



South Wales Outdoor Activity Providers Group

Minutes of Eighth Group Meeting

21st October, 2013 at Henderson Hall, Talybont at 6.30pm

In Attendance

Matt Woodfield – Freelance (Chairman) Tom Partridge – Everything Outdoors (Coordinator) Jeff Calligan – Mountain and River Activities Ltd Mark Soanes – Call of the Wild Jethro Moore – Adventure Beyond Tony Rees – Welsh Adventures Andy Meek – Storey Arms Fred Wright - Interactivities Dave Thomas – Call of the Wild Nick Leftly - Freelance Richard Hill – Glasbury House OEC Steve Rees – Pivot Point Photography Juliet Parker-Smith – Trewern OEC Gary Evans – Hawk Associates Roger Lee – Hampshire Mountain Centre Gareth Reid – OLTC-RN John Cliffe – AALS	Keith Williams – BBNPA Gerwyn James - MOD Huw Richards - SDW Paul Lilygreen - SDW Chris Smith – Royal Air Force Crickhowell Mark Hamilton – Vale Outdoor Learning / Adventures David Williams – Neath Group Clare Adams – Torfaen CBC Cilla Withers – Plas Pencelli Will Kilner – Freelance Carl Durham – Black Mountain Adventures Sean Taylor - Freelance Dan Thorne – Gwent OEC Chris Watson – Tirabad RET Chris Pierce – Woodlands OEC
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1. Welcome:

Matt Woodfield opened the meeting, SWOAPG Chairman, thanking everyone for attending. The chairman thanked the Talybont CC for the hire of Henderson Hall and also welcomed the guest speakers for the meeting.

2. Apologies:

Andy Cummings - Mazoku Geoff Haden - Clyne Farm Centre Ian Kennet – Gwent Adventure Centre Nick Fitzgerald - RJC Paul Donavon – Escape Routes Paul Peet - Afan Valley MTB Hire Paul Webb – High5 Adrian Thomas - ADE Lee Garbett - Quest Punch Maughan - BBT Stefan Davies – Sbri Cymru Steve Rayner – Brecon Canoe Club	Paul Donavon – Escape Routes Paul Dann – Natural Resources Wales Paul Webb – High5 Kevin Hannam Bowen Punch Maughan - BBT Steve Rayner – Brecon Canoe Club Ashley Davies - Garnswllt Activity Centre Riki Phillips – Mynydd Outdoor Adventure Steve Rees Steve Rose – Absolute Adventure James Young – Adventurous Ewe Mick Collins - Outdoors@Hay
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3. Update on Membership and SWOAPG Progress:

In keeping with the last full meeting format TP presented the following summary followed by a Q and A session.

SWOAPG Membership

Level 1 Members – 11

Level 2 Members – 86

Level 3 Members – 105

Plus a range of associate and observer members

Clubs - 6

Total Joined – 240

There continues to be a rise in membership and a small increase in club membership. Freelancers are also able to join but a list of instructors and a basic email list has also been created to keep those not wishing to join in full up to date (suitable for instructors and staff working for organisations etc.). TP also notified those present that he had been successful in the tender process for selecting the Co-ordinator for another year running from the 1st October 2013.

Mellte Code of Conduct

TP updated the members present on the current status of the training scheme for the Code of Conduct. There have been 3 'open' sessions delivered from July through to September which all users of the Mellte gorge, and the wider SWOAPG membership, have been invited to and those who have attended have had their individual access status, by the landowners, confirmed.

The landowners are clear that now the planned sessions have been completed those remaining providers who have not attended the training do not currently have access granted, by them, to use the gorge for gorge walking and canyoning activities.

TP noted that there will be an annual open training session delivered at the start of each season (March / April time) to pick up any outstanding members and new providers who require the training.

If a provider requires the training outside of the set date then there will be a fee involved which will be payable to the group account for the time required to deliver the session. This is currently £80 per session, not including venue hire. A provider can share the costs with other providers if they wish.

In addition, there will be a planned workshop and walk down of the gorge to discuss, in detail, the access and egress points and the areas of environmental concerns, amongst other topics to be confirmed for a date in the early part of the 2014 season. TP will use the existing list of trained and non-trained providers to communicate these details. If you would like to be included in this list, or you are currently not receiving any info on the Mellte Code of Conduct training dates but are using the gorge you must contact the Co-ordinator ASAP.

More details on the Mellte Access Project can be found on the website:

<http://www.swoapg.org.uk/index.php/projects/mellte-survey/>

Action: TP to arrange a date for the Code of Conduct training session and the workshop for the early part of the 2014 season.

Canoeing Passport Scheme

TP told the members present that there have been 14 Passports Issued for the 2013-14 year. There have been no reports to date of any misuse from either BBNPA or DCWW and that BBNPA have contacted all holders of the passport to look at reviewing the arrangements and scheme with a view to continue the scheme into the future. There is still the hope that over time the SWOAPG can and will take over the admin of the scheme but with potential changes to access to water in the future the BBNPA and DCWW would like to maintain the admin of the scheme in its current format. TP urged and passport holders to share their views and respond to the questions sent to them

Environmental Charter

With over 99 providers now signed up to the charter TP was pleased to announce that the projects so far had been a success. TP made the group aware of the hard work and commitment to the match funding volunteering days that have taken place over the last few months and showed some photo evidence of that work. Also highlighted were the resources available for members as a result of the grant, including the coastering and Beach users work books and the training day in July – paid for by the grant moneys.

There will be future volunteering days on the 1st and 15th November and members are asked to support these where possible. Details can be found on the events section of the website for full details: <http://www.swoapg.org.uk/index.php/event/>

Finally there will also be a Cave and Underground Exploration Workshop – including environmental resources and training held on the 25th November 2014

Late Booking System

TP wanted to take the opportunity to comment on how the www.l8bsw.org.uk link was being used and its success and/or failures. TP noted that the link does actually get a proportion of hits but the providers canvased for some booking stats to back up the hits to the site was limited due to the fact that many providers wouldn't ask how they came to their business for a quote or work enquiry. TP also mentioned that many providers are still not giving out the link to customers that meet the criteria when bookings cannot be fulfilled. However, TP also suggested that in one of the snapshot weeks audited there were 5 calls from the link however not one could be fulfilled due to unrealistic budgets and time scales for the potential clients (i.e. wanting next day bookings and activities for very cheap etc.)

TP will continue to run the system and will be looking into renewing providers and the schedule in the next season when the current lot ends.

In the mean time please do check out the advice and instructions for use on the website and give out the www.l8bsw.org.uk link to any clients or customers that may benefit from the contact details on the page.

WATO Update

TP commented on the on-going budget made available to the SWOAPG through engagement with Visit Wales and WATO. The main focus of WATO had been the economic impact survey and this is an Agenda item. (Notes under item 4)

IN addition – Alun Richardson has stepped down from the role of liaison officer for the POCG and this position is soon to be filled. TP will keep members updated.

There have also been 2 areas of focus for WATO – Apprenticeship Schemes and Visit Wales Website. Both items have not been without their issues but TP re-assured the group members present that through active involvement with WATO and Visit Wales and through the Steering Group they should be confident that we continue to strive for the best possible outcomes for our membership. More details on the planned Apprenticeships, that are in their trial year, will be announced when the group is clear on the future of the scheme.

BBT Update

Mark Soanes gave an overview of the new BBT website and also the benefits to new members wishing to join BBT. You can view the presentation given by Mark on behalf of BBT by following the link to the website: <http://www.swoapg.org.uk/index.php/members-area/meeting-minutes/>

Questions and Answers

TP offered out to those present for a chance to ask any questions and there were none.

4. Impact and Value of the Outdoor Activity Tourism Sector in Wales

Miller Research were appointed by Welsh Government to undertake the survey, which was hoped to give the Outdoor Sector a starting block and set of figures in which we could hopefully use to persuade and evidence to Welsh Government in any future developments of our sector – including- Funding, investments etc.

Sam from Miller Research was kind enough to preview some of the preliminary results and the math's behind the stats to the group ahead of the final report. No details or presentations have been included at this point as the final and approved reports must first pass Welsh Government but will be circulated, in full to all members as soon as the coordinator is able to do so.

The presentation did throw up some discussion around the inclusion of the 'education' sector and how the 'tourism driven' survey may not have given a full picture of the sector in South Wales. TP noted to those present that there were many discussions at the WATO meeting that day about how the survey could be rolled out, year on year, creating more and more reliable and inclusive stats – possible creating base line data from a set of simulated businesses in the area – to create an industry standard survey. This could mean that businesses are used to feeding the survey and may collate and gather info throughout the year to simplify the process.

TP thanked Sam and also the members who did fill in the survey, South Wales made up a good proportion of the responses given, however, in Wales there were still only 93 responses. TP made the point that for this to work, year on year, members must start responding to such requests for data to enable the best possible picture to be generated.

Action: TP to circulate the final report when made available.

5. Review of Dinas Rock Access Rules 2013

Prior to the meeting the re-draft of the 2013 rules was sent out to all members with a note to inform all that the rules would be voted and agreed on at the full meeting on the 21.10.13. TP received no email or other communication prior to the meeting with regards to the rules and the rules were voted on by the members present at the meeting. With only 1 abstaining vote and none against(?), the majority voted in favor of the new 2013 Dinas Access Rules. All changes to the rules were summarized by TP and the new rules can be found on the website:

<http://www.swoapg.org.uk/index.php/projects/dinas-access/>

The Rules, along with the Mellte Access Rules will be reviewed on an annual basis at the end of season full meeting each year, unless otherwise required.

6. 3 Year SWOAPG Review and Focus for 2014

GE facilitated a group work task which focused those present into helping to review the SWOAPG over the last 3 years and also highlight any areas for development as well as the priorities for the group moving forward. There is a summary of the findings on the website:

<http://www.swoapg.org.uk/index.php/members-area/meeting-minutes/>

7. Steering Group Nominations

MW commented that there were currently 2 places available on the Steering Group. TP also thanked JPS for her hard work and commitment to the group in the 3 years the group has been in existence and the work in the early days of the formation of the group.

Prior to the meeting TP received a self-nomination from Nick Winder – Tirabad RET and also backed by a vote from JPS for a position on the Steering Group. As there were no other nominations NW will take one of the vacant posts. At the meeting MW asked if there were any other nominations for the Steering Group and Dan Thorne proposed Lisa Boore of Hampshire Mountain Centre. LB confirmed that she would like a place on the Steering Group. The full Steering Group set up can be seen on the home page of the website.

8. AOB

TP alerted the members present to some recent changes to RIDDOR sent through to him from Marcus Bailie – AALS. TP recommended that members check with the H&SE for the exact details but the summary sent to TP can be seen on the alerts section of the website:

<http://www.swoapg.org.uk/index.php/news-and-alerts/changes-to-riddor/>

Finally – a preview trailer was shown for a recently made documentary called “Project Wild Thing”. The film may be of interest to a range of members and is about re-connecting the youth with the outdoors. For full details, the screening of the films and the trailer visit:

<http://projectwildthing.com/>

Gerwyn James – MOD – Asked the question around the clarification of the access situation at Glasbury for canoeing on the river wye. There was some debate about new agreements on the Wye and Usk Foundation Website as well as suggestions that the exit point at Gliffaes was due to be closed too. MW suggested that the answers could not be generated in the room at the time however, ask requested at the last full meeting, SWOAPG now have a representation on the WUF committee and we will take this back to them with immediate effect to attempt to generate an answer.

Meeting Close:

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending.

The next full meeting will be in March / April 2013.

The SWOAPG is supported by:

