

14th Full Meeting – 13th November 2017, Up & Under, Cardiff

1. Welcome and Apologies

Mark Soanes (Steering Group member) opened the meeting, welcomed attendees and thanked Up & Under for hosting the AGM.

Apologies had been received from Pam Bell, Paul Dann, Ieuan Starks, Richard Tyler, Kevin Walker and David Windebank.

Mark handed-over to Nick Winder (Chair), who introduced Steve Rayner as the new SWOAPG Coordinator.

2. Overview of Activity, Last Year and Next Year

Nick Winder explained that membership had remained stable during the last year and described key activities that had taken place during the last year, which included:

- a 'pop-up project' in Reading, using an artificial cave system to promote South Wales as an adventure tourism destination;
- member workshops on Coasteering (Nov 2016), Storytelling (Feb), Dinas/Mellte Code of Conduct Training (Feb), History of Dinas (Feb), Legends in the Landscape (Mar), Canoeing (Oct) and Caving (Oct); and
- preparing a submission to the Welsh Government in response to its consultation paper on improving access for outdoor recreation.

He then described some key activities for next year:

- Governance Review: we need to assure ourselves that we are running SWOAPG 'properly' as a membership organisation, that we are insured for the activities we undertake and that we have the most appropriate legal structure. At present we are a 'community association' but this may not best suit our future purpose – so we will be looking into this in 2018.
- Funding Review: we have enough cash in hand to run SWOAPG for a year or more (based on our current expenditure). However, our core funding from Visit Wales is now less than the cost of employing our Coordinator – so we need to look into filling this funding gap (or asking our Coordinator to do less!). Nick stated that one option might be a small membership fee, although he was reluctant to impose this.
- Wales Outdoor Alliance: following the 2016 consultation last year on 'creating an effective outdoor sector network in Wales', an 'Outdoor Alliance' is being proposed in the form of a virtual network and online portal. SWOAPG is expected to be a founder member and to contribute to further developments.
- WG access proposals: we should find out early next year how the Welsh Government has responded to its access consultation – which attracted 15,000 responses. Some areas, such as a Statutory Code for responsible behaviour, were broadly welcomed – while others, such as access to inland water, remain highly controversial! We can expect to be involved in further work if WG decides to pursue its proposed changes.
- Workshops: we will continue to offer training workshops for members if there is sufficient demand (see Item 5 below).

3. Presentation of Accounts 2016-17

Steve Rayner presented the accounts, this being the first year we've fully managed our own accounts. They have been confirmed by an independent examiner, who reported that "I have completed my examination and have no concerns...and I have found no matters that require drawing to your attention".

Steve reported, as shown below, that we had slightly more income than expenditure, due to surplus made on workshops and projects.

Steve also noted that for 2017/18, our funding from Visit Wales has reduced from £5,000 to £3,000, while the 'contracted' cost of the Coordinator for 24 days' work will be £4,200 (plus expenses) – which explains our need to review funding arrangements carefully next year.

Income & Revenue	£ 7,495.36
Visit Wales Funding	£ 4,828.27
Workshop fees received	£ 650.00
Project fees received	£ 2,017.09
Expenditure	£ 7,128.67
Co-ordinator fees	£ 5,972.55
Workshop costs	£ 450.00
Project costs	£ 360.00
Administration	£ 346.12
Income less Expenditure	£ 366.69
Opening balance	£ 4,308.23
Closing balance	£ 4,674.92

4. Steering Group Elections 2017-18

Nick thanked Lisa Boore, Richard Hill, Rikki Phillips (Treasurer), Jon Roberts & Martin Sweeney who were standing down as SG members this year; and Matt Woodfield for his great work as Coordinator. Nick explained that Matt would continue as a Steering Group member in line with previous practice.

Steve then explained that there were 3 vacancies for new Steering Group members (since the limit imposed by our Terms of Reference had been exceeded the previous year) and 4 nominations had been received, from Katie Lloyd (Princes Trust), Richard Carpenter (The Outward Bound Trust), David Windebank (Coleg Gwent) and Jeff Calligan (Mountain & River Activities).

Steve therefore proposed a 'secret ballot', but Jethro Moore proposed that all four should be elected. This proposal was seconded by Riki Phillips; it was confirmed that the AGM had the authority to make this decision; and the proposal was agreed by all present. Steve agreed to notify all four candidates that they had been elected.

5. Workshops 2017-18: What do Members want?

Attendees were invited to suggest (using 'Post-It Notes') "what workshops could / should SWOAPG organise for members next year?" and "what else would you like us to do for you / on your behalf?". The following ideas were suggested:

- Car Park & Site Clean-ups ("we get the blame for some sites being messy so we might as well clean them up")
- Games & Energisers ("bring your ideas to share and learn from others; facilitator-led by someone with lots of experience of this")
- Coasteering (suggested 3 times, including "recent best practice")
- Foraging in the Outdoors
- Wild Cook-outs
- Welsh language development ("how to use Welsh to enliven sessions, e.g. instructions in Welsh, meaning of landscape names, etc.)
- Emergency Services Water Safety Awareness course / CPD
- Gorge-Walking (suggested 3 times, including "gorge technical advisers' workshop")
- Caving (suggested twice)
- Environmental-focused workshops ("flora & fauna")
- Mountain Biking (Trail Leader level)
- Geology of the Hills
- "Year of the Sea 2018" ("information sheets about water hazards, coastal environment factsheet")
- Pop-up events (suggested twice, including "run our own in Beacons / Cardiff to make the general public aware of outdoor providers locally", "greater exposure of SWOAPG outside S Wales")
- Code of Conduct training
- Two levels of workshop: foundation then advanced

6. Outdoor activities through the Medium of Welsh

Huw Thomas, Menter Iaith Language Services Coordinator, explained his role to increase the provision of outdoor activities through the medium of Welsh in the Brecon Beacons area. He is leading a project that is funded to provide subsidised activities during school holidays and wants to know who can deliver what activities in Welsh. Steve agreed to circulate a questionnaire from Huw to members. Riki Phillips suggested that the Urdd was perceived by some schools as having a 'monopoly' on Welsh language provision. Rhys Pinner explained that this was a result of tradition, rather than any 'rule' and encouraged Huw to establish relationships with schools.

7. Recognition for Gorge-Walking

Tom Partridge, UK Canyon Guides Regional Representative in S Wales, explained that an accreditation scheme for Gorge Walking is being piloted in the North of England (see <https://www.canyonguides.org/> and <https://www.howstean.co.uk/groups/training-courses/>), with the hope of delivering a pilot course in South Wales early-season in 2018. UK Canyon Guides is prepared to work with SWOAPG, landowners and AALA to continue developing standards of best practice and technical up-skilling through its recently formed gorge-walking group, which will be extended through open meetings and meetings to take place in the new year.

Tom explained his vision to create a synergy between the various combined Water & Rock activities through an 'event' or 'symposium' in mid-2018 to celebrate activities and provide further training and information.

Anyone wishing to become involved should contact Tom for more details (tom.partridge@atlanticcollege.org).

8. Adventure Activities Licensing Review

Paul Donovan described the process that the Health & Safety Executive (HSE) is taking in reviewing the AALS scheme, where they are expected to consider three options:

- a. AALS 'as is'
- b. AALS+ (bringing additional activities within remit)
- c. an industry-run scheme, which Paul has been preparing on behalf of the Adventure Activity Industry.

Proposals will be submitted to the HSE in November and consultation on their proposed response is expected in February 2018. He encouraged all SWOAPG members to contribute to this.

9. Any Other Business

Nick Winder had attended the recent IOL (Institute of Outdoor Learning) conference and given an overview of SWOAPG activity. Tom Partridge added that the SW & SE sub-committee of IOL Wales is providing a programme of workshops which should complement the SWOAPG programme of events; and will be putting on an initial open session to promote the work of IOL Wales early in the new year, which all would be welcome to attend.

It was noted that the National Coasteering Council was holding a regional round-up this week; and the BMC its Area meeting on 21 Nov at Up & Under.

Staff from Up & Under then gave a presentation on "What's Hot in the Kit Store", which was well-received by all present.