**PDCMG Secretary’s Report October 2017**

1. Boyd Potts

It is with great sadness that I must report that Boyd Pott’s passed away on the 17th September. Boyd was an honourable servant to the PDCMG as well as to British Caving more generally for many years and will be sorely missed. I am sure that all will join me in sending condolences to Jenny at this difficult time. Boyd’s funeral will be on the 10th October. If anyone would like further details then I can put them in touch with Jenny directly.

2. BCA Vote

With thanks to all those who contributed to our vote on the BCA constitutional changes. Out group vote for the proposals in the context of the overall result was as follows, with all proposals being passed pretty conclusively.

1. Proposal 1 – removing the first line of 4.6 from the constitution. Individual members voted 88% in favour, and group members voted 85% in favour. Out vote was abstain (we voted 3 for, 3 against and 1 abstention).
2. Proposal 2 – adjusting the 2 house voting system. 94% of individual members voted in favour, and 95% of group members. Out vote was for (we voted 5 for and 2 abstentions).
3. Proposal 3 – reducing the emphasis on postal balloting. Individual members voted 96% in favour and group members 93%. Our vote was for (we voted 5 for and 2 against)
4. Proposal 4 – again, changing the emphasis to internet voting. Individual members voted 95% in favour and group members 93%. Our vote was for (we voted 5 for and 2 against)

3. New Chair of Group

I have been following up a number of lines of enquiry with respect to a new chair. After a number of enquiries, Les Williams has confirmed that he would be willing to take on this role. Please note that Les has stressed that “the PDCMG need to understand I have a busy life and they need to consider my other commitments when planning meetings”. It is now for the group to determine whether (i) they are happy for Les to undertake the role in accordance with the constitution[[1]](#footnote-1) and (ii) that they can reasonably arrange meetings to avoid classes with Les’ other commitments (for example he is at the BCRA meeting this weekend).

4. Drws Cefn

As mentioned before the postponed meeting, feedback for the “light touch” closure of Drws Cefn was not well received by NRW. It was felt that we were receiving rather contradictory advice from the organisation who had not supported a hard solution on ground of potential changes to airflow, but yet had then also not supported a much more open approach, seemingly on the grounds of fear of vandalism. As a result it was suggested that placement of a surface grille, entirely in keeping with the bat workers manual and other best practice may be the best solution and may not require licencing. A proposal along these lines will be brought to the meeting for discussion and potential approval before any further work proceeds in this area.

5. Access for caver training

No further news on this subject.

6. The Last Sandwich.

It is with sadness that I report the unilateral enlargement of the Last Sandwich U-bend and exit squeeze. On the first weekend in July an OUCC-UBSS team heading for Dollimores were turned around by bang fumes shortly before the final narrow sections of the passage. Later trips confirmed that the U-bend and exit squeeze had been substantial enlarged using explosives. What had once been an awkward on your side corner was now an easy on your front crawl. Two issues arise from this matter. One is the lack of consideration by the culprits for the safety of potential cavers passing that way. The second is the unnecessary enlargement of a piece of passage that while without doubt had been an obstacle, had already been passed by many larger chested gentlemen.

7. Entrances

Rumours have been circulating of further entrances dug into the Ogof Draenen system. I can report no further facts at this time, although some have suggested that this matter and the enlargement of the last sandwich could be linked. Certainly it is possibly that making the last sandwich more accessible could have encourage this action, but all if of course speculation.

8. My Position.

After over 6 years of work for the PDCMG I have decided that at these coming committee elections I must stand down. When I started this role I was a bright eyed PhD student with much more time on my hands. Now I am a fully-fledged stressed academic, with many grant deadlines and a other researchers to support. I remain passionate about Ogof Draenen but no longer have the time to do justice to this role. Consequently, I will not be standing for re-election on the 15th October. Thanks to everyone who has helped me over the past three terms.

9. Llanfoist Fawr Community Council defibrillators application

I have been contacted by Llanfoist Fawr Community Council (through whom I arrange the meetings venues for the group). They are looking for support for applications for funding for installation of defibrillators within the community. Previous applications have failed on the grounds of lack of community support. They are asking for signature to a petition (attached). I have pledged out general support and said I would circulate the petition. Please return any signatures direct to Gareth Havard, Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer, Llanfoist Fawr Community Council (llanfoistfawrcommunitycouncil@gmail.com)

F. Loveridge

PDCMG Hon Sec 11th October 2017.

1. Class 4.1: The Group shall invite a suitable independent chairman. To encourage continuity and stability the chairman's position should be retained until the chairman resigns or there is some other compelling reason for a successor to be appointed. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)