



OGOF FFYNNON DDU ACCESS AND ENTRY

Access Guidelines, Access Procedures & Entry Conditions and Rules

Access Guidelines

Due consideration should be given to the local community when visiting Ogof Ffynnon Ddu (OFD). The cave is located in a remote area.

It is particularly important that visitors to OFD1 follow the approved route to the cave and **DO NOT USE** the minor road which runs close to the resurgence for access. **The correct route is described next to the cave key boxes in the SWCC headquarters. Please ensure that you follow the correct route.**

Access Procedures

1. These Access Procedures apply to all parts of and all entrances to OFD and will apply until further notice.
2. The South Wales Caving Club Permit Secretary (The Permit Secretary) can be contacted by e-mail at permit_secretary@swcc.org.uk or by mobile phone - 07734907343.
3. The Permit Secretary administers access to OFD acting on behalf of the landowners (NRW) and South Wales Caving Club (SWCC). The entire cave is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a large part of it is a National Nature Reserve (NNR). Access to the cave is subject to obligations placed upon the landowners by its special status.
4. Entrances to the cave are gated. Permits for entry may be obtained from The Permit Secretary by following the procedures below. Conservation of the cave and its flora and fauna is a priority and cavers are expected to act responsibly and adhere to the Entry Conditions and Rules.
5. Access is available to members of *bona fide* caving clubs who have read, and are prepared to abide by, the Entry Conditions and Rules published by The Permit Secretary and who have also read and understood the guidance set out in this document. *Bona fide* caving clubs are defined as those entities affiliated to the British Caving Association (BCA) or another appropriate national or international body.

6. Applications for permits should be made by an officer of the visiting club and be received by The Permit Secretary at least two weeks prior to the proposed caving trip. Preferably, applications should be made by e-mail to permit_secretary@swcc.org.uk or by using the link from the SWCC website. The following minimum information should be included in the request:
 - Club name and BCA membership number/DIM BCA Membership number
 - Number of cavers/groups of 6
 - Dates access required
7. The maximum permitted party size is 6 people, including the Leader, and individual parties must remain separated in the cave. A permit covers a single party of up to 6 people. If more than 6 people from the applying club will be in the cave at the same time, then multiple permits must be requested. See the rule below with regards to size of party.
8. Permit holders may ONLY obtain keys to the cave from the SWCC headquarters. The following procedures shall apply:
 - Cave keys are held in key safe boxes within the changing rooms corridor of SWCC Cottage No.3. Below the key safe boxes are located the SWCC Cave Keys User Log Sheets and adjacent there is a whiteboard to advise other cavers of trip destinations, neither are to be used to arrange callouts. Cavers are advised to make their own callout arrangements or to use the Digital Destination Board app (available on Android and iPhones).
 - The code to access Cottage No.3 and the codes to access the key safe boxes will be provided to you with your date specific permit or DIM permit. Members of annual permit holding clubs should request a key as early as possible and no later than 48 hours in advance of their trip by email or text message. Door and key safe codes are changed regularly. All visitors requiring access should therefore book a key code with the Permit Secretary prior to their intended visit.
 - Upon collection of a key, an SWCC Cave Keys User Log Sheet MUST be filled out with all the information boxes completed clearly and legibly. Leaders are reminded that Advanced levels of skill are expected of them in this respect (see Appendix A). The key boxes should also be locked and codes scrambled. Sensitive personal data can, in the alternative, be e-mailed to the SWCC Permit Secretary in advance of completion of the SWCC Cave Keys User Log Sheet. In such circumstances the address and contact tel No. can be filled out as 'SUPPLIED TO SWCC PERMIT SECRETARY'.
9. SWCC members are to collect keys from the members key safe only. Access to members safe codes and procedures are shown in the members area of the SWCC website.

10. The SWCC Cave Keys User Log Sheets are a critical data source that would allow SWCC to respond appropriately and with expedience in the event of identification of a Covid-19 case and are also a statistical conservation data resource. Failure by the Leader to complete the User Log Sheets will result in the withdrawal of their club's Annual Permit for the remainder of the calendar year and may lead to a refusal to issue future permits to the club in question.

Upon completion of the trip:

- The cave key must be returned to the same key safe from which it was taken
 - The key safe must be relocked and codes scrambled.
 - The SWCC Cave Keys User Log Sheet entry should be completed with the time of return
 - The trip details left on the whiteboard should be removed
 - The outer door to Cottage No.3 should be locked on exit
 - Any incidents concerning the security and conservation of the cave such as the loss of a cave key must be reported to The Permit Secretary as soon as is reasonably practical
11. Permit holders **MUST** ensure that they have made adequate provision for rescue call out via an independent contact or system not connected with the key acquisition process. **The SWCC Duty Officer system to administer keys and monitor a cave destination board is no longer in operation.** It is essential that cavers obtaining a key from SWCC headquarters have in place alternative rescue call-out processes. A digital application for call out for OFD which is monitored by SWCC members (Digital Destination Board) can be downloaded from Google Play Store or Apple Store.
 12. The Permit Secretary shall, on behalf of SWCC, have absolute discretion in interpreting these conditions and may refuse a permit, in which case the applicant and SWCC Committee will be informed of the reason for refusal. The applicant may appeal in writing to the Committee of SWCC at 1-10, Powell Street, Penwyllt, Pen-y-Cae, Swansea, SA9 1GQ.
 13. Annual Permits may be issued to clubs that have demonstrated a regular and conscientious interest in OFD. Applications for Annual Permits should be made to The Permit Secretary. Each Annual Permit holding club shall be notified of these Access Procedures. All Leaders, be they permitted by Date Specific Permit or Annual Permit are assumed to have read accepted and understood these guidelines and Access Procedures.
 14. The Entry Conditions and Rules, below, are issued with all permits and must be complied with by all visitors to the cave.

Entry Conditions and Rules

- a) These Entry Conditions and Rules apply to all parts of and all entrances to OFD.
- b) Parties must now make their own arrangements for rescue. Note that even if the headquarters is open, no monitoring of trips will be made. Parties using the key safe boxes within Cottage No.3 shall log the use of keys on the SWCC Cave Keys User Log Sheets provided but note that these are strictly NOT MONITORED for the purpose of rescue call-out.
- c) For reasons of cave conservation and adequate supervision of less-experienced cavers, the maximum permitted party size is 6 including the Leader. Parties must not join up underground and should deliberately maintain separation from other parties.
- d) The Leader is responsible for the conduct and safety of the party AND for the provision of the equipment necessary to complete the trip. The Leader must draw to the party's attention the conditions relating to the use of any fixed equipment within the cave, which is listed at the bottom of these Entry Conditions and Rules. The Leader is responsible for the cave key and lost keys will incur a charge of £50. Lost cave keys must be reported to the Permit Secretary.
- e) ONLY electric lighting is to be used. Carbide MUST NOT be taken into the cave.
- f) This permit is for ENTRY ONLY. Camping, digging and the use of explosives, dye tracing and other research projects require special permission, for which application is to be made to The Permit Secretary.
- g) Conservation of the cave is very important and those who enter the cave are responsible for its welfare. Some areas are taped off for conservation reasons. Marker tapes must not be crossed or moved, under any circumstances other than in extreme emergency. Observe all tapes and route markings in the cave. If there is no tape, proceed only if there is a clearly defined path. If in doubt, STOP. Please refer to the Minimal Impact Caving Guidelines document.
- h) Smoking is prohibited throughout the cave and no litter whatsoever is to be left either inside or outside the cave.
- i) Cavers visiting OFD1 must park vehicles in approved locations and approach the cave entrance by approved routes. Details of parking locations and approach routes can be found at the bottom of these Entry Conditions and Rules.
- j) The gates to the cave are to be locked at all times except when entering or leaving the cave.
- k) Cavers enter at their own risk. Many sections of the cave are arduous. For safety reasons, adequate experience and suitable clothing and equipment are required throughout the cave and especially in the further reaches of the cave and in the streamway.
- l) Installations, apparatus and equipment must not be damaged. If accidental damage occurs this should be reported immediately on return via the whiteboard in SWCC Cottage No.3 and by e-mail to The Permit Secretary at permit_secretary@swcc.org.uk.
- m) Access to the land surface of the NNR and of much of the remainder of the SSSI is unrestricted but visitors are asked to help protect the wildlife and natural beauty and avoid disturbance to grazing animals.
- n) Failure to observe these conditions may result in the refusal of any future application for entry.
- o) These Entry Conditions and Rules may be revised from time to time.