

Ogof Ffynnon Ddu Cave Advisory Group  
Minutes of Meeting at South Wales Caving Club 4th Dec 2022 at 0930  
The meeting was held in person and by Zoom

Apologies

Hywel Davies, Vince Allkins, Ken Perry, Christina Byrne, Mike James

Present

Gary Vaughan, Allan Richardson, Jill Brunsdon, Like Ashton, Nicola, Jules Carter (rescue Rep), Paul Dann (NRW), Tom Partridge, Dave Dobson (SWCC Conservation), Andrew Dobson, Andrew Mcleod, Jo White, Claire Vivian.

Chairmans opening comments

As Hywel Davies was unavailable Gary Vaughan acted as Chairman.  
He welcomed everyone to the meeting

Appointment of new Wardens

Jo White was ratified as a Warden.

Since the last SWCC Committee meeting two other wardens have volunteered:-  
Si Lewis and Tomasz Zalewski, they were ratified at the meeting and they will be confirmed at the SWCC committee meeting in January 2023.

Correspondence received

None

Chairmans Report

None received.

Hon. Secretary's Report

Ongoing process of recruiting wardens, this has been successful so far.

SWCC Permit Secretary's Report

- The following documentation has been updated and is awaiting ratification before release:
  - Annual and Date Specific Permits - Updates to access advice
  - OFD Access Document – Updates to reflect access advice, key process, callouts
  - Annual Permit Application form
- The development of an electronic permit application form is still in progress. Electronic key booking for annual permit holders is being piloted via the Digital Destination Board application.
- SWCC has navigated a difficult course through the pandemic and remains in a state of development and change with respect to its systems and protocols. The historic midweek cave key system has now been adopted as a replacement for the Duty Officer key administration system as mentioned in the updated OFD Access Advice document. This system has been extended to include keys for other caves held by SWCC for members. Any

permit holding caver can simply request a cave key by e-mail, text or phone. Codes are issued which enable the caver to access the changing facilities and showers at the SWCC HQ and to retrieve a cave key 24/7. The use of the key is logged on user sheets designed to keep records sufficient to comply with any usage statistics that may be required in future and with SWCC's legal responsibilities as a manager of premises under current Covid related requirements.

- Cave usage statistics are currently limited to 2022 records only. Digitisation of records previous to 2022 is in progress but I am reluctant to release these statistics until transcription is complete. This is due to the previous records being a mixture of key log sheets and trip tickets. It is very time consuming to attempt to relate any trip tickets to key use sheets to record accurate data, to date I have recorded over 900 rows of data. Reports will be generated for complete years and published to the OFDCAG/SWCC Committee as they become available.
- There have been no issues or extraordinary circumstances with permit issuing or access since my time in post.

**Period 01/01/2022 – 27/11/2022**

Number of cavers total – 2567

<b>Year</b>	<b>No. of Date Specific Permits (OFD) Issued</b>
2022	76
2021	(no data)
2020	(no data)
<b>Year</b>	<b>No. of Annual Permits (OFD) Issued</b>
2022	30
2021	20
2020	36

Luke Ashton

Conservation Officers Report

Work has continued on re-taping, formation cleaning and removal of boot and hand prints etc.

Quite a lot of tape cleaning and re-alignment has been required, plus the substitution of heavy duty pins for the more vulnerable area of taping, this is expected with the age of some tapes.

The usual thanks go to Andy & Brian for their stalwart assistance.

Dave Dobson

### Fixed Aids Officers Report

The normal fixed aids checks are continuing, including recently checking all the fixed wires in OFD1. Tunnel Top entrance became impossible to lock but this has now been repaired. The Cwm Dwr 2 entrance was forced open but repairs are underway and the entrance should hopefully be re-secured by the time of this meeting.

The Cwm Dwr entrance was repaired earlier this year as the top timbering had become loose. Scaffolding has been added to allow access without disturbing the loose fill. Further work is required to secure the loose fill; further scaffolding or a ladder lower in the shaft may be required.

A review of the Fixed Aids list is underway. The list includes various anchors, some of which are extremely old and should probably be replaced by Cambrian Caving Council resin anchors (subject to appropriate permissions). Resin anchors do not require maintenance and do not currently appear on the SWCC Fixed Aids list.

I have committed to producing topos for SRT pitches in OFD; this is likely to begin with the Columns pitch which should have a few extra anchors installed for pitch-head safety. Further topos would be drawn as and when old anchors are replaced with new resin anchors.

Andrew McLeod  
SWCC Fixed Aids Officer

Cwm Dwr entrance, needs more work, NRW to be approached for permits and funding. Detailed measurements to be carried out at New Year.

### Reported Accidents

The Rescue rep reported that there had been none.

### Rescue Liason Report

Jules reported that Rescue Practices were being carried out.

### Allocated Columns duties

01/01/23, 09/04/23, 30/04/23, 28/05/23, 27/08/23.

These have been published on the SWCC notice board and will be published on the OFDCAG webpage.

There was a query re an extra Columns Day for the Kings Coronation in May 2023, this will depend on the availability of Wardens, AR to check.

### Cave Management Plan

Nothing to report from NRW.

### Update on safety advice

No information from NRW.

SWCC is looking into Radon advice for cavers eg when assisting filming or other commercial groups.

### Possible changes to TOR's

Review ongoing at present initiated by SWCC with reference to the MOU.

## OFDCAG digital interface-update

A page for the OFDCAG is under construction on the SWCC page and will be launched after the next meeting.

Andrew McLeod

The aim is to have all OFDCAG information on the webpage, including minutes of meetings from the formation of OFDCAG. AR to sort digital copies for Andrew.

### AOB

Nicola Pearce pointed out that she was now a Wessex member.

She was elected as a warden by the meeting, this needs to be confirmed at the next SWCC Committee meeting.

Luke hasn't had any updates on the safety advice for the information he sends out with permits.

Andrew wasn't aware of any updates needed.

Allan hasn't received any updates, should he do so the information would be distributed.

Gary suggested the Permit Secretary email address is published on the OFDCAG/SWCC pages for reports of problems in OFD.

Paul Dann thanked the Conservation Warden and his team for all their hard work.

Jules reported that NRW have received some money from Freshwater Ecologies, this links into the Cave Management Plan. This is to study the ecology of OFD.

Date of next meeting 0930 on 28/05/23 (tbc)

This will be a blended meeting held at SWCC.

R. Allan Richardson

Hon. Secretary

OFDCAG