

Pwll Du Cave Management Group

Minutes of the biennial general meeting held on Sunday 15th June 2025 at Salisbury Hall, Govilon.

Present

Les Williams (LW)	Chair
Sue Mabbett (SM)	Secretary / Morgannwg CC
Clive Owen (CO)	Treasurer / UBSS
Peter Smith (PS)	Biological Recorder
Chris Seal (CS)	Chelsea SS
Barry Hill (BH)	Hereford CC
Steve King (SK)	Shepton Mallet CC
Frank Tulley (FT)	Wessex Cave Club

1. Apologies

Dan Thorne, Permit Secretary; Josh White, Conservation Officer; Rich Smith, Survey Officer, Webmaster and BEC; Chris Densham OUCC & trustee, Rich Hill, Gagendor; John Sheehy, Gwent CC; Nick De Gare Pitt, Brynmawr CC; Ali Garman (AG) Fixed Aids / Draenen Diggers; Christina Byrne (CB) Natural Resources Wales and Stuart France, Caving Wales Conservation Officer.

Note: Those present agreed to proceed with the meeting even though we were inquorate. All decisions will be ratified at the next quorate meeting. A quorate meeting requires at least 6 PDCMG Club representatives (SMCC is not a member club), including at least 2 officers, plus the independent chair.

2. Approval Minutes from Last General Meeting

2a. Approval of Minutes from last general meeting held 19th June 2024

The minutes had been circulated prior to the meeting, with all corrections sent to SM completed. No further corrections were identified.

These minutes were proposed by FT and seconded by BH, the vote was abstentions: 1 (not present at meeting) and remainder for approval, therefore these minutes are approved as true record of the meeting. LW approved minutes as true record.

2b. Matters Arising from the Minutes NOT Covered Elsewhere in the Agenda

None.

3. Officers Reports

3a. Secretary

SM had issued a report before the meeting as detailed below:

I have been in correspondence with the landowner, Pwlldu Conservation Ltd, sending copies of draft minutes and approved minutes from the Nov 2024 and June 2024 respectively. Prior to the minutes being finalised I have also reported to the landowner the latest situation on Ogof Tarddiad and the Nunnery, providing background information on why we were not planning to publicise anything further on the Nunnery entrance use, I also asked if there was anything further the landowner wished for our group to do in regards to the Nunnery entrance. From these email discussions with the landowner, I was asked for a copy of our Conservation policy,

which I duly sent. This did highlight to me the current Conservation policy was approved in 2014, and maybe it is time to complete a review of that policy.

I attended the Caving Wales AGM in March, where I had opportunity to chat with Martin who manages the Caving Wales Cave Registry. I was following up on the action from the last meeting to request the registry details for the Nunnery Entrance, clarifies that the access agreement does not allow use of this entrance. Martin informed me, he is planning to remove all cave and mine access details from the Cave Registry as these details are also provided under the Access section of the Caving Wales website, and he does not want duplication as in future the details may differ. So we agreed that as access details are being removed my request is void.

Those present discussed whether we should ask for the Caving Wales Access section on the website to be updated, to note the access agreement with the landowner does not permit access to Ogof Draenen via the Nunnery Entrance. Last meeting's request to update the Cave Registry is void as it is not detailing access arrangements in future, and any details for access to a cave currently present will be deleted. SM commented she did not know what was present in the Access Section of Caving Wales website, this needs to be checked before any request is submitted. On viewing the CW website we noted access to Ogof Draenen by the gated entrance was listed in the 'restricted access' section.

ACTION SM to review Caving Wales access page to see what it says, if access is not detailed as restricted for other entrances (e.g. Nunnery) on PCL land then request update to Caving Wales Access page, SM to contact secretary of Caving Wales for update if required.

3b. Treasurer

CO had issued a report before the meeting as below:

PDCMG Treasurer's Report to the General Meeting 15 June 2025

There has been just one transaction on the account since the last meeting. Here is a summary:

Date	Description	Paid in	Paid out	Balance
19 Jun 2024	Balance carried forward			£624.19
27 Dec 2024	Donation from UBSS	£10.00		£634.19

The balance in the account currently stands at £634.19.

This balance should be sufficient for normal day to day running of PDCMG. However, the Group has no regular income and donations are therefore very welcome. The easiest way to pay in to the PDCMG account is by bank transfer. The account details are:

Pwll Du Cave Management Group
52-21-07
36707473



Clive Owen
Treasurer

CO sufficient for current requirements. CS asked what money was spent on. CD reported money spent historical on conservation materials, keys, padlocks, door repairs, fixed aid materials.

LW noted he was aware the initial legal costs to set up a Company Limited by guarantee had been met by two members of the committee. LW believed the caving community had sufficient funds and that individuals should not be paying for these costs. The costs to date had been met by SM and CO, others present at the meeting agreed costs should not have to be met by individuals. Those present asked what the costs were to date. CO estimated around £1000. LW stated we were lucky SM and CO were in a position to pay these costs and we should not rely on this and we should consider repaying CO and SM. PS asked when in future we do proceed with the company limited by guarantee, what further costs there may be. SM commented that the draft articles were in a state to be approved, so additional costs would be registering the company, but not too great. This is on the assumption there are no changes in the legal requirements. Those present agreed that PDCMG members should be aware what had been paid for by CO and SM so at some point in future we could repay them.

ACTION CO to add a note to next treasurer's report on costs covered by SM and CO to date.

3c. Permit Secretary

DT had sent email to SM as below:-

I have some logbook data from Stuart F, but am away at the moment on a 5 day exped so I'm not sure if I will get to a computer to process. I'm back in the UK for July. So will service the logbook then.

ACTION DT to provide SM with log book data for the minutes. SM to add data to the minutes.

3d. Conservation Officer

JW had sent short report via email to SM as below:

I also have no report as have not been made aware of any conservation issues or changes since the last meeting. As you are aware I am happy for the conservation officer to be handed over to a new person, as I don't have the time or commitment to make changes or respond effectively to any issues within Draenen.

I have very much enjoyed making improvements and being responsible for Ogof Draenen, but over the last few years my location, work and family does not allow me to cave like I once did and I'm sure someone else would make a much better conservative officer.

I am happy to help new conservation officers with any questions and suggestions, I can also send them spare tape too.

No questions or queries raised on the report

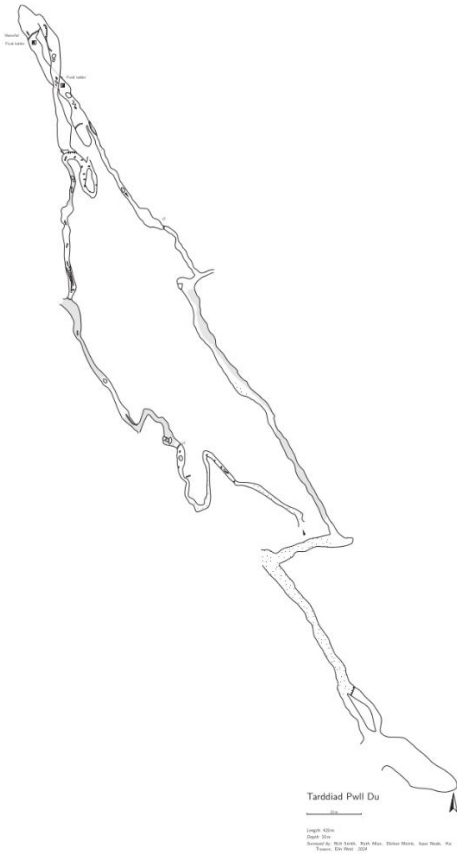
3e. Survey Secretary

RS had sent report via email to SM as below:

I've continued to follow up potential leads regarding the use of data from surveying trips already carried out. I think this is still quite possible, but conversations are continuing.

I've carried out a few surveying trips myself, concentrating on areas that have not been previously published. Here for example is part of the survey I've drawn up: the new entrance of Tarddiad Pwll Du up from the connection with the Draenen passages, which might be of interest if it comes up for discussion at the meeting.

This is a very long way from a proper survey of the system of course, but I'm willing to stand again if the group thinks these efforts are useful.



The meeting wished to thank RS for the work done so far.

3f. Biological Recorder

PS had sent report to SM copied below

PDCMG – Biological Recorder report June 2025

The only biological reports from within Ogof Draenen since the meeting of 27 November 2024 have been casual sightings of bats from Stuart France. On 29 December 2024, Stuart noted about 70 lesser horseshoe bats in Nunnery Passage. He noted occasional greater horseshoe bats and the odd non-horseshoe bat there too.

In Ogof Tarddiad Pwll Ddu, Stuart recorded bat ultrasound passes in the streamway passage after the first waterfall during September, October and early November 2024 and in April and May 2025.

There have been no other reports.

I will not stand for re-election.

Dr Peter G Smith

Biological Recorder, PDCMG, 12 June 2025

Thanked PS for his report. LW asked what are non-Horseshoe bats, PS commented possibly Myotis or brown long eared bats.

3g Fixed Aids Officer

AG had sent short report via email to SM as below:

From a fixed aids perspective, everything is in order to best of my knowledge, with the next inspection due in December.

There were no queries or questions arising from this report.

3h Webmaster Report

RS had sent report via email to SM as below:

The website has only had minor updates recently (e.g. to reflect the new entrance situation). The server has been upgraded by BCA, so it loads a lot faster than previously.

I've been offered some Draenen route cards / navigation aids, which I'd be very keen to accept and get uploaded onto the website. I'd also welcome any other good content of course if anyone wants to contribute anything.

Those present thought the route cards/ navigation aids would be a useful resource *provided* they do not take cavers through sensitive areas, damaging formations or disturbing bats. And also that there are no copyright issues, and source data for any plots is not questionable.

4. Election of Officers/Recorders

LW proposed vote of thanks to all outgoing officers and recorders for work completed in last two years as they constitutionally resign prior to this election. The meeting agreed. SM to send an email to JW recording our thanks.

Before starting the election of a new committee, those present confirmed who could propose, second and vote for new committee members. The voting is limited to those representing PDCMG member caving clubs. At this meeting this limited those able to vote to CS, BH, SM, CO and FT. SK is present as an observer as SMCC is not a member Club of PDCMG.

Tabulated below are post, person(s) nominated, proposer and seconder

Post / Role	Nominated	Proposer	Seconder	Voted In
Secretary	Sue Mabbett	CO	BH	SM
Treasurer	Clive Owen	SM	CS	CO
Permit Secretary	Dan Thorne (see note 1)	CS	FT	DT
Conservation Officer	Isaac Neale (see note 2)	SM	CS	IN
Survey Secretary	Rich Smith(see note 3)	FT	BH	RS
Biological Recorder	No nominations (see note 4)			
Geological Recorder	No nominations (see note 5)			
Fixed Aids Officer	Alistair Garman (see note 6)	CS	CO	

Note 1 DT in email conversation with SM agreed to continue with role as long as group accepted he was in Japan for next year at least.

Note 2: At the previous two meetings IN had reported he was willing to take on the role of Conservation Officer as Josh White no longer had the time to fulfil the role; therefore those present assumed he was willing to stand for the role of Conservation Officer, this will be confirmed at the next quorate meeting.

Note 3: Although not present RS stated in his report he was willing to stand for the role of Survey secretary.

Note 4: As PS detailed in his report he was not standing this year, SM had contacted A Lewington, who is currently doing Biological survey of Draenen. SM had not received a reply before the meeting, so the role was left vacant. At the next quorate meeting we hope to co-opt a new biological recorder.

Note 5: Geological recorder has been vacant for a few years, LW offered to contact a geologist caver to ask if they would take on the role.

Note 6: AG had not stated in his report he was not standing this year; therefore it was assumed he was willing to continue in the role of Fixed Aids officer, this will be confirmed at the next quorate meeting.

At the end of the election SM suggested we made use of the clause in the constitution -

The Group may co-opt persons with specialist experience or knowledge, as considered appropriate, to advise the group. Such appointments shall carry no voting rights -

to co-opt RS as Web Officer/ Webmaster. RS as Survey Secretary and as the BEC representative, has voting rights via these roles. Those present agreed to the co-option of RS as Web Officer/ Webmaster

5. Constitutional Amendments

None submitted. SM had reviewed the current constitution. As we plan to move to Company Ltd by Guarantee at some time in future when the number of officers will be greatly reduced, SM decided not to propose adding more posts.

6. Submissions for Adoption of Additional Cave Entrances

No submission on any new entrances, despite update to the Entrance policy.

7. Applications for membership

SM and DT had received no requests or applications from caving clubs for membership of PDCMG.

8. Applications to become key holders

SM and DT had received no applications to be permanent key holders.

9. AOB

LW went around those present, only one item was raised, a follow up on Ogof Tarddiad.

a) Current Status on Ogof Tarddiad

After our last meeting RS added information about Ogof Tarddiad to the PDCMG website. It notes access is not managed by PDCMG and points to the Caving Wales website for information.

Prior to this meeting Stuart France, Caving Wales Conservation and Access Officer sent SM information relating to Ogof Tarddiad, in summary: - Caving Wales have written to NRW stating they are not an occupier of SSSI land in which Ogof Tarddiad is located. SF is studying the flora in the SSSI to determine if flora detailed in the SSSI documentation are present in the land around Ogof Tarddiad.

SM had requested an update from Christina Byrne, NRW representative, on the SSSI, CB reported: As far as I know there was a plan for an ecological (probably higher plant) survey. This was to be done in-house, so wasn't funding dependent, but might be impacted if staff time was in short supply.

LW asked if anyone knew if NRW had written to Caving Wales with any further restrictions on access to Ogof Tarddiad? PS reported that from his conversations with SF, he did not believe NRW had contacted Caving Wales.

There was discussion on Ogof Tarddiad regarding general access and potential changes in future, but with few people present and without definitive information from NRW or Caving Wales it was agreed we were still uncertain about the longer term status of Ogof Tarddiad, and using this entrance to access Ogof Draenen. LW suggested as there were still uncertainties about the future status for this entrance we should continue in holding off progressing with forming a new company limited by guarantee. We will review the status at our next meeting when hopefully more people will present and more information to enable an informed decision to be made on continuing with a company limited by guarantee.

As previously agreed at last meeting those present agreed PDCMG should continue in its current function to manage access to Ogof Draenen, completing its commitments to conservation of the cave, fixed aid checking, ensuring public liability insurance is in place, etc.

CS asked whether the sale of property and land including the SSSI had occurred (at last meeting it was up for sale). PS reported it had been withdrawn from sale.

10. Date of Next Meeting

After short discussion it was agreed the next meeting will be on line (via Zoom) on:-
Wednesday 26th Nov 2025, 8.00pm.

Meeting closed at 12.10pm.

DRAFT