**Alton Castle Abseil**

**Standard Operating Procedure and Risk Assessment**

**Activity Specific - Abseiling**

**1. The Legal Context**

Below is the current position as viewed by AALA With regard to Alton Castle not holding an Adventurous Activities Licence for Abseiling.

“Use of climbing walls, abseiling towers and similar man-made structures designed for practising climbing techniques are excluded from licensing but this does not extend to other outdoor man-made structures such as disused railway viaducts.”

Reference L77 Page 24 Paragraph 22 Guidance from the Licencing Authority on the Adventure Activity Licencing Regulations 2004. Appendix 1 Further Information and Interpretation.

Further confirmed by a telephone conversation with Marcus Baily of AALS on the 5th July 2016

**2. Method and safety**

The Abseil will be conducted in accordance with current best practice for this type of event; principally Participants will be safeguarded by an independent safety rope from the abseil rope which shall be releasable in the event of an emergency. See Risk assessment for further Risk control measures.

The Platforms are annually inspected by a local Scaffolding Contractor and a “handing over” certificate issued.

**3. Instructor Guidelines**

The Minimum National Governing Body Qualification to lead this activity is: M.L.T.B. Climbing Wall Award + Abseiling Module or that they have been assessed and a statement of competence produced by a suitably qualified technical advice in this case an MIA holder.

Instructors must log out all technical equipment from the stores, check for damage before and after use and report any defects. Return all equipment to the stores after the session.

Instructors will ensure that activity participants are suitably clothed and equipped.

Instructors will ensure the wearing of approved helmets by all participants and supervisors; below the castle, approaching and during abseiling.

Be aware of personal safety whilst working close to the edge of the castle when preparing the abseil

**4 Generic risk assessment for abseiling activity**

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| **HAZARD** | **WHO MIGHT BE HARMED** | **SEVIRITY** | **IS THE RISK ADEQUATELY CONTROLLED BY:** | **FURTHER RISK CONTROL** | **RESIDUAL RISK** |
| Fall from Castle edge | Instructors & Participants | Fatal | Activity participants to be roped at cliff edge or otherwise protected by a life line on approach  Guide Ropes to mark access route to the little Drop | Participants attached whilst on platform | Low |
| Falling object | Instructors & Participants | Fatal | Participants briefed not to look up on hearing ‘Below!’  No unauthorised people in landing zone | Helmets worn by all participants and supervisors; below the crag, approaching and during Abseiling. | Low |
| Anchor Failure | Instructors & Participants | Fatal | Anchor selection by qualified staff.  Annual safety inspection of Platforms. | Correctly loaded backups used. | Low |
| Hair, jewellery or clothing trapped in equipment | Instructors & Participants | Slight Harm | Before climbing participants are asked to remove jewellery, tuck away hair, loose clothing and draw cords etc. | Releasable abseil deployed | Low |
| Stuck Frozen tangled abseiler. | Instructors & Participants | Slight Harm | Systems, equipment used and training in extrication. | Releasable abseil deployed | Low |
| Equipment failure | Instructors & Participants | Fatal | Procurement, monitoring, All Karabiners. Used have a screw gate | Chest or body harness used on those with ill defined waist. | Low |
| Cuts grazes rope burns pinches sprains etc. | Instructors & Participants | Slight Harm | Alert group to hazard of venue/ activity. | The speed of decent is controlled by the Instructor to minimise rope burn | Low |
| Harnesses and helmets incorrectly fitted | Instructors & Participants | Fatal | Participants fitted with equipment by a suitably experienced person | Instructor to check equipment prior to the abseil | Low |
| Inversion/fall | Instructors & Participants | Slight Harm | Instructors will provide clear instruction to avoid inversions  Instructors to ensure correct use and fitting of equipment | Instructors to use chest harness where needed (i.e. oversized participants). | Low |
| Asthma attacks and other medical conditions | Instructors & Participants | Harm | Medical conditions should have been pre-notified at time of booking | Confirmation that Participant has their medication with them | Low |

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| Risk assessment Conducted By | Reviewed By | Date | Next scheduled review | Signed | Signed Off By |
| Dom Salter  MLTB SPA | Dom Salter | 17th May 2018 | May 2019 | C:\Users\dom\Documents\My Documents\personal\AA-Sig.png |  |