

Pwll Du Cave Management Group

Minutes of the meeting held at Salisbury Community Hall, Govilon on Sunday 15th October 2017 commencing at 10:00am.

Present

Mick Day (MD)	Chairman
Rich Hill (RH)	Gagendor rep
Peter Smith (PS)	Biological recorder
John Stevens (JS)	Survey recorder
Christina Byrne (CB)	NRW
Martin Hoff (MH)	SWCC rep
Sue Mabbett (SM)	Permit secretary/access officer
Dave Glover (DG)	MCC Rep
Spencer Drew (SD)	Treasurer
Charles Bailey (CB)	Trustee
Ali Garman (AG)	Fixed Aids Officer / Draenen Diggers rep
Chris Seal (CS)	Chelsea Speleo. Soc. rep
Nig Rogers (NR)	GOG
Mary Rogers (MR)	GOG
Steve King (SK)	SMCC rep
Josh White (JW)	Conservation officer
Malcolm Stewart (MS)	CDG
Sam Richards (SR)	Aberystwyth CC rep
Ian Wallace (IW)	
Chris Gibbs (CG)	Cwmbran CC rep
Stuart France (SF)	CCC
Anthony Donovan (AD)	SWCC
Tom Williams (TW)	Brynmawr rep
Nick DeGare Pitt (ND)	Brynmawr
Chris Densham (CD)	OUCC rep and Trustee
Rich Smith (RS)	BEC Rep (also member of Cardiff Hill Divers)

Apologies

Fleur Loveridge, Andy Farrant, John Pybus

1 Minutes from Previous Meeting (20/11/16)

Accepted and signed by Mick Day. At this point RH volunteered to take minutes in Fleur's absence.

2 Matters Arising

None that wouldn't be covered later.

3 Officers Reports

a) Secretary

A report had previously been circulated by Fleur which was read by CD. During this SM went to buy condolence card for Jenny Potts, following passing of Boyd Potts. The card was circulated and signed by those present. The petition from Llanfoist community for a defibrillator was also circulated and signed.

A vote of thanks was proposed by CD and SM for Fleur's hard work.

A copy of the report issued by Fleur is attached to these minutes.

b) Treasurer

SD stated that since the last meeting a donation of £20 had come from UBSS but nothing else to add. He apologised but he had left his treasurer's report at home by mistake. SD would forward his report to the secretary to enable it to be attached to the minutes. At this point SF suggested that in the future written reports should be submitted before the meeting which was generally accepted as a good idea but not mandatory.

Post meeting note: A copy of the treasurer's report sent by SD to SM is attached to these minutes.

c) Permit Secretary

A trip log was circulated.

Trips Recorded in Ogof Draenen Nov 2016- Sep 2017

	Jan 17	Feb 17	Mar 17	April 17	May 17	June 17	July 17	Aug 17	Sept 17	Oct 17	Nov 16	Dec 16
Parties	1	6	9	7	6	2	3	1	5	0	2	1
Persons	7	24	39	21	26	11	9	2	13	0	10	3

Total 165

May to June may not be accurate due to the logbook being in the wrong place. A general discussion followed regarding accuracy of log compared with actual numbers. CD stated groups were seen in cave but not in logbook. Some signatures in Geyrions Lair log but not entrance one. SF commented that previous counter studies had shown a 10% discrepancy. CS/SF commented on data protection and suggestion that only numbers need to be kept for more than a year and that names should be destroyed at this point.

Action Point Club reps to reiterate to members to sign the logbook.

Action Point More log sheets need to be purchased.

Action Point delete names of lead caver from the trip records after one year.

d) Conservation Officer

- Retaping of main areas including Gilwern has been done but Gilwern needs rethinking as it is getting damaged quickly. JW (Joshua White) suggested tape on steel rods. SF offered CCC stainless pegs and tape to do the job.
- Last sandwich has been enlarged which allows easier access to the further reaches and therefore the areas beyond need to be considered for further action such as retaping.
- JW suggested some working parties.

General discussion followed. CD mentioned enlargement of grovels in Midwinter chambers. SM read point 7 of access rules stating that modification of the cave shouldn't happen on a general trip. It was suggested that moving rocks for safety would happen on the trip but that enlarging of passages shouldn't be done without PDCMG consent except during exploration.

There are 3 things to consider;

- Don't damage formations- if accidental damage occurs report back
- Moving rocks which are a safety hazard- do as a matter of course during the trip and report back
- Enlargement by explosives- only during exploration

Minimal Impact Caving Code (MICC) and British Caving Association (BCA) digging policy were mentioned.

SF mentioned complaints regarding two abandoned camps at Big Beauty junction and another in WoW.

Andy Freem has requested permission to shoot a conservation video in Draenen.

Action Points

JW to come up with a plan for conservation trips and email requests for help.

JW to look at MICC and BCA digging policies and incorporate in Draenen policy

SM to tell Andy Freem yes to video.

SF to forward CCC pegs and tape to JW

JW /CD to arrange for removal abandoned camp materials.

e) Survey Secretary

John Pybus not present and no report submitted. John just safeguards the Grade 2 survey which is available on OUCC website. General discussion followed re grade 5 survey. JS said that if the Grade 2 was archived and there was no longer a requirement for explorers to provide grade 2 info then he could make the grade 5 survey available. JS would not make the grade 5 data available but would provide enough detail to link in new finds if others surveyed to the same standard. He would also be willing to work with explorers to make sure new finds were surveyed accurately.

f) Survey Recorder

JS stated that the Grade 2 survey had 47.7km of passage with 6100 stations and that the grade 5 had 40% more than this in 2014. JS has more survey detail but due to confidentiality he can't reveal how much. Other surface work and locations within the catchment and downstream extents have been given GPS locations and some work was done but more sites and work could be added.

NB post elections JS holds both survey secretary and survey recorder posts so something could be done to resolve this issue and enable publication of a Grade 5 survey.

Action Point New secretary to draft update to 'Code of Conduct' to include a statement for survey data to be submitted to survey recorder and that requests for confidentiality would be kept, changing from must complete survey to grade 2 at least.

g) Biological recorder

No data received, PS had no further report.

h) Geological recorder

No report

i) Fixed aids officer

The spreadsheet is up to date but the next set of inspections are due this month and new ropes are needed next year. The entrance work is going well and there are probably only two trips to do to finish timber replacement and pillars.

4 Election of Officers

Firstly of those present, it was checked who was present representing a Club with voting rights for PDCMG, 11 club representatives were present.

Position & Nominations	Proposed by	Seconded by	Votes For	Abstentions	Elected
Secretary					
Richard Dewsnap	CS	TW	4		
Sue Mabbett	CD	AG	7		SM

Position & Nominations	Proposed by	Seconded by	Votes For	Abstentions	Elected
Treasurer					
Matt Terry	PS	CS	3	1	
Spence Drew	DG	C Bailey	7		SD
Permit Sec					
Dan Thorne	RH	AG			DT
Conservation Officer					
Josh White	CD	SR	5		JW by chair
Tom Williams	AG	CS	5		
Survey Secretary					
Tarquin Wilton Jones	CD	DG	3	1	
John Stevens	CS	RH	7		JS
Survey Recorder	Not filled at time of election. JS to fill both positions and resolve survey issues.				
Biological Recorder					
Pete Smith	CS	AG			PS
Geological recorder					
Andy Farrant	Elected in his absence				AF
Fixed aids officer					
Tom Williams	Elected Unopposed				TW

5 Other Group Business

Selection of new Chair-

The secretary's report listed Les Williams as the only person nominated who had agreed to take on the role. There were questions as to how new chairman was identified. SM commented the last minutes had requested that all representatives on PDCMG should send potential names for new chairman to the secretary, FL. A few reps had suggested names for the role of chairman, the only one of those suggested who had accepted was Les Williams. There was lots of discussion around whether a chair should be a Welsh caver, it was confirmed by SM the person she proposed was Welsh but had rejected the offer to be chairman. Another suggestion is in the future potentially NRW could chair. This would mean a different NRW rep with an access role and probably mean upgrading the cave to SSSI status. The constitution says that the chair will be suggested by the PDCMG and will stand until they resign or there is some other compelling reason to go. C Bailey suggested it would need to be a caver, MD said that if there was only one or two meetings then it would be a chair role and the cavers on the PDCMG could discuss caving issues and a NRW type of chair wouldn't need to be a caver. As it is only one willing volunteer has come forward, Les Williams, and therefore 8 recommended Les has the position and 3 abstained.

Action Point SM to inform Les of his success.

Drws Cefn

There was a long conversation regarding the entrance to Drws Cefn and the potential placing of a "Bat grille".

It was confirmed by CD that PDCMG was facilitating a request by the landowner to close access to cavers through Drws Cefn. The proposal suggested by CD and supported by Anton Kattan apparently will not need a licence but this was disputed by several people present including PS and SF. CD did not definitely have this agreement from NRW.

History- First proposal (wall) not granted on alteration of air flow grounds and therefore disturbance to bats.

Second proposal not granted on grounds that it would be vandalised and this would disturb the bats

Third (current) proposal (as shown by CD) needs clarification, as clarification this proposal was not formally voted on at the meeting. It was thought that the grille would not pass the IROPI test. Before any physical work is done responses from landowner (Pwlldu Conservation Ltd, PCL) and NRW need to be obtained. PS accepted a copy of the sketch for review and comment on suitability of the proposal for bat access and NRW approval. SF then gave his opinion regarding problems associated with any alteration to the Drws Cefn entrance. SF informed the meeting that the land on which the Drws Cefn entrance is located is an 'Urban Common land'. It is therefore subject to the right associated with common land.

- Law of Property Act 1925- allows for "air and exercise" on common land and therefore could be disputed in line with the Regina vs Billson case
- Common Act 2006- it is not possible to build/amend land without permission from the secretary of state and BBNPA on common land

In SF's opinion the CRoW also gives you the right to roam and cave on access land. C Byrne disagreed with this statement, and stated the NRW had confirmed their interpretation of the CRoW Act that Access land gives the right to roam only. NRW correspondence with SF had stated this interpretation of CRoW.

SF reported that the British Caving Association (BCA) have recently agreed that caving should be included under the CRoW Act so may well now be looking for a test case. NR and SF both said that if Drws Cefn was gated in any way that prohibited access to the cave they would go to court. It was the opinion of SF that trustees and officers of PDCMG could be liable if NR and SF were successful. In SF opinion the landowners Pwlldu Conservation Ltd (PCL), a registered company, did not have enough money to cover potential costs. SF suggested that PDCMG seek a solicitor's advice. SF stated that a compromise out of court would be a better way forward. CS stated that PCL representative Peter Jones should be informed of this latest opinion. CD asked SF if these considerations were taken into account when the 'blue gate' was originally installed. MR believed they had behaved illegally but did not know this at the time and nobody had made a legal complaint.

There was news breaking that a new entrance had been dug into Ogof Draenen, the exact location of this entrance was not known nor if this entrance was on land within the ownership of the landowner that PDCMG has an agreement with; as there was insufficient information on this new entrance it was not discussed further as part of this meeting.

Action Points

PS and CD should look at the grille proposal further and send this to NRW who must respond.

SM to contact a representative of PCL, Peter Jones, re the latest opinions and respond to PDCMG

The constitution needs to be looked at with regard to entrances on other land.

All club reps to go to their clubs and seek an update on the viewpoint of multiple entrances.

6 Application for Membership

SM had received no applications for membership.

Action Point DT and SM to clarify key holders and email addresses for current clubs/key holders as key for current lock were first issued >9 years ago, some of those who had been issued with keys had since passed away or left the clubs therefore SM/DT to complete an inventory.

6 Application for Keys

SM had received an application for a Key from York CC. SM confirmed York CC visited Ogof Draenen ~3 times a year. This application for permanent key was accepted applied and accepted.

Cardiff Hill Divers (CHD) have been accepted as members of PDCMG at previous meeting, members of PDCMG were permitted to hold a permanent key and so on payment of £20 they should receive a key.

Action Point SM to issue a key to York CC and to ensure CHD received a key following receipt of £20 to PDCMG.

Martin Lavery to update website contact details.

8 AOB

None

Date of Next Meeting

SM to talk to Les Williams to find a mutually acceptable date in May / June 2018.

Meeting closed ~ 3.20pm.



10 Jun 2018

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. Our 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. Our 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. Our 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 constitution¹ and (ii) that they can reasonably arrange meetings to avoid clashes 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

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.

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 Dollimore 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 substantially 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.

Pwll Du Cave Management Group

Income And Expenditure Account For the Year Ended 31st May 2017

	Year ending 31/05/17		Year ending 31/05/16	
	£	£	£	£
Income:				
Donations:				
MCC		100.00		105.00
OUCC		50.00		0.00
F Loveridge		36.00		36.00
Hereford CC		25.00		0.00
UBSS		40.00		20.00
Shepton Mallet CC		20.00		0.00
Refund From CCC (Insurance)		50.00		50.00
Bank Interest:		0.00		0.00
		<u>321.00</u>		<u>211.00</u>
Expenditure:				
BCA Insurance	(50.00)		(50.00)	
Llanelly Hall Hire	(36.00)		(36.00)	
New safety equipment (Draenen)	0.00		(105.00)	
New lock and Keys	0.00		0.00	
Glo-tape	0.00		0.00	
Administration costs	0.00		0.00	
		(86.00)		(191.00)
(Deficit) of Income Over Expenditure		<u>235.00</u>		<u>20.00</u>

Notes to the above for the year ending 31st May 2017

	2017	2016
The closing balance actually requests the following:		
Balance in current A/c	622.61	427.61
Balance in Reserve A/c	0.10	0.10
Total Funds	<u>622.71</u>	<u>427.71</u>

On behalf of the group I would like to formally say thank you for all the donations in the last year.
The only other item to confirm is the BCA Access Controlling Body registration has been obtained again.

Spencer Drew ACA DipPFS BSc
Treasurer
(Spencer.Drew@Ntlworld.com)