

BMC Cymru Access & Conservation Report for Area Meetings: November 2018

Key points:

- **Welsh Government – Brexit and our Land**

BMC responded to this major consultation on how the Welsh landscape will look and be managed after Brexit. With EU subsidies coming to an end (whatever happens to Brexit, this will be happening) it has major repercussions for the way the countryside is farmed, managed and funded. A key point in our response is that access to the countryside for recreation is a “public good” that must be free for the user and that landscapes need to be protected by adequate planning controls from industrial scale tourism, energy and forestry developments.

- **National Parks**

These continue to be seriously underfunded but after concerted campaigns by various conservation and access groups, the Welsh Environment Minister decided early in 2018 not to accept the finding of a controversial review and retain their core purpose, aims and structure. Funding for National Parks in Wales also fared better than other local authorities in 2018.

- **Pembrokeshire**

It was a very good year for relations between climbers and conservationists in Pembs in 2018. There were no recorded infringements of the (complicated) access agreements and the National Park and MoD were very complimentary of climbers’ behaviour. Over 16 young Chough chicks fledged successfully and at least 68 seals successfully produced young along the Castlemartin Coast. 171 people attended the Range West briefing and 225 climbing visits were made up to November to Range West. This is significantly lower than in 2017 so it’s be good if more climbers could attend the briefings to keep the pressure on the MoD to allow access to this amazing area.

Dates for Range west briefing for 2019 are in Summit and below:-

Thursday 07 March @ 18:00

Saturday 09 March @ 10:00

Thursday 18 April @ 18:00

Friday 19 April @ 10:00

Thursday 23 May @ 18:00

Saturday 25 May @ 10:00

All at the Army camp as usual, meet at the guardroom 10 minutes before start time.

- **Ormes bolting**

Volunteers from the North Wales Bolt fund continue to inspect the bolted lower offs at Pen Trwyn and replace any as needed. Please support the bolt fund and consider volunteering to help the process of annual inspections of the 300+ bolts that the BMC are responsible for in order to maintain access to this venue.

- **Tremfest 2018 and 2019**

Superb weather saw the return of Mike Raine to help out with organising this very popular event with over 70 volunteers helping to maintain the paths, routes and fabric of the BMC owned and managed crags at Tremadog. It was also great to see the new owners of the café, Gareth and Jo getting so enthusiastically behind the event and supporting climbers.

- **Craig y Forwyn**

The new owners of Plas Newydd (and the main part of Craig y Forwyn) have now obtained planning permission for the redevelopment of the caravan park. The BMC has agreed to formally start negotiations with them to secure long term access and possible purchase or lease of this central part of the crag. They had requested BMC to hold back on this until they had received planning permission. Now this is in place. We hope to resume negotiations and obtain an agreement early in 2019.

- **Llandarcy Swansea**

A new and popular sports climbing site, recently developed on an old industrial site on the outskirts of Swansea, lies within a huge development site for a new village of 4,000 new houses. The landowners have understandable concerns about liability and any impact that climbing would have on this multi million pound development. However the developers have expressed an interest in discussing future access agreements with the BMC. – watch this space.....

- **Pant Quarry, Glamorgan**

This is a Tarmac owned limestone quarry, technically still active with many years of mineral reserves still to be extracted. However one of the walls has been climbed on and according to those who have been there (inc Steve McClure!) it has the potential to be one of the best hard sports climbing venues in the UK. Tarmac has so far not agreed to any form of access for climbing (due to safety and legal reasons as well as the financial value of the minerals). South Wales climbers are very keen to raise this further and for BMC to engage with Tarmac at a national level to try to secure access to this site.

- **Castle Inn**

A very good training session for local outdoor centres and instructors was held here in late September, organised with Mountain Training, BMC and Conwy Council to look at climber parking, behaviour and use of the site. It's recommended that minibuses, large vans, etc. are parked at the main Mynydd Marian car park and not below the crag. The site warden was very positive about climbers' behaviour and a work day will be organised to follow up on some of the issues discussed to help with conservation work at this local nature reserve.

- **Snowdon Weather Information Project**

It was hoped that this BMC Access & Conservation Trust funded project to give live weather information from the summit of Yr Wyddfa would be live in summer 2018, however technical issues over the fabric of the summit building and some issues between the National Park and Snowdon Mtn Railway have delayed the project until spring 2019.

- **Cwm Dudodyn bridge**

Some initial costings have been obtained for this from the National Park and initial discussions with the landowner indicate that he is happy for the bridge to be reinstated. An application needs to be submitted to the BMC ACT but currently there are no funds for this as the ACT funds have been used to support the BMC's Mend our Mountains campaign.

- **South Stack Gogarth**

RSPB appealed against the refusal by Anglesey Council to grant planning permission for pay and display machines. The Planning Inspectorate upheld the appeal and overturned the decision, so we can assume that in 2019 pay and display parking will be in place for Gogarth/South Stack (including the laybys). Parking is free for RSPB members.

- **Snowdonia Hydros**

One goes; another one is on the cards! The NT have decided against the construction of a new micro hydro scheme on Afon Bodesi at Ogwen (opposite the north ridge of Tryfan, on the lower slopes of Carnedd Dafydd) due to both landscape issues and the discovery of a rare lichen in the feeder stream. However another scheme (not NT) has been submitted to the National Park for a micro scheme at Afon Cynfal, above Ffestiniog in an ecologically very sensitive gorge. The Planning Application details are on the [Snowdonia NPA website](#)

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