

Ogof Ffynnon Ddu Cave Advisory Group
Minutes
Was held by Zoom on the 11th June 2025
starting at 1900

Apologies

Tomasz Zelewski, Moyrah Gall, Vince Allkins.

Present

Tony Baker, Allan Richardson, Luke Ashton, Andrew McLeod, Claire Vivian, Dave Dobson, Andrew Dobson, Nicola Pearce, Jo White, Duncan Hornby,

Chairmans Report

Nothing to add to the reports below.

Appointment of new Wardens

Request for new Wardens has been sent to the SWCC committee
Sarah Garlick, James Hallihan, John Roe, Helen Nightingale.

Everyone happy with the new Wardens.

Correspondence received

None

Hon. Secretary's Report

Nothing to report other than the normal administration.

OFD Access Review Group Report

No update from SWCC yet, ongoing.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between NRW and SWCC

NRW has not been able to progress this at present, some ideas have been received from Gary Vaughan, Ongoing though currently paused.

SWCC Permit Secretary's Report

SWCC Permit Secretary report to the June 2025 meeting of the OFDCAG

Annual permit holding clubs can now book keys via the Digital Destination Board app 24/7.
If you would like to use this feature in DDB, please download the app and create an account, then send me your DDB username, name and club.

- The adoption of the Digital Destination Board application continues to be significant throughout 2025.
- No access issues have been noted over this reporting period.

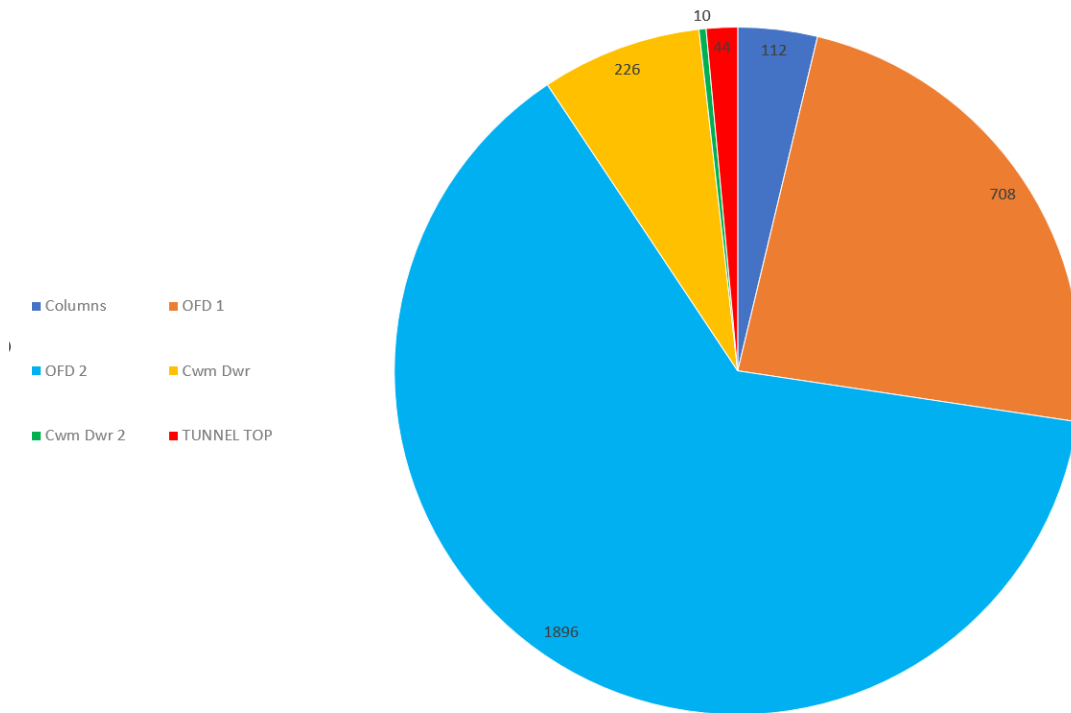
- Issues have been noted with the completion of the cave log sheet. The SWCC membership and all permit holders must be reminded to complete the key log sheet completely and appropriately.

*See footfall per entrance graphs attached

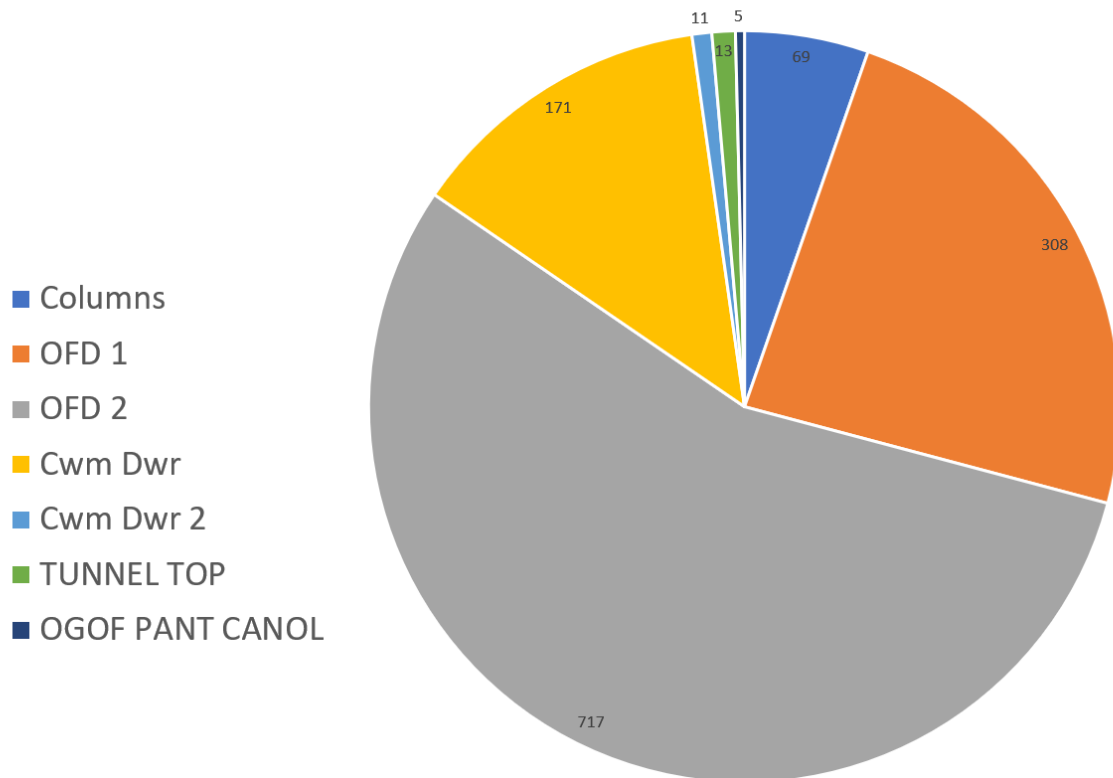
Year	No. of Date Specific Permits (OFD) Issued
2025 (to date)	36
2024	110
2023	55
2022	76

Year	No. of Cavers via All Entrances
2025 (to date)	1283
2024	2952
2023	2927
2022	2847

Footfall per Cave Entrance - 2024



Footfall Per Entrance - 2025 to date



Luke Ashton – 14/05/2025

Luke was asked to use the same colours year on year.

Query re rolling out DDB to all major clubs, possible but needs to wait until the OFD Review is completed.

Luke to look into more Annual Permits at the end of the year.

Conservation Officers Report

Work has continued on tape cleaning and re-aligning, with many new areas also taped. Formation cleaning has been carried out as usual, the Wedding Cake always seems to acquire a muddy handprint.

Frozen River has an on-going problem with displaced tape, probably caused by dragged tackle bags, other members have reported restoring the tape to its proper route, their assistance is appreciated! Various members have also suggested conservation projects and have given their time as well.

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

Dave Dobson

SWCC Conservation Officer

Fixed Aids Officers Report

Fixed Aids report for OFDCAG meeting 11/6/2024

Inspections of fixed aids in OFD have continued as usual. The resin anchoring programme of Ogofa Cymru is reducing the number of required inspections as resin anchors do not require inspection. I am continuing to shift focus away from regular inspection and towards installing fixed aids which do not require regular inspection as they suffer less wear (e.g. stainless anchors, stainless steps).

The Diver's Pitch bypass handline has been identified as needing replacement; this will require a new length of large-diameter synthetic rope. Use of a length of stainless chain at the top of the rope will reduce wear and make it easier for cavers to add their own belay rope to the system if desired. We are also planning to install stainless chain and rings at pull-cord locations (the Skyhook and the Fault Aven pull-up systems) and replace the non-stainless chain on the Letterbox. These proposals have been submitted to Ogofa Cymru for potential funding.

Resin anchors have been installed by Ogofa Cymru in Cwm Dwr 2, the Letterbox (to hold the planned chain), and Edward's Shortcut chimney and traverse. Work is still planned at the Fault Aven pull-up system in future. A Cwm Dwr 2 key has been added to the 'off-site key' allowing non-member cavers to access Cwm Dwr 2 more easily through the same process as accessing OFD.

Work has been carried out in the Cwm Dwr entrance to add further scaffolding in the lower portion of the rift (many thanks to Jules and co. for this). This continues work done over the last few years to replace rotting timbers and keep cavers away from the loose material in the rift.

There have been some difficulties with cave locks and keys, but this is being worked on to try and reach a better solution (thanks to Vince for managing this).

There is one location that I think would benefit from resin anchors at this time, but I have not yet submitted a proposal to the Fixed Aids Advisory Group (FAAG): the up-pitch near Mutiny Junction. Currently, this ends in a loose free-climb up a final chimney with no good anchors at the top. It forms part of a round trip (via the Skyhook up, p20 and p8 down, three small down pitches and Haydn's Dig). It is also one of only two ways up into that section of cave, the other way being the three small pitches up and a very tight crawl. I believe new anchors at the top, traversing onto a large chockstone at the head of the pitch, could provide a safer clean ascent/descent of this route away from the loose material. I am happy to bring this proposal back to OFDCAG after submitting it to the FAAG if the OFDCAG does not wish to give approval (conditional on FAAG/SWCC approval) at this time (apologies for not being more organized with the timing).

Andrew McLeod

SWCC Fixed Aids Officer

Tomasz had emailed to say he was unhappy about making access to Merthyr Vale easier which is a fragile area.

Consensus was to send it to the FAAG, as this was not a heavily visited area.

Reported Accidents

None

Rescue Liason Report

Team has set rescue practice dates and notified SWCC.

The permit agreement for OFD has been sorted out.

Allocated Columns duties

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

Cave Management Plan

Ongoing

Update on safety advice

See Fixed Aids report.

Possible changes to TOR's

These are part of the MOU, they are ongoing.

OFDCAG digital interface-update

The Columns open days and wardens names have been updated.

AOB

Next meeting, December 2025 date tbc. nearer the time.,

Andrew and Duncan are looking at refreshing the SWCC website, there is the opportunity to make the Columns page more visible & informative.

Columns Wardens need to be aware that the top entrance to the Columns is for people who are SRT competent only.

Need to send email round re Wardens re volunteering.

Thanks to Jules Carter and James Waite re works in the bottom of Cwm Dwr entrance, Tony will write to them.

R. Allan Richardson
Hon. Secretary
OFDCAG

11 June 2025