

# **SOUTH WALES CAVING CLUB**

## **CLWB OGOFEYDD DEHEUDIR CYMRU**

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at the Miners' Welfare Hall, Abercraf, at 9.00 a.m. on Saturday the 1<sup>st</sup> of May 2010.

### **1. Apologies for absence**

#### **10/A1.**

J. Day, B. Hall, E. Hall, R. Hall, M. Hoff, G. Jones, H. Jopling, M. Jopling, K. Maddocks, H. Meredith, P. Meredith, A. Peskett, D. Sullivan, M. Williams

There were 65 voting Members signed in and 3 Provisional Members – see archived sheets.

### **2. Remembrance and the Chairman's welcome**

#### **10/A2 and A3. Chairman's welcome and comments on 2009/2010**

The Chairman thanked everyone and welcomed those present and went on to say:

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to the 2010 AGM of the South Wales Caving Club. It has been my sad duty to serve as Chairman in the year in which our founder member and past President, Peter Harvey, passed away. I know that many of you were here at this time last year, when Peter stood down after 33 years of service as our club President, and with the benefit of hindsight I think we can look back and realise that his decision to stand down gave us the opportunity to recognise and reward his contribution to the club while he was still alive, an opportunity that we would otherwise not have had. I think Peter was genuinely moved by the standing ovation he received at our last AGM, and I have no doubt that he would have been moved by the tributes that followed his passing away at the end of October last year. As well as the inevitable obituaries in the caving press Peter's passing made the national newspapers, and there are few in the caving world that either merit or receive such tributes. Peter was the last surviving founder member of SWCC and as such his passing truly marks the end of an era.

Many of us attended Peter's funeral on the 6<sup>th</sup> November 2009 and I suspect he would have been moved not just by the turnout but by the affection and respect for him that was reflected in the words spoken by Jan Bell and by our own Jem Rowland.

I must at this point acknowledge Peter's generous legacy to SWCC, his prized collection of books, journals, photographs and other documents. Ultimately, however, Peter's greatest legacy will be the cave that he and Ian Nixon discovered back in 1946, and that meant so much to him throughout his lifetime.

Can I ask you all now to observe a minute's silence in memory of Peter Harvey. Thank you.

Peter's passing was no doubt a low point but in the last year SWCC has continued to be an active and vibrant club. As well as the usual weekend activities at Penwyllt there have been foreign trips: there was a good turnout for the trip that Gary Vaughan organised to the Grotte de la Diau in France, in recent weeks members have been to Belize and to Canada, where Martin Groves, ably assisted by other members, continued with the remarkable diving project that he started last year, and reached dry cave after an amazing 846m dive. That trip was nearly scuppered by industrial action affecting British Airways, and the annual spring trip to Cantabria was threatened by the disruption caused by the volcanic ash cloud. SWCC members don't give up that easily, though, and most of the team made it northern Spain thanks to some hasty ferry bookings.

There have also been some UK trips, including the now-annual North Wales mining weekend and a successful Yorkshire trip.

In my address last year I commented on the dedication and hard work of that year's committee, and I am pleased to say that this year's committee have shown equal levels of commitment. This has been something of a difficult year for the committee, with some complicated and troublesome issues to deal with. Allow me to outline some of the things that we've had to deal with since the last AGM.

There is the ongoing issue of the lease on the Penwyllt Inn. While we are close to having a finalised and signed lease with the Wealden Cave and Mine Society, it has taken a while to get to this point, due in part to disagreements between lawyers about what does and does not constitute a valid lease document. Our trustees are about to sign the finalised lease on our behalf, and we are now, at last, close to establishing what we hope will be a long and friendly relationship with our new tenant.

In August last year a young man with learning disabilities joined SWCC. It would be fair to say that we were not, in the first instance, properly appraised of his needs, but nonetheless the committee and individual members went to some lengths to accommodate the young man and to fulfil his desire to go caving. Ultimately, however, what SWCC was able to provide did not meet his family's expectations of us. The episode ended rather unhappily and we were asked to refund his subscription.

While the club's policy document and the BCA code of conduct state clearly that we do not discriminate against anyone on the grounds of disability, the realities of adventure sports such as caving create a minefield that is not easily negotiated. Thanks to those members with professional experience in the field of disability I was able to convene a small sub-group to look at the wider issues affecting SWCC and disability, and although we held an initial discussion via email we have not yet held an actual meeting in which to discuss this and create an established way forward. This is something that I will have to discuss with whoever is elected Chairman later in today's meeting.

The year has also been marked by a couple of unpleasant confrontations that have taken place at our HQ, and among my more difficult tasks as Chairman has been to talk to, and in some case write to, those involved. I am sure that we would all wish Penwyllt to be a happy and harmonious place in which both members and visitors feel welcome and secure, and I hope that such incidents are now firmly a thing of the past.

Over the last twelve months Ogof Draenan has been something of a hot topic, after work on a previously dormant dig site created a new entrance to the cave. As a constituent club of the Pwll Du Cave Management Group, SWCC had to send club reps to several meetings at which the matter was to be discussed, and as anyone who has been involved is only too aware, feelings on this subject run high. There are SWCC members on both sides of the debate and as Chairman I received numerous entreaties with regard to the briefing of club representatives. This was a thorny issue for the committee to deal with and we were bound to draw criticism whatever we decided, but I'm confident that those who have represented SWCC at PDCMG and Cambrian Caving Council meetings have done so with great integrity and that the club's response to the issue has been both responsible and carefully considered.

In recent months a great deal of the committee's time has been occupied with the issue of replacing the club's heating and hot water boiler, and this has been another source of controversy. You will have already read a brief summary of events in the recent Newsheet and there is an item on the agenda for later in today's meeting so that the issue can be discussed. Inevitably projects such as this entail spending considerable amounts of the club's money and are bound to be contentious. Sadly one result of our discussion and vote on this matter was that one member of the committee resigned shortly afterwards. As you may have seen, work has already started on the preparations for the new boiler, and the working week team are carrying out a carefully scheduled process that should see the new boiler up and running in a little over a month from now, bringing to an end a long period of uncertainty and unreliability. I hope that the end result of the committee's deliberations and decisions on this will be that the club has a reliable, efficient and cost-effective hot water and heating system that will serve us long into the future.

Enough of troublesome issues; let me highlight some of the positives of the last year. Just weeks before the event was scheduled, the organisers of the annual Council of Higher Education Caving Clubs conference were faced with disaster when their agreed venue went out of business. An urgent plea was made to SWCC and after some hasty deliberations the committee agreed that we would step in and host the event. Despite agreeing this at only three weeks' notice the CHECC weekend went off smoothly, with only the Penwyllt weather attempting to dampen things down. Thanks are due to all those from SWCC who helped out. When we were first approached and asked if we could save the event the committee were mindful of both the short-term and long-term potential benefits. In the short term there was, we hope, some good PR for the club as well as the significant amount of money received, but the long-term benefits are more difficult to quantify. Hopefully we have raised our profile with the UK's student caving clubs, which in turn leads to increased hut bookings and, ultimately, more potential future SWCC members.

On the subject of new members, for me one of the highlights of the last twelve months was the provisional members' weekend last November. SWCC was an uplifting place to be that weekend, thanks to all those who organised it, who prepared the food, and who took new members on caving trips. I heard nothing but positive comments from both the provisional members and the established members who were there, and a few weeks later I received the following message from a new provisional member.

"I had my Provisional Membership card in the post today, so I'm pretty proud of that. Thank you very much for all your help - I was very nervous about coming to the club when I didn't know anyone and feared that I might feel like the odd one out, but everyone has been so friendly and welcoming that I think coming up to see you all on the Provisionals' Weekend was the best decision I made this year." To me that message sums up what I think this club should be.

I could run the risk of repeating the sentiments of my last year's address, by recognising the hard work done by not just the committee but by all of those who contribute to SWCC. So I'll keep it brief by thanking on your behalf all those who served on the committee and everyone else who has contributed to the club, in whatever way, in the last twelve months.

SWCC is what it is because of what people put into it. If you have an opinion on what you want this club to be then I urge you to get involved. There are some important committee posts to be filled in the elections later this morning and if you don't have a good committee you won't have a good club. You don't have to be on the committee to contribute but in my opinion it's the best way to make a real difference.

One final point. In last year's address I made an attempt to encourage more diggers and more digging activity. The weather over both the summer and the winter did nothing for the cause and while a resolute few have continued

there hasn't been anything much to shout about. So I'll use the last few words of my address to try again ... we have the finest caving club HQ in the country and some of the finest caves in Europe on our doorstep. But we could have so much more. I can't pretend that digging involves anything other than hard work and copious quantities of mud but if you don't get out there and look for cave you won't find any. We have another digging week planned for the week of the August Bank Holiday so come and get involved and let's hope that we can kick-start the future of this club with a major breakthrough. It's long overdue. Thank you.

### **3. Minutes of the 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2009 AGM**

**10/A4a.** The Chairman invited the proposal that the minutes of the 2009 AGM might be taken as read. Proposed by B. Jopling and Seconded by A. Richardson.

**Majority For, 0 Against, 1 Abstention – Car**

**10/A4b.** The Chairman then suggested that the minutes be signed as an accurate record with any identified corrections inserted. Proposed by K. Goodhead and Seconded by N. Davies.

**Majority For, 0 Against, 2 Abstentions - Carried**

**10/A5** Corrections to the 2009 Minutes:  
There were no corrections.

### **4. Matters arising from the 2009 AGM Minutes**

**10/A6.** There were no matters arising.

### **5. Officers' Reports to the 2010 AGM**

**10/A7a.** The Chairman suggested that the reports be taken as read. Proposed by D. Edwards and Seconded by J. Lister.

**Unanimous For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions - Carried**

**10/A7b.** The motion was then put to take the Officers' Reports *en bloc*, with any questions would be directed to the individuals concerned. Proposed by D. Edwards and Seconded by S. West.

**Majority For, 1 Against, 0 Abstentions - Carried**

### **Questions to Officers**

#### **10/A8. Secretary**

There were no questions from the Members at the meeting.

G. Vaughan proposed a vote of thanks for the efforts of the Secretary over the past five years.

The Chairman added his thanks and then asked the Secretary to reply.

C. Friend said that he had enjoyed the past 5 years and thanked everyone that had helped in the task. In particular Lel Davies was thanked for her role as Assistant Secretary having taken on many extra jobs and effectively covered for the Secretary.

#### **10/A9. Treasurer**

B. Jopling asked why a list of cheques paid out had been included in the accounts, it was too much and was not the actual expenses. The Treasurer replied that B. Jopling had been present at the Committee meeting at which the proposed draft had been presented and asked why he had not queried the list then? He also explained that listing what was paid to Members was the easiest way of listing the payments.

The Chairman then explained that the 2009 AGM had asked for transparency and this was what had been achieved by the Treasurer.

G. Christian said that it was valuable as it showed to the wider Membership exactly where the Club money goes.

B. Jopling then said that the next Treasurer could simply say 'no expenses' if that was the case.

P. Collings-Wells proposed that this level of transparency was good and was supported by K. Goodhead, who wanted to know how long this had taken.

S. Moore agreed with B. Jopling that what was produced was a list of transactions. P. Cardy also said that he did not think what was produced was a list of expenses, but that they all appear in the cheque book.

The Treasurer argued that the balance between effort and detail was difficult and there was a lot of work to separate out particular items. This was backed up by B. Clipstone who argued that what had been produced was way beyond anything that a Charity was expected to do.

S. Moore then Proposed "that the format of the accounts be recast to show out of pocket expenses"

C. Friend pointed out that on looking through R. Smith's documents we were not setting a precedent by paying these expenses as this has been covered in old Minutes from the past.

B. Jopling argued that it was the recording of the information and a simple accounting of what was spent on telephone calls etc., it need not be identified.

P. Francis said that the system was working as the data was available to all in the AGM Agenda. D. Edwards suggested that this could be another note to the Accounts. The Treasurer agreed that there could be another note heading in the accounts. C. Friend then reiterated what the Treasurer had said at the start, why query something now when there was opportunity to have done it in a Committee meeting.

G. Vaughan proposed that we have spent too much time and should move on. The Chairman then indicated that we had the proposal by S. Moore.

There was further discussion over what was transparency versus too much or the wrong information.

The Chairman then asked what advice do we give to the next Treasurer?

G. Vaughan then Proposed “The accounts as presented contained an adequate level of clarity” Seconded by P. Collings-Wells. There then followed a brief discussion over the amount of work that this would entail and S. Moore withdrew his proposal.

The vote on the G. Vaughan proposal was:

**46 For, 0 Against, 9 Abstentions - Carried**

B. Jopling then proposed a vote of thanks for the Treasurer’s efforts.

### **10/A10. Warden**

A. Richardson requested that the ant-rodent skills of the Warden be employed, and the Warden replied that chemical warfare had already been set in hand.

G. Vaughan then asked a question about the gas supply, enquiring why it had been allowed to run down so low? The Warden and C. Friend then explained the problem. G. Vaughan then asked that the next Committee is proactive on this system as we cannot afford to run out.

S. Amatt then reported on the position with the supply pipes.

### **10/A11. Conservation**

P. Francis asked why there was no mention of the second Ogof Draenan entrance in the report and wanted to know how the Committee had asked our representative to vote. The Chairman explained the position and how the Club had been represented at the two meetings. He explained that initially we had very few facts. B. Woodley then explained what had happened at the second November meeting and explained that a motion to put a gate on the access from Drws Cefn was passed and has been fitted. After further questioning from P. Francis, B. Woodley then explained that he voted against the motion, reasoning being for conservation. He explained that if the digging was stopped they would simply go outside the managed land and dig another entrance. The landowners now have stated that they do not want Drws Cefn open.

P. Francis then Proposed that “SWCC is against a second entrance to Ogof Draenan” Seconded by J. Carter.

J. Carter then updated and clarified the position in that Ogof Draenan will become an SSSI because CCW have acted very quickly and so gain considerable protection from potential damage with a second entrance.

E. Little explained that it is the landowner’s views that need to be considered first, and these are that the BCA Conservation Guidelines should be followed and then Proposed that “the views of SWCC should support the BCA National Guidelines respect the wishes of the landowner”.

A. Richardson thought this was unwise as SWCC would have to police its own diggers.

G. Vaughan asked if we were under any pressure to do this, and the Chairman replied that he had had many emails and telephone calls over the matter, and so yes.

S. Moore then stated that any wording needs to be very carefully considered and agreed with the comments of A. Richardson.

D. Edwards thought that the position was still rather fluid and that it should be left to the next Committee and Conservation Officer.

It was pointed out that the SWCC Policy Document is clear and that we should follow the BCA Cave Conservation Policy.

All proposals were withdrawn.

#### **10/A12. Training Officer**

There were no questions from the Members at the meeting.

#### **10/A13. Assistant Secretary**

There were no questions from the Members at the meeting.

#### **10/A14. Records**

B. Jopling stated that he was unable to find copies of some of the previous AGM Minutes. All of the important records are available for anyone to look through. Then these Minutes reappeared. He wondered if we could have a copy of the Minutes to look at and the signed Minutes were stored elsewhere.

C. Friend then explained the present position. There are two sets of Minutes – one for the Library and one with the Secretary.

F. Levett then indicated that more of this could come when we discuss the Archives item.

It was agreed to terminate the discussion now.

#### **10/A15 Fixed Aids**

There were no questions from the Members at the meeting.

A. Dobson then said that it was good that the job was back on track with the backlog of inspections cleared with everything up to date.

A vote of thanks was given to M. Hoff for his efforts.

#### **10/A16. Equipment Officer**

There were no questions from the Members at the meeting.

#### **10/A17. Rescue Liaison Officer**

There were no questions from the Members at the meeting.

J. Rowland proposed a vote of thanks.

#### **10/A18. Communications**

There were no questions from the Members at the meeting.



## **10/A19. Editor**

B. Stevens admitted that he had lost motivation and that he was to stand down and hand over the partly laid out Newsletter. On a question from P. Cardy, B. Stevens reported that there was no lack of articles and that there were enough for issues to come.

P. Cardy urged that the new Committee get this Newsletter out quickly as it is an important document and that we have not had one for some time.

Some discussion then followed over the need for a glossy magazine. The Chairman reiterated a point made earlier, that the Newsletter is all that some people get for their subscription.

A. Maddocks pointed out that the Club web site is now a place for much information could it be done that way? P. Collings-Wells said he enjoyed looking back at old Newsletters and B. Thompson said that she was unable to download large items from the internet because of her remote location.

There was then discussion over the dissemination of information. The consensus was that the Club should produce a Newsletter as soon as possible.

## **6. Auditor's Report**

**10/A20.** A. Maddocks read out the report from the Auditor, K. Maddocks. The accounts presented were found to be an accurate reflection of the Club's affairs and that they were in order.

It was Proposed by J. Lister and Seconded by K. Goodhead, that the Auditor's Report be accepted.

**Majority For, 0 Against, 1 Abstentions - Carried**

## **7. Subscriptions and Hut fees**

**10/A21.** The Treasurer summarised his report and recommended that there should be no changes to the Subscriptions or Hut Fees.

There was discussion over whether, following the hard winter and the rise in fuel prices that we can meet the extra expenditure. The Treasurer explained that there is little we can do as we have a contract that runs for another two years and BP are the only supplier who will come. Also, with the new boiler we should see a reduction in the amount of gas we consume.

A. Maddocks pointed out that the Auditor's comments on the Accounts did include a point on forward planning for this type of thing.

J. Carter argued against an increase in subs, but asked about funds to cover contingencies, for example the roof.

A. Burrows Proposed that "the meeting should accept the Treasurer's recommendation that Subscriptions and Hut Fees remain at current levels" and was Seconded by G. Edwards.

**Majority For, 2 Against, 4 Abstentions - Carried**

## **8. Lease of the Penwyllt Inn**

**10/A22.** The Chairman asked the Secretary to explain the position. C. Friend summarised the position to date and then explained that the lease with the Wealden Cave and Mine Society would be signed by the Trustees today, after the AGM. The documents would then be given to G. Christian to take to WCMS to do their side and then aim to have them back for WW10 when we would exchange.

P. Cardy asked what the rent was and it was explained to be £1 and 2 firkins of good ale. P. Cardy then asked when do we get paid and it was explained that we can stipulate when we want the firkins. The next Committee have to decide when they want them.

P. Francis wanted to know if the beer would be distributed free or if donations should be made? S. Moore argued that they cannot be free as that would be a distribution of assets.

The Chairman curtailed the discussion as it had strayed onto the rent. This would be dealt with by the new Committee.

F. Levett said that it was good that we had another active club close to us and that WCMS have done a fantastic job to the Inn. The Chairman then said that the Secretary had largely been responsible for seeing this project through.

K. Goodhead enquired on the state of the Swindon Speleological Society. C. Friend explained that they may be teetering on the brink and that there really is no firm information, but they do seem to be committed to be there. B. Jopling then asked what might happen if they folded. Would it be a decision of the AGM or a Committee? C. Friend explained that in the first instance it would be the Committee that would deal with it as a management issue as for example, the last time that the Inn was being leased by SSS.

G. Christian then explained the position between WCMS and Swindon Speleological Society. WCMS have provided opportunities for SSS to improve Wern House and SSS are about to install an internal flushing toilet.

It is to be hoped that the impetus given to SSS will pay off and that two flourishing clubs will be occupying 'The Stump'.

V. Allkins said that the official opening of the Inn would be the 19<sup>th</sup> June and that all SWCC Members were welcome to join in.

## **9. Rates and Insurance**

**10/A23.** J. Lister said that he had received the current rates demand for 1-10, Powell Street confirming that we have 100% relief (£1288/annum). This can be taken as assurance that we will not be re-rated as a result of any of the recent changes. He then explained that he had fully investigated the option of SWCC to take back the responsibility for paying Non-Domestic Rates for 'The Stump'. This cannot be done. The liability for rates lies with the occupier and not with the owner.

J. Lister went on to explain that SSS were paying rates only on one third of the property, the rest was viewed as derelict and so did not incur rates. SSS will now only pay on 50% of the building.

WCMS will eventually get a demand from the Rating Officer once it is accepted to be occupied after signing the lease. Powys CC is fully aware that WCMS are a Charity and as such will receive the equivalent of 100% rates relief.

The Secretary then explained the position over the insurance. Presently, SSS pay the insurance and SWCC reimburse SSS a proportion. SSS and WCMS have agreed that presently, SSS will upgrade their insurance and WCMS will take over the proportion for the Inn. SWCC are looking at what the cheapest method of insuring the property. Our solicitor has advised that it would be better overall to have SWCC insure all of its property and recoup proportions from tenants. This needs action by the incoming Committee.

### **10. The future of the Club's history**

**10/A24.** The President introduced the item and talked to Attachment 1.

Basically there is a growing amount of items from bicycles to paper and medals to toilet seats, that the Club needs to decide what to do with – retain or throw away being the two extremes. We need to be able to allow all to access this material, we also have to interact with other bodies and institutions as we have important material. We need some rules as to how to cope with this material. Did Peter Harvey leave us a collection to be kept in one piece in one place, or did he leave us material that we can distribute between different places?

A. Amatt pointed out that if SSS failed we could use Wern House as a 'museum' for the archive material.

B. Jopling suggested that Club records should not be in personal hands and that the Club should create some form of safe storage that it controls. An Archive needs to be secure and not on general access.

G. Vaughan argued over the digital world and the paperless office. A digital format is cheaper to store and would give free access to all. The costs of storing paper versus the costs of initial scanning are the points to consider. J. Rowland said that digital formats change and the costs would be a continued updating.

P. Francis argued that the Library needs redesigning in order to be able to house the documents. More space could be made if we got rid of the worktops. B.

Jopling said he was confused as to what sort of documents G. Vaughan was referring to. If it is Club Newsletters, many are already scanned. Is it legal to scan a Lease and ditch the original? This was then explained to be a confusion as all of the original legal documents that we have are with our solicitor and should never be destroyed. We can keep copies of what we like.

J. Burrows suggested that the documents need to be culled before storage, but that we must keep the most interesting ones. C. Grimmett then reminded the Meeting that the archive is not just paper, it goes from bicycles to a toilet seat.

He said that he had investigated third party environmentally controlled storage and if it was booked in perpetuity, it was not expensive.

G. Amabalino returned to G. Vaughan's original point of commercial scanning, which would be more expensive than storage.

C. Jay and J. Carter both pointed out the problems with decay of digital storage and the problems of keeping up with format change.

A. Richardson pointed out that we do not know what will be valuable in the future. There may well be items that seemingly have no value now, but will become so.

B. Jopling agreed it was a problem of knowing what will be needed in the future. What we need to do is to sort out duplicates and reduce the volume. We could pass out material and share the work out to produce scans of documents and then everything would be conserved.

B. Hall suggested that it may be worthwhile talking to the County Archive as they do collect personal documents.

P. Cardy stated that we should keep the originals as well as making a digital copy.

J. Carter pointed out that you will have to be hard over what is kept. You probably do not want to keep everything. K. Goodhead argued that material should be digitised in a searchable form, if possible, and this will add to the flexibility of the Archive.

B. Jopling then asked about the valuable books given to the Club by P. Harvey – what will happen to them? The Chairman explained that the current arrangement is that they will be lodged with M. and J. Day and that they can be viewed on arrangement.

D. Edwards asked how do we control the temperature? This will be a big problem if on site, as all we have is the Library. Hiring a steel box will not help old documents. H. Jenkins pointed out that the ideal is a climate-controlled store, but this is unrealistic for the Club. P. Cardy indicated that could we approach a local Library the way Shropshire Mines Society did?

S. Goodhead then pointed out that there are photographs and transparencies that need dealing with.

J. Rowland clarified the scanned part of the Peter Harvey photographs. Soem scans were good others not so good. J. Rowland is writing DVDs with related photos put together. The original material is all being kept. J. Rowland also has all of P. Harvey's original diaries.

A. Maddocks summarised the discussion as two points, a, what to keep and b) how to keep it. We do have to be hard on what is retained.

A. Richardson then summarised the books left to the Club by P. Harvey, valuable ones, ones we do not have in the Library and a group that we already have in the Library.

The President then summarised that everyone now has a feeling for the problem that we have. There is a consensus that our history matters, we do need to do

something about it, we need to sort it out and keep it secure but accessible. We all have ‘stuff’ that might be left to the Club, but SWCC needs to know about it before you go! C. Schrijver suggested that a young Member needs to be involved as they may be able to give some insight into what might be important in the future.

P. Francis suggested that we auction off duplicate books, the money going into providing more facilities. The President then asked for a formal endorsement of the report which was Proposed by J. Carter and Seconded by P. Francis.

**Unanimous For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions - Carried**

The Chairman then thanked the Sub-Committee for their work in preparing the document for the discussion.

### **11. New Boiler System**

**10/A25.** The Chairman introduced the issue and spoke to Attachment 2. This created considerable discussion.

P. Cardy stated that yes, we need a new boiler. It was suggested years ago with the ‘Grand Plan’, but that the ‘Grand Plan’ had been voted out and the work should not have been put forward. He wanted to know is there anything else in the ‘Grand Plan’ to be done?

B. Clipstone countered this and said that what had been done was not the ‘Grand Plan’, was for a grant for the showers which involved contractors and doing it all in one go. The AGM had instructed the Club not to go for the grant to get contractors but to do the renovations in house, and that is what had been done over the last few years and that we have now eventually arrived at the final room. There was a general agreement that this is what the situation was, but P. Cardy disputed this and the Chairman asked him to read out the Minute, which he did. Then Chairman then explained that some people had interpreted the Minute to mean that any work carried out has been contrary to this, which is not the case. He said that the real issue was over the boiler and not what had been accomplished in the past. S. Moore, who was cited in the Minute, then confirmed that he believed the ‘Grand Plan’ was to pay a contractor to do it all in one go. Basically it was not about what was or what was not in the plan, it was simply the use of a contractor. There was again general agreement that this was the case.

B. Jopling then outlined his argument, that work of this consequence should be decided at an AGM not by the Committee. He outlined the case that misleading information had been given. He argued that the Club is not being given the chance to make a decision, it is all being done by the Committee. He then went on to say that he believed the 2005 AGM Minute said that we are not going ahead with the big plan. He said that we could be talking about a huge amount of money if we are going to replace all the stairs.

The Chairman then called for a pause, and said that the work on Cottage No.4 has been waiting for a decision on the boiler. He then asked one of the WW to speak and C. Grimmett replied. He said that first there was never a statement that the stairs in Nos.3/4 were rotten. The joists were certainly rotted at the front as was witnessed by the metal supports that had been put in a long time ago, and as confirmed by P. Cardy. The stairs came up because the floor was coming out and it was sensible to approach them at the same time. If we simply built round them they would never be done. He agreed that the stairs might have gone on, but the recommendation was that the stairs should be replaced with the ceiling. As the plumbing and boiler replacement came in it was logical that it was done at the same time.

B. Stevens said that the Club operates on goodwill and that those involved in WW spent a lot of time and effort doing things and it needs to be the case that we do not make it onerous for them to do the work – which needs to be done. There was general agreement with this sentiment.

P. Cardy replied that the course of work outlined by C. Grimmett was eminently reasonable. You do not want to put a new boiler in and then mess about with ceilings etc. He suggested that this was not the way it had come over to him. Others disagreed indicating the work had been laid out in a justified way. The Chairman then said that he was always under the impression that at the Committee the decision was reached on the basis that it made sense to replace the stairs at the same time as the ceiling. What he asked the Committee to vote on was exactly what C. Grimmett had just outlined.

P. Quill argued that we must have a master plan and that we could change the whole configuration of the HQ if need be. C. Friend then endorsed what P. Quill had said, and stated that when F. Levett and G. Vaughan had held the office of Warden, both had put forward the idea of having a long term plan for the HQ, but it was rejected in favour of stop-gap repairs. He then explained that yes, replacing the drains was minuted, but to get at them the floor needed to come up and to take that up the facilities had to be wrecked. There had to be a plan for replacement of the whole complex from the bottom up, and that was to do things in an orderly fashion, room by room – we are now at the end of that plan. We do need a long term plan to prevent this again. B. Clipstone supported that view confirming there is only the drying room left.

The Chairman pointed out that there has been a Minute for at least two years on the boiler and its replacement because of its unreliability. The Committee made the decision in the December 2009 meeting to carry out the replacement and that it is not something that has been hatched up on a whim or secretively.

B. Jopling said that the decision has been taken and that it is silly to bring it to the AGM. What he was concerned about was that the AGM should be told that there are major problems with parts of the Club. Someone needs to present a reasoned plan and costing so that the Club can see how to finance it, that the Membership knows what its money is going on. He argued that there are

Members who believe that what we have is quite good enough for a caving club, which is what we are. It should be the AGMs decision what the Club should be, not the Committee.

B. Thompson pointed out that the Club is a 200 year-old building, similar to that which she lives in, and they need regularly maintaining. Yes, you can plan, but the moment you start doing something you find things unexpectedly. You need the Committee to have the ability to make decisions quickly.

B. Jopling was concerned that the structural hart of the Club was being changed. A room has been created, that he had only just learned about from the Agenda, which had not been decided as to what to do with it.

The Chairman cleared up this point in that when Tackle was moved into No.4 Front it was always a temporary action. There was always a 'new room' to find a use for.

The President then said that it was quite good to roll back two decades and said that he felt that the Club has now learned the value of having a long-term plan for the HQ. Here is an opportunity to develop a forward plan. We are a Members Club and it is for the Members to decide what to do. Let us not miss this opportunity.

The Chairman indicated that there was a feeling for a Forward Plan. Where should it come from? The President replied that it was in the hands of the Committee to sort this out. Let it come back to the 2011 AGM with proposals. S. Moore argued that we must distinguish between strategy and tactics. The Club needs to buy into the strategy and doing it is what the Committee is for, the tactics are their concern.

G. Vaughan was going to make a proposal, but the Chairman made it clear that this was a clear view of the AGM that there needs to be a Forward Plan put up to the 2011 AGM. The President said that there needs to be a formal proposal and Proposed "that during the course of this year the strategy is produced and presented to the 2011 AGM" which was Seconded by A. Richardson.

**Unanimous For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions - Carried**

S. Amatt then raised the problem of the gas pipes from the supply to the Kitchen. Last year he had raised the point of the odd diameters of pipes and B. Jopling had taken this on as a project but nothing happened. Two weeks ago as nothing had happened he had sorted out a fitter who came and inspected the premises said that we need to replace the supply pipe work with 22mm pipes rather than the 15mm that are presently installed. We need this work done by a qualified gas fitter.

The tank needs an upgrade of valves on top, which will be done by BP. However, we are now responsible for the valve on the wall as well as the pipe from the last valve on the tank. This needs to be changed for a more modern, uprated version.

S. Amatt then asked for a separate allocation of money to allow the upgrading of the pipe work. A. Richardson then said this was a separate project, but it needs sorting out. C. Friend pointed out that the money is on top of WW10 and that a Committee decision is needed. A. Dobson then proposed “that the new Committee sort out the matter of the extra pipe work to the Kitchen as a matter of urgency” Seconded by B. Clipstone.

**Majority For, 1 Against, 2 Abstentions - Carried**

## **12. Duty Officer System.**

**10/A26.** The Chairman asked G. Vaughan to speak to Attachment 3. G. Vaughan explained that the Committee has struggled with this problem for some time and it is now up to the AGM to set the strategy. K. Goodhead agreed that the system is not working and has some ideas that can be put forward. He pointed to several faults with the system, no DO, key cupboards left wide open. P. Cardy indicated that he has not been DO for some long time and would be happy to do a weekend when we do not have one. The Chairman urged people to use the website and volunteer. D. Edwards suggested that the DO Czar simply appoints people for a particular weekend. F. Levett explained why we need a DO, the key system and the duties/responsibilities that we have to Land Owners who have given us the task. If we wish to step away from this we could and then hand over the responsibility for giving out keys to someone else. Members would suffer as we would need to get keys from elsewhere. K. Goodhead then added the destination board and rescue call out. F. Levett insisted that there is an important point of principle here, if we say we are going to go on administering the key system we have to man it properly. If we say ‘no’ there are other ways of doing things. B. Jopling argued that a DO is essential and we have to sort out how to make people do their fair share. C. Friend pointed out that from R. Smith’s documents there were early Newsheets and Secretarial Notes that stated the DOs for the whole year. We are going over old ground again, it is not a new problem. J. Burrows liked the early system when a DO could go out in the afternoon, suggesting that if you did not have a key by 12 o’clock you could not go underground. It was observed that B. Clipstone would never go caving if this happened. J. Rowland pointed out that the DO system has not been around from the year dot. It was introduced by L. Galpin in the late 60s and the lists that C. Friend had referred to was produced by going round signing people up. P. Francis suggested that as a subs reduction has worked in terms of getting them in maybe if you are DO you can get an additional reduction in subs. M. Day explained that the origins were from a few individuals and Committee Members who had keys and it became too much and so was shared around. B. Stevens expressed a widely held view that those who travel a long way find the time precious and so want to go caving and do not wish to sit around being DO.



K. Goodhead indicated that we have a distinction between cavers and non-cavers so maybe we have to define use and we put up the subs and reduce them when people are DO. He said that he would be happy to administer that type of system.

G. Christian pointed out that there have been times when we have been successful and this seems to coincide with sending around someone to cajole Members to do DO. The DO Czar does seem to work. R. Radcliffe backed up the idea that if you have travelled a long way and though the idea of going off at say mid-day, is good, but then rather than not allowing people to go caving, it reverts back to there being no DO.

P. Quill thought that what G. Christian had said was correct, Bob Hall being very successful

B. Thompson indicated that there could be a system that generated an email to alert Members that a DO was needed.

B. Jopling said that the system is not manned and weeks can go by with no Members even present. The Club appears to have lost the social side where people turned up to be together.

H. Jenkins indicated that for new Members, being a DO is a daunting task and could they be doubled up with an experienced person to make it easier. The Chairman said that we did have a system that if you proposed someone you had to help them with their first DO duty. The Chairman reiterated the point that the Club Rules say it is the duty of Members who use the Club to be DO. The problem is how you get people to do it or enforce this. He indicated that he had the feeling that SWCC wanted to retain the responsibility of the keys.

G. Vaughan asked for an AGM-level decision on who is responsible to be DOs, and what does 'use the Club' mean?

B. Stevens pointed out that the insurance was not a good way of sorting people out.

K. Goodhead wanted to know why limited DO hours was stopped and asked C. Friend to comment. C. Friend stated that he thought that continuity was important, people go caving when people go caving, not according to a cut-off point, and indicated the caving habits of B. Clipstone. A person needs to be in charge for one day so that the responsibilities are fulfilled and possible rescue scenarios are managed as they happen when they happen, and that there are no slips ups with the destination board. K. Goodhead then asked for any evidence to indicate things were missed and the example of parties coming back from caving late in the evening to find the place locked and the DO away from the building.

R. Radcliffe Proposed "that we revert to the system where the DO can be off duty between 11am and 5pm" and was seconded by K. Goodhead.

F. Levett then said that, if this what we wanted to do, we probably had a duty to consult with the Land Owners as to whether it was acceptable.

There was then agreement that rescues happen when rescues happen, not outside the hours of 11 to 5 when there is no DO. The Club needs to be manned when people are underground. This was backed up by a number of Members and there was agreement that we need constant cover.

The Proposal was voted on:

**7 For, Majority Against, 3 Abstentions - Defeated**

V. Allkins Proposed “that SWCC should maintain the current system and that the new Committee needs to be tasked with encouraging all Members, where practicable, to act as DO” and was seconded by S. West.

**41 For, 3 Against, 11 Abstentions - Carried**

G. Vaughan then said that with this decision, the AGM has clearly defined a group of Members that are tasked to be DO. He reiterated that there needs to be a proper definition. C. Friend said that the AGM has already visited this when the Club Rules were changed. Those who use the Club is a rigorous definition.

L. das Neves argued that Members do not appear to realise how important the DO system is. G. Christian then pointed out that is there a list of DO duties, can it be reproduced in paper form – he asked C. Friend to confirm that such a list is in the Club Handbook – it is. C. Grimmett also confirmed that it is quite a long list and so can be daunting. The Chairman re-iterated that when you propose someone for Membership, they do need to be assisted on their first DO duty. G. Vaughan then, in the light of the Club Rules, proposed “ that use of the Club means that a person has signed in on the Huts Sheets in the last two years” seconded by B. Stevens.

**Majority For, 0 Against, 12 Abstentions - Carried**

The Chairman reminded people that Members must sign in for any visits to the Club.

### **13. Policy Document**

**10/A27.** The Chairman introduced the Club Policy Document that has to be ratified each AGM. There have been no changes to it in the last year. Proposed by J. Lister and Seconded by K. Goodhead that it be ratified.

**Unanimous For, 0 Against, 0 Abstentions - Carried**

### **14. Election of one Trustee**

**10/A28.** The Chairman explained how he intended to carry out the procedure in the light of there being two candidates. There would first be a straight vote and then the acceptance vote for the winner, both to be carried out by paper vote. The AGM was in agreement with the proposal.

The two candidates were:

G. Ambalino

Proposed by: A. Richardson, A. Burrows, B. Clipstone, A. Dobson, D. Dobson, R. Radcliffe

C. Friend

Proposed by: F. Levett, V. Allkins, S. Goodhead, C. Grimmett, J. Lister, L. das Neves

As a result of the first vote C. Friend was to go through to the second vote. The result of the second vote, which needed to be passed by a two thirds majority of those voting, was:

**56 For, 3 No, 1 Abstentions**

As a result of this **C. Friend** was elected to be appointed Trustee of SWCC.

### **15. Election of Officers**

#### **10/A29. President**

There was only one nomination received for election as President:

**Fred Levett**

Proposed by: C. Friend, N. Bayley, G. Christian, B. Clipstone, H. Jenkins, L. das Neves,

The meeting agreed not to hold a paper ballot. The show of hands was:

**65 For, 0 No, 0 Abstentions**

As a result of this **Fred Levett** was elected as President of SWCC.

F. Levett thanked the AGM for the

#### **10/A30. Vice Presidents**

The 4 Trustees were proposed and seconded *en bloc*.

**Les Hawes**

**John Lister**

**Alison Maddocks**

**Clark Friend**

Proposed: A. Richardson

Seconded: B. Clipstone

**Majority For, 0 Against, 4 Abstentions - Elected**

#### **10/A31. Vice Presidents**

The following were proposed:

**M. Day**

Proposed: D. Edwards

Seconded: A, Burrows

**Majority For, 0 Against, 1 Abstentions – Elected**

**J. Rowland**

Proposed: B. Clipstone

Seconded: R. Jones

**Majority For, 0 Against, 2 Abstentions - Elected**

T. Baker then asked for nominations for the post of Chairman. None was received.

After some short discussion G. Vaughan then proposed that T. Baker stand for a third year. This proposal met with the approval of the AGM and T. Baker reluctantly agreed to stand.

**10/A32. Chairman Tony Baker**  
Proposed: G. Vaughan                      Seconded: The AGM  
**Elected**

The Chairman then asked for nominations for Secretary, none was received. There was then a proposal that C. Friend stand again.

C. Friend then explained that now, as he was elected as a Trustee, he was unhappy about being on both sides, part of the 'managers' and being one of the 'managed'. Whilst there is nothing in the Constitution to prevent this, he was not comfortable with it. The Trustees are instructed by the Committee to carry out responsibilities concerning the Club property and cannot really take part in formulating the instructions. G. Vaughan suggested that he could abstain from all votes and just be Secretary. V. Allkins then proposed and seconded by G. Vaughan that C. Friend be Secretary. C. Friend then pointed out that whilst it is accepted that there is nothing in the Constitution to prevent a Trustee being on the Committee, he was not comfortable and asked the other Trustees what their opinion was. The consensus was that it was not a good idea for a Trustee to be on the Committee and on this basis C. Friend explained that he was not willing to stand.

B. Jopling then asked if we have to have one. C. Friend said that as per the Constitution we have to appoint one, and read out the paragraph.

The Chairman then asked again of there were any nominations and again received none. He then adjourned the Meeting for a short time.

On return he then asked for nominations and received one.

**10/A33. Secretary Lizzy das Neves**  
Proposed: B. Jopling                      Seconded: A. Burrows  
**Elected**

The Chairman then asked sequentially for nominations for the following Officers. For each of which only one nomination was received.

**10/A34. Treasurer Andy Freem**  
Proposed: J. Rowland                      Seconded: V. Allkins  
**Elected**

**10/A35. Warden Brian Clipstone**  
Proposed: K. Goodhead                      Seconded: G. Vaughan

- Elected**
- 10/A36.** Conservation Officer **Bernie Woodley**  
 Proposed: K. Goodhead                      Seconded: A. Richardson  
**Elected**
- 10/A37.** Training Officer **Gareth Edwards**  
 Proposed: B.Jopling                      Seconded: A. Burrows  
**Elected**
- 10/A38.** Records Officer **Allan Richardson**  
 Proposed: S. Moore      Seconded: V. Allkins  
**Elected**
- 10/A37.** Equipment Officer **Paul Meredith**  
 Proposed: G. Edwards                      Seconded: G. Vaughan  
**Elected**
- 10/A38.** Editor **Helen Jenkins**  
 Proposed: G. Vaughan                      Seconded: A. Burrows  
**Elected**
- 10/A39.** Cave Rescue Liaison Officer **P. Hobson**  
 Proposed: G. Vaughan                      Seconded: C. Friend  
**Elected**

**10/A40.** The Chairman then asked for nominations for Four Ordinary Members. Following the proposal of five candidates were proposed:

**Peter Collings-Wells**

(Proposed: J. Burrows                      Seconded: B. Clipstone)

**Les Davies**

(Proposed: G. Edwards                      Seconded: G. Amabalino)

**Annabel Hallihan**

(Proposed: L. Davies                      Seconded: N. Davies)

**S. Moore**

(Proposed: J. Rowland                      Seconded: G. Vaughan)

**Corrie Schrijver**

(Proposed: P. Francis                      Seconded: S. West)

The Chairman proposed that, with the agreement of the AGM, he would like to avoid a ballot. He asked that if Lel Davies would accept co-option, the other four would go through. Lel Davies was happy with that arrangement and the AGM agreed that this should happen.

**16. Appointment of Auditor**

**10/A41.** Ken Maddocks was proposed as Auditor by B. Jopling and Seconded by J. Rowland.

**Majority For; 0 Against; Abstentions 0 – Carried**

## **17. Any Other Business**

### **10/A42. Kitchen.**

A. Richardson expressed concern over the state of the Kitchen – we need it to be cleaned properly. The Chairman asked about costs, but there were no details. It was suggested that the new Committee find these out.

J. Burrows argued that to have one ‘deep clean’ a year would not be unreasonable and together with P. Collings-Wells thought that we could do it ourselves rather than use a contractor. B. Jopling indicated that the way we get it clean is to have more visitors as they do clean the place up.

K. Goodhead then Proposed “that the AGM is in favour of the Committee looking at getting the Kitchen area, including fridges and ovens, is cleaned by specialists”

**Majority For; 5 Against; 4 Abstentions – Carried**

### **10/A43. AGM Minutes.**

B. Jopling said that the draft AGM Minutes be published to the Membership within 2 months of the AGM. C. Friend said that there already was a time limit on production because the Committee had various actions that needed to be carried through. The Minutes were normally available for the first meeting after the summer. It was suggested that 1<sup>st</sup> of August would be reasonable.

C. Friend explained that he had attempted to produce them for the first Committee Meeting after the summer break. K. Goodhead “Proposed that the Draft Minutes be published 3 months after the AGM”

R. Radcliffe then asked how they would be published as costs were important.

**Majority For; 2 Against; 11 Abstentions – Carried**

### **010/A44. Committee Meetings.**

V. Allkins asked for clarification on Members attending Committee meetings. It was explained that any Member can attend a Committee meeting, but can take no part unless invited to do so. Members are invited to come and contribute, e.g. WW10, but they cannot participate in any voting.

**10/A45.** There was an enquiry as to the health of Mary Hazelton’s dragon. The Records Officer assured the Meeting that it was in good health.

### **10/A46. Keys.**

There is a clear security problem over cave keys, particularly those keys which are designated by the various Management Committees for use by SWCC Members only. We have already lost a Craig a Ffynnon key and we now have need to think of a way of keeping them secure yet obtainable.

J. Burrows suggested a second key cupboard with the key available from the DO. B. Jopling pointed out that the keys for that cupboard would then be on the DO key ring, which is not secure.

A. Richardson that they might be stored off-site but J. Burrows argued that they should be on-site for ease of instant access and the Chairman indicated we had to cope with mid-week caving as well.

J. Carter said that whatever we do is going to be a compromise and there was general concern about making more work for the DO to little effect.

It was agreed that the new Committee must make this a priority.

#### **10/A47. Hut Bookings**

K. Goodhead was asked if he would continue as Hut Bookings Officer; he agreed. The AGM gave thanks.

#### **10/A48. Digging Week**

The Chairman announced that there would be another Digging Week later in the year.

#### **10/A49. Early-bird payments**

L. Davies reminded Members that subscriptions are due tomorrow and that there is an early-bird reduction for paying within the prescribed period. It was accepted that this reduction had helped in getting in the subscriptions.

#### **10/A50. Electronic banking**

G. Edwards was asked how much progress has been made with setting up electronic banking with PayPal. G. Edwards replied that it had been tested and was now ready to use.

#### **10/A51. Confrontations.**

T. Baker explained the position with J. Corrigan, who has been subject to a ban from SWCC for many years. Due to an incident with him the Committee had reconfirmed the ban apart from getting cave keys. The Committee were asking for confirmation of this because J. Corrigan has presented his ban as something orchestrated by a small group of individuals and not from the majority of the Club. As J. Corrigan has been elected Training Officer of the Rescue Team the Committee reviewed the ban and agreed to allow him to attend Rescue Executive Meetings in the Club. He has again flouted this, appearing in the Club and using the facilities when no Rescue Executive matters were being dealt with. The Chairman then asked how the Club would like to move forward with this?

B. Jopling Proposed “that the AGM endorses the way that the past Committee have handled the position”, Seconded by D. Edwards. The Chairman reconfirmed with the Meeting, that this means that J. Corrigan is banned from the Club apart from collecting/returning cave keys, attending rescues and rescue practices and attending any Rescue Executive meetings that are held at SWCC.

K. Goodhead asked if serious dialogue with J. Corrigan had been attempted – the answer was yes, on several occasions.

H. Eteen asked what happens if he simply ignores the position as he currently appears to do?

B. Jopling said that he had explained the position to J. Corrigan and recommended that if people do not want to face him they simply phone the Police. He did not think that a Club Member should have to have to face threats from a non-member.

J. Carter, speaking as Chairman of WBCRT, said that J. Corrigan was in fact doing a good job in the rescue team. However, he admitted that J. Corrigan had previously physically assaulted him and so knows what J. Corrigan is capable of.

S. Moore asked for some guidance for DOs and the Chairman said that this was partly the reason for sending out the eNews/Newsheet message. The Chairman reiterated that if people are afraid of him that it is best to ring the Police. The threat of ringing the Police has caused him to leave the Club in the past, so it works. People now know exactly the position if they see him around the Club.

**Majority For; 0 Against; 3 Abstentions – Carried**

### **17. Time and Venue for 2011 AGM**

**10/A52.** The 2011 AGM will be held on Saturday the 30<sup>th</sup> of April. It was Proposed by V. Allkins and Seconded by K. Goodhead, that it be at 9.00 a.m., at a venue to be advised (suggested to be at the Miners' Welfare, Abercraf). The Committee would confirm the venue at a later date.

**Majority For; 3 Against; 0 Abstentions – Carried**

**09/A50.** There being no further business, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.

Clark Friend, 07/07/2010

