



Here is an update on some outdoor recreation news which you may like to know about....



The Ambassador Business Charter

The National Trust (NT) own about 20% of the coastline in Wales, including some of the best areas for outdoor recreation such as cliff climbing, coasteering and paragliding. In Pembrokeshire these areas include the Blue Lagoon at Abereddy, Porth Clais climbing areas (Grey and Red Wall), and the Stackpole Estate in South Pembrokeshire to mention just a few.

Last month an internal NT document called the 'Ambassador Business Scheme' was widely circulated amongst activity providers, outlining a method of working with activity providers which has been used in other areas of the UK. The scheme encourages NT property managers to seek to arrange exclusive licenses for access for activity centres and businesses to areas owned by the NT. The scheme, whilst not officially released by the NT, did cause widespread concern amongst providers throughout Wales. Activity providers felt that if the NT did issue exclusive licenses that it would stop the majority of businesses being able to take groups to the venues that they regularly use for outdoor activities.

However, The South Wales Outdoor Activity Providers group met with the NT to discuss the scheme, and after a very positive meeting the below statement was issued by Jonathan Hughes, the General Area Manager for Pembroke on behalf of National Trust Wales:

"The National Trust is keen to work more closely with outdoor activity providers in Wales, helping people share the wonders of the natural world. We have been considering how we might work collaboratively with the outdoor sector, ensuring that groups get the best possible experience from the spectacular coast and countryside in the Trust's care in Wales. The nature of any relationship will reflect the type of business and the character of the site. One model that was considered was the Ambassador Business



Scheme which is being piloted in England. Whilst the scheme has some positive aspects, it is definitely not our intention to roll it out to all providers across Wales. "The Trust would hope

that this is the start of a positive ongoing dialogue with providers of outdoor activities, and looks forward to developing mutually beneficial relationships that help people get outdoors and closer to nature."

The next Outdoor Charter meeting is on the 7th March and will be held at...

The Venue for the next full Outdoor Charter meeting, 7th March, 10am – 3pm has been decided upon, and it will be held at..... Liberty Stadium in Swansea!!



“Built on the site of the former Morfa Athletics Stadium and playing fields, the 20,520 seat stadium has become one of the foremost sporting venues in the country. As well as two hugely successful sporting teams, we now regularly hold International sporting fixtures, numerous sell out concerts and we provide the home to thousands of conferences and events every single year.”

The reason for this grand venue for our next meeting is that Visit Wales are supporting a gathering of the [South Wales Outdoor Activity Providers group](#) (the equivalent of the Outdoor Charter group in the SW, Brecon Beacons / Gower area) and us with a view to facilitating a conference to ask you all about the issues that are affecting you and your businesses as you strive to deliver quality and sustainable outdoor recreation and activity tourism in SW Wales.

This will be an important opportunity for the outdoor recreation sector in SW Wales to speak directly to representatives from Welsh Government about the importance of outdoor recreation for Wales, issues affecting development of the sector, and to get updated on a wide range of topics including Adventure Activities Licensing, the new National Coasteering Charter and Visit Wales’s plans for the promotion of activity tourism in Wales.

This all day event (likely to be from 10am till 3pm) will be a great opportunity to give your input and support for the development of the outdoor recreation sector in Wales, and also to meet providers from across the whole of SW Wales. It will be free to attend, lunch will be provided & transport from Pembrokeshire will be arranged.

A draft agenda for the day is being put together now – please let me know what you would like to see on there. **And stick the date – 7th March - in your diary please!**

HSE - Health and Safety Executive publish new guidance on “School Trips”...

“To tackle some of the myths about red tape and prosecution, HSE has published a policy statement to encourage all schools (in both maintained and independent sectors) and local authorities to remove wasteful bureaucracy imposed on those involved in organising school visits and outdoor learning activities.”

Read more here: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/services/education/school-trips.htm>

Coasteering – there is lots happening!!!

The DVD & Code...

The Coasteering Code of Conduct and DVD on best practice will be completed as planned by February 2012. 500 copies will be distributed across Wales for coasteering guides and activity centres, and a short online film showing the key points will be available. Coasteering has continued to grow in popularity, and in some areas this has resulted in conflict of interest between adventure activities providers, landowners, and conservationists.

The DVD and Code is aimed at reconciling coasteering and conservation to ensure that best practice is encouraged, and that disturbance to the environment, wildlife and communities / other users of the coast are minimised.

New ‘National Coasteering Charter’ gets unanimous thumbs up from 80 coasteering providers...

Recently the National Coasteering Charter had a very successful inaugural meeting in Bristol, with over 80 coasteering providers attending and unanimously voting the ‘Charter through. This group is concerned with promoting best practice for coasteering both in terms of safety, and the environment. The group has been considering the wording of the draft coasteering code of conduct, and the draft has been widely circulated for comment from all key stakeholders.

WAMO!! Wales Activity Mapping - the Coasteering Layers.

David Jones has now finished uploading the coasteering layers on the [Wales Activity Mapping](#) website (formerly the recreation audit) showing areas of Pembrokeshire where coasteering is happening, where it could happen (always subject to a site evaluation), and where it would be highly unlikely to be encouraged due to wildlife and wildness. We need your feedback and agreement (or disagreement!) on these draft layers, and Project Officer David Jones has now gone the extra mile to help you to get to grips with the site by producing a help video showing exactly how to use it. [Just click on the ‘help video’ tab on the WAM website](#) Please do have a good look at the map, and the layers, and please give us your comments...



Aberiddy Coasteering Management Scheme seems to be working...

A management scheme devised by the Pembrokeshire Outdoor Charter group with providers, land owners and conservationists, appears to be working well according to the land owners and the main activity centres using the site. There has been a reduction in the amount of commercial activity at the bay due to the voluntary agreement to limit numbers there, resulting in less overcrowding at this site by commercial activity centres. The general public are being encouraged to always go coasteering with a qualified guide on a new sign put up by the National Trust (NT) at the site. The NT are also moving forward with plans to license all centres wishing to use the site to ensure that they are operating to the agreed National Coasteering Charter guidelines, and that all companies taking groups out coasteering have adequate insurance in place. A new webpage on the OC website giving a more detailed overview of the new scheme, and how you can get involved, has been posted online – click here to read it: <http://www.pembrokeshireoutdoors.org.uk/best-practice/coasteering-at-abereiddy/>

Paragliders and Farmers come into conflict in the Preseli Hills...

The Preseli Hills are common land, and access for recreation on the Preseli's is guided by a piece of legislation called the CROW (Countryside Rights of Way Act). Upland areas are also a Site of Special Scientific Interest due to the special flora there.



Unfortunately for Paragliders the Act states that Paragliding (and Hangliding) is not permitted without the consent of the land owners. Some individuals from the farming community have in the past allowed Paragliding to develop in some areas of the Preseli's, but recently the farming community have collectively decided to withdraw all permissions stating that paragliding activities are disturbing livestock. The Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority is responsible for the managing land covered by the CROW Act, and has recently issued a statement:

*“The grazing of the commons is important for the conservation of the SSSI and SAC – It is important for the NPA **Conservation Purpose** that the commons continue to be grazed.*

*At the same time we have a purpose to promote **Enjoyment** and to foster the socio-economic well being of the community. Paragliding provides a sustainable and peaceful activity which, if it can be combined successfully with other users, we would normally wish to encourage. It is an activity which provides a good opportunity for public enjoyment of the Park's special qualities."*

The paragliding community have been extremely upset by the total ban on their activities, and some have ignored the ban & continue to fly there. The Paragliding community have launched a social media campaign to raise awareness about the ban, and to put forward their case that they believe there is plenty of room for Paragliders in the Preseli's, and that with negotiation and compromise, paragliding could take place without causing undue disturbance to livestock.

Nick Bamber from Pembrokeshire Paragliding has said that he will respect the ban, but he added:

"There are many in the community deeply frustrated about the ban, especially at this time of year when there are no sheep on the mountain. The paragliding community feels this is a public issue over access rights and that as such it should be handled in the public domain. We would welcome an opportunity for a public debate on this matter where both sides of the argument were able to be clearly put forward with adjudication from a non biased party. Paragliding is good for the County and its outdoor sports image. We have achieved great things by giving Pembrokeshire the most positive publicity through multiple social media outlets, and it is so disappointing to be banned from flying in the Preselis which is a World class venue for the sport."

The PCNPA concluded their statement by saying

"We are also conscious that it is almost impossible to entirely prevent any activity from taking place on an area as large as the Preseli Hills. Our experience of managing recreation elsewhere both as NPA and through the Pembrokeshire Outdoor Charter Group is that it is much more effective and satisfactory to agree ways to use land which avoids damage, and to rely on peer pressure to make these work, than it is to attempt prevention, policing or enforcement.

We believe that it is in all parties' best interests to achieve an agreed solution and to avoid outright bans or conflict if at all possible. We are willing to work with all parties involved to try and agree a workable compromise that meets agricultural, conservation and recreational requirements"

The Pembrokeshire Outdoor Charter have discussed these issues at a dedicated Wind Sports management meeting, and with all concerned, and are endeavouring to facilitate a meeting involving all key stakeholders to see if any agreement can be reached in the new year.



**Parc Cenedlaethol
Arfordir Penfro**

**Pembrokeshire Coast
National Park**

Publicity for Pembs on ‘Adventurers Guide to Britain’ on ITV 20th December...



The Pembrokeshire Outdoor Charter group were contacted by ITV to assist with filming for the new series about having adventures in Britain. Here is the write up...

“The Adventurer's Guide To Britain strays from the beaten track to uncover the mysteries and secret wonders of the British Isles. From lost gold mines and inaccessible cliffs to drowned villages and watery caverns, naturalist

Charlotte Uhlenbroek and action-man Gethin Jones discover the incredible but dangerous places less intrepid explorers avoid. The adventurer duo need all their strength and stamina as they trek, climb, kayak and fly their way around the country, investigating history and geography in stunning visual detail. On behalf of the armchair explorer in all of us, The Adventurer's Guide To Britain reveals the spectacular, hidden side of Britain which only few dare to seek out.” ITV STUDIOS for ITV1

[West Wales Dive Company](#) took Gethin and Charlotte out on a boat trip, fishing and snorkeling, and [Preseli Venture](#) took the duo out coasteering. I helped with the coasteering, and helped organise an overnight wild camping trip with the help of the National Trust and [Celtic Camping](#). A fun couple of days were had by all, and I'm looking forward to seeing how Pembrokeshire looks in HD. Tune in on the 20th of December...