

Caving Wales Annual General Meeting Cyfarfod Cyffredinol Blynyddol Ogofa Cymru

Sunday 15 March 2026 at 13:00h
in the Hibbert Room at Craig-y-Nos Country Park
Pen-y-cae, Swansea SA9 1GL

Please note that the country park has car parking charges
Tea and coffee will be provided. There is also a café on site.
The meeting will be held in person and by Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84974491558?pwd=LiPkbADfyNaibMso5s7wUbZLDoc0TI.1>
Meeting ID: 849 7449 1558
Passcode: 477480

AGENDA

1. Attendance List

2. Apologies for absence

3. Chair's Welcome

4. Minutes of the 2025 AGM

These minutes are available to download from:

https://www.cambriancavingcouncil.org.uk/pdf/meeting_minutes/2025/AGM2025MinutesDRAFT.pdf

5. Applications for membership

6. Officers' reports

6.1 Chairman - Adrian Fawcett

I have nothing much to report from the last 12 months. It has been another quiet year for Caving Wales, with officers efficiently undertaking their duties with little involvement from the executive. I have had no contact with NRW this year other than being in receipt of the citation for the merged and extended SSSI covering Mynydd Llangatwg, Llangynidr, and further west. I would be only too glad to have a constructive dialogue with NRW about our shared interests, however there has not been a suitable pretext for this lately.

One significant event during the year was the move of the Forest of Dean clubs to form their own regional council. While I wish them well, it does concern me that the pool of active caving clubs represented by Caving Wales, already quite small, is now further diminished. Going forwards, there is probably more we should be doing to engage with our affiliated clubs, ensuring that Caving Wales remains relevant to them.

6.2 Secretary - Allan Richardson

The main thing to note is the creation of the Forest of Dean as a separate Regional Council of the BCA. This has been an amicable split with Caving Wales which seconded the motion at BCA Council. I have attended most of the BCA meetings in the past year as the Caving Wales representative. I am willing to stand again for the position of Caving Wales Secretary.

6.3 Treasurer - Mary Rogers

Ogofau Cymru/ Caving Wales				
Accounts for the Year Ended 31 December 2025				
<u>Income and Expenditure Account</u>				
	2025		2024	
<u>Income</u>	£	£	£	£
BCA Grant	1,411.55		425.88	
Training Events	2,285.00		1,200.00	
Compensaton (Barclays)	0.00		60.00	
Keys	70.00		60.00	
Total Income		3,766.55		1,745.88
<u>Expenditure</u>				
Training Events	1,944.30		1,248.40	
Equipment and Techniques	1,137.57		784.83	
Conservation and Access	1,053.21		571.59	
Anchors	149.29		0.00	
FoDCCAG	0.00		281.00	
Print, Postage and Stationery	161.14		55.13	
Total Expenditure		4,445.51		2,940.95
Net Income (Expenditure) for the Year		(678.96)		(1,195.07)
<u>Balance Sheet</u>				
Barclays Current Account	4,524.65		5,203.61	
		4,524.65		5,203.61
Reserves at 31st December 2025 and 2024	5,203.61		6,398.68	
Net Income (Expenditure) for the Year	(678.96)		(1,195.07)	
Total Reserves		4,524.65		5,203.61
(Signed) Mary Rogers Treasurer Date : 3 February 2026				
Honorary Scrutineer's Report				
The above accounts of Ogofau Cymru / Caving Wales showing a net expenditure of £678.96 and capital of £4,524.65 have been prepared by us from the books, records, information and explanations provided to us by the above and we certify that the same is in accordance therewith				
(Signed) Ian L Adams FFA FFTA AIAB (For Abacus Accountants) Date: 3 February 2025				

Caving Wales Treasurer's Report for the year ending 31st December 2025

The Ogofa Cymru / Caving Wales audited accounts for 2025 show a deficit of £678.96 leaving our bank balance as of 31 December 2025 at £4,524.65.


Expenditure on C&A and E&T was mostly later in the year – the former included replacing various fixed aids items in OFD and concluding payments to clear FoDCAG's outstanding claims for Wet Sink and Redhouse, while E&T included an extra set of SRT equipment to support training courses and a second set of survey equipment for the planned re-survey of DY0 which our committee agreed on.

Richard's training events made a substantial profit of £340.70.

As far as I am aware, CW budgeted £2,501.21 in expenditure for the year and so the BCA grant, when claimed, for 2025 will cover this in full.

Again, many thanks again to Ian for his prompt audit and to Richard and John for their help.

I will be quite happy to resign as Treasurer and am hopeful that John Sheehy will be able to replace me, should his time allow and subject to there being any other candidates.



13 February 2026

6.4 Conservation and Access Officer - Stuart France

CAVING WALES / OGOFA CYMRU CONSTITUTION

The separation of the Forest of Dean from Wales for regional caving representation purposes has advanced during the past year. FoDCCAG has been liaising directly with BCA aiming to become a separate regional council. A formal motion to bring about this change, supported by Caving Wales, was passed by the BCA Council meeting in January 2026 but the details are still to be worked out. BCA now has the responsibility for paying FoDCCAG's expenses.

From our perspective, it needs a minor change to our Constitution, which could be done at our 2027 AGM so I propose a motion that the sentence "Areas of England represented by Caving Wales include the Forest of Dean and Shropshire" in section 1.1 be deleted in its entirety which leaves the phrase "bordering counties of England with relevant geology" in place but unspecified.

Financially, CW has no outstanding liability for FoDCCAG expenses in the last financial year. CW included a reasonable estimate for FoDCCAG in its BCA budget forecast for 2026 absent any actual estimates by FoDCCAG. That combined budget has been accepted by BCA and it cannot now be changed. We are in the process of agreeing a split with FoDCCAG which will receive a further £500 from BCA to cover incidental administrative expenses in becoming a separate regional council.

BRITISH CAVING ASSOCIATION

BCA Council meetings have been attended by Allan Richardson - see the Secretary's report. The BCA's C&A Working Group has met twice by Zoom in the year reported. I was neither invited to nor made aware of its first meeting in 2025 which is the one where it discussed the FoDCCAG split.

I was at its second meeting, just after the BCA Council blessed the regional split. It discussed other topics as diverse as cleaning graffiti from mines and the less than satisfactory relations between caving and the national conservation bodies of England and Wales and ways to try to improve them.

NATURAL RESOURCES WALES

I have had no direct contact with NRW over the past year myself other than one incidental encounter with their staff at a BBNPA event. I would like to thank Sue Mabbett for attending National Access Forum for Wales (NAFW) meetings on behalf of Caving Wales during 2025 – see her report in item 7.

NRW still treats caving as an indoors activity because cave 'passages' by definition are in the main enclosed. The Dartmoor Camping Case went to its final appeal at the Supreme Court during 2025 where the appellant landowners comprehensively lost. Five judges unanimously ruled that being inside a tent in the context of recreation, walking in that instance, does not convert "open-air recreation" (the term used by the CRoW Act to scope its application) into something different and that the term is general and cannot be taken literally. The Court also defined the scope of "recreation" because the appellant had argued that going to sleep, where walkers becomes unconscious, cannot be recreation. Again, the Court ruled that "recreation" is general and going to sleep is "part and parcel" of some physical activities, and going to sleep (inside a tent or elsewhere) during a walk does

not convert "recreation" into something else. This ruling makes NRW's literal interpretation of "open-air", and other objections to caving rights - like the detail shown or omitted on OS maps in a caving context in order to deny access rights for caving - unsustainable in law. Consequently I have rewritten the legal guide page of the Caving Wales website to align our stated position with the Supreme Court.

The enlarged Mynydd Llangattock SSSI has come into effect. This 28 square miles "Site" of "Special Scientific Interest" extends west from the Clydach Gorge near Gilwern towards the Taff valley near Merthyr Tydfil. Other than roadside wooden notices appearing, which address Landowners and Occupiers, there is no obvious change on the ground. However, the expanded "Operations Likely to Damage the Scientific Interest" (the OLDSI list) has become more restrictive. These operations are actions for which those responsible for managing SSSIs have to consult the national conservation body (NRW) for clearance before carrying them out, and failure to consult is a criminal offence. This does not apply to visitors such as cavers or walkers who are clearly neither Landowners nor Occupiers.

There is a vast body of case law concerning what an Occupier is. Simple cases are like a tenant farmer or a tenanted pub landlord where the person who runs the business from day to day and, crucially, is also responsible for health and safety at the "premises", is deemed an Occupier. A member of the public who comes on to land simply as a visitor or into a pub as a customer, welcome or otherwise, is not an Occupier simply because of their physical presence.

So NRW gives me the impression of positioning itself for future legal conflict with caving because it is already claiming that arranging cave access for other people (and I suppose for oneself and one's friends too) converts such facilitators and visitors into Occupiers. This is legally creative but absurd since buying a ticket, or being given free access to visit a showcave or a Cadw castle or anywhere else, whilst being a contract and forming a relationship of sorts does not convert visitors into an Occupiers because the landowners have not transferred their legal rights nor their legal responsibilities to their visitors. Simply obtaining permission by fee simple or pro bono to visit property owned by someone else does not create endless new Occupiers. Otherwise every user of a permissive footpath or house or hotel guest or show cave and so forth would become and remain an Occupier. Absurdity is not, however, likely to prevent NRW from having a tilt at someone after setting up this scene.

MLCMAC

Caving at Mynydd Llangattock continues to be observed by the MLCMAC advisory committee. This group has been supported by CW after NRW decided to stop running it. Its constitutional purpose had been to advise NRW as the legal Occupier of the Craig-y-Cilau National Nature Reserve under a lease from the Beaufort Estate which delegated control of the caves to CCW (NRW's predecessor). The lease expired decades ago and control of everything then reverted back to the Beaufort Estate. It seems that NRW's relationship with the Estate is now such that the latter will not offer any new lease.

Due to staff turnover, the Estate's land agent changed in 2025 and we have yet to meet their new person. The Estate's long-standing position on recreational caving is to permit it on their land provided that visitors (as Estate guests) act responsibly and self-assess any risks. There is no written agreement between the Beaufort Estate and Caving Wales nor with MLCMAC.

Now that NRW is on a "Meaning of Occupier" frolic, MLCMAC decided to change its name and its constitution which was written by NRW at the time that NRW controlled it. This revision is nearing completion internally. The group's new name has the same acronym but the second M now stands for monitoring, not management. The group's aims are more clearly set out in its new draft constitution as primarily to advise the landowner on the caves which the group monitors on the landowner's behalf. Membership of MLCMAC is limited to recreational cavers who are direct or club BCA members with practical interest in the caves of the area and willing to undertake some of the committee's duties.

CAVE ACCESS LTD (CAL)

The company directors voluntarily dissolved the company last autumn. Its last contact with NRW to try to devise replacement access agreements for the ones that NRW revoked was in July 2024. NRW has since made 250 staff redundant and had a near £20M demand from HMRC concerning tax irregularities which perhaps explains the hiatus. NRW's CEO left last summer, its Chair's tenure ended in the autumn. Set against this, CAL saw no point in continuing to be a dormant company.

Focusing, as ever, on process rather than progress, NRW appears to us to have settled on having a single contract to cover all recreational activities, reckless to the impossibility of putting caving, bird watching, art, motor rallies, fell races, mine exploration, educational groups and so on into a single management framework. Their final idea, which we could not accept, was 14 separate contracts (one per mine) which seemed to have been written to suit forestry motor rally events on particular dates, with temporary toilets, litter bins, direct supervision and site security etc provided by the organisers.

We did offer CAL as a free ready to use off-the-shelf company limited by guarantee to a group of cavers in North Wales involved in a new access agreement there, but this was not taken up.

BBNP UNESCO GEOPARK

Our local park has been renamed Bannau Brycheiniog National Park, or just Bannau Brycheiniog, or Y Bannau depending where you look. Brecon Beacons, like Snowdonia, as English words are officially dead. In a stroke of marketing genius, the BBNP website has an MP3 clip to pronounce its name.

Some good news is UNESCO (United Nations) has renewed our local Geopark's charter for another four years following a peer review. The BBNP Geopark Management Group has met only once in the past year in the form of a workshop, and I quote, "to discuss the impact of climate change so as to begin developing adaptive pathways [and] flexible strategies to navigate and mitigate climate change challenges [in the context of the Craig-y-Nos site and its surrounding area] to understand the impacts facing the location and to work together to develop a range of actions". Eloquently put, but visitors and residents will surely find necessary "adaptive pathways" for themselves. There was no other contact with the BBNPA in the year.

OFD

SWCC has continued its current system for cavers to apply in advance for a code to open a key safe to obtain a cave key on a particular date. This has been working well. The bolting programme continues with topos being published on the Caving Wales website. The online cave river and rainfall system continues to provide valuable insights for intending cavers. The live results page is at: <https://swcc.grafana.net/public-dashboards/888b896eda8447fd8691bdeec0c2b82?from=now-7d&to=now&timezone=browser&refresh=10m&orgId=1>

DYOCAP

The £5 per visit "conservation charge" administered by the DYO Caving Advisory Panel has been working well too. Recreational access here depends on the goodwill of the showcave business owners. Nominated cave leaders take in groups comprising BCA-insured cavers (or the foreign equivalent) requesting access into the vast system beyond the showcave that is open to the public. About half of the accumulated conservation funds have now been spent on surveying equipment with the rest held over for contingencies such as maintaining the emergency camp near Wigmore Hall.

A new group has formed to re-survey the entire cave digitally and to publish open data. This has the support of the landowners provided that it does not result in more entrances being created. Two sets of modern surveying equipment have been bought for this work, funded by DYOCAP and Caving Wales. A productive and positive inaugural meeting attended by about 30 people, mainly active cavers, was hosted by the showcave company in its café during the autumn.

The online underground river depth and local rainfall telemetry system was re-installed last July. This uploads new data hourly using the showcave company's new Ethernet network. It ran smoothly until December when perhaps the most severe flooding for a decade or two caused some damage to the equipment at Pot Sump. It seems that this pot fills well above the level of the fixed ladder, and at times a powerful waterfall feeds the pot. Passing cavers gave the underground equipment "a tap in the right place" at New Year and it then restarted sending data. A dry spell of weather is awaited to permit a proper assessment to take place. The public results page is at <https://linetop.co.uk/dyo/>

FoDCCAG

Exploration of the vast 'new' system at Redhouse Lane continues, aided by a dry summer. There is no general access to anybody other than those involved in the exploration, surveying, photography, filming and conservation of the discoveries. Attempts to find a second much easier dry entrance have not been successful yet with just one extremely challenging and impractical alternative being examined and another prospect radio-located.

The Forest of Dean has in effect become a separate BCA regional council as from 2026, the details of which, such as its land boundary and its share of the 2026 BCA budget, are yet to be clarified.

OGOF DRAENEN

The PDCMG's efforts to convert itself into a bespoke company limited by guarantee have made some, albeit slow, progress in the last year. When completed, this will enable a new access agreement with the landowners to be signed where new company directors take on the responsibilities of the present trustees. Some £900 has been spent so far on legal advice, funded from personal loans, so donations from clubs or individuals are sought because this large expense exceeds PDCMG's own funds.

The open entrances on Urban Common land at Drws Cefn and the Nunnery remain in use as does the newest open entrance on neighbouring private land at Ogof Tarddiad Pwll Du (OTPD) where there is now a permissive path to reach the caves for the purpose of responsible caving activities. PDCMG has acknowledged that OTPD falls outside its remit and has dropped it from its meetings agenda.

OGOF GOFAN and CASTLEMARTIN RANGE WEST

Light but steady visits to this small but spectacular cave have continued over the past year with good feedback from visiting groups. The landowner, Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO), part of the MOD, is happy with the cave access arrangements which have been renewed for a further 10 years.

Please arrange visits to Ogof Gofan through me and I will request the firing range management to issue you with a PDF permit giving you and your group exclusive access to the cave for up to four people for one day. Allow 2 weeks notice for setting this up please if you can. You can see what dates are *definitely not* available for access due to live firing exercises on the Range at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/castlemartin-firing-notice--2/

Calling the Range's answerphone on 01646 662367 on the day *before* your visit is advised to confirm the footpath to the cave will be open and that the firing schedule has not changed at the last moment.

A quite different system applies for access to Range West to explore for new caves there. You need to attend a briefing meeting at the range in person to get your name onto their annual permission list which enables you to acquire a day badge on the date of your visit from the guard room subject to various T&Cs. The dates for the 2026 safety briefing meetings are on the CW website.

I attended the autumn recreational users' AGM held at Castlemartin Range. This is a key event to maintain relations with landowner personnel and interested parties like Pembrokeshire National Park Authority, and liaising with other recreational body representatives. Caving and our access agreement has been featured again in Sanctuary, the MOD's now bi-ennial glossy magazine highlighting military conservation success stories worldwide. It is very clear that DIO regards its successful approach to providing and managing cave access as an achievement of potentially wide interest. See: <https://linetop.co.uk/caveaccess/OgofGofan/Sanctuary2025.pdf>

OGOF Y CI

This small stream cave near Merthyr Tydfil had been extensively used by professionally-led groups and occasional independent beginners to gain experience. Sadly, I have to report that access to all has been lost due to the former conflicting with the farmer during the past year. They then tried but failed to renegotiate their own access. So I intend to visit the landowner in 2026 to discuss re-instating access for recreational cavers only now that some time has passed since the regrettable incidents.

I am willing to stand again but as I have been in this role for a decade someone else, ideally younger, should consider taking it or undertaking some aspects of it. I am willing to provide them with support and advice. As well as the obvious conservation and access remit implied by the job-title, it does mean attending some real meetings across Wales, forming constructive relationships with the willing – usually in person, keeping abreast of developments in the caving and wider world, staying on top of email and being responsive to cavers' requests and concerns which these days mainly come in that way.

Sadly, I have to say that commercial experience and a grip on the relevant legislation has become increasingly important in dealing with the ingenious opposition of government bodies (notably NRW but also Defra and

Welsh Government as advised by NRW) to going caving and the facilitation of cave access generally. Improving matters to foster goodwill and generate mutual benefits, like better outcomes for nature alongside better public goods, needs NRW to change tack. This implies doing more than just its recent consultation about how the organisation is perceived by its stakeholders. After 10 years of general unease across Wales such research seems long overdue. We hope to see progress sooner rather than later with the new recently appointed NRW Chair and the search for a new CEO in 2026.

In contrast to the above, my experience of landowners has been consistently good, and we are fortunate to have such generous and supportive hosts, for which I sincerely thank them all.

6.5 Training Officer - Richard Hill

Another year of SRT workshops and Geology walks. These events continue to be of interest although not quite as well supported as before.

I am standing down from this position after many years. Dave Coulson has offered to take over from me so please vote him in. We will both be working on the SRT workshop at the end of March and I will share accounts info/processes etc with him. Dave will also keep the four caving Wales SRT kits after this event.

Going forward I am happy to help on the SRT workshops and assist Vince with bolt placements but I don't have time to do all the background work.

I have started to organise a Cave Life workshop with Andy Lewington and a photography workshop with Bill Nix. Dave Coulson is in the loop with both of these and hopefully they will happen.

6.6 Equipment and Techniques Officer - Vince Allkins

6.7 Cave Registrar - Martin Laverty

There is little to report from the Cambrian Cave Registry. It was pleasing to receive details of two new surveys, one from the north (Lower Afon Meirchion Cave), and one from the south (Pwll Dwfn), and a handful of reports of unrecorded sites (mainly between Merthyr and Llangattock).

The data sources used for mapping and images are subject to rather more frequent change - or withdrawal - than is desirable. This year's culprits have been BCA for withdrawing web hosting from the Brynmawr CC (which has impacted several images (and associated references from their website), and NRW for changing their hosting details for Lidar.

I take the very limited amount of feedback I receive from cavers (one complaint over a historic attribution to a club rather than individual diggers) to signify satisfaction with my efforts and so I am prepared to continue in the role for now, but probably not for another decade.

6.8 Information Officer- John Sheehy

I have made a number of routine updates to the website throughout the year to publicise training courses, geological walks and other newsworthy events.

I am happy to continue in the role in 2026.

6.9 Recreational Mine Exploration Officer – Roy Fellows

There are two matters arising from the last AGM:

1. I was asked to look into the feasibility of extending the resin bonded anchor testing program to mines. I have already prepared and distributed a report on this, but attach copy anyway.
2. Definition of my remit. It was agreed that as well as dealing with, and reporting any incoming inquiries relative to mines, I would submit an annual report of Welsh mining news.

I have received no inquiries since the last AGM, so will move onto news. First I will deal with organisations in which I am personally involved and then move onto more general news.

NAMHO

The 2025 annual conference was held at Llanrwst Rugby Club. It was very successful, this in part due to the centralisation of the event, the lecture program being on the same grounds as the camping. Some field trips that were planned had to be cancelled due to the end of CAL agreement, however good substitutes were found. This year's event will be at Reeth in North Yorkshire.

Cambrian Mines Trust (CMT)

The NRW/MRA (Mining Remediation Authority) scheme moves at a snails pace, the only thing definite is that it is going ahead. We therefore restrict any trust projects to schemes that will not be affected by this. We have two on the table. One is the clearing of the fall in Gills Upper Level so as to give an easy and sociable access to the vast Pugh's Mine. The present route involves advanced SRT which in the event of an accident would make rescue more difficult. It very much on and off anyway: this in itself says much. The other is the restoration of the portal of Lefel Fawr to be complete with a replica of the original plaque.

Natural Amenities Ltd

Good relations continue with the new landowner at Upper Dinas. The reinstated easy route Public Right of Way up to the mine gives easy access for the divers who have equipment to carry. An offer by an outdoor group to purchase the diving section was politely declined.

Cave Access Ltd

CAL was dissolved via voluntary strike-off on 16 Dec 2025.

Mining History Trust

Our database gradually continues to expand. I have provided all of my personal collection of digitalised documents and people photos, some of which have historical significance: it all amounted to about 35GB of data! The Buddlepit Forum continues to attract new members including familiar names from the now defunct Aditnow. We are currently dependent on third party hosting; we could move everything onto a dedicated server if we could get funding. As things stand, we are using Flickr to host photographs and one issue is the file size limit imposed. So now we intend to migrate this to a cloud server. I cannot overemphasise the importance of the MHT initiative.

Welsh Mines Society

Nothing new here but feel it appropriate to give this society an honourable mention. Membership without insurance, if you have it from elsewhere, is cheap at £8 only per year and you get a newsletter with some seriously interesting content. Membership with surface only insurance is £12 per year.

Under general news concerning specific sites, this year I would like to highlight:

Llanrwst Mines

There is indication that these are being monitored by NRW who have the power to prosecute anyone caught entering the mine.

Pandora Mine

There is no official access as it is part on NRW land and part on private land where the owner forbids access. Spion Kop shaft has run in and is now open on the surface. I have it on good authority that underground there is a total mess. Although the resulting fall is passable there is also the matter of sheep carcasses etc.

Parc Lead Mine

Again on good authority, a section of the no.2 level has collapsed into the stope below, however it is still passable with care.

Pantywrach Mine near Penrhyndeudraeth

In 1999 I re-opened the upper adit. The level gained included a rise some distance in leading up to a platform but this was never investigated. Just beyond here another dig connected with the main workings, previously only accessible by SRT. In 2025 I finally got round to taking in some aluminium ladders which gained the platform. The rise continued upwards past some 'hanging death' to a false floored level above. This was a difficult challenge which was met by constructing two prefabricated ladders out of timber with rungs of bar stock and Allthread, the latter for fixing brackets. One had to go up direct to get level with the hanging death, a mound of rock perched on a fallen timber balances across a stemple. This was taken out with a hand pick. The next ladder had to go in at an angle to miss the false floor. After gaining the level it became blind in one direction and went all of about 5 metres in the other. Rather than leave the ladders to rot they were refitted to give easy access to a large daylight stope above the level. This adds quite a bit of extra interest to the exploration.

Maenofferen

A load of aggravation here. Well-publicised on social media, a large group arrived up there to be met by quarry officials and the police. The 'easy' entrance to the connecting level has now been sealed off, however dedicated explorers can still access by more difficult routes.

Gaewern near Corris

The landowner has been seriously doubling down on efforts to exclude all unauthorised access to both the above and below ground areas of the mine. Copious amounts of new barbed wire has been used, adit entrances have been blocked and there are private property/keep out/CCTV signs at all former access points. The non-PRoW paths on the site have also been effectively blocked.

Goginan and Frongoch

Personal digging projects have ceased as a waste of time, plus health and safety concerns.

New Mid-Wales Mining Museum

Author and mine explorer Ioan Lord is setting up a new Mid-Wales Mining Museum at Devils Bridge at the Vale of Rheidol Light Railway station.

Cwm Cynfal, Ffestiniog

A proposed hydro scheme at this location is being delayed while Welsh Government decides whether ministerial approval is required.

Croesor-Rhosyth Through Trip

There was a rescue call out January 25th due to the failure of one of the *in situ* zip wires which had been in for about 4 years. The trip continues to present problems, not just the wires but canoes etc. I recommend anyone considering taking this route to check out its current status.

Minera Mines, Meadow Shaft

The headframe had deteriorated to a dangerous state and has now been demolished. Other structures such as the balance bob are at risk. My opinion, for what it's worth, is that the timber used originally was rubbish.

7. Reports from other access, advisory and special interest groups. OC/CW Member Clubs are also welcome to contribute reports here.

NAFW – Sue Mabbett, Caving Wales Representative

At the last Caving Wales AGM, I volunteered to be the CW representative at NRW's National Access Forum Wales meetings. Firstly, I had to agree to its terms of reference which included its key purposes:

- To help improve the quality and extent of access to the countryside and coast of Wales, and extend the opportunities for enjoyment and responsible outdoor recreation to all, with regard to environmental sustainability and education and the context of the climate and nature emergencies
- To work together as a stakeholder network, fostering understanding, and sharing information and good practice; to support the realisation of benefits of outdoor recreation and access in Wales
- To support NRW in its aim of more people participating in, and benefitting from, outdoor recreation more often.

So long gone are the original purpose of this forum set up to help define the areas of Open Access land and the rights of access to this land for the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act. As I agreed to the terms of reference; I saw my role is to network with other outdoor recreation groups, land owners' representatives and the statutory bodies (NRW, National Parks) so we can together achieve the key aims of the forum.

I attended two Forum meetings, the first in July (online) and the second in November in person at Aberystwyth. The third meeting of its year will be in early March 2026. There were four presentations at each meeting and although there were none directly related to caving, there were some presentations that reported on matters that impact those involved in all types of outdoor recreation, including caving. From these presentations the following related items were raised:

- Poor public transport links across Wales, and lack of regular public transport in West Wales.
- Plans for National Forest Trail running through Waterfalls walk area near Glynneath, a location that is already under heavy visitor pressure, also affecting the cavers.
- A review of Countryside Code on its 75th Anniversary highlighted little knowledge of this code in the general population. If the key points of this code — Respect Everyone, Protect the Environment and Enjoy the Outdoors — are not known or understood then it may lead to restricting access for all, including cavers.
- Sporting and Challenge events, although for conservation reasons we do not hold races through cave systems, or sponsored caving trips, I did not realise how many large sponsored charity events, commercial races or challenges, and organised events for minority groups occur. These are very popular in the Eryri and Bannau Brycheiniog National Parks putting pressure on the NP Wardens and the Parks.

Although caving may not be raised directly at these forum meetings, I think it is important we attend to work with other members of the outdoor recreation community to meet the objectives of this forum.

FoDCCAG

Welsh Mines Society

NWCRO

SMWCRT

GCRG

OFDCAG - Allan Richardson, Secretary

The group continues to meet twice a year. No major issues exist at present other than a reminder that people need to seek permission from NRW before starting any dig within the OFD National Nature Reserve, both below and above ground. Relations with NRW are still satisfactory. Bolting and the production of rigging topos ongoing.

DYOCAP

PDCMG

CMT

MLCMAC

OGOF MARROS

8. BCA Matters

9. Election of Officers

Chair
Secretary
Treasurer
C&A Officer
E&T Officer
Training Officer
Recreational Mines Exploration Officer
Cave Registrar
P&I Officer

10. AOB

11. Date and Location of next AGM