



Comisiwn Coedwigaeth Cymru
Forestry Commission Wales

Waterfalls Area Activity Concordat



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government



Forestry Commission Wales & South Wales Outdoor Activity Providers Group

Concordat

1. Introduction

This concordat aims to both safeguard the long term use of the Waterfalls area by South Wales Outdoor Activity Providers Group and balance its use with the wider environment, community and health and safety issues currently faced by the land manager.

2. Access

2.1. To groups that have signed up to the Concordat via the South Wales Outdoor Activity Providers Group (SWOAPG), Forestry Commission Wales (FCW) will:

- Allow access for non-commercial and educational outdoor activities in the Waterfalls area managed by FCW. Map of this area forms part of appendix 1.
- Permit access for agreed outdoor activities in the Waterfalls area (see appendix 1) to all affiliated commercial providers, provided that the use of the Mellte and Sychryd Gorge is carried out



- sensitivity and that the gorge is not considered to be in a deteriorating condition by FCW.
- Maintain car parking facilities in Dinas Rock Car Park.
- Maintain an outdoor changing area for groups subject to its appropriate use.
- Provide SWOAPG with an annual outline risk assessment for the inherent site features in March of each year.

2.2. South Wales Outdoor Activity Providers Group (SWOAPG) will:

- Ensure that all members abide by the current Gorge Walking Code of Conduct (appendix 2) version 2 reviewed in 2011.
- Ensure that all staff who work in the gorge have been trained in its sensitivity and use the gorge walking access map. (SWOAPG to define programme)
- Provide all members with a copy of the Dinas Access Rules and update members on any changes. (appendix 5)
- Ensure that members use the Sychryd and Mellte Gorge in a sensitive manner and only use designated less sensitive areas, access and egress points. These may change over time, and are shown in the Access Map and Code of Conduct poster version 2 reviewed in 2011.(Appendix 2)
- Ensure that all the members are registered to receive activity providers alerts from the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority.



- In April every year provide a risk assessment for users in the gorge and agree site safety rules with FCW. Risk assessment to be sent to, Paul Dann, Llandovery Forest District, Forestry Commission Wales, Llanfair Rd, Llandovery, SA20 0AL.
- Recognise that this land forms part of a working forest. Groups must be aware of all other users and must obey warning signs temporary or permanent.

3. Access Code of Conduct

South Wales Activity Providers will work together with Forestry Commission Wales to ensure members adhere to the Dinas Access Rules 2012 (appendix 5)

Enforcement Policy

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

- First Transgression - FCW will write to the Provider with a Warning and the Provider will be placed under Review for a period of between three and six months.
- Second Transgression under review - SWOAPG will downgrade the Provider to 'Non-Gorge User' membership status and FCW will write to them telling them they are no longer permitted to use the site.

There will be an independent route to appeal.

4. Review and consult

Both Forestry Commission Wales and South Wales Activity Providers will:

- Hold an annual review of the concordat to promote understanding and raise awareness of either organisations' issues. The agenda for the meeting is outlined in appendix 3.



- Consult with each other about developments with potential impact on either organisations' interests.

4.1 Accident reporting

- Both FCW / SWOAPG members have joint responsibility for recording and investigating all serious/major accidents and incidents within the gorges of which they become aware or are made aware involving users of the gorges. (see appendix 4 for full details)

5. Implementation

- No action from this concordat will override the statutory duties and responsibilities of either organisation.
- SWOAPG will ensure annually that all members are covered by at least £5 million of public liability insurance.
- SWOAPG will annually provide details of all members to FCW at Llandovery Forest District, Forestry Commission Wales, Llanfair Rd, Llandovery, SA20 0AL.

The Concordat will be reviewed at least biennially, with the second review to have taken place by 30th October 2014.

Dated: October 2012



Signed by:

Forest District Manager: Neil Stoddart 12/11/12
NEIL STODDART
FOREST DISTRICT MANAGER.

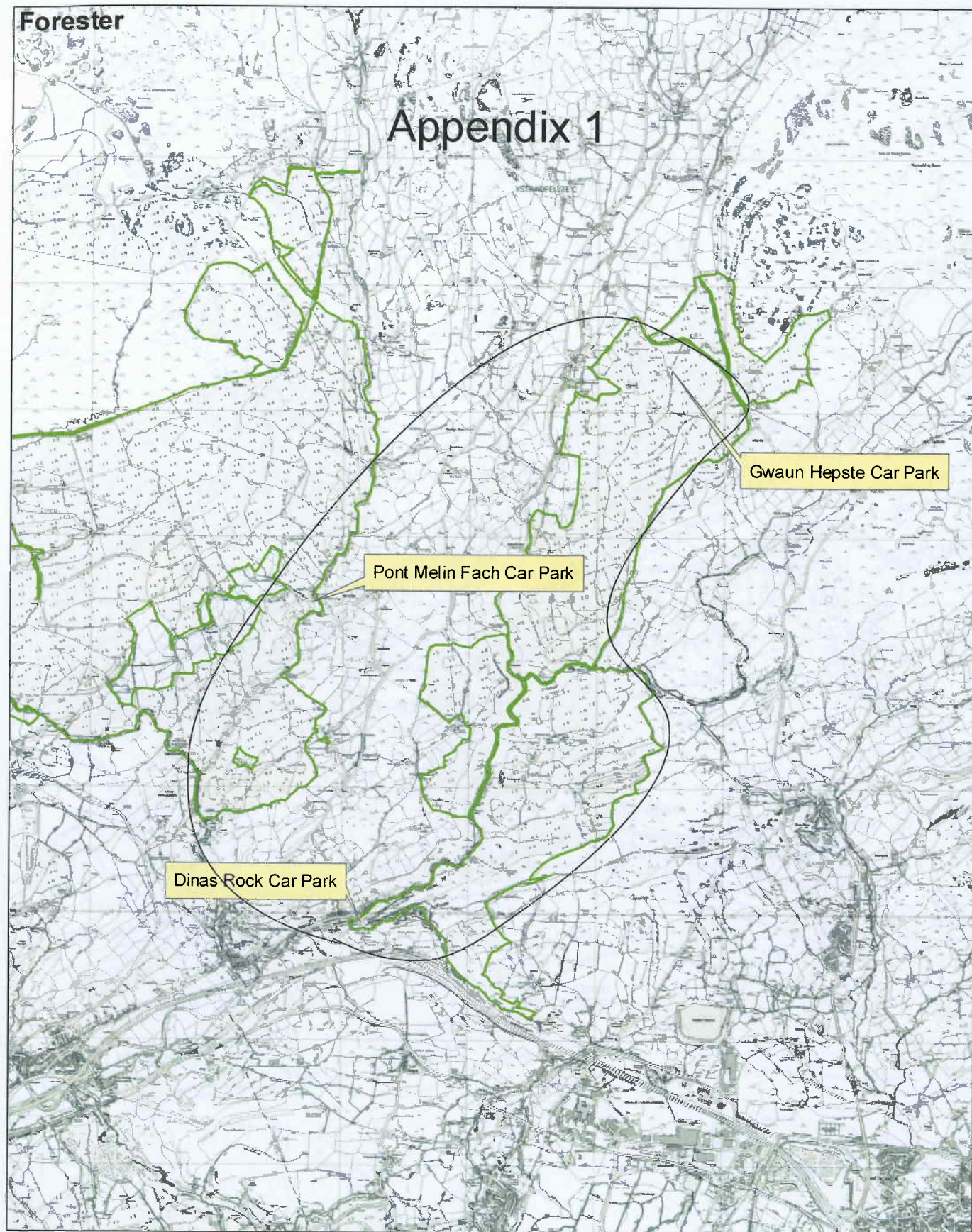
South Wales Outdoor Activity Providers Group:

[Signature] SWOAPG Co-ordinator

[Signature] SWOAPG Chairman

Forester

Appendix 1



Forest District

Title

Type of Map

Scale

Date

Stock

1:39,245

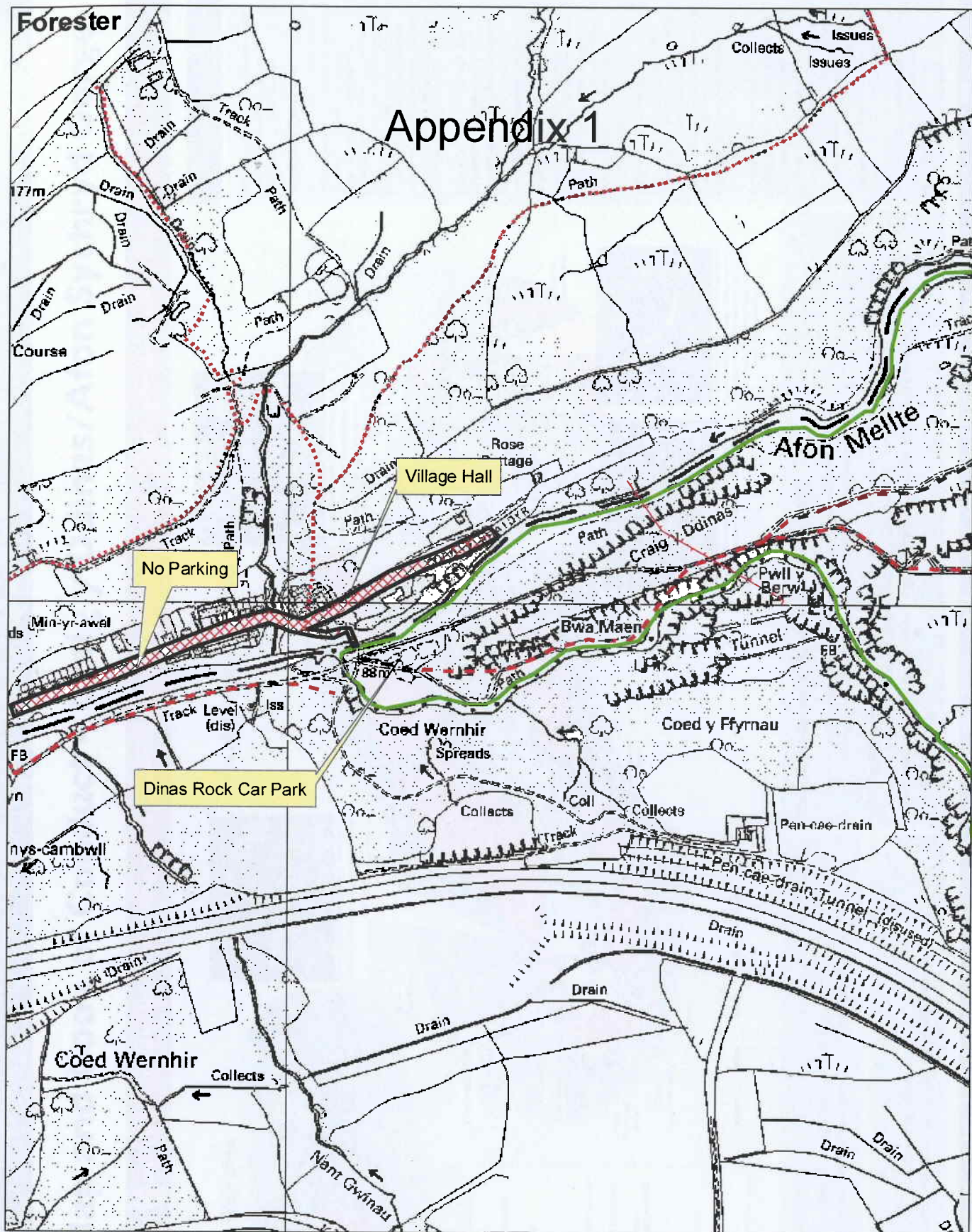
Legend

 Management Area



Comisiwn Coedwigaeth Cymru
Forestry Commission Wales

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Forest District

Title

Type of Map

Scale

Date

Stock

1:5,954

Management Area

Compartment Bdy

Compartment No.
and area (ha)

Sub-Compartment Bdy

Sub-Compartment,
Species & Planting Year

FC Road

Ride

O/H Powerline

Ancient Monuments
(Scheduled/Unscheduled)

Recreation Site

SS2/DF

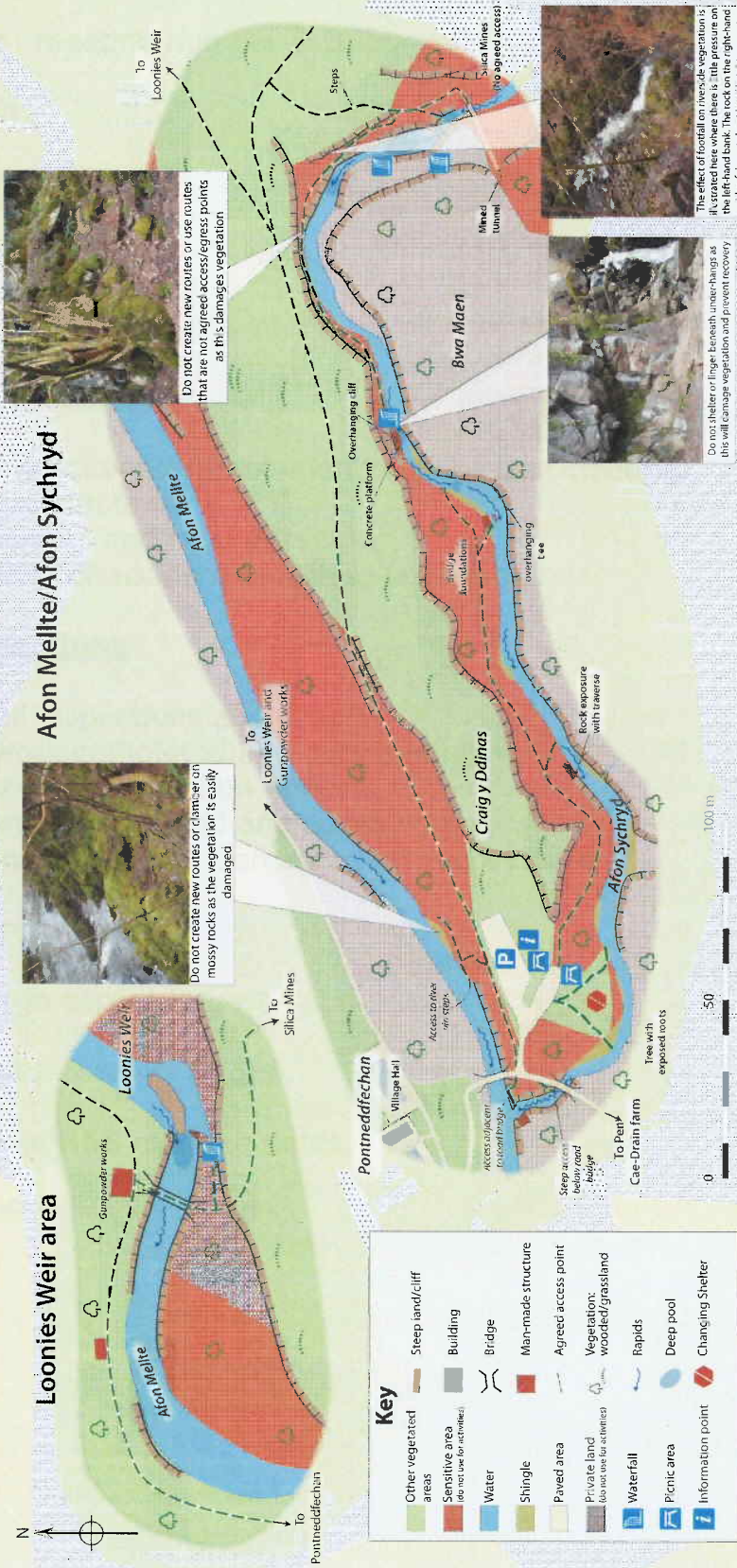


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Access Map and Code of Conduct – Craig y Ddinas/Afon Sychryd Gorge

The Afon Sychryd gorge is part of the Coeddydd Nedd a Melltke Special Area of Conservation a legally protected site under European law because of its high nature conservation value



Gorge Walking Code of Conduct

Following this code will minimise environmental disturbance within this protected site.

Brief your groups

When participants understand the fragile nature and protected status of the gorge, damage can be avoided as individuals assume a personal responsibility for protecting the area. Be sure to brief every group, including any parents, teachers or observers not actively participating. The Countryside Council for Wales has produced a short DVD on gorge walking; if possible offer your group the chance to see it before visiting the area.

Keep to footpaths and the agreed access points and routes as shown on the map

The agreed access routes and access points can accommodate groups of different abilities, and also take account of different water levels - high and low. Ensure you know which access point to use and avoid using any that are not shown on the map. Do not create new routes and access points. Groups should follow unsurfaced paths in single file to avoid widening pathways.

Stay in the watercourse

By keeping in the water flow you will ensure that you and your group are doing least damage. However, avoid moss/vegetation-covered rocks, boulders and tree bases within and by rivers, or any vegetation away from agreed routes and access points.

Avoid the marked sensitive areas (red hashing) for activities and stops

The entire gorge environment is very sensitive to disturbance and continued use of some areas prevents recovery. This is why most of the gorge is marked on the map as sensitive. Avoid conducting activities, group briefings and breaks in these sensitive areas. Break stops and group briefings can be particularly damaging as it concentrates damage from feet into one area. Therefore please conduct briefings in the car park.

The Concordat and Code of Conduct is required:

- to ensure that providers and landowners comply with environmental legislation
- for providers to gain permission to enter FCW land for gorge walking

This Concordat governs access for agreed outdoor activities in Waterfall Country. Any provider not signed up to the Concordat does not have FCW permission to access their land. For details on how to sign up see the BBNPA website www.breconbeacons.org/environment/waterfall-country or enter Gorge Walking into the Search box.

This map is to be used to:

- minimise environmental disturbance within the Craig y Ddinas/Afon Sychryd
- by following the agreed Code of Conduct and keeping to agreed access routes/points.

This map is for the use of:

- Activity providers who have signed up to the Concordat between the South Wales Outdoor Activity Providers Group and Forestry Commission Wales.

Appendix 3 Example Agenda for Liaison Meetings between FCW and SWAOPG

Agenda

FCW and SWOAPG Gorge use Concordat Liaison Meeting

Meeting: meeting number & Date

Location:

Present:

Apologies

Items

Health and Safety

- 1.1 Items actioned / implemented since last meeting.
- 1.2 Items outstanding
- 1.3 Accidents and Near Misses
- 1.4 Review of accident reporting regime

2. Inspections

- 2.1 Trail inspections and reports
 - work completed and outstanding
- 2.2 Car Park Inspection Reports
 - work completed and outstanding.
- 2.3 Condition of the Gorge habitat /ecosystem
3. Access Issues
- 3.1 Gorge access issues
- 3.2 Visitor journey issues
4. Agree H&S meeting dates.
5. AOB

Appendix 4.

Accident reporting

FCW / SWOAPG members have joint responsibility for recording and investigating all serious/major accidents and incidents within the gorges of which they become aware or are made aware involving users of the gorges.

The essential points to record are:

- Where did it happen?
- What happened?
- Who did it happen to?
- What was the nature of the accident?
- Was it reportable under RIDDOR (Reporting Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences).

Both parties will input to the WASAG's (Waterfalls Area Safety Advisory Group) incident response plan, which is in the Waterfalls Area Health and Safety policy document. This plan will be reviewed biannually and copies of each such plan will be held at each office location (SWOAPG and FCW), copies will also be provided to the emergency services.

Both parties will retain an identical up to date master copy of the gorge network, key access points and other relevant information. These maps will be accessible and easy to locate by all members of FCW Llandoverly staff and members of SWOAPG, and will be updated at annual review meetings.

Any serious/major incident involving customers, during SWOAPG group led activities must be investigated by SWOAPG within a period of 7 days from the date of the incident and a copy of the report sent to FCW.

Any accident occurring during an FCW permitted event (excluding any SWOAPG organised events) will be investigated by FCW.

Reportable Major Injuries reportable under RIDDOR

- ☒ Any fracture, other than to the fingers, thumbs or toes.
- ☒ Any amputation.
- ☒ Dislocation of the shoulder, hip, knee or spine.
- ☒ Loss of sight (whether temporary or permanent).
- ☒ A chemical or hot metal burn to the eye or any penetrating injury to the eye.
- ☒ Any injury resulting from an electrical shock or electrical burn (including any electrical burn caused by arcing or arcing products) leading to unconsciousness or requiring resuscitation or admittance to hospital for more than 24 hours.
- ☒ Any other injury:
 - ☒ leading to hypothermia, heat-induced illness or to unconsciousness;
 - ☒ requiring resuscitation; or;
 - ☒ requiring admittance to hospital for more than 24 hours.
- ☒ Loss of consciousness caused by asphyxia or by exposure to a harmful substance or biological agent.
- ☒ Either of the following conditions which result from the absorption of any substance by inhalation, ingestion or through the skin:
 - ☒ acute illness requiring medical treatment; or;
 - ☒ loss of consciousness.
- ☒ Acute illness which requires medical treatment where there is reason to believe that this resulted from exposure to a biological agent or its toxins or infected material.

The full list of reportable major injuries, dangerous occurrences and diseases and interpretation of the terms used is contained in the HSE priced publication 'A Guide to the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations - 1995 L73'.

1. Parking & Traffic

Part 1 is designated Green Car Park. Village Hall Car Park only - Access. Pedestrians and their dogs should not park way to village hall - much of this parking is for weekly residents and their dogs. The sign also prevents auto, disabled and loading in the street.

Part 2 is designated Blue Car Park. Village Hall Car Park only - Access. Pedestrians and their dogs should not park way to village hall - much of this parking is for weekly residents and their dogs. The sign also prevents auto, disabled and loading in the street.



Dinas Area Access Rules for Outdoor Activity Providers 2012

With the increase in popularity of Dinas as a venue for a variety of Outdoor Activities, particularly Gorge Walking, the impact on the local community has continued to grow and remains a challenge for us to resolve. Use of this site is important to a wide range of Providers and whilst we have handled the Gorge Code of Conduct and Concordat well, the problems we cause with high Visitor numbers remain unresolved.

We were asked in 2008 to look at how to reduce the impact and a variety of requests have been circulated to Outdoor Activity Providers in 2008, 2009 and 2010 to take some care in planning their visits to the area, with a varied degree of success.

Guidelines were drawn from the actions that were suggested by all attendees at the full SWOAPG Meeting on 29th November, 2011. However, by August 2012, with many issues still unresolved due to the unfortunate actions of a small number of Providers and renewed pressure from the local community, the Guidelines were replaced with these Rules.

1. Parking & Traffic

- a. **Park in designated Dinas Car Park or Village Hall Car Park only** – Activity Providers and their clients should not park near residences - 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. **No Parking on double yellow lines** or in the lane adjacent to the Village Hall

2. Changing

- a. **No Changing permitted in the Main Car Park.** Ensure your groups use the Changing Screens in the dell or change inside vehicles.
- b. **No Changing is permitted In the Village Hall Car Park.** Either use the Village Hall for changing or send your group to the changing screens in the Main Car Park.
- c. **No Changing in front of residents houses and the children's play area at all times.**
- d. **Brief groups to ensure changing takes place in the designated areas**

3. Toilets

- a. **Do Not use the Car Park or surrounding area as a Toilet.** Public toilets are available at the Angel Inn or book the Village Hall to use all their facilities.

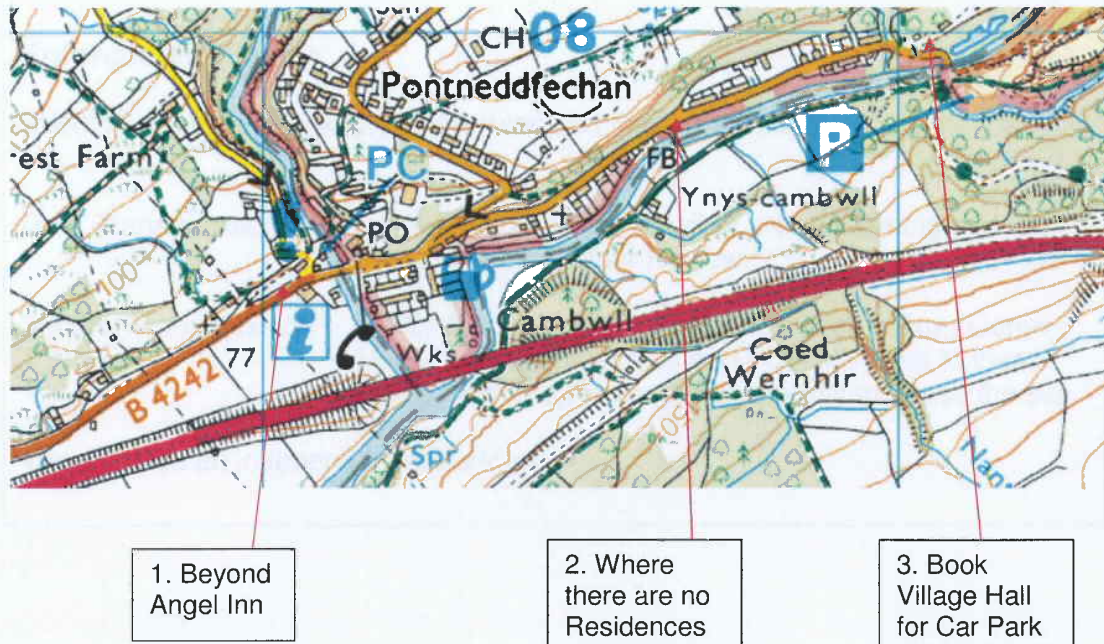
4. Numbers

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

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** - pick up yours and any other litter you find. Take all rubbish (and clothing) home with you.
- c. **Check the Changing Area** for litter and forgotten equipment once your Group has finished changing. Carrying black bags and protective gloves will help with this.

Suggested Alternative Parking



Advice

- **Park efficiently** in the Main Car Park, avoid wasting parking space
- Arrange a **meeting place** for Gorge Clients and then bring the minimum vehicles to the Dinas main car park
- The main Dinas car park is nearly always full after 11.00am on a Summer weekend. If arriving after 11.00, **consider another venue** or drop your group off and park the vehicle back beyond the Residential areas
- 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

Enforcement Policy

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

First Transgression - FCW will write to the Provider with a Warning and Provider will be under Review

Second Transgression - SWOAPG will downgrade the Provider to 'Non-Gorge User' membership status and FCW will write to them telling them they are no longer permitted to use the site.

There will be an independent route to appeal.

Village Hall

Use of the Village Hall as follows

- Hall can be hired for £10 per hour
- Lunches or Packed Lunches £4.50 each
- Hall car park can be used if hall booked

Book with :

Dilys Jenkins – 01639 721057

Lynette – 01639 721498

Some Providers have used the Hall numerous times very successfully, so it is very worthwhile 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.

1.1 Outline Risk Assessment

Forestry Commission Wales- Forestry Works Manager - Outline Risk Assessment		
Location: Dinas Rock	Work Activity/Task: General activity	
FWM: Signature: 	Name: Paul Dann	Date: 25/6/2012

The Hazard	Location of the Hazard	Who could be harmed?	Level of risk	FCW Controls	SWOAPG Controls
Rockfalls caused by climbers loosening rocks	In car park and on Sychryd trail	Members of the public/ Gorge walkers/staff	low	- Rock faces visually checked during monthly inspection - Warning signs installed and checked monthly	- Visual inspection during every use - Removal of loose rocks on used routes where safe and appropriate
Rock Falls	Side of the Sychryd trail/car park	Members of the public/ Gorge walkers/staff	Low	- Steel mesh placed onto the rock face to catch falling rocks in car park - Rock faces visually checked during monthly inspection - Warning signs installed and checked monthly	- Visual inspection during every use by Instructors and annually by Technical Advisors - All Climbing and Gorge Walking participants to wear Helmets - Reporting of any concerns to SWOAPG and/or FCW
Steep unguarded drops	Upper Sychryd Gorge	Members of the public/ Gorge walkers/staff	Medium	- Main Sychryd path surfaced away from the edge. - Handrail and steps installed to aid access egress into the gorge. Handrail inspected monthly for strength.	- Briefing and direction to Group Members by Instructors. - Avoidance of unprotected drops - Reporting of any issues with Steps and/or Handrail to FCW

Old Concrete undercut section potential failure	Upper Sychryd Gorge	Gorge walkers	medium	Gorge walkers informed of the risk	Regular visual inspection by Instructors and Technical Advisors and reporting of any concerns to FCW
Power lines	Above site between upper and lower gorge see map	Members of the public/ Gorge walkers/staff	low	- Gorge walkers informed of the risk - Ensure warning signs on poles are in position	Awareness by site users is the responsibility of each Organisational Representative signing Concordat
Mines area	Upper Sychryd Gorge	Members of the public/ Gorge walkers/staff	high	- Area inspected monthly to ensure signs and fencing is in place to prevent access - Groups advised not to use area due to mines report and advice from AALS	Mines & Tunnels Inspection Scheme gives clear advice to avoid Quartzite Mines at Upper Sychryd on FCW Land.
Cold fast flowing water	In the gorge	Members of the public/ Gorge walkers	med	Risk outlined on site interpretation board and waterfalls leaflet	Gorge Instructors to be appropriately trained, qualified and briefed. Safety is the responsibility of Organisational Head or Manager and should be aligned to advice from Technical Advisors.
Metal debris in pools and old railway trucks	In pools at the bottom of the cascade and trucks in upper section	Gorge walkers	med	Gorge walkers informed of the risk	Individual Organisations are responsible for inspecting Pools each year and providing appropriate guidance to their Instructors and Assistants
Falling down into gorge	Landslip area of old tramway which requires groups to leap over area in upper Sychryd Gorge	Gorge walkers	high	- Gorge walkers informed of the risk - Area clear of vegetation and fall is obvious	- Individual Organisations to decide whether or not to use this route - Spotting and/or use of a safety rope are recommended

Difficult access egress point avoiding using tree roots	Upper Sychryd Gorge	Gorge walkers	high	Gorge walkers informed of the risk	- All SWOAPG users receive advice on the use of the 'Roots Climb' during their Code of Conduct training. - Individual Organisations responsible to train their Instructors on safe and environmentally sensitive use of this access route
Trees falling over	All over the site	Members of the public/ Gorge walkers/staff	Low	Trees inspected as per OGB 1 on an annual inspection.	- SWOAPG members encouraged to report new tree falls immediately - SWOAPG Coordinator reports new tree falls that are causing a problem to FCW and uses Alert System to report tree falls that create a hazard

Dinas Rock Assessment

Forest District
Title
Type of Map
Scale 1:4,610
Date

- Management Area
- Compartment Bdy
- Compartment No. 2032
- and area (ha) 32
- Sub-Compartment Bdy
- Sub-Compartment, SS90F
- Species & Planting Year
- FC Road
- Ride
- O/H Powerline
- Ancient Monuments (Scheduled/Unscheduled)
- Recreation Site

Legend

- powerline_oh
- SAMs
- archaeology_area

