

Ogwen Users' Forum - Notes

April 13 2016 4.30p.m

Present

Iwan Jones (chair)	Snowdonia National Park Authority (SNPA)
Alan Pritchard	Snowdonia National Park Authority
Gwyn Thomas	Blaen y Nant
Hywel Roberts	Natural Resources Wales (NRW)
Mark Roberts	Bethesda
Guto Roberts	Cwm Idwal Partnership
Jeroen Verbeek	Idwal Youth Hostel
Carys Dafydd	Snowdonia National Park Authority
Naomi Jones	Snowdonia National Park Authority
Mal Creasey	Mountain Leaders Instructors
Arwel Johnston	Tenant
Alison Cousins	Capel Curig Community Council
Jamie Holding	Outward Bound
Catrin Williams	Translator
Howard Hughes	Translator

Apologies

Edward Jones; Jon Cawley; Dewi Roberts; Andy Harbach; Edwina Johnson; Dewi Davies; Rob Spencer; Al Crisp.

1. The chairman welcomed everybody to the meeting, and as some of the members were there for the first time he asked everybody to introduce themselves.

2. Notes from the last meeting.

- a. The accuracy of the notes was noted.
- b. Matters arising - page 6 Ogwen Falls. Alan Pritchard (SNPN) said that Helen Pye (SNPA) and Dewi Roberts (NT) had met to discuss the possibility of improving the access to Ogwen Falls. However they agreed that it would not be prudent to encourage more people to go and view the waterfall.

3. An update on recent activities in the area, Guto Roberts Cwm Idwal Partnership

- A new sign will shortly be put up near the start of the path to Cwm Idwal with information about the Nature Reserve and will have information on the importance of keeping dogs on leads. Seasonal information will also be included
- A bridge over the waterfall at the back of the building will be erected during the coming year – tenders will need to be sought from civil engineering companies.
- Three shepherds have recently been appointed to work in Cwm Idwal, they are; Hefin Hughes; John Doyle and Gwyn Thomas. They have been issued with Shepherd of Cwm Idwal t-shirts.
- A discussion is being held regarding whether signs should be put up in Cwm Idwal warning visitors that there are working dogs there and that they could be dangerous to dogs which are not on leads. A discussion ensued on the problem of dog owners letting their dogs off their leads. Arwel Johnson said that the number of dogs who visit the Valley has increased significantly over the past five years. He added that the National Trust promotes Cwm Idwal as the place to go and dog on their website and that they were missing an opportunity to stress the importance of keeping dogs on a lead. Guto Roberts said he would make inquiries into the matter. Mark Roberts said that it was an exception when one dog attacks another, but if a dog attacked his guide dog it would count as an offence – just as if the dog had attacked him personally

4. The current situation on site-

In the absence of Edward Jones, the chairman read out his report.

- Contractors have been back on site in order to address outstanding shortcomings, still awaiting further response from the architects.
- Following a tendering process there has been a change in the cleaning contractors and a new cleaner has started.

- After a two-month delay due to inclement weather, we were able to resurface the car park before Easter. Contractors will re paint the white lines once the Easter holiday is over.
- The Authority is currently in negotiations with a film company which has applied to use the car park as a compound while filming on location in Cwm Idwal. The filming will take place between the 25th and 29th of April. They will probably be on site from Tuesday until Friday, but this has not been confirmed yet.

Guto Roberts added that the film is produced by Sky - called The Last of the Dragon Slayers it will be shown on Christmas Day. Guto will accompany the group to the Cwm, to ensure they do not damage the terrain.

He said it might not be possible for the public to have access to all areas of the valley during the filming.

5. An update on interpretation in Ogwen – Naomi Jones

- The situation regarding the screens on the wall has improved.
- The projector has been fitted with a new bulb and as a result the film is easier to see. It might be possible to improve the situation further by using

a large television screen (which has recently become available due to the closing of the Dolgellau information Centre).

If this is successful, the darkening film will be taken off the door – this will be the first step to see if it will improve matters. It might be possible then to remove the film from more areas.

Arwel Johnson said that this had been a problem from the outset and that people saw the room looking dark and then assumed that it was closed.

- The feed-back questionnaires have been collated and there is a big variation in the responses – mostly to do with whether the interpretation was working- some people said that they are happy just to have a warm dry room to shelter their groups.
- The 3D model was vandalised over the Easter holidays. It has been repaired by now but the long term issue needs to be addressed.
- It was decided to frame the posters #cwmidwal60 rather than print them on Foamex.
- The new film has had a very favourable reviews
- We shall be assessing the possibility of having more internal benches.

Mal Creasy left the meeting at 5.30p.m

6. An update on Ogwen Cottage – Jamie Holding

Jamie Holding said that he was very glad to be back working in Ogwen Cottage – this time as a member of staff for Outward Bound. A number of staff who used to be based in Aberdyfi have now moved to Ogwen Cottage. He said that schools from as far afield as Aberdeen have benefited from the new service and that it was great to remake the connections with schools from Birmingham. They have a working partnership with the National Trust and that students have been doing

conservation work. They also offer the John Muir award and intend to offer opportunities for primary schools too – although this will be limited by season. He added that at the moment they were still in a trial period to see how things work for both sides

Guto Roberts asked whether they had any intention of working with local schools. Jamie Holding replies that Outward Bound as a charity had received funding from the Esme Kirby Trust specifically to work with local schools from their 6 centres in Wales.

7. The proposed Carneddau Project

In the Jon Cawley's absence, Naomi Jones reported that the project would be presented at the end of May. This exciting project will be concentrating on archaeological elements. The main aim is to raise awareness within the local communities. She said that if people wanted to know more it would be possible to circulate more detailed information

Gwyn Thomas joined the meeting at 5.35

8. Any other business

- Arwel Johnson asked whether there was any news regarding public transport in the area. No one at the meeting had heard anything.
- Alison Cousins said that off road motor bikes were a serious problem in Capel Curig - Alan Pritchard replied that Peter Rutherford - The National Park's Access officer has been having discussions with landowners in the area.
- Gwyn Thomas asked if there had been any development in the undergrounding of electricity lines. No one at the meeting had any updates.
- He went on to say that the gate at the bottom of Nant Ffrancon had been broken one again and that the cattle grid was in a critical condition. – Whom should he contact? Alan Pritchard replied that it was the responsibility of Gwynedd Council but that the gates have not been

maintained since the departure of Mark Balaam. He said that the gate at the bottom of the Nant had been damaged following a car rally and added that Gwynedd might be waiting for compensation from the organisers before repairing the gate. He said that he had repaired two gates since his return to the Ogwen area to work.

He said that he would email Robin Perkins of Gwynedd Council to report the matter.

- Gwyn Thomas showed photos of traffic that he had taken on the A5 recently. And a discussion on the matter ensued. Jamie Holding said that the fact that the Ogwen Cottage stores had been relocated to the other side of the A5 meant that the children had to cross the busy road at least once a day. It was decided that the photos should be forwarded to Iolo Tegid together with another letter expressing the Forum's continuing concerns and asking for a site meeting. Carys Dafydd agreed to do this.

Gwyn Thomas said that there was a need to look outside the box – he suggested that a 150 meter wooden boardwalk on the inside of the wall on the A5 would ensure people's safety.

Guto Roberts agreed to discuss the matter with Dewi Roberts to see if this could be a practical solution.

- Gwyn Thomas said that the sheep and lambs would be returning to the Cwm in a fortnight and that he was worried about out of control dogs. Guto Roberts said that signs would be put up in the near future and if a bird survey concluded that dogs had an adverse effect on birds in the Cwm then it might be possible to ban dogs altogether from the cwm between May and September.

The Chair thanked everybody for their attendance and the meeting concluded at 5.55p.m