

## **OFD Access and Entry: Conditions, Procedures and Rules**

1. These Procedures apply to all parts of and all entrances to Ogof Ffynnon Ddu (OFD) and are to be read in conjunction with the Terms of Reference of the Ogof Ffynnon Ddu Cave Advisory Group (OFDCAG) (Annex 1).
2. By agreement with NRW, the access controlling body for OFD is the South Wales Caving Club (SWCC); the SWCC Permit Secretary administers access, taking advice from the OFD Cave Advisory Group (OFDCAG). The entire cave is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a large part of it is a National Nature Reserve. Access to the cave is subject to the obligations placed upon the landowners by its special status.
3. Entrances to the cave are gated and permits for entry are obtained from the SWCC Permit Secretary by following the procedures set out here. Conservation of the cave and its flora and fauna is a priority and cavers are expected to act responsibly and adhere to the entry conditions and rules.
4. Access is available to members of *bona fide* caving clubs who have read, and are prepared to abide by, the Conditions of Entry and Rules published by NRW and SWCC. *Bona fide* caving clubs are defined as those affiliated to the British Caving Association or another appropriate national or international body.
5. Applications for permits must be made by an officer of the club and be received by the Permit Secretary at least two weeks prior to the proposed caving trip. Applications may be made either by email to ofdaccess@hotmail.co.uk or by post, in which case a stamped addressed envelope would be appreciated.
6. The maximum permitted party size is 6 people, including the leader, and individual parties must remain separated in the cave. A permit covers a single party of up to 6 people. If more than 6 people from the applying club will be in the cave at the same time, then multiple permits must be requested.
7. Permit holders may obtain keys to the cave from SWCC headquarters at weekends or, during the week, from recognised key holders.
8. The Permit Secretary shall have absolute discretion in interpreting these conditions and may refuse a permit, in which case the applicant will be informed of the reason for refusal. The applicant may appeal, in writing, to NRW and SWCC or via the secretary of the OFDCAG.
9. There is a facility for Annual Permits to be issued to clubs that have demonstrated a regular and conscientious interest in Ogof Ffynnon Ddu. Applications for Annual Permits should be made to the Permit Secretary. Clubs who have a rapid turnover of members (such as University caving clubs) are not normally granted annual permits.
10. Access to the Columns area is restricted in the interests of conservation. Parties may visit the Columns only when a Cave Warden is present. Wardens will normally be available for visits to the Columns between noon and 3pm on the Sundays of Easter, May Day, Spring and August Bank Holidays, and New Year's Day, for which there will be a rota of Wardens. Parties wishing to visit the Columns at these times do not need to make any prior arrangements but should make themselves known to a Warden by 10 am on the day. Parties must ensure that they have their own leaders; Wardens do not act as leaders for visiting parties.
11. The 'Entry Conditions and Rules' are listed on the reverse of each permit.

**The text above being a copy of that agreed with NRW in July 2019 and published as Annex 2. to the Memorandum of Understanding between SWCC and NRW.**