

# PWLL DU CAVE MANAGEMENT GROUP

## **Minutes of the Annual Meeting held at the Lamb and Fox on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> Jult 2010 commencing at 7.30pm.**

### **Attendees:**

Mick Day		Chairman
Fleur Loveridge	Oxford University C.C.	Secretary
Chris Densham	Oxford University C.C.	Club Rep & Trustee
Chris Seal	Chelsea S.S.	Club Rep
Ali Garman	Draenen Diggers	Club Rep
Spencer Drew	Morgannwg C.C.	Treasurer
Ben Lovett	Morgannwg C.C.	Conservation Officer & Club Rep
Owen Clarke	Cwmbran C.C.	Club Rep
Rhian Kendall	Morgannwg C.C.	Biological Recorder
Charles Bailey	CSS/Hades	Trustee
Paul Nuttall	Brynmawr C.C	Club Rep
Tim Barter	Westminster S.G.	Club Rep
Sue Mabbett	South Wales C.C.	Club Rep
Elsie Little	Cambrian Caving Council	
Gareth Owen	Countryside Council for Wales	
Bernie Woodley		
Malcolm Reid	Brynmawr C.C	
Jess Stirrups		
Chris Gibbs	Cwmbran C.C.	
Robbie Clarke	Cwmbran C.C.	

### **1. Apologies**

Apologies received from Pete Talling of UBSS and Andy Farrant (Geological Recorder) in advance of the meeting. Subsequently apologies were also received from Tim Long (Trustee) and John Pybus (Survey Secretary).

### **2. Minutes of the last Meetings (12<sup>th</sup> December 2009)**

CD asked that the legal advice he received from Ursula Collie, and was read out at the meeting, to be included in the minutes in Section 7. This was agreed and then the minutes were signed as a true and accurate record by the Chair.

### **3. Matters arising not covered elsewhere in the Agenda**

None.

### **4. Officers Reports**

#### **a) Secretary**

The Secretary had provided a long report ahead of the meeting (see attached) mainly detailing activities related to Drws Cefn but also a few other matters.

The Treasurer thanked the Secretary for her hard work during a difficult period with respect to access to Ogof Draenen.

A discussion was held regarding the caver counters installed by Stuart France last year. Although it was considered by some that these could prove useful to the Group, there was concern these had been installed without consent and had not been properly used. It was agreed that the Secretary would write to SF to point out that the counters were installed outside of current procedure and invite an application from him with respect to the counters. This should include the rationale, purpose and benefits of the scheme and a procedure for handling, verifying and interpreting the data. **FL to write to SF.**

b) Treasurer

The Treasurer presented the annual accounts. A higher income than usual was seen due to the deposits received for the new keys. Where possible the Treasurer is reclaiming costs from the CCC.

A query was raised about the cost of the new padlock. It was clarified that this represents two locks and 25 keys; the keys being not copiable with the original certificate pertaining to the locks.

It was also confirmed that signatories on the bank account were now up to date following the changes in the committee last year.

FL proposed acceptance of the accounts, this was seconded by EL and unanimously agreed.

c) Permit Secretary/Access Officer

SM presented her report (attached) including caver numbers from January 2009 until May 2010, which continue to hold steady.

SM is having difficulty deciphering some of the logbook entries, probably due to muddy hands as the logbook is now within the cave. The possibility of returning the logbook to the surface was discussed. In the end it was agreed to investigate the use of pre-printed waterproof paper of the type used on Llangattock where it is provided by the CCW. This will make it clearer what information is to be provided where by providing a proforma approach, and will discourage people writing "OUT" across their entry at the end. **Gareth Owen from the CCW to look into the possibility of obtaining this paper.** If this approach does not work then the logbook will be returned to the surface by the Lamb and Fox.

There had been a little confusion over the status of Cardiff UCC, who had not in the past been a permanent keyholder, but who are regular visitors to the cave. Given that CUCC are now a member club of the PDCMG, it was agreed that they should therefore be a permanent keyholder.

CS raised the issue of whether large clubs (or those using the cave regularly) could have a second key. After much discussion it was agreed that in principle this could be the case, providing that a club is making regular visits. Clubs wishing a second key should write with good justification to the Permit Secretary, highlighting their frequent trips to the cave.

SM had also received a number of requests from non-club cavers for access to Ogof Draenen. It was confirmed that both the Licence and ethics of the CCC refer to Caving Clubs and therefore access should continue to be on a club basis only (individual membership of the BCA is not sufficient).

d) Conservation Officer

BL reported that most of his activity since the last meeting had been contained in the Secretary's report.

Subsequently some excess mould had been noticed in the cave, but this has now largely degraded after a 2 to 3 month period. All cavers were asked to be more careful when eating lunch and carrying food within the cave (Clubs reps cascade this request within their clubs). It was agreed that this was a matter of general cavers' education and **EL agreed to write a general note on the subject for wider circulation.**

The Group was reminded that all Club Reps and Member Clubs have a duty to do conservation work within the cave. Two particular future projects highlighted were taping and re-taping of passages, especially trade routes and fixed point photography. Volunteers are required for both these projects and a conservation weekend was suggested. As taping is a skilled job, sufficient experienced tapers would be required to facilitate this. **BL to organise.**

e) & f) Neither the Survey Secretary nor the Survey Recorder were present at the meeting and no reports had been received.

g) Biological Recorder

RK had received a communication from Prof. John Altringham of Leeds University looking for permission to do some scientific work with respect to the Ogof Draenen bat population. This is to involve new dataloggers which can distinguish different bat species from their calls and is a nationwide project. It was unanimously agreed that this project should be supported and BL in particular expressed an interest in getting further involved.

RK and Prof. Tim Guilford have recently produced an extensive report on the Draenen bat population bringing together all of the records produced by cavers. This is currently in draft form, but it is hoped that it will form part of the special issue of Caves and Karst Science being organised by AF (see below).

All cavers were encourage to record their bat sightings, either in the logbook or providing information directly to RK.

h) Geological Recorded.

Refer to attached written report. AG and BL were tasked with producing a short paper on the history of exploration of Draenen for the special issue of Caves and Karst Science.

## 5. Other Business

a) Fixed Aides and Balcony Pitch

The Secretary thanked AG and Jules Carter for replacing the ropes at the entrance climb and Indiana Highway. AG reported that although the rope at Balcony Pitch had also been replaced, the belays themselves need further work. Although the existing ladder is generally in good condition, it is missing one rung, and it is intended to replace this with the stainless steel ladder previously provided for that purpose. AG is willing to take this project on and considers that if stainless steel through bolts and other connectors are used then the Group has the skills in house to do the work. 3 or 4 caving volunteers will be required to assist with this work.

## b) Website

In the absence of Martin Laverty it was agreed that FL would liaise with ML about greater use of the website. While it was generally agreed that more could be done, there was a feeling that the site's main function should be to present the work of the Group rather than advertise the cave.

## c) Constitutional Changes

A brief run through potential constitutional changes was made ahead of next year's biennial meeting in order to save time at future meetings.

Voting: it was broadly agreed to formally enshrine voting for the "recorders" and other currently non-constitutional officers, as originally agreed at the June 2003 meeting. "Proxy" voting is also to be clarified, ie that clubs send a representative to the meeting who may be substituted by that club, but officers cannot vote in absentia via a proxy. Trustees should not be able to vote.

Election of Officers: it was unanimously agreed that all officers should stand down before the election of officers. In this way, only the club reps will elect the officers. This will guard against undue influence by a small number of clubs.

EGMs: it was agreed to make provision in the constitution for Extraordinary General Meetings.

Order of meetings: it was agreed to insert a new clause to specify the order of meetings (apologies, minutes, officers reports, elections, keyholders, other business, new members) with new members club applications always included at the end to guard against clubs joining to influence a specific meeting.

CCW: Countryside Council for Wales to be added as a (non voting) member of the Group.

## d) AOB

Insurance: CS queried an action from the last meeting referring to the requirement in the Licence for the Group to provide liability insurance. It was confirmed via EL and SD that this requirement is met and that all caving related activity on all PDCL is covered by our BCA insurance. EL undertook to keep the Group informed of any future developing issues with BCA insurance.

Works at Drws Cefn: The Group needs to confirm any likely costs arising from the proposed works at Drws Cefn and then write to both the CCC and the C&A committee of the BCA with respect to potential funding.

## **Meetings closed at 9.50pm**

Next meeting in November 2010 at a date to be agreed.