

# Adventure Activities Licensing Service

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## SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT

**Licence Applicant** The Wilderness Centre  
**Centre Name** The Wilderness Centre  
**Ref. No.** R2353  
**Operational Base** The Wilderness Centre, Micheldene

**This report is submitted following :**

A visit to observe the practical application of the providers safety management systems.

**Contact Person during Inspection** David Squire, Mark Parnham , Nathan Hill  
**Contact Position** Head of Centre, Deputy Manager, Instructor.  
**Inspector** Richard Townshend  
**Date of inspection** 7.9.2016  
**Time on Site** 3 hour(s)

### About this Report

- This report has been prepared from information provided by a duly appointed inspector. You should act on the requirements of this report which supersede any previous correspondence or discussion.
- The final decision of the Licensing Authority will generally be in the form of the licence document, where applicable. The licence will be forwarded to the provider when any required information has been received and full payment has been made.
- In some cases you may be instructed to make changes to the way you operate and you should note any required time scale.
- In other cases you may be offered advice. In these cases you should use your own expertise and discretion to decide if it is applicable or necessary.
- In all cases the continued management of safety remains the responsibility of the provider and not the Licensing Authority nor the Licensing Service.
- Your licence, where one is applicable, will show the licence holder as **The Wilderness Centre** and the operational base as **The Wilderness Centre**.

- Similarly, you should check that the “Activities offered by the provider” section, if shown, is accurate. This matrix may contain activities which are not licensable. These will not appear on any subsequent licence document and may not have been considered as part of this inspection.
- You should also check that the audit of provision section, if shown, is accurate.

*Please advise us as a matter of some urgency if these details are not correct.*

- You should be aware that you have the right to make a representation to the Licensing Authority on any decisions made by them. In the first instance representations should be to the Head of Inspection of the Adventure Activities Licensing Service.

**During an inspection on 7 September, 2016 the following aspects of the organisation were considered.**

### **Part A. About this Provider**

A detailed description of this provider is given in the report following the inspection of the management systems on 20.06.16.

### **Part B. About this Visit**

This was an arranged visit to inspect the practical application of the management of safety systems by observing an activity.

### **Part C. Activity Observation**

The inspector joined a group of 20 participants on a climbing and abseiling session at the nearby crag known as Plump Hill.

The participants were a varied group from a private school that ‘specialises’ in offering targeted education for pupils with a variety of needs. Centre staff and visiting staff were engaged in attempting to encourage participation from all and were clearly experienced in identifying and coping with a variety of behaviours.

The crag was reached by a 20 minute walk from the centre which includes crossing a main road. From observation and discussion it was clear that the procedure for this had been carefully thought through.

Harness and helmet fitting and adjustment was carried out near the crag by Nathan whilst Mark rigged the anchors and ropes at the top. The climbs and abseil are located on a relatively easy angled slab. The rock is quite friable (a type of sandstone) and care needs to be taken to ensure climbers do not erode the holds with poor footwork. The anchors were arranged to facilitate lowering off rather than ‘topping out’ however quick access for staff to the top of the crag or as on the day the presence of a second competent member of staff at the top of the crag running the abseil means that participants can be safeguarded from above if required. The nature of the rock also means that care is always required to avoid issues with stonefall both by wearing helmets and by careful positioning of the participants.

The participants were divided into two groups of ten one group proceeding by a simple but longer path to a safe area at the top of the crag, and the others further subdivided into teams of 5 climbing and ‘peer’ belaying. On this occasion staff had chosen to use ‘grigri 2’ devices and lowering off was performed by the instructor. Other systems are permitted by the operating guidance at the discretion of the SPA qualified staff.

The abseil was rigged and supervised in a safe manner. One participant who would not have been able to complete an abseil alone was able to descend in ‘tandem’ with a visiting teacher.

The session appeared to confirm that the risk analysis and management systems claimed by the provider and/or seen in various documents were being implemented in practice.



