

PWLL DU CAVE MANAGEMENT GROUP

Minutes of the General Meeting held at the Old School Community Centre, Gilwern on Saturday 16th June 2012 commencing at 7.30pm.

Attendees:

Mick Day		Chairman
Fleur Loveridge	Oxford UCC/Red Rose CPC	Secretary
Sue Mabbett	South Wales C.C.	Permit Secretary & Club Rep
Ben Lovett	Morgannwg C.C.	Conservation Officer & Club Rep
Stuart France	Chelsea S.S.	Club Rep
Ali Garman	Draenen Diggers	Club Rep & Fixed Aids Officer
Tim Barter	Westminster S.G.	Club Rep
Owen Clarke	Cwmbran Caving Club	Club Rep
Henry Patton	Aberystwyth Caving Club	Club Rep
Chris Densham	Oxford U. C. C.	Club Rep
Spencer Drew	Morgannwg C.C.	Treasurer
John Stevens	Chelsea S.S.	Survey Recorder
Elsie Little	Cambrian Caving Council	
Bernie Woodley	Cambrian Caving Council	
Chris Gibbs	Cwmbran Caving Club	
Becka Lawson	Red Rose CPC	

1. Apologies

Apologies received from Rhian Kendall (Biological Recorder), Les Williams (Wessex CC), Charles Bailey (Trustee), John Pybus (Survey Officer), Stuart Reid (CCW), Tim Long (Trustee), Richard Hill (Gagendor) and Chris Seal (Chelsea S.S.)

2a. Minutes of the last Meetings (19th November 2011)

The minutes were signed as a true and accurate record by the Chair.

2b. Matters arising not covered elsewhere in the Agenda

There were no matters arising which would not be covered later in the agenda.

3. Officers Reports

a) Secretary

The Secretary's report is attached with the minutes. The commercial use of the cave was discussed. It was concluded that the current policy is clear: commercial use is not permitted. No members present had any knowledge of commercial use occurring and there had been no unusual key requests or logbook entries.

b) Treasurer

The accounts were presented and are attached. There are no major issues; some minor costs have been accrued, but there is money available to pay these.

c) Permit Secretary/Access Officer

The Permit Secretary's report is attached. Most visitors to the cave are from existing key holder clubs, but a marked drop in numbers has been recorded in the

last year or two. The cause of this was discussed with possible reasons being the re-introduction of a key rather than a combination, or the general cyclic nature of caving. This was not thought to be a cause for concern.

d) Conservation Officer

No conservation issues have been brought to the attention of the Conservation Officer. Megadrive, the route out of Lamb and Fox chamber and the start of the Canyons area have been re-taped ahead of the meeting. It has also been noticed that the bat notices in this area are somewhat out of date, referring to old CCW contacts and surveying that was due to be complete in 1997. It was agreed that these would be removed and replaced with up to date signs, with a more general message about bat conservation and a relevant PDCMG contact. **FL to contact Stuart Reid about removing the old notices.**

e) Survey Secretary

The Survey Secretary sent his apologies.

f) Survey Recorder

Not much further progress has been made as the Survey Recorder is waiting for input from the Therion team. However the three dimensional model has been built. Very little new data has been received.

g) Biological Recorder

The Biological Recorder sent her apologies. However, a brief report has been received from the freshwater fauna team via Lou Maurice. Excellent progress is being made with the first recordings of some important species of *Niphargus* in Welsh Caves. Further work is ongoing.

h) Geological Recorder.

No report.

h) Fixed Aids Officer

The first fixed aids inspection has been carried out. This has resulted in the deletion of two rows from the draft spreadsheet circulated at the last meeting. The inspection revealed one eco-hanger (in the entrance series) which could be twisted slightly. Although this was not considered to be problematic **AG will report this occurrence to Andy Lewington** of CCC.

An additional rope, which is not a PDCMG fixed aid, was reported to be present on the climb in the entrance series. It was agreed that this should be removed. **CD was tasked to do** this the following day.

It was suggested that Steve King's description of the cave should include information about which of the aids within the cave are within the official remit of the PDCMG. **CD will contact Steve to discuss. FL to contact ML about putting this information on the website.**

The fixed aids policy has been updated since the last meeting to reflect the inspection of the aids and to change the inspection regime to be every 12 months (in keeping with other similar policies). While there is still some spelling and punctuation to be addressed, the contents were agreed in principle. It was proposed (by AG) and seconded (by CD) that the policy should be adopted. There were not votes against and no abstentions.

4. Election of Officers/Recorders

NA

5. Other Group Business

a) Drws Cefn

See the Secretary's report for an update. AG is planning the engineering. Soon a date and working parties will need to be arranged to carry out the work. FL/AG to organise via email/doodle polls.

b) The Gate

See the Secretary's report and Access Officer's report. There have been no other reports of the gate sticking and things seem to be better in this respect. It is thought that the problem has been in the internal mechanism, but this is not properly understood. **EL to contact the manufacturer** to check the situation.

6. Applications for membership

None received.

7. Applications to become keyholders

Wealdon CMS and Devon SS had previously applied to become keyholders which had been approved by the group executive.

8. AOB

It was suggested that having a news section on the group website would be a useful communications tool. **FL to investigate.**

Meetings closed at 8.45pm

Next meeting on November 17th 2012.

PWLL DU CAVE MANAGEMENT GROUP.

General Meeting 16th June 2012

Secretary's Report

Drws Cefn

On the 15th April I met with our licensed bat workers and took them to see the entrance at Drws Cefn. This was so that they could take photos of the entrance and get a feel for the situation so as to support their work producing the license. On an ecological front we observed fresh droppings in the entrance area, which suggests that bats are using it for access to the wider system. These observations tally with sightings previously made by Andrew Lewington of Lesser Horseshoe bats exiting from Drows Cefn at dusk the previous month.

Progress is now being made on the licensee application and although it is slightly behind compared to the discussion we had in March, it has been confirmed to me today that we are still on schedule to have the works complete before the start of hibernation this autumn. We will therefore soon need to start thinking about ear marking some dates so that we can have working parties ready to do the work later in the year (before October).

When we visited the entrance in April it appeared that it was not in use. In fact, it appeared that a number of large rocks had been deliberately placed at the top of the scaffold shaft in an unstable pile. These would have been a serious hazard for anyone attempting to exit the cave via this route, and we had to remove them to allow safe descend in order to inspect for evidence of bat activity.

Gate

Earlier in the year there were few reports about the gate sticking on exit from the cave. Ben Lovett and I had a look at this at the end of March and while it was not quite clear what was going on, the inside mechanism did appear to be stiffer than the outside. We found that a little carefully applied force to the handle was useful on exit. During the Easter weekend I placed a hammer just inside the entrance to provide assistance if required. I have had no further reports of any problems or of people getting stuck.

Commercial Use of the Cave

Peter Jones was in touch earlier in the year say that there has been talk in the Lamb and Fox of someone paying £50 to be taken on a trip round the cave. I asked for feedback on this from the Group at the time, but received none. I would still be grateful if anyone has any information about commercial trips in the cave.

Fleur Loveridge, 15th June 2012.

Treasurer's Report

To be included

Access Officers Report

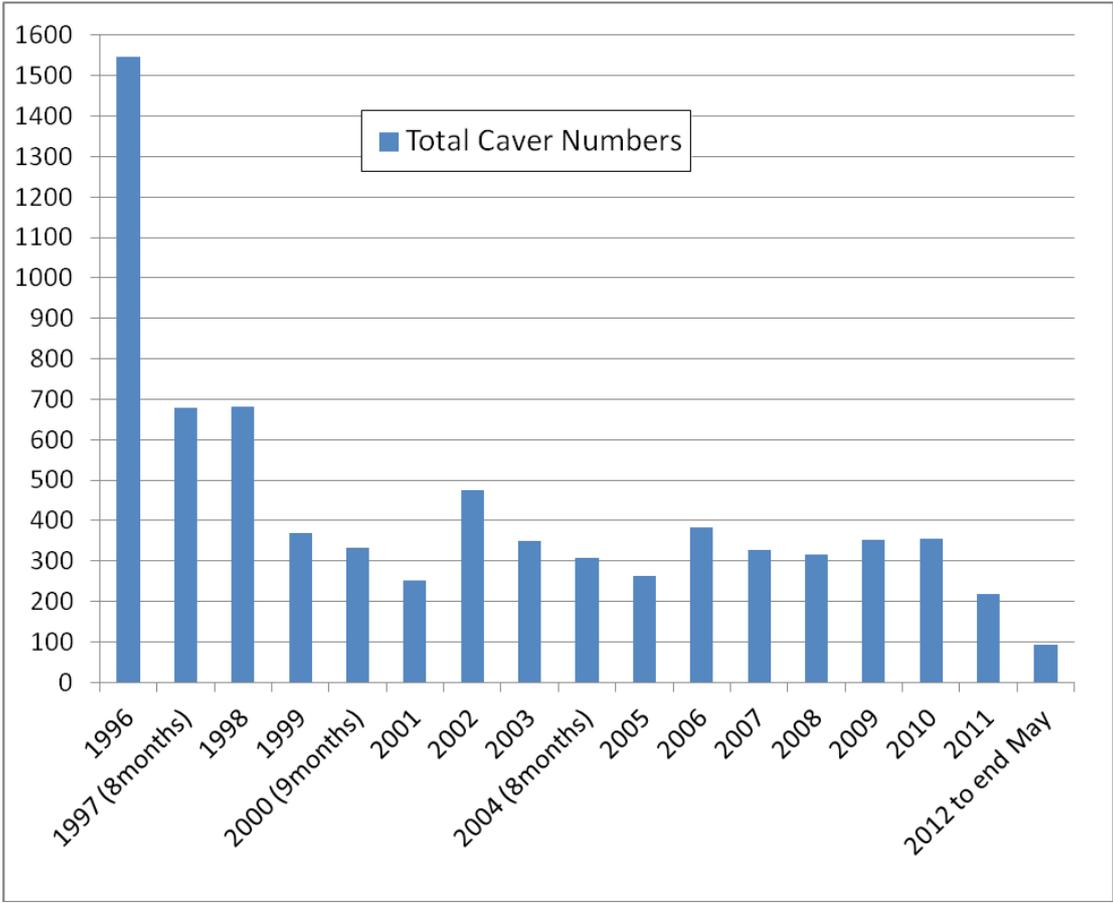
The number of cavers entering Ogof Draenen is gradually decreasing year on year with 20 fewer cavers than Nov 10 – Jun 11 period last year (2011). I have attached trip details for 2011 and up to end May 2012. At our last meeting I was only able to present the summary figures as the trip reports had not reached me. The use of new log book is providing clearer records with less mud obscuring the details.

Since Nov 2011, I received request for second key from Chelsea SS, which was duly sent on receipt of £20 cheque, principle of second key agreed at last meeting. I also received request for permanent key from two clubs visiting Draenen regularly Devon SS (Lee Knight from DSS is completing biological survey as reported by Lou Maurice at last meeting) and Wealdon CMS, after quick opinion poll with other committee members a permanent key was dispatched to DSS, WCMS already had a key for multiple trip request for 2012. These Clubs have not expressed a wish to be members of PDCMG, but we have previously had permanent key holders who are not part of PDCMG.

Since Nov 2011 the padlock was reported as full of mud and difficult to open. The spare padlock was swapped in, and the failing padlock taken to the locksmiths for clean up and service, I also purchased three keys to replace the permanent keys sent out. The door latch was also reported as stiff to open, I included warning with keys sent out but I have received no further reports on door issues.

I continue receive trip requests at a steady trickle, my only request on these is do not send the requests too early. One Club sent request for trip in 7 months, cheques are only valid for 6 months!! Also trip with this lead time tend to get buried behind other requests. So key requests should be sent only 1 to 3 months before planned trips. There is never a shortage of keys and if there were I would simple purchase more but I have never been that inundated. Requests with less than a month risks overlapping with a holiday.

<u>Trips Recorded in Ogof Draenen Nov 2011 to May 2012</u>						
	Jan-12	Feb-12	Mar-12	Apr-12	May-12	Jun-12
	13					
Parties	13	6	6	10	6	2
Persons	42	22	14	36	22	7
	Jul-12	Aug-12	Sep-12	Oct-12	Nov-11	Dec-11
Parties	0	0	0	0	8	6
Persons	0	0	0	0	30	18



Fixed Aids Policy

To be included

Fixed Aids Schedule

Ogof Draenen Fixed Aids - 09/06/2012									
Pwll Du Cave Management Group									
No.	Location	Identification	Specification	PPE	Installed By	Installation Date	Inspection Due	Rigging Comments	Inspection 09/06/12 - AG
									Inspection Comments
1	Entrance Cimb	1st backup Eco hanger furthest from pitch head	DMM Eco hanger	Yes	CCC	??	09/06/2013	Un-used	OK
2		Middle Eco hanger	DMM Eco hanger	Yes	CCC	??	09/06/2013	Rope tied directly into Eco hanger	Hanger rotates slight. Loaded perpendicularly so not a concern Resin does not completely fill the hole flush to the surface
3		Main hang Eco hanger	DMM Eco hanger	Yes	CCC	??	09/06/2013		
4		MR for 3rd Eco hanger	10mm Long Open MR	Yes	AG & JC	24/04/2010	09/06/2013		Some minimal surface corrosion
5		Traverse and knotted handline	11mm Edelrid Superstatic	Yes	AG & JC	24/04/2010	09/06/2013		OK
6	Indiana Highway	1st Eco hanger from Indian Highway end	DMM Eco hanger	Yes	CCC	??	09/06/2013	Tied directly into Eco hanger	OK
7		2nd Eco hanger	DMM Eco hanger	Yes	CCC	??	09/06/2013		OK
8		MR for 2nd Eco hanger	10mm Long Open MR	Yes	AG & JC	24/04/2010	09/06/2013		OK
9		3rd Eco hanger	DMM Eco hanger	Yes	CCC	??	09/06/2013		OK
10		MR for 3rd Eco hanger	10mm Long Open MR	Yes	AG & JC	24/04/2010	09/06/2013		OK
11		4th Eco hanger	DMM Eco hanger	Yes	CCC	??	09/06/2013	Tied directly to Eco hanger	OK
12		Traverse line	11mm Edelrid Superstatic	Yes	AG & JC	24/04/2010	09/06/2013		OK
13	Balcony Pitch	Left hand Eco hanger	DMM Eco hanger	Yes	CCC	??	09/06/2013		OK
14		MR for Left Eco hanger	12mm Long Open MR	Yes	AG & MS	22/05/2011	09/06/2013		OK
15		Right hand Eco hanger	DMM Eco hanger	Yes	CCC	??	09/06/2013		OK
16		MR for Right Eco hanger	10mm Delta MR	Yes	AG & MS	22/05/2011	09/06/2013		OK
17		MR for Left of ladder	10mm Long Open MR	No	AG & MS	22/05/2011	09/06/2013		OK
18		MR for Right of ladder	10mm Long Open MR	No	AG & MS	22/05/2011	09/06/2013		OK
19		MR for lifeline	10mm Long Open MR	Yes	AG & MS	22/05/2011	09/06/2013	Linked into Delta MR	OK
20		Looped ladder lifeline	11mm Edelrid Superstatic	Yes	AG & MS	24/04/2010	09/06/2013	Runs through 10mm MR	OK
21		Stainless Steel Ladder	Daren style ladder	No	AG & MS	22/05/2011	09/06/2013	Lifeline is the PPE	OK
22		Chain for rigging ladder	10mm Zinc Plated chain	??	AG & MS	22/05/2011	09/06/2013		OK