



**Cyfoeth
Naturiol
Cymru
Natural
Resources
Wales**

Dinas Area Access Rules for Outdoor Activity Providers

NB all Providers using the Dinas Area under these arrangements MUST:

- **agree formally to operate gorge walking in the Area in accordance with the terms of the NRW Activity Access Concordat and Code of Conduct and agree that SWOAPG may sign the Concordat with NRW on their behalf;**
- **have a current employee who has attended a SWOAPG Code of Conduct Training Session for the Sychryd Gorge and undertake to ensure that this training is passed on to all other relevant staff as required; and**
- **maintain public liability insurance of at least £5 million covering all adventurous activities provided in the Area.**

With the continuing popularity of Dinas as a venue for a variety of Outdoor Activities, particularly Gorge Walking, the impact on the local community remains a challenge for us to resolve. Use of this site is important to a wide range of Providers and whilst the Gorge Code of Conduct and Concordat help, problems continue to be raised with high visitor numbers.

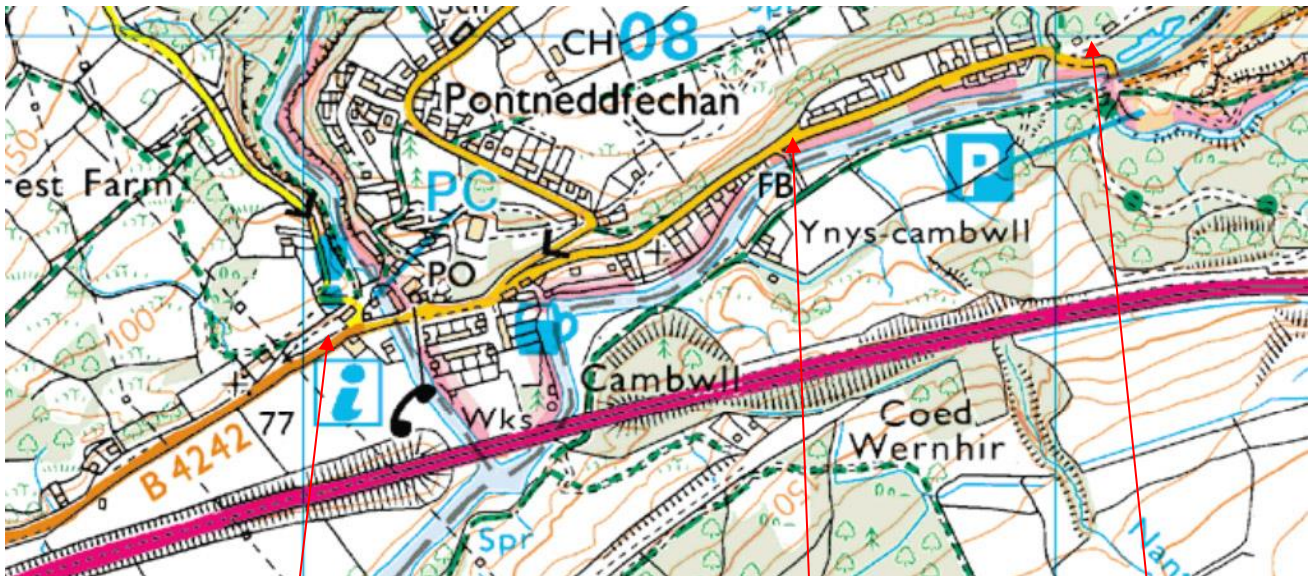
These rules have been created by SWOAPG in partnership with Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and BBNPA and will be reviewed and agreed annually by the membership. The rules form part of the requirements of the land owners (NRW) and BBNPA to show that SWOAPG members are conducting themselves in a professional, environmentally sustainable way and making all possible efforts to minimise impact and disturbance to the local community and visitors to the site and area. Any breach of these rules will be dealt with by the land owner (NRW) through the Enforcement Policy.

1. Parking & Traffic

- a. **Avoid parking in Residential area** at all times. - much of this parking is for elderly residents who need easy access to their homes. This then also prevents noise, disruption and 'changing in the street'
- b. The **Angel Inn car park** is not for public use, it is private property for customer use only. However, the owner has given permission for activity providers to meet their clients in the car park early morning but **must vacate by 10.00am**.
- c. **Coaches** should enter Pontneddfechan and may use Coed y Rhaidyr (the 'triangle' by the Village Hall) **only to drop-off and pick-up clients**. Arrange a pick-up time with coaches so that they wait in the village for no more than 30 minutes. For longer-term parking or waiting, direct coaches to park or wait at a point 'beyond' the traffic lights in Glyn Neath.

Suggested Alternative Parking

Please adhere to any local parking restrictions and/or any parking schemes in place at alternative parking sites.



1. Beyond
Angel Inn

2. Where
there are no
Residences

3. Book
Village Hall
for Car Park

2. Changing

- In the main car park, ensure your groups use the Changing Screens in the Dell next to the main car park.
- In the Village Hall car park, **no changing is permitted**. Either use the Village Hall for changing or send your group to the changing screens in the Main Car Park. If using the Village Hall, **do not hang activity clothing or equipment on the fence** around the children's playground.
- Avoid changing in front of residents' houses at all times.**
- Brief groups properly** to reduce/prevent numbers of 'pants on trees'.

2. Toilets

- Use Toilet facilities at The Angel Inn **Public Toilets** or **book the Village Hall** to use all their facilities.

3. Numbers

- The Maximum Number of Participants in the Sychryd Gorge is 25** per Organisation at any one time.

4. Identification of Groups

- a. **Gorge-walking groups must display valid SWOAPG ID cards** prominently (so that the side showing the business / organisation name is visible) whenever operating in the gorges: (i) in each vehicle parked in the vicinity of the gorge; and (ii) on each Group Leader in the gorge – for example attached to the leaders' bodies, bags or buoyancy aids.
- b. Wherever practicable, group members should have the business / organisation name clearly marked on the outside of their buoyancy aids.

5. Other

- a. Keep **noise levels to a minimum** and avoid bad language, particularly close to residential areas. Remember that noise carries in these areas. Avoid briefing your group in the Village Hall car park close to houses.
- b. **No Litter** and pick up any litter you do find. Take all rubbish (and clothing!) home with you.
- c. **Check the Changing Area** for litter and forgotten equipment once you group has finished changing. Carrying black bags and protective gloves will help with this.

Advice

- **Park efficiently** in the main car park, avoid wasting space
- **Arrange a meeting place** for clients and then bring the minimum number of vehicles to the Dinas main car park
- The main Dinas car park is nearly always full after 11am on a Summer weekend. If arriving after 11am, **consider the use of another venue** or drop off your group and park the vehicle in a suitable place away from the main car park, adhering to Rule 1. Parking & Traffic
- Encourage clients to **car share** from their point of departure
- Consider **Centre Bus Sharing** if possible
- Consider the **use of other sites or alternative Activities** to prevent over-use of the Gorge and Area
- Set up your own '**Acceptable behaviour contract**' for your Groups
- NRW have issued a letter to clarify the issues relating to **sub-contracting** in relation to gorge walking (Appendix 1)

PTO

- Until such time as legal access has been established along the lane from the Village Hall to Loonies' Leap, please respect the owners' wishes and do not use this lane with gorge-walking groups (instead, use the route over the hill from Dinas Rock to access or return from Loonies' Leap *or* groups may use the path on river-left to return from the lower footbridge to Dinas Rock car park, subject to the following condition (do not use the bed of the river):
 1. The path is to be used one-way only (from the bridge to the car park).
 2. Providers must familiarise themselves with the areas where there are sensitive plants – see Appendix 2. Groups must not enter or cause damage to these sensitive areas (damage in the SSSI could lead to prosecution).
 3. Groups must walk in single-file, stick to the worn route and not try to overtake other groups.

Enforcement Policy

Should a Provider break any of the rules and there is no doubt about who they are, then:

First Transgression of the year –

NRW will write to the provider with a warning that they are known to have broken the rules and should take steps to prevent this from happening again.

Second Transgression of the Year-

NRW will contact the provider and inform them that they will need to submit an improvement plan within 14 days if they wish to continue to use the gorge under the concordat.

Third transgression of the year –

SWOAPG will no longer recognise the provider as signed up to the concordat and will inform NRW of this. NRW will send the provider details of the alternative access arrangement for use of the gorge outside of the concordat.

Village Hall

Use of the Village Hall as follows

- Hall can be hired for c.£20 per hour
- Lunches or Packed Lunches on application
- Hall car park can be used if hall booked

Book with Sian Williams, sianwills1@hotmail.co.uk

Some Providers have used the Hall numerous times very successfully, so it is worth considering, especially as it solves parking problems for you when you book. The Hall has a large meeting/dining/activity room, a kitchen with a small dining space, gents and ladies toilets and showers, though the shower facilities are limited.

Appendix 1



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Dear Provider,

I have been asked by the South Wales Outdoor Activity Providers Group (SWOAPG) to give some clarification on the issue of subcontracting in relation to Gorge Walking.

Subcontracting-in an instructor from another provider or a freelancer in order to use the subcontractor's group number allowance in the gorge and therefore exceed the session limit is against the rules.

Passing on part of a larger booking is allowed as long as the booking is fully transferred to another organisation.

This means that the following points must be met:

- The booking, payment arrangements and invoice must be passed over to the receiving organisation
- The group must be briefed separately
- The group must be managed separately within the gorge
- The group must be insured separately and hold the consent/medical forms for the individuals within its group
- For under 18's both companies must hold a valid AALA licence
- Each company must use its own safety equipment, unless this is hired.

I am aware that some organisations go to great lengths in order to stay within the rules, such as offering alternative activities for part of a group or splitting the group into sessions and using climbing, caving or walking as an alternative.

I hope that this provides some clarification.

Yours Sincerely

Paul Dann

Local Area Manager

For and on behalf of Forest District Manager

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Croesewir gohebiaeth yn y Gymraeg a'r Saesneg

Correspondence welcomed in Welsh and English

Appendix 2

Map of sensitive locations of the lower Afon Mellte gorge



Picture 1



Constraint 1: Hazel by the path supporting *Peltigera horizontalis*

Picture 2



Constraint 2: Ash on limestone outcrop with *Leptogium lichenoides*

Picture 3



limestone outcrop with frequent *Distichium capillaceu*, could easily be damaged by passing

Picture 4



limestone outcrop set back from path, with occasional *Distichium capillaceum*

Picture 5



fallen tree trunk supporting *Rhytidiadelphus subpinnatus*, just before a limestone outcrop

Picture 6



6 & 7: patches of *Rhytidiadelphus subpinnatus* on steep banks at SN91530817 to SN91530818.

Picture 7



6 & 7: patches of *Rhytidiadelphus subpinnatus* on steep banks at SN91530817 to SN91530818.