

PWLL DU CAVE MANAGEMENT GROUP

Minutes of the EGM held at the Blaenavon Workingmen's Hall on Sunday 1st November 2009 commencing at 11.00am

Attendees:

Mick Day		Chairman
Fleur Loveridge	Oxford University C.C.	Secretary
Les Williams	Wessex Cave Club	Club Rep
Chris Densham	Oxford University C.C.	Club Rep & Trustee
Chris Seal	Chelsea S.S.	Club Rep
Peter Talling	University of Bristol S..S	Club Rep
Ali Garman	Draenen Diggers	Club Rep
Spencer Drew	Morgannwg C.C.	Treasurer
Sue Mabbett	South Wales C.C.	Access Officer & Club Rep
Ben Lovett	Morgannwg C.C.	Conservation Officer & Club Rep
John Pybus	Oxford Uni C.C.	Survey Officer
Richard Bayfield	Bristol Exploration Club	Club Rep
Owen Clarke	Cwmbran C.C.	Club Rep
Martin Laverty	G.O. Garimpeiros	Club Rep
Mike Kelly	Gagendor	Club Rep
Rhian Kendall	Morgannwg C.C.	Biological Recorder
Charles Bailey	Trustee	
John Stevens	Chelsea S.S. / G5 Surveyors	
Elsie Little	Cambrian Caving Council	
Imogen Furlong	Sheffield University S.S.	
Thomas Bell	Sheffield University S.S	
Chris Gibbs	Cwmbran C.C.	
Tim Guilford	Oxford University C.C.	
Anita Milicic	Oxford University C.C	

1. Apologies

Apologies received from Andy Farrant (Geological Recorder).

Minutes & Matters arising (not covered in the agenda)

The previous minutes were not reviewed or agreed as this was an Extraordinary Meeting. This is to occur at the next Ordinary Meeting.

Given the public interest in the meeting there was a review of the voting rights of members and the constitutional validity of the meeting.

It was agreed that while it may be better for all Officers to stand down before the elections of the Officers, this is not what has happened in the past and there are no restrictions in the Group constitution in this respect. The previous elections were therefore constitutional.

It was agreed that voting in the EGM should be in accordance with the constitution, namely that Club Representatives and Officers are eligible to vote, but no individual should have more than one vote. The Officers defined in the constitution are the Secretary, the Access Officer, the Conservation Officer and the Treasurer. This excludes a number of other officers (eg Geological Recorder, Survey Officer) who have in the past voted due to precedent. All Officers are also Club Reps (ie only one vote) apart from the Secretary and the Treasurer who both elected to exercise their right to vote.

It was agreed that FL would bring a revision to the constitution to the next meeting in order to clarify the voting rights and procedures for all future meetings. **Action FL**

2. Survey Policy

The following three motions were proposed by FL and seconded by LW:

(i) “John Stevens is co-opted as Survey Recorder”

(ii) “John Pybus is retained as Survey Officer to maintain the Grade 2 data pool as long as this is deemed necessary”

(iii) Proposed change to the code of conduct from:

“New discoveries must be conserved taped and surveyed as they are explored or very soon afterwards and a copy of the survey notes passed the Survey Officer. These activities are a strict condition of access. Requests for confidentiality will be honoured. A photographic record of new discoveries is encouraged. Surveying and taping should be meet the standards set out in the PDCMG's Conservation, Access and Survey policies.”

to:

“New discoveries must be conservation taped as they are explored or very soon afterwards. All taping must meet the standards set out in the PDCMG’s Conservation Policy. A photographic record of new discoveries is encouraged. The PDCMG and Survey Recorder should be notified of new discoveries with arrangements made for timely surveying to an appropriate level. Confidentiality will be respected if requested.”

All three motions were agreed unanimously by vote (13 for, 0 against, 0 abstentions) [votes for: WCC, OUCC, CSS, BEC, UBSS, MCC, CCC, SWCC, DD, Gagendor, GOG, SD, FAL]

FL, JS & JP to form a working party to revise the Group Survey Policy in line with the new approach. **Action FL, JS, JP**

3. Report on Consultation

A wide consultation was held regarding the entrance policy. The results of this are contained within the attached report. A summary is given below:

Three clubs that are not members of the PDCMG are in favour of a single entrance cave, except in some cases for connections made from new caves at a larger distance from the currently known system.

Personal correspondence received by the Secretary and by Descent suggests that most people are in favour of either a single entrance (8 people) or using the existing second entrance only for specific tasks (2 people). The scientific community is generally in favour of conservation through the single entrance policy.

The online caving forum is fairly evenly split between single and multiple entrance viewpoints. However, the nature of the forum contribution, including in some cases use of threats, means that care should be exercised over the weight attached to these discussions. It should also be noted that there is no overlap between contributors expressing opinions on the online forum and the personal correspondence received, suggesting a different demographic.

The Clubs comprising the PDCMG contain a spectrum of views from those preferring a single entrance policy to those preferring a multiple entrance policy. In a straw poll of the Clubs (11 No.) and additional Officers (1 No.) present:

0 polled for no restrictions on entrances or access to them

0 polled for consideration of further entrances on a case by case basis, without any further guidelines.

5 polled for consideration of further entrances on a case by case basis, but with guidelines.

5 polled for consideration of further entrances on a case by case basis, but with strong guidelines and a preference for a single entrance

2 polled for a single entrance policy.

The landowner's position was also reviewed following correspondence with EL and FL. While the landowner will take advice from the PDCMG, he will make the final decision regarding entrances on his land. He will take some convincing regarding the new entrance as he is concerned about both conservation and the suitability of the location given its visibility and accessibility from the tramroad. He is certainly not happy about the location of the Nunnery entrance and is concerned about the attitude of some members of the caving community. In essence the landowner needs support from the caving community, and previously good relations have been strained.

4. Recap on entrance(s) policy

The existing entrance policy was reviewed and it was commented that this does actually allow for some flexibility.

5. Discussion of Entrance Policy

After much discussion and based on the results of the straw poll the existing policy was revised as follows:

2nd paragraph of policy to be replaced with:

“Any digging activity, whether inside the cave or on the surface near to the known cave, which is likely to result in the opening of an additional entrance should be brought to the attention of the Group along with a strong case demonstrating how it is in accordance with the current conservation policy. Requests for confidentiality will be respected.”

Proposed BL, seconded FL.

Votes for: 10 [WCC, OUCC, CSS, BEC, UBSS, MCC, CCC, SWCC, DD, FAL]

Votes against: 1 [Gagendor]

Abstentions: 1 [GOG]

Additional paragraph to be inserted:

“The Group reserves the right to prevent or control access to entrances or connections that it deems to be against the interests of the cave. “

Proposed OC, seconded CD

Votes for: 6 [OUCC, BEC, UBSS, MCC, CCC, FAL]

Votes against: 2 [CSS, GOG]

Abstentions: 4 [WCC, Gagendor, SWCC, DD]

6. Ogof Drws Cefn

Most Clubs Reps felt that they did not have a sufficient mandate from their respective clubs to vote on the future of Ogof Drws Cefn at this meeting. Consequently it was agreed to meet the diggers request for discussions and to arrange for a further meeting in 4 to 6 weeks time.

FL/ML to arrange meeting

The following motion was proposed by CD and seconded by OC:

“Fleur Loveridge and Ben Lovett to consult with the diggers regarding immediate and long term control of access in accordance with the agreed policy”

Votes for: 10 [WCC, OUCC, GOG, BEC, UBSS, MCC, CCC, SWCC, DD, FAL]

Votes against: 0

Abstentions: 1 [CSS]

The landowner’s views are to be fully accounted for in the discussions with the diggers.

It was agreed that a survey of the new finds would be beneficial to future discussions.

JS to survey new find and tie in to the cave

Meetings closed at 5:30pm