

Ogof Ffynnon Ddu Cave Advisory Group
Minutes
9th December 2024
starting at 1900

Apologies

Jill Brunson, Christina Byrne, Linda Wickham, Paul Dann, Tom Partridge.

Present

Tony Baker, Allan Richardson, Vince Allkins, Andrew McLeod, Luke Ashton, Dave Dobson, Duncan Hornby, Tomasz Zalewski, Nicola Pearce, Jo White, Claire Vivian, Andrew Dobson.

Chairmans Report

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending, he had nothing to report

Appointment of new Wardens

None

Correspondence received

None

Hon. Secretary's Report

Nothing to report other than the normal administration.

OFD Access Review Group Report

No update from SWCC yet, ongoing.

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between NRW and SWCC

NRW has not been able to progress this at present, some ideas have been received from Gary Vaughan, ongoing though currently paused.

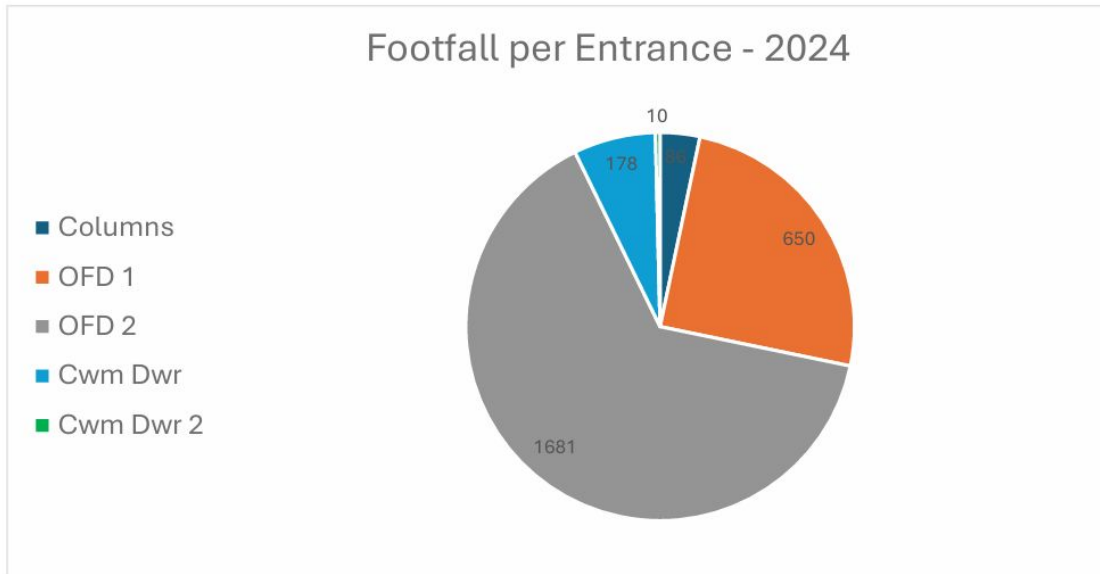
SWCC Permit Secretary's Report

Cofion cynnes
Luke Ashton
SWCC Permit Secretary

Annual permit holding clubs can now book keys via the Digital Destination Board app 24/7. If you would like to use this feature in DDB, please download the app and create an account, then send me your DDB username, name and club.

At the meeting Luke and Vince confirmed that so far this year, two keys have been lost.

The nos visiting the Columns are higher than what is on the key log, Luke to look into wording on the log in. Suggest that wardens count the numbers attending and record it.



Year	No. of Date Specific Permits (OFD) Issued
2024 (to date)	105
2023	55
2022	76

Year	No. of Covers via All Entrances
2024 (to date)	2605
2023	2927
2022	2847

Conservation Officers Report

Work has continued on re-taping, formation cleaning and removal of boot and hand prints etc.

A fair amount of tape cleaning and re-alignment has been done, plus more route taping and spot taping in new areas.

The usual thanks go to Andy & Brian for their stalwart assistance.

Dave Dobson, December 2024

Fixed Aids Officers Report

Inspections of SWCC Official Fixed Aids continue. The number of official fixed aids that require inspection is being reduced as maintenance-free anchors are installed; some other fixed aids may not require yearly inspection.

Scaffolding work is planned for the lower half of the Cwm Dwr entrance rift next year to prevent

loose material being dislodged from the rift, as the original timbers have rotten and fallen away. This will be similar to the work carried out successfully in the upper half of the Cwm Dwr entrance rift.

Anchor work has continued with Ogofa Cymru installing resin anchors in OFD to replace older and/or less robust anchors. Locations where resin anchors have been installed include Swamp Creek, the Skyhook, two pitches in Great Oxbow, a traverse on the Lavender Way bypass to Northern Lights and the Crevasse. Over the last year, approximately 47 anchors have been installed in OFD; in all cases these anchors have been installed on existing routes with old anchors. 12mm Petzl stainless steel through bolts (which are of a high quality) on the Crevasse have been incorporated into the resin anchor route to avoid installing more anchors than required.

Locations which have been agreed but anchors not yet installed include the Letterbox and the Fault Aven pull-up system. Currently the Skyhook has an unapproved fixed rope in place but this may be restored to the previous pull-up system in time.

Three new locations have been identified as suitable locations for resin anchor installation; one in Cwm Dwr 2 and two on the Edward's Shortcut route. If both SWCC Committee and OFDCAG (including NRW) agree with these proposals, then a request will be made to Ogofa Cymru to consider installation of resin anchors in OFD.

Cwm Dwr 2 is rarely visited, but has a small pitch which currently relies on older, potentially poor anchors and could benefit from installation of resin anchors; no objections were raised by the Fixed Aids Advisory Group.

Edward's Shortcut is a major trade route in the cave. Currently, most people do not use ropes on the route, which can be passed without great difficulty by competent cavers but does involve an unprotected traverse over a 10-15m deep rift. Many cavers only travel in one direction on this route due to difficulties in ascending the chimney climb. Some cavers do not use this route at all due to the hazards of the traverse.

As part of the preparation for these proposal, a consultation of SWCC members was run asking whether members supported a proposal to install resin anchors on both the chimney and the traverse on the Edward's Shortcut route. After filtering of repeated responses, 48 responses were considered. 73% of the responses were in favour of the proposal with only 17% opposed, showing strong support for the proposal.

The small chimney on the way to Edward's Shortcut currently relies on either a natural thread (which does not give a good hang for SRT) or a spit (which again does not give a clean hang for a direct drop, although a traverse on spits exists). This location could benefit from installation of resin anchors, and no objections were raised by the Fixed Aids Advisory Group.

The traverse on Edward's Shortcut has a range of potential anchors on it as well as natural anchors either side, including a drilled thread, a very small thread suitable for Dyneema and a spit, but

rigging using these is not straightforward and does expose the rigger to some risk due to spacings between the small thread and the drilled thread. This installation was more contentious in the Fixed Aids Advisory Group; a recommendation to install resin anchors on this traverse was passed by 2 votes to none, with five members abstaining.

Proposal: support the installation of resin anchors on the small pitch in Cwm Dwr 2.

One abstention, rest in favour, passed.

Proposal: support the installation of resin anchors on the small chimney climb on the Edward's Shortcut route.

All in favour, passed.

Proposal: support the installation of resin anchors on the traverse on the Edward's Shortcut route.

Three abstentions, rest in favour, passed.

Reported Accidents

None

Rescue Liason Report

Continuing with a temporary Rescue Liason Officer (Claire Vivian).

Rescue practice was held in OFD on 30th November. For conservation reasons where necessary, the casualty was removed from the stretcher to avoid crossing over tapes.

Vince tasked by SWCC committee to look for a volunteer Liason Officer by the next SWCC AGM.

Allocated Columns duties

These have been published on the SWCC notice board and on the OFDCAG webpage.

Cave Management Plan

Ongoing

Update on safety advice

Nothing to report

Possible changes to TOR's

These are part of the MOU, they are ongoing.

OFDCAG digital interface-update

The Columns open days and wardens names have been updated.

AOB

Luke said he will have 3 years of accurate visitor data by the end of the year. This will be made available as a statistical report after December and available for the next meeting.

Andy pointed out that people are appointed for three years, they need to be reappointed by SWCC Committee.

Allan to check when people need to be re-appointed, need to talk to SWCC Committee about re-appointments, also re changing the TOR.

Need to look at getting more Club Representatives.

Luke will contact the Annual Permit Holders to ask for volunteers as Club Representatives.

Date of next meeting tbc.

R. Allan Richardson

Hon. Secretary

OFDCAG