

# Cross-Party Group Minutes

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## Meeting Minutes:

<b>Cross Party Group Title:</b>	Cross-Party Group for the Outdoor Activity Sector
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	13th December 2021
<b>Location:</b>	Via Zoom

## In attendance:

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Title:</b>
Huw Irranca-Davies (HI-D)	Chair - Member of the Senedd
Sam Rowlands (SR)	Vice Chair - Member of the Senedd
Cefin Campbell (CC)	Vice Chair - Member of the Senedd
Paul Donovan (PD)	Secretariat - Outdoor Alliance Wales and Wales Adventure Tourism Organisation Representative
Vaughan Gething (VG)	Minister for Economy
Janet Finch-Saunders (JF-S)	Member of the Senedd
Zak Weaver (ZW)	Sam Rowland's Office
Jess Williams (JW)	Observer Member - Sport Wales Representative
Rebecca Brough (RB)	Member - Ramblers Cymru Representative

Gethin Thomas (GT)	Member - British Caving Association Qualifications Committee Representative
Paul Airey (PA)	Member - The Outdoor Partnership Representative
Paul Frost (PF)	Member - The Outdoor Partnership Representative
Tracey Evans (TE)	Member - The Outdoor Partnership Representative
Gwenda Owen (GO)	Member - Cycling UK Representative
Paul Renfro (PR)	Member - Pembrokeshire Outdoor Charter Group & Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum Representative
Andy Taylor (AT)	Member - Adventure Activities Industry Advisory Committee & Woodcraft Folk Representative
Mike Rosser (MR)	Member - Outdoor Education Advisors Panel & Adventure UK Representative
Alison Roberts (AR)	Observer Member - Natural Resources Wales Representative
Matthew Williams (MW)	Member - Welsh Sports Association Representative
Steven Morgan (SM)	Member - Plas Menai Representative
Steve Rayner (SRa)	Member - South Wales Outdoor Activity Providers Group Representative
Emma Edwards-Jones (EE-J)	Member - Snowdonia Active Representative
Catherine Williams (CW)	Member - Snowdonia Active Representative
Neal Anderson (NA)	Member - Valley Training Consultancy Representative
Kathryn Stewart (KS)	Member - British Horse Society Cymru Representative
Eben Muss (EM)	Member - British Mountaineering Council Cymru Representative

Emma Richards (ER)	Member - Urdd Representative
Amanda Smith (AS)	Member - CAT ZCB
Gerwyn Owen (GeO)	Member - Royal Yachting Association Cymru Representative
Hayley Sharp (HS)	Member - Brecon Beacons National Park Authority Representative
Jethro Moore (JM)	Member - National Coasteering Charter Representative
Kate Ashbrook (KA)	Member - Open Spaces Society Representative
Ric Potter (RP)	Member - British Mountain Guides Representative
Ryland Doyle (RD)	
Steffan Roberts (SRo)	Observer Member - Visit Wales Representative
Sue Williams (SW)	Observer Member - Natural Resources Wales Representative
Tom Sharp (TS)	Member - Welsh Sports Association Representative

### Apologies:

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Title:</b>
Arwel Elias (AE)	Member - Outdoor Education Advisors Panel Representative
Craig Armigar (CA)	Member - Institute for Outdoor Learning Cymru Representative
Andrew Denton (AD)	Member - Outdoor Industries Association Representative

## Summary of Meeting:

PR focussed his presentation on the economic and social value of adventure activities, referencing the findings of the Millar Research that was carried out in 2014 and acknowledging how dated the findings are and how the sector needs to understand its value in 2021/22 for it to take a strategic focus for the future. PR noted the value and benefits of adventure activities: health & well-being, social, education and life long learning, as well as being inspirational, providing opportunities for self development, preserving and protecting our natural environment. PR went on to highlight the challenges the sector faces as well as the opportunities it can bring, noting that to enable the sector to take an informed strategic and sustainable approach that recognises and catalyses the contribution the sector makes to a green recovery in Wales, there is a need to identify and understand its current economic impact and consider the social value of these activities in Wales. PR concluded that achieving this will highlight the importance and relevance of the sector and fully recognise its contribution to the economy of Wales.

A copy of the presentations will be distributed together with these minutes.

HI-D thanked NA & PR for their presentation and initially give VG the opportunity to share some of his thoughts before discussion and questions got underway.

VG acknowledged the common challenges that many sectors face i.e. labour and skills and the need to encourage career opportunities that are not seen as seasonal. VG also noted that the last 2 years from a schools and youth perspective should now provide demand opportunities for businesses and it's how these demands are managed and how businesses invest in these demand opportunities that needs to be considered. VG acknowledged the need to work together to growth the outdoor sector sustainably and concluded that he is looking forward to doing so with his Deputy Minister Dawn Bowden.

HI-D asked a question of VG around the challenges of the breadth of the outdoor sector and how best is this translated to Welsh Government (WG). VG noted that whilst it is challenging to secure ministerial time, it would still be worth contacting those Ministers with responsibilities for the various areas i.e. Health & Well-being, Education, Economy, Tourism, Environment etc. to point out the overlap and value of these areas with the outdoor sector and how the benefits of working across governmental departments will provide a clear perspective between all aspects (see Action 1 below).

HI-D thanked VG for his time today, acknowledging that he is likely to leave before the end of the meeting. Prior to going to questions/comments from those in attendance, HI-D noted that there is a need to update the findings of the Millar Report of 2014 and

posed the question as to how can this be achieved and who would be able to conduct such research that addresses both the economic and social value of the outdoor sector in Wales.

The comments below reflect points raised in the chat box and in person during the meeting:

AT noted the economic and social value of the voluntary sector and the contribution the voluntary sector makes, acknowledging local communities working within local communities, the positives this brings from a Welsh language perspective and the engagement this brings from youth perspective.

RB noted that the huge challenge that underlines all of this is the quality of the physical access on the ground, highlighting that public rights of way are the way into the landscape for so many activities yet the network is struggling from a lack of resources and enforcement. RB went onto say that the opportunity presented by new Agricultural management scheme looks likely to be missed unless Welsh Government take the necessary steps to make access key to compliance for the new scheme. These points were echoed by many, including EM, JM, GO & SRa with further support for access being included as cross-compliance in the Agricultural Management Scheme and that it is crucial that landowners are incentivised to maintain existing access as well as to create improved access. GO pointed out the need to be mindful of WG intent to widen access as part of the Access Reform. HI-D noted that what CPGs can do regarding key things is to take them up directly with Ministers (see Action 1 below).

KA noted how she uses Wales as an example of how things should be done when talking to English colleagues and that she would be disappointed if she is not able to use Wales as this example. KA went onto focus on the need for research into the economic value and benefits of the rights of way networks across Wales. Again, the research currently available for this is outdated so would certainly benefit from a refresh. HI-D suggested taking this offline following the meeting to firstly identify what research currently exists for both the economic value of the outdoor sector and the rights of way networks (see Action 3 below).

MR noted his representation from an Outdoor Education Advisors Panel perspective and the links that have evolved with Education officials during the Covid-19 period, highlighting the value of this engagement as well as the value of engaging with outdoor providers. MR went onto say that whilst such conversations exist within the WG education team, these can't be looked at in isolation and need to be shared across departments and areas. HI-D suggested that PD liaise with key individuals with a view to drafting correspondence to go to Ministers and the First Minister (see Action 1 below).

PF noted the part that local communities play in enabling change at both local and national government levels, highlighting that its local communities that build local communities and as capacity grows, this provides incentives as well as life long involvement in the outdoors and in turn enables generational change.

CC as the question as to whether the outdoor sector has the capacity to provide outdoor activities through the medium of Welsh, given that more and more people are learning Welsh in schools and colleges etc.?

PA noted research conducted by Bangor University a while ago highlighted a small percentage of Welsh speaking outdoor activity instructors within the workforce and research conducted c.3 years ago highlights 25%-30% of providers able to conduct

outdoor activity sessions through the medium of Welsh. PA went onto reference the work of The Outdoor Partnership and the importance of delivery through the medium of Welsh.

PR noted the training opportunities that Pembrokeshire Outdoor Charter Group put on for their members to enable them to better understand the Welsh language, especially key words and phrases that are found in guide books and on maps for example.

**Action 1.** *PD & HI-D to liaise over the summer period with a view to identifying the initial topic(s) for the next meeting.*

**Action 2.** *PD & HI-D to liaise regarding drafting a letter to be sent to Ministers to highlight the establishing of the group and the willingness to engage and support Government.*

**Action 3.** *PD & HI-D to identify a suitable date for the next meeting and consider how often such meetings ought to take place.*

## **5. AOB**

No other business raised

## **6. Date of next meeting**

SM referenced the instructor development programme offered by Plas Menai, which certainly offers opportunities for delivery through the medium of Welsh. SM also noted the Urdd and the apprentice scheme they offer. ER from the Urdd was on the call today but had left by the time this conversation took place.

HI-D suggested that as MSs, it might be work having discussions with Ministers regarding the Welsh language and the delivery of outdoor activities. CC further noted the need for Welsh names - the historical ancestry, may be lost if we don't retain such names, which go back centuries.

CW noted the Carneddau Landscape Partnership that is currently running in North Wales. It identifies Welsh names and the historical nature of the names.

HI-D asked CC whether they could look to the Spring for a back bench debate with MSs around a number of the issues we are talking about here. CC agreed that this would be incredibly beneficial and suggested we spend the next few months pulling things together. (see Action 2 below).

HS noted that the economic benefits for local communities, local procurement, local chains, local employment, business taxes on outdoor centres, local taxes of outdoor education should not be overlooked.

RP noted that the key thing is that there is a joined up approach . Local engagement is so important, continually and developmentally though school years and into adult hood brings the whole community the opportunity to be part of the outdoor sector either professionally or just for their own well being.

## 5. Summary of the meeting and actions

HI-D summarised the meeting highlights and concluded with the following actions:

**Action 1:** A letter to be sent to cross cabinet members of the government and the First Minister, picking up on key points - challenges, opportunities and solutions to the issues in question and noting that we are keen to work with and help WG. Opening such a channel of communication will certainly help raise the profile of the sector. **PD the start this process, utilising the Outdoor Alliance Manifesto 2021 as a starting point for identifying the key points. All to contribute thereafter.**

**Action 2:** A back bench debate in the Spring to raise the profile of the sector and some of the points raised today. There will be a need for all of us to reach out to our MSs to ensure they are in a position to contribute to the back bench debate. This will require us to provide MSs with the relevant information so a need to use the next few months to pull things together. **All to consider the key aspects that need to be included in the debate and reach out to respective MSs (the content of the letter noted in Action 1. will assist with this). HI-D & CC to identify an opportune time for this to happen and therefore make it happen.**

**Action 3:** Update economic and social value research for the outdoor sector in Wales and consider updating the research related to the economic value of the rights of way networks across Wales. **PD to collate any existing research as a starting point. All to contribute.** Documents already signposted include the following:

<https://wcva.cymru/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/The-role-of-the-voluntary-sector-in-shaping-a-new-economy-for-Wales.pdf> ;

<https://www.sportandrecreation.org.uk/pages/reconomics-plus>

<http://www.wato.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/The-Economic-Impact-of-Outdoor-Activity-Tourism-in-Wales-Visit-Wales-March-2014.pdf>

## 6. Date of next meeting - TBC



