

Pwll Du Cave Management Group

Minutes of the meeting held at Salisbury Community Hall, Govilon on Sunday 30 Jun 2019 commencing at 10:00am.

Present

Les Williams (LW)	Chair
Sue Mabbett (SM)	Secretary / SWCC Rep
Chris Seal (CS)	Chelsea Speleo Soc.
Sam Richards (SR)	BEC
Frank Tully (FT)	Wessex CC
Daren Postians (DP)	Gwent Caving Club
Kieran Ashman (KA)	Cwmbran Caving Club
Barry Hill (BH)	Hereford CC
Jamie Lakre (JL)	Gwent Caving Club
Dan Thorne (DT)	Permit Secretary / Gagendor
Clive Owen (CO)	UBSS
Rich Smith (RS)	BEC
Chris Densham (CD)	Trustee / OUCC Rep
Thomas Leung (TL)	OUCC / SWCC
Steve King (SK)	SMCC
Ali Garman (AG)	Draenen Diggers
John Stevens (JS)	Survey Recorder
Stuart France (SF)	Cambrian CC (CCC Conservation Officer)
Mary Rogers (MR)	GOG
Paul Shea (PS)	GOG/ CSS

Apologies

Josh White (JW) Conservation officer / Aberystwyth; Rick Hill, Gagendor; Martin Hoff, SWCC; Dave Glover, MCC; Chris Howes, MCC; Spencer Drew; Treasurer, Christina Byrne, Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and Peter Smith (PS), Biological Recorder.

1. Opening Remarks

LW suggested we got the meeting started as it was a little after 10. He welcomed everyone present.

2. Minutes from Previous Meeting (25 Nov 2018)

2a. Approval of Minutes from last meeting

LW questioned if anyone had any corrections for the minutes.

JS on behalf of PS commented that in the minutes of Nov 2018, under the secretary's report there is a minute:- 'At our last meeting, I reported the Cadw had received the Bat Survey report which confirm no bats were using this entrance when referring to Twll Du.'

PS had noted there was no minute of the June meeting, stating no bats were observed at the Twll Du entrance. SM believed she had reported this fact even though no minute present her secretary's report had recorded bats had been observed at the other entrance Drws Cefn. SM asked those present and also present at that June 2018 if they could remember what was reported. JS believed SM reported she could not give details. SM believed the details of the Bat Report she could not report on were the contract details locations, times and observations. SM did state in her secretary's report of June 2018 that bats were in Drws Cefn.

As the meeting of June 2018 was over a year ago those present could not confirm which account was correct, therefore there is conflict in accounts on what was reported in the June meeting in terms of bats present at the entrances. This is noted in these minutes, but the minute of the Nov 2018 is correct that is what Sue reported. The minutes were proposed to be accepted by DT and seconded by SK,

there were 8 in favour, 2 against and 3 abstentions (due to not being present at meeting), LW signed the minutes as a true record, accepting typographical corrections would be completed, no change to content.

2b. Matters Arising from the Minutes not covered elsewhere in the Agenda

It was noted the EGM planned to discuss entrance(s) was not in the agenda, it was agreed this would become items 5.2 on the agenda.

3 Officers Reports

3a. Secretary

Copied in Attachment 1 is the secretary's report as circulated prior to the meeting.

In first paragraph of the report covered action to write to Cambrian Caving Council. SM had sent letter to Cambrian and this letter had been copied to PDCMG. The initial response did not cover the points raised in the letter with reference to the CCC constitution, SM had received an updated reply. This last reply was circulated to those present. It was noted in SM report a typo of 2018 not 2019. A copy of this letter is in attachment 2. SM felt this letter was a positive reply to move forward together, LW said it was where he wanted to be also. SM confirmed she had replied thanking CCC for this positive response.

Website will be discussed as item 5.1 in the agenda.

On the Access Agreement which had not progressed as no new trustee identified at last meeting, advice had been sought from Ursula Collie, it was agreed to discuss access agreement as item 5.3 in the agenda.

SM reported had held a meeting with land owner representative, Peter Jones, he confirmed he wished for the names to remain in the cave log records he received. At last meeting request to check previous minutes to identify what permissions were sought for bat surveys. She found a request from Prof Tim Guildford in about 2007/8 the permission was given by this group, no permission sought from the landowner. SM also found earlier requests for surveys; there was no permission sought from landowner for any biological or geological survey. PJ agreed he did not need to give permission for surveys. SM did not have this in writing however the access agreement shows the group, PDCMG give permission for surveys. At this meeting SM also asked on behalf of request from Rick Hill and CICs in Wales if Cave Leader / Instructor training or assessments could take place in Ogof Draenen. PJ verbally agreed in outline but wanted further detail before Pwlldu Conservation Limited give final permission.

It was reported to the meeting Brian Lewis had passed away in early June; he was one of the directors of Pwlldu Conservation Ltd who own the Pwlldu land. Brian had a long relationship with cavers and Ogof Draenen. He was the landlord of Lamb & Fox which had welcomed many a caver exploring and caving in Ogof Draenen since Ogof Draenen's discovery. He died in early June, SM did not know the date. It was agreed SM to send condolence card on behalf of PDCMG, other members wished to send a personal card AG has the address for Carol his widow. AG reported there is a celebration of Brian's life in mid-July it was not an open invite to this event.

A question was raised on how this affected PCL and the agreement PDCMG have with PCL. LW stated it was too early, at this stage to know what impact this may have, but obviously the personnel who make up PCL will change following Brian's passing.

Actions

SM to send a condolence card to Carol, Brian Lewis's widow on behalf of PDCMG.

SM to forward letter from RH to PCL re- access to Ogof Draenen for Cave Leader / CIC training and assessment.

3b Treasurer

SM circulated copies of the accounts that she had received from Spencer.

Spencer is giving up role of treasurer due to family commitments he is giving a number of his volunteering roles. SM summarised meeting hall hire is the hire of this place. Log book paper was purchased by Dan, wall ties and other conservation materials was spent by Josh. SM thanked UBSS for their annual donation.

LW asked if these accounts were independently audited / checked. There is no requirement for audit of accounts within the constitution. AS no independent check of the accounts is required, it was agreed that these accounts were formally accepted by the meeting. Proposed by AG, seconded by CO, all those eligible to vote accepted accounts (13 for).

The meeting would also formally wished to thanks Spencer for all his hard work as treasurer over the last 15 years plus.

3c Permit Secretary

A summary of records for trips up to June were circulated prior to meeting, see attachment 3. DT commented this was only for trips recorded and it was unknown about usage at other entrances and potentially trips where log book not used. At last meeting it was agreed for DT to complete summary over multiple years. SM had forwarded data she held and DT had sent summary to SM. SM apologised and assumed this summary sent by e-mail was for the landowner. SM had missed that in this e-mail from DT there was a summary of record since 1998. These records are now attached in Attachment 3. DT readout some highlights from the report, for the first full year from data SM provided the data in number of people.

Year	No. of people
1998	824
1999	208 some missing data.
2000	405
2001	174 (Foot and Mouth Disease stopped entry)
2002	485
2003	290 some missing data
2004	460
2005	281
2006	384
2007	328
2008	315
2009	352
2010	355
2011	236
2012	266
2013	237
2014	304
2015	199
2016	198
2017	203
2018	149

The data from last six months had some odd entries including Nig Rogers (who has passed away). For the missing data SM would check her records for any further data she may have.

SF reported he had summary data from caver counters, he had placed in the cave.

In summary the caver counters had identified

2 parties going through Drws Cefn from Feb – Nov 2018

SF reported some detail on the trips identified by the cave counters, in summary 30 days with activity through the Nunnery Entrance Feb 18 to May 19, some of these were identified as one way so the party

had used another entrance to enter or leave. SM read out the conditions of entry are to record details in the log book.

DT and SF agreed they would meet to compare data. SF had cave counters in various locations apart from entrances and the pattern of trips can be as useful as numbers. SF would keep the cave counters in the cave monitoring a random sample for a few years to build up the data. SM reported the landowner is aware the entrances are open. It is appropriate to record information identified by the cave counters. From conservation point of view it is useful information to identify where trips go and the footfall in various areas.

SF reported his counters had identified one overnight trip. SF believe camping in the cave can be a conservation issue. It was pointed out that overnight camping is permitted and no permission is required for an overnight camping and it had often been used in the early years to further exploration. It was noted camping or any other long trip could cause food spills and food spills is an issue in all caves. Others considered PDCMG should ban camping or require permission to be given, after some discussion it was agreed this imposed on volunteers un-necessarily and would not be followed who ignored the rules anyway (in event identified there was no corresponding record in the log). SM read out condition in cave access agreement that stated no smoking, carbide and to eat food over a bag. SM suggested we could strengthen these words as food spills was a conservation issue independent of the trip length or time. It was agreed that in future we could consider recommended location for camping and guidance for completing camping trip. The wording in access conditions to be strengthen for food transport and eating.

3d Conservation Officer

This meeting had apologies from Josh. JW's report was read out and is copied below.

[Conservation Report - June 2019](#)

Since the last meeting I have nothing to report, no one has raised any issues with me, and I sadly have not had the time to organise any more conservation trips. I am hoping to try to organise another trip in early autumn.

The only point I would like to raise is litter within the system. On my last trip I was surprised to pick up as much as I did, and it must have been dropped within the last year. I am sure we all agree that we shouldn't find any.

I am happy to continue as the Conservation Officer, but sadly I cannot make the meeting as I am on holiday this time.

Joshua White

On strengthen access condition for general conservation include taking litter out with you, although this shouldn't need to be said. Others at meeting commented they had not observed any litter on recent trips.

3e Survey Secretary

The short report is copied below:

[Survey Recorders Report - June 2019](#)

Data sent to me for this area has been minimal, and as there has not been any major extensions, there has been no-one to chase for data.

I am still willing to continue in this post.

John Stevens

JS had nothing to add to the report. PDCMG rely on Grade 2 data. Currently there is no back up with another holder. CD asked if there were any plans for grade5 data, JS had no comment on this data. JS

could not confirm how much data as some was received as some was received as confidential. LW asked about security of grade 5 data, JS did confirm there is a back-up of Grade 5 data securely held.

3f Biological Recorder

PS was unable to make the meeting due to previous commitment. His report was previously circulated and is appended a separate pdf file in attachment 4. This report included a bat grille for Drws Cefn, how to progress on this will depend on outcome of the EGM on entrances so this information can be held until the outcome of this event. JS commented that further tweaks to design would be required. If we wanted to lock it would require padlock, if we needed to install and lock it. SF commented the Drws Cefn is heavily used by bats. Some key highlights are Bats have taken over Drws Cefn, some getting through to Elliptic and Wessex Series. Numbers of bats in the cave were going up. SM had checked recording of Nov meeting and the bat report from the Nunnery had not been presented at that meeting (as per PS report) as we were mainly discussing Twll Du at that meeting.

JS on behalf of PS read out a statement from PS:-

Biological recording proposal, this group delegates authorisation and co-ordination of biological surveys to the Biological Recording Officer. This will avoid duplication of surveys too close together in time and location. It will facilitate suitable distribution of survey effort across the cave system. Also to prevent duplication of surveys.

Any approach to members of the group for permission for biological surveys must be forwarded to the Biological Recording Officer for approval.

LW asked who currently manages this? SM commented requests for biological surveys previously managed at the PDCMG meetings, this was discussed at last meeting that the officers as part of their role would give permission for activities between meetings as part of the role on the committee. If the request for a biological survey occurred close to the next general meeting then there is no reason why it should not be brought to the PDCMG meeting to consider, however between meetings, it is his job role to give permission. JS had been asked to formerly to propose this. At this meeting we agreed he has right to give permission for any biological surveys. PS reports to this meeting and would have to explain actions taken. CD commented there is the issue that PS reported Cadw to the police and threatened their contractors, CD stated he had acted as an individual at that time. CD wanted this to be recorded at this meeting. It was recognised that he was not acting on PDCMG when he took these actions. SF summarised events at point Twll Du was sealed; LW commented this was previously discussed and does not need to be discussed further.

It was confirmed that all officers are devolved to fulfil their role between meetings, (e.g. DT issues keys to caving clubs, JW organises conservation days) and any questions arising from their actions would be discussed at the next meeting. It is up to the group by voting for the committee, to determine if someone is appropriate for their role. As final point AG noted the landowner has the right to give permission for surveys or any other activity in the cave, this group can only manage where they are asked for permission.

3g Geological Recorder

Still no-one in post therefore no report

3h Fixed Aids Officer

AG apologised that for him all PDCMG business had been on hold since Jan 2019 due to family matters taking priority. CD had kindly performed the latest check of the fixed aids on his trip into Ogof Draenen yesterday, AG wish to thank CD for doing this, he had not had chance to place outcome of this survey in a written report, AG said he would send the report for circulation with the minutes, this is included in

attachment 5 with report of last inspection only. *(If anyone wishes to see full report contact SM for copy full excel file.)*

AG reported from CD's survey 2 MRs on Indiana Highway need replacing the rope is also due for renewal so both will done at the same time. The rope on Balcony Pitch needs to be longer, current a little short, so this also needs sorting. There was suggestion stainless steel MRs are better, as the Eco hangers are stainless steel. Different metals can lead to quicker corrosion. AG believed 2 MRs had rusted due to interaction ladder fixing.

SF offered stainless steel cable length he had after discussion it was decided this length would be too short so they would remain with rope.

4. Election of Officers

LW wanted to check that we do not vote if there is only one nominee following recent meeting he attended we election of officers thrown into confusion with voting when only a single nominee. It was agreed no voting if only one nominee, as occurred at previous meetings. The table below shows who was proposed and seconded for each post there was only one person nominated for each post therefore no election took place.

Role	Person proposed to fulfil role	Proposer	Seconded
Secretary	Sue Mabbett	Chris Densham	Steve King
Treasurer	Clive Owen	Sue Mabbett	Sam Richards
Permit Secretary	Dan Thorne	Barry Hill	Clive Owen
Conservation Officer	Josh White	Sue Mabbett	Chris Densham
Survey Secretary	John Stevens	Chris Seal	Dan Thorne
Biological Recorder	Peter Smith	Chris Seal	Dan Thorne
Geological Recorder	No-one nominated	Meeting agreed if person found to fulfil role this person could be co-opted	
Fixed Aids Officer	Ali Garman	Dan Thorne	Chris Seal

On completion of nominations and selection of the committee, the meeting determined signatories for the PDCMG bank account. As agreed meeting in June 2018, the people in the following roles should be the signatories on the PDCMG bank account: Treasurer, Secretary and Conservation Officer

It was formally record at this meeting the signatories for the Pwll Du Cave Management Group (PDCMG) bank account are Treasurer; Secretary, and Conservation Officer. The people fulfilling these roles following election of the officers are Clive Owen (who has taken over from the retiring treasurer Spencer Drew), Sue Mabbett and Josh White respectively.

A further proposal was made to the meeting that the current requirement for two signatories on the cheque should be reduced to a single signatory. This was considered to aid the job of the treasurer as the people fulfilling the signatory role live some distance apart, and those present believed a review of the accounts at each meeting was sufficient protection of PDCMG funds.

The proposal for all the signatories detailed above and reduction to a single signatory on the account was proposed by Ali Garman, seconded by Chris Seal. There were 11 for this proposal, 2 abstentions and 0 against the proposal.

It was agreed if CO wished he could move the account to internet banking. It was also suggested to close savings account, but due to difficulties in opening accounts agreed to leave accounts as current.

AG took on the role as Fixed Aids Officer on acceptance others would assist with the inspections within the cave.

5. Other Group Business

5a. PDCMG Website

AG summarised, Tim (Long) had obtained domain name for PDCMG from previous webmaster, TL now holds PDCMG domain name on behalf of PDCMG. At last meeting AG had reported his son, Rhys, had created updated website content, however due to family events this had not progressed as planned for uploading onto the website. The new site was available but not on the PDCMG site. Since then the previous webmaster had taken down the content. There had been e-mail discussion between Tim Long, AG, SM, SR, and others in last few days on options for website. AG final summary we were currently in a similar situation as we were at the last meeting.

The potential options to resolve the current situation were discussed, the hosting options was current issue as previous webmaster was hosting the site. So another hosting location is required. It was confirmed the domain name has been transferred from Martin Lavery to Tim Long. There was some discussion on domain name holding, hosting site, servers and a need for a PDCMG webmaster. The conclusion of the discussion was for PDCMG to formally appoint a web master.

Rich Smith was proposed for this role by AG seconded by SR, all accepted this nomination.

It was agreed RS should work with TL and identify suitable host (BCA was recommended but it is up to webmaster) and it was agreed he could spend up to £50 to set up update web site, all costs associated with the website should be from PDCMG funds. It was agreed TL manage registration of domain name and would not be removed from him.

Action RS to set up new website using his own judgement for hosting. Once website sorted to progress with linking e-mail for the group.

5b EGM

CS had an action to set up EGM, he had sent initial e-mails to AG, to work on a proposal for an EGM. However due to family events with both AG and CS setting up an EGM had not progressed.

JS handed to CS a proposal that PS written. CS thanked PS for taking his time to write a proposal. This proposal from PS for Single / Multiple Entrances Ogof Draenen

The Group is of the opinion are conservation interests at Ogof Draenen are suitable served by taking tapping areas of high conservation value within the cave and encouraging responsible use. The group recognises that are several entrances open into the system of which only one is gated and locked. The group believes the physical difficulty of any entrance such as casual members of the public are effectively excluded rather any restriction on the number of alternatively entrances is the chief factor in maintaining high conservation standards. Thus the group wishes to use al entrances and seek approval from the landowner for access.

This proposal is for information, this is matter for the EGM. CS is asking for differing opinions so we can seek a compromise. JS questioned how many more would turn up to an EGM. SM commented lots as all turn out for important issues.

It was agreed CS will continue with action to generate a proposal for the EGM. CS should aim to send out proposal in September to allow sufficient time for each Caving Club committee to consider their response to the proposal. It was proposed the EGM should be before next general meeting or the other option is the EGM replaces the next general meeting and after the main business of the EGM the meeting reports by officers are kept short along with any other business.

There was discussion on what an EGM should hope to achieve. It was agreed that any proposal needs to have clear majority for acceptance, any vote with for and against being very close (as Brexit) creates situation we have now with no progress on maintaining the single entrance as voted for last time. Therefore any proposal must be confident of receiving a majority. I was also agreed that the vote should not consider specific entrance or based on current entrances, the proposal should provide a policy with a clear definition of how we consider each entrance. It's location on the surface, location within the cave, as examples. AG believed there should not be an open end number of entrances, previous reports suggest there are up to 7 entrances currently. So any policy on additional entrance(s) should consider distances between other entrances. Current PDCMG only have authority to manage entrances on PCL land, however AG believed we should manage the whole cave and we should aim to set up agreements with other landowners as required.

In summary we need an EGM and a firm proposal. The EGM cannot be discussion on current individual entrances, it need to agree a policy on how to consider each entrances. DT commented we need to face reality there are multiple entrances. CS wants to avoid a close vote as this will just leave us in the current situation. CD was asking if we are assuming that we have to accept multiple entrances. DT commented that we have to accept reality to enable us to move forward to conserve the cave and gain acceptance with most cavers who wish to go into the cave. LW stated if we have strong consensus then we would keep the caving community on side, so we need a very clear mandate.

JS asked if we need to speak to landowner on our proposal to consider multiple entrances, SM stated that discussions already held with landowner and he is willing consider multiple entrances.

Discussion on timing took place after consideration on holiday periods and BCA events. In outline aiming to send out proposal in September, aim for October / November for EGM, to meet constitutional requirements (one month) preferably longer so caving committees consider proposal. Provisionally suggested 24 Nov for EGM.

Action

CS to write a proposal, and send out in September.

5.3 Access Agreement

At the last meeting no new trustee had been found with no nominations. Since last meeting SM had sought advice from Ursula Collie. SM circulated a summary of advice from UC. As copied below

Ursula made very clear she needs to remain neutral to quote an extract: -**very strict about not "doing politics". I can't be involved in anything that would threaten that hard-won neutrality.** Below are notes for each option.

Company Limited by Guarantee

Setting up the agreement so that it doesn't need Trustees is a bigger exercise. It may help if I take a step back and explain why Trustees sign agreements in the first place. Please forgive me if I am teaching my grandmother to suck eggs, but I have found there is a lot of confusion about these issues!

As you probably know, a members' club such as, for example, an angling club is legally an unincorporated association. This means it isn't a legal person – it can't enter into binding contracts or own land. Historically how this has been dealt with is that individual Trustees are appointed by the committee of the Association under its constitution, and they agree to hold the asset or enter into the contract on behalf of the membership. So if our hypothetical angling club needed to sign a licence of fishing rights, it might appoint Trustees to do this.

Now suppose that our hypothetical club finds that its members are getting into disputes with a group of canoeists who also use the same stretch of riverbank. Matters get stressful and the landowner has to get involved. Hotheads on both sides say things that later they will regret. The position of being a Trustee – legally responsible – for the Wet River Angling Club becomes an uncomfortable one.

What the angling club may do is set up a company limited by guarantee. A limited company *is* a legal person and can own assets, in this case the fishing rights licence. Normal commercial limited companies are “limited by shares” – that’s to say, the shareholders own the company. You can also have a company “limited by guarantee” – where the members of a group all pay in some notional sum such as £1 and together they own the company. You can’t have a limited company which isn’t owned in some way like this.

In the case of the Draenen licence, I think the difficulty with setting up a company limited by guarantee would be identifying an underlying homogenous group who would be the company’s members and – without wishing to stray into politics - who would have legitimacy in the eyes of the wider caving world. So there is perhaps a discussion to be had, before you approach the land owners. I’ll see if I can dig out some standard notes about companies limited by guarantee, which I sent Les.

Agreement with Trustees

If it was just Charles retiring, we could just do a supplementary Deed recording this. I can’t remember off the top of my head how many Trustees signed the agreement, but if there were 4 originally, I don’t see why the landlord wouldn’t be happy with 3.

The world is getting more litigious and I’m finding that more and more often individuals are less willing to put their neck on the line by being Trustees. When I advise potential Trustees, they always ask me what would happen if the organisation was sued. And I say, your name would be on the claim form, but in a representative capacity. So if the Court made a decision which had a financial consequence, you would pass this back to the organisation. And they say, so what happens if the organisation doesn’t exist anymore, or doesn’t have any money? And I say, hmm, tricky one, I couldn’t promise you that you would never be personally liable although it is hopefully unlikely. You yourself will have to decide if that is a risk you are willing to take.

We started with three trustees, Chris Densham, Tim Long and Charles Bailey. So we are down to two so we really need to find another one. I know we take public liability insurance out for our landowner, the trustees and the group. Does not protect them in event of a claim?

Or is there an instance where the organisation is being sued and the insurance does not cover this scenario, the only reason I am asking is when we look for a trustee, is the fact we have public liability insurance protect them from all comers?

Yes, the fact that there is public liability insurance in place might be a strong factor in a Trustee feeling that they were happy to take on the role. As you say, they would need to check the terms of the insurance and make sure that the insurance covered all the liabilities which the Trustee might be subject to. When I am negotiating a licence for Trustees I try to put in a clause restricting the liability to the extent of the insurance cover (this doesn’t always wash with the landowner / licensor!).

Current status and discussion on the matter:

There was some discussion on the options, question raised of staying with just 2 trustees this was not an option. So we need to find another trustee or take up option to replace trustees with Company Ltd by guarantee.

On completion of discussion all present agreed to proceed with Company Ltd by guarantee. It was unanimously agreed by the meeting the directors should be current trustees Chris Densham and Tim Long with Chris Seal (who was willing to be a director of a Company Ltd by guarantee but not a trustee.)

SK pointed out it is important we progress this matter as Charles Bailey has reported his resignation as a 'trustee' a year ago, but he still remained the signatory on the access agreement, and we have not progressed with removing his name from the licence. So Charles is still has responsibilities due to his signature on the current licence agreement. We should out of duty to Charles progress the activities to update the access agreement as possible.

Actions

SM contact Charles Bailey to inform him of current status

SM contact Ursula to enquire how to progress company ltd by guarantee.

SM inform landowner outline of where we hoped to move to for an access agreement.

6. Applications for Membership

Gwent Caving Club had requested to become members of PDCMG. A letter of application had been sent to SM by e-mail, this is copied below and read out at meeting by SM. SM had informed DT of this application prior to the meeting, DT had checked records and found Gwent CC had completed a 2 trips in last few months and another 2 trips at Cave fest.

Hello Sue

I am writing in my capacity of Secretary of Gwent Caving Club to request that the club is admitted to membership of PDCMG.

The club was formed in November 2015 and is based in Blaina, Gwent. We are passionate about all things underground from the natural beauty of the caves to the man-made mines of more recent centuries. To date we our membership stands at 70 cavers, ranking in experience from novice to very experienced (some with an extensive knowledge of Draenen) and age ranges between 11 and 72. Some of our members are also members of other clubs (Cardiff University, CDG, Chelsea, Cwmbran, Mendip, Wealden, Wessex, Welsh Mines Society and Yorkshire).

We are an active caving club, caving every weekend with diarised trips every two weeks and other more informal trips in between. Our trips are, of course, focused in South Wales, but have regular trips further afield (Mendip, North & West Wales and Derbyshire). We are an inclusive club and have reached out to cavers across the UK through our 'Cavefest' events which have been held on Mendip and South Wales. Our 5th Cavefest is to be held this year in Crickhowell over the August bank holiday - at which we hope to welcome cavers from as far afield as Spain!

We are not yet affiliated with SMWCRT (application pending) but our club participates in practice events and our CRO, Jonathan Jones, has been seconded to the SMWCRT committee.

As an established caving club in the area we would be eager to participate in the group and contribute to the conservation of the cave.

If accepted into membership we will be represented by our chairman, Darren Postians, or a member of the club committee should the chairman not be able to attend.

I hope this gives you enough information to consider our application. We would be happy to provide more.

I look forward to your response.

Best regards John Sheehy
Secretary, Gwent Caving Club.

The members of GCC present agreed they would accept to abide by the constitution and access conditions. The group voted on accepting GCC as member of PDCMG, there were 12 for and 1

abstention. LW welcomed GCC to PDCMG. DT and GCC reps will discuss sending GCC a key on payment of £20, as for all other Clubs.

7. Applications to become key holders

There were no applications to be a key holder only.

8. Any other Business

No further business identified, the date of next meeting may not be required as next general meeting may be a short addition to the EGM. This will depend on date of EGM nominally 24 Nov 2019 or 01 Dec 2019.

Meeting closed at 1.30pm.

DRAFT

PDCMG Secretary's Report Jun 2019

Correspondence with Cambrian Caving Council

At the meeting in June 2018 I took an action to write to CCC, at the Nov 2018 meeting I circulated a draft to a few for initial comment, this draft then went out again in Jan 2019. A few comments were received for typos and clarifications. Final version was sent to CCC and copied to all PDCMG members. I received a response from Allan Richardson, Secretary of CCC outlining the rights of access on the land under which Ogof Draenen lies, based on their legal opinion. The land varies from private, to Open Access to Urban Common Land. This letter did end with a request that we join together to work constructively. This last sentence was read out at the CCC AGM I attended (not as PDCMG rep). I replied that this letter failed to respond to the points raised in the letter in relation to the CCC constitution and a request the CCC abide by their constitution. I have now received an updated response from Allan Richardson, responding directly to the points raised in my letter. This letter will be presented to the meeting on Sunday.

PDCMG / Ogof Draenen Website

Things have gone downhill since our last meeting, not only has the new content not been up loaded but the current content has been removed. I was made aware of this by Stuart France, I then contacted Tim Long, to find out if he was aware of current status and to enquire on progress on uploading the new content developed by Rhys Garman. He replied stating he needed to know either: a) The name server addresses where the DNS records will be managed (typically provided by the web hosting company); or b) The IP address or DNS name of the web server, if you want me to host the DNS records. So no further progress made currently. However another volunteer has stepped forward and hopefully, we may be on the way to updating the website. Discussion of the website is an item on our agenda and as a group we can agree the best way forward.

New Trustee and Ogof Draenen Access Agreement

As suggested at our last meeting I have contacted Ursula Collie, for advice on access agreements, Ursula provided advice on two options, first to simply add a new trustee, the second option to set up as PDCMG group a company limited by guarantee. Ursula kindly provided clear Pros and Cons to the two options. I will present these to the meeting so as a group we can determine which option is best for us.

Meeting with Pwlldu Conservation Ltd (PCL) Representative

I held a positive and pleasant meeting with the landowner, I met face to face so I could discuss directly the actions raised at the last meetings. In summary

1. the landowner wishes for the names to remain on the log details sent to them,
2. Bat surveys, other biological surveys, geological surveys are within the scope of the access agreement so no additional requirements for permission is required.
3. PCL are not against Ogof Draenen being used for Cave instructor training or assessments, so I have now tasked Rick Hill to outline the limits they would apply for use of Draenen for Cave Instructor Awards.

Other Matters

At the last meeting we discussed the Caving Clubs / Groups that make up PDCMG. I have not heard from Westminster Speleo Group who I contact before last meeting. I am still trying to contact Cardiff University Caving Club, so if any clues as to a current contact is welcome. I have received a request from Gwent Caving Club to join PDCMG, their request will be presented to the meeting.

Sue Mabbett
25 June 2019

87 Hacking Drive
Longridge
Preston PR3 3EP
24th June 2019

Sue Mabbett
Secretary
Pwll Du Cave Management Group

Dear Sue and fellow Management Committee Members,

Thank you for your letter of 7th March 2019 to which I am responding.

Cambrian Caving Council (CCC) are well aware of how Ogof Draenen and long-standing differences of approach have been viewed nationally. This has been much to the detriment of caving in Wales and to Ogof Draenen in particular.

Raking over old arguments will get neither of our organisations very far. So in the spirit of better mutual relations, and more importantly to support caving in Wales generally, we would like to draw a line under events of the past and to start again afresh. This may not be as easy as one might imagine, but I hope you would agree that an optimistic outlook brings more chance of success than assuming that difficulties lie ahead.

Firstly, we are bound by all those objectives in section 3 of our Constitution such safeguarding the interests of cavers, caving and mining clubs, and improving access arrangements. Secondly, our guiding principles state that there shall be respect for the autonomy and independence of action of individual members and member clubs provided that these are not against the aims and objectives of the Council in section 3. Our principles are dependent on harmony with our objectives.

It would be a major step forward for both of our organisations if we were able to move forward now by supporting the independence of action and autonomy of individual members and member clubs in a spirit which improves cave access so as to show respect to the wider interests of most cavers, clubs and associations.

Regarding section 4.2, I believe that the access argument has now moved on, as improving countryside access has clearly become Welsh Government policy. The practical details will be for an expert working group to develop. The Deputy Minister has written to say that CCC will be invited to contribute to their work.

Yours sincerely

R. Allan Richardson
Secretary
Cambrian Caving Council

Attachment 3

Draenen data for the last year is present below

2018	Jan-18	Feb-18	Mar-18	Apr-18	May-18	Jun-18	Jul-18	Aug-18	Sep-18	Oct-18	Nov-18	Dec-18		
					logbook stolen									
Parties	8	6	4	3					2	3	9	7	42	Total Parties
Persons	36	27	20	8					5	6	29	18	149	Total Persons

2019	Jan-19	Feb-19	Mar-19	Apr-19	May-19	Jun-19	Jul-19	Aug-19	Sep-19	Oct-19	Nov-19	Dec-19		
Parties	4	2	6	7	3								22	Total Parties
Persons	15	6	22	27	12								82	Total Persons

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The summary since 1998 is present below

Year	Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Totals
1997	Parties										19	35	17	71
1997	Persons										74	134	62	270
1998	Parties	24	25	31	20	19	16	8	1	15	16	20	34	229
1998	Persons	70	90	103	77	69	56	45	20	54	59	61	120	824
1999	Parties	22	19	4	Missing Data							4	13	62
1999	Persons	61	71	17								8	51	208
2000	Parties	5	13	9	18	1	9	7	6	8	24	8	7	115
2000	Persons	16	53	26	68	3	33	18	16	29	89	30	24	405
2001	Parties	18	11	Foot & Mouth			4	8	1			1	12	55
2001	Persons	60	35				12	22	3			3	39	174
2002	Parties	14	10	13	8	13	18	15	6	9	10	17	14	147
2002	Persons	47	27	45	30	50	52	45	14	24	28	69	54	485
2003	Parties	8	12	19	10	14	3	6	7	1	7	6	9	102
2003	Persons	24	58	62	37	48	9	18	19	2	20	20	32	349
2004	Parties	14	14	14	7	21	10	5	1	12	17	12	11	138
2004	Persons	41	47	48	26	75	24	17	5	37	61	44	35	460
2005	Parties	7	11	8	8	8	9	2	2	4	4	13	8	84
2005	Persons	13	44	34	25	24	29	12	4	15	15	39	27	281
2006	Parties	14	9	9	14	8	8	3	1	6	10	15	8	105
2006	Persons	53	31	36	47	28	28	14	2	23	34	62	26	384
2007	Parties	11	7	13	7	5	3	4	5	7	10	9	7	88
2007	Persons	44	25	43	34	21	12	21	16	23	40	27	22	328
2008	Parties	10	7	10	10	7	1	4	5	5	9	9	4	81
2008	Persons	36	26	40	42	29	3	13	18	23	34	35	16	315
2009	Parties	10	4	17	4	8	4	8	14	6	11	16	15	117
2009	Persons	26	16	58	13	22	9	22	38	17	29	48	54	352
2010	Parties	5	10	15	4	14	6	12	4	7	9	15	5	106
2010	Persons	16	23	50	9	36	22	41	13	26	38	58	23	355
2011	Parties	8	7	4	9	5	4	5	3	2	4	8	6	65
2011	Persons	31	29	12	37	21	13	15	9	6	15	30	18	236
2012	Parties	13	6	6	10	6	7	5	1	2	7	6	5	74
2012	Persons	42	22	14	36	22	25	20	1	12	29	23	20	266
2013	Parties	1	9	7	4	5	14	2	4	4	4	11	5	70
2013	Persons	3	23	29	13	18	41	4	13	14	15	46	18	237
2014	Parties	7	3	6	5	7	7	5	3	5	5	13	10	76
2014	Persons	25	12	22	25	26	24	16	13	19	23	63	36	304
2015	Parties	10	1	6	10	6	2	5	4	3	4	4	6	61
2015	Persons	21	5	22	37	19	7	14	16	10	12	14	22	199
2016	Parties	6	8	6	2	4	3	3	5	6	8	2	1	54
2016	Persons	19	29	30	9	11	8	11	15	24	29	10	3	198
2017	Parties	1	6	9	7	6	2	3	1	5	5	2	8	55
2017	Persons	7	24	39	21	26	11	9	2	13	16	7	28	203
2018	Parties	8	6	4	3					2	3	3		29
2018	Persons	36	27	20	8					5	6	8		110
2019	Parties													
2019	Persons													

Attachment 4

See Biological Recorders report circulated in early June by e-mail to committee, group members and interested party.

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Ogof Draenen Fixed Aids - 29/06/2019									
Pwll Du Cave Management Group									
No.	Location	Identification	Specification	PPE	Installed By	Installation Date	Inspection Due	Rigging Comments	Inspection Comments
									Inspection 29/06/19 - CD
1	Entrance Climb	1st backup Eco hanger furthest from pitch head	DMM Eco hanger	Yes	CCC	??	29/06/2020	Un-used	OK
2		Middle Eco hanger	DMM Eco hanger	Yes	CCC	??	29/06/2020	Rope tied directly into Eco hanger	Hanger rotates slight. Loaded perpendicularly so not a concern
3		Main hang Eco hanger	DMM Eco hanger	Yes	CCC	??	29/06/2020		Resin does not completely fill the hole flush to the surface
4		MR for 3rd Eco hanger	10mm Long Open MR	Yes	AG & JC	24/04/2010	29/06/2020		Consider replacement with Stainless Steel MR
5		Traverse and knotted hand line	11mm Edelrid Performance Static	Yes	AG	25/07/2015	29/06/2020		OK
6	Indiana Highway	1st Eco hanger from Indian Highway end	DMM Eco hanger	Yes	CCC	??	29/06/2020	Tied directly into Eco hanger	OK
7		2nd Eco hanger	DMM Eco hanger	Yes	CCC	??	29/06/2020		OK
8		MR for 2nd Eco hanger	10mm Long Open MR	Yes	AG & JC	24/04/2010	29/06/2020		OK - surface corrosion. Replacement Req'd
9		3rd Eco hanger	DMM Eco hanger	Yes	CCC	??	29/06/2020		OK
10		MR for 3rd Eco hanger	10mm Long Open MR	Yes	AG & JC	24/04/2010	29/06/2020		OK - surface corrosion. Replacement Req'd
11		4th Eco hanger	DMM Eco hanger	Yes	CCC	??	29/06/2020	Tied directly to Eco hanger	OK

Ogof Draenen Fixed Aids - 29/06/2019									
Pwll Du Cave Management Group									
No.	Location	Identification	Specification	PPE	Installed By	Installation Date	Inspection Due	Rigging Comments	Inspection Comments
									Inspection 29/06/19 - CD
12		Traverse line	11mm Edelrid Performance Static	Yes	AG	25/07/2015	29/06/2020		OK
13	Balcony Pitch	Left hand Eco hanger	DMM Eco hanger	Yes	CCC	??	29/06/2020		OK
14		MR for Left Eco hanger	12mm Long Open MR	Yes	AG & MS	22/05/2011	29/06/2020		OK
15		Right hand Eco hanger	DMM Eco hanger	Yes	CCC	??	29/06/2020		OK
16		MR for Right Eco hanger	10mm Delta MR	Yes	AG & MS	22/05/2011	29/06/2020		OK - slight surface corrosion
17		MR for Left of ladder	10mm Long Open MR	No	AG & MS	22/05/2011	29/06/2020		OK - very slight surface corrosion
18		MR for Right of ladder	10mm Long Open MR	No	AG & MS	22/05/2011	29/06/2020		OK
19		MR for lifeline	10mm Long Open MR	Yes	AG & MS	22/05/2011	29/06/2020	Linked into Delta MR	OK - some surface corrosion
20		Looped ladder lifeline	11mm Edelrid Performance Static	Yes	AG	25/07/2015	29/06/2020	Runs through 10mm MR	Rope re-rigged, but is barely long enough for double life lining
21		Stainless Steel Ladder	Daren style ladder	No	AG & MS	22/05/2011	29/06/2020	Lifeline is the PPE	OK

Rope replacement requires 60m of rope.