

Cross Party Group Title:	Outdoor Activity Sector in Wales
Date of Meeting:	28 September 2022
Location:	Via Zoom
Name:	Title:
Sam Rowlands	Vice Chair – Member of the Senedd
Jeremy Miles	Minister for Education
Paul Donovan	Secretariat - Outdoor Alliance Wales & Wales Adventure Tourism Organisation
Rebecca Brough	Secretariat – Ramblers Cymru
Graham French	Member – Association of Heads of Outdoor Education Centres - North Wales
Clare Adams	Member – Outdoor Education Advisors Panel Cymru
Kathryn Stewart	Member – British Horse Society
Jethro Moore	Member – National Coasteering Charter
Catherine Williams	Member - Snowdonia Active & Wales Adventure Tourism Organisation
Emma Robinson	Member – Youth Hostel Association
Paul Airey	Member – The Outdoor Partnership
Mark Jones	Member - The Outdoor Partnership
Mike Rosser	Member - Outdoor Education Advisors Panel Cymru & Adventure UK
Gethin Thomas	Member – British Caving Association Qualifications Management Committee
Tom Carrick	Member – British Mountaineering Council

Sue Williams	Observer - Natural Resources Wales
Phil Stone	Member – Canoe Wales
Simon Patton	Member – Mountain Training Cymru
Angela Jones	Member – Snowdonia National Park Authority
Paul Frost	Member – The Outdoor Partnership
Steve Morgan	Member – Plas Menai & Sport Wales
Eben Muse	Member – British Mountaineering Council
Phil Stubbington	Member - John Muir Award Cymru
Beverley Penny	Member - Open Spaces Society
Sian Thomas	Observer – Senedd Research
Arwel Elias	Member - Outdoor Education Advisors Panel Cymru
Richard John	Member - Deryn, on behalf of Canal & Rivers Trust Cymru
Greg Whiting	Observer - Senedd Education Team

Apologies

Name:	Title:
Huw Irranca-Davies	Chair - Member of the Senedd
Andy Meek	Member – Association of Heads of Outdoor Education Centres - South Wales
Delyth Jewell	Member of the Senedd
Llyr Gruffydd	Member of the Senedd
Peredur Owen	Member of the Senedd
Heledd Fychan	Member of the Senedd
Steve Rayner	Member - South Wales Outdoor Activity Providers Group & Wales Adventure Tourism Organisation
Alison Roberts	Member - Natural Resources Wales
Paul Renfro	Member - Pembrokeshire Coastal Forum, Pembrokeshire Outdoor Charter Group & Wales Adventure Tourism Organisation
Alistair Dickson	Member - Canoe Wales
Cefin Campbell	Vice Chair – Member of the Senedd
Sian Richings	Member - Royal Society for the Protections of Birds
Emma Edwards-Jones	Member - Snowdonia Active & Wales Adventure Tourism Organisation

Summary of the meeting

Previous minutes accepted as accurate.

Action arising previously:

1. Letter was sent to Minister for Climate Change, Julie James, regarding piloting of access reforms. Awaiting response.
2. CPG members discussions regarding resources for further work on access reform yet to take place

Presentation

A presentation was made by Graham French, addressing Outdoor Education and Learning in Wales.

Points raised in the presentation were:

1. Highlighted useful definitions:
 - Outdoor learning – subjects that are taught outside and an approach that can be used across all subjects and across a broad range of teaching ;
 - Adventure education – more traditional activities, e.g. hillwalking, kayaking etc focuses on personal and social learning frequently – has been part of curriculum since 2008;
 - Outdoor Education: encompasses elements of both Outdoor Learning and Adventure education and a useful common language for Wales
2. Outdoor education has a range of settings – residential or day visit centres; in school with existing staff or external specialist staff
3. Links to curriculum through:
 - Health and Wellbeing Area of learning; supporting the development of positive lifelong lifestyle behaviours, establishing connections to nature; processing emotions and impact of actions on other people
 - Humanities Area of Learning; identifies opportunities to learn outdoors as a specific consideration for delivering curriculum, and connection to the wonder of nature
4. Options for teacher engagement through Local Authority Centres (Welsh authorities and English authority-owned in Wales), Third sector organisations, commercial providers or mixed business, Forest Schools, Natural resources Wales.
5. Challenges for the sector include

- Resources for schools that connect them to the new Wales curriculum and its ethos
- Need for signposting – knowledge of the availability of advice through Outdoor Education Advisers Panel (OEAP) Cymru is inconsistent amongst schools.
- Co-ordination of national approaches – getting a shared understanding of language and approaches
- Equity – affordability and accessibility to all. Not all schools take part and within schools its not always accessible to all
- Recognition – communication of the value and purpose needs improving – move from ‘nice to have/enrichment’ to entitlement as part of teacher’s approach. Role of Awards to add level of recognition for participation.
- Ambition for outdoor learning to become part of every child’s educational journey and part of the approach to their schooling

General Discussion and issues to note

6. Minister welcomed presentation and reflected on:
 - the importance of outdoor education and the link to learner wellbeing and life choices, particularly the inclusive nature of benefits;
 - the power of Outdoor learning in the context of the Climate and Nature emergencies and the connections it creates to the natural world;
 - highlighted that commissioning of resources is ongoing; highlighted opportunity for the National Network of education/external experts and school staff to come together in ‘deep dives’ develop resources and best practice in the Outdoor education area.

The following points reflect the open forum discussion by those in attendance:

7. How to facilitate involvement of teachers; additional asks of teachers time, particularly residential trips is difficult ; securing resources to cover lessons needs consideration
8. Fundraising of costs can help support equity for costs of trips, but also has impact on role of teachers to support this initiative
9. Embedding of Outdoor Education as part of teacher training may help this be seen as part of role not an additional activity, and a culture shift towards this may be helped by covid-experiences.
10. Using specialised outdoor providers will be required and welcomed, with a recognition of the professional skills and expertise available to help deliver the new curriculum
11. OEAP work to taking learning outdoor starts with teaching staff using their own grounds and a recognition of teachers existing skills and experiences; then build their

confidence and competence to go further afield.

12. Sector is noticing smaller groups attending centres as financial pressures increase on families
13. Sustainability of approach important by linking with external providers and training school staff: appropriate packages of support which remain accessible within school when personnel leave
14. Quality and relevance of resources and how to signpost to these is key; mapping of what is underdevelopment and available across the whole spectrum of outdoor learning
15. The continuum of experiences from birth and through school age, and into community life is crucial to sustaining outdoor activity and offers skills development and employment option in later life.
16. The recognised physical and mental health benefit of outdoor learning and its effects on connectiveness to nature are equally important outcomes, helping create engaged citizen who are environmentally conscious
17. Creating safe quality experience where people are educated to enjoy the outdoors safely and responsibility – lots of resources available but need to be mapped and brought together, and appropriate Welsh culture for outdoor education to develop
18. Issue of risk aversion: how is this tackled at a leadership level when opportunities are rejected because of perceived risk: role for Welsh government?
19. Need to consider wider cross-portfolio areas – such as linkages to reforms in agriculture and how access to the outdoors is managed by landowners, and how landowners are engaged in managing their land for the benefit of outdoor learning, given current challenges with the condition of some paths and access land
20. Member Bill on Outdoor Learning is going forward into Senedd for debate in late October, proposed by Sam Rowlands MS
21. Minister recognised opportunities for embedded outdoor culture in education system and curriculum approach; noted the challenges of resources; would like to further explore the way a National Network discussion could explore flexible opportunities and secure a continuum of experience through the education stages. A move to a statutory underpinning would raise questions of funding and conditions and how to deploy available resources to deliver. Welcomes further thinking on balance between an integrated approach and a more flexible, discreet offering by different settings.

Meeting actions

1. Mapping exercise of resources to be explored with the OEAP - Secretariat to initiate conversations with key outdoor education organisations and report back at the next meeting of the CPG
2. Further explore Minister suggestion of National Network conversations with a focus on Outdoor Learning - Secretariat to make a request of the Minister to make a visit of Storey Arms in the new year with a view to following up on the Ministers suggestion and also his other reflections, noted in point 21 above.
3. Arrange an AGM - Secretariat to make the necessary arrangements asap, ensuring the availability of the Chair and Vice Chairs.

Next Meeting:

Safety in the Outdoors

Date & Time: TBC, early 2023 - awaiting confirmation from Dawn Bowden's office for a suitable date

Venue: possibly North Wales, Venue TBC

Virtual: Zoom link: TBC and provided in the invitation for the next meeting.