

CCB CYMDEITHAS ERYRI the SNOWDONIA SOCIETY AGM
Held on Saturday 22 October 2016 at Electric Mountain, Llanberis

MINUTES

Present: 63 members, with President John Lloyd-Jones in the Chair.

Apologies were received from:

Trustees:

Gareth Roberts

And 40 other members

1. The minutes of the Annual General Meeting held in 2015 were approved *nem con* (proposed by Jacob Buis, seconded by David Firth).

2. **Matters arising**
 - i. JIJ drew the floor's attention to item 9, clarifying that it was CPRW's evidence to the Welsh Assembly that had been damning of the role of NRW; the criticism was not of CPRW.

JIJ paid a tribute to John Disley, a stalwart of the National Park and initiator of the London Marathon and to Ian Mercer, first Chief Executive of Dartmoor and of CCW, and invited the floor to honour their memory.

Chair's report

3. David Archer expressed his pleasure to see so many people attending and thanked Paul Gannon for his excellent morning walk.
 - i. He reported that, after 4 years, the long-running Welsh Government reviews of National Parks (and most recently, a review of reviews by the Future Landscapes Working Group) was still not complete, with a statement expected from the latest Minister, Lesley Griffiths, promised in November.
 - ii. He expressed concern about the Brexit vote and possible negative implications for the environment and funding for rural and deprived areas of Wales, while recognizing opportunities that might benefit Snowdonia if agricultural support were to be redirected to fund environmental goods such as storing carbon, promoting biodiversity and flood protection. He assured the floor that the Society would be campaigning on such measures.
 - iii. David highlighted the Society's successful campaign against the Conwy Falls hydro-electric scheme, in partnership with other organizations, and praised John Harold's efforts.
 - iv. He reported the success of the Snowdonia Ecosystem Project, and its expanding programme involving more partners, more volunteers and a wider range of conservation schemes, including the Ty Hyll Project. The Snowdonia Society is now seen as one of the key players in co-ordinating and providing volunteer conservation services in Snowdonia. Due to the diligent work of Mary-Kate and the Director, funding for the Ecosystem team is now guaranteed to 2018.
 - v. Tight financial control has enabled the Society's net operating budget to show a slight surplus for the financial year. The Society received a substantial donation from the Esme Kirby Snowdonia Trust, and other legacies; David emphasised the importance of legacies, small or large in funding campaigns and rebuilding reserves.

- vi. David highlighted the staff's fundraising work, in particular the 'CanSaveCarbon' challenge launched by Frances Smith, the Membership and Fundraising Officer, which raised over £1,400 for the Society.
- vii. He expressed hope that the National Grid would start survey work early in 2017 for undergrounding pylons in the Dwryd estuary.
- viii. He drew attention to the Society's role (in partnership with the Landscape Research Group) in offering a platform to debate art in the landscape, prompted by two installations in key locations within the Park. The final vote in the debate was to favour further development controls.
- ix. David wished a Happy 80th Birthday to the Campaign for National Parks, a long standing ally of the Snowdonia Society, who helped fund the Conwy Falls campaign.
- x. David finished by reminding the floor that 2017 is a big year for the Society, being its 50th anniversary, and gave advance notice of a programme of events and occasions. He urged members to take part and look forward to another 50 years of celebrating and enhancing our iconic National Park.

Snowdonia Ecosystem Project Manager's presentation

- 4. Mary-Kate Jones gave a brief summary of the Project's work during the year:
 - i. She listed some of the many organizations the Project is working with, including Snowdonia National Park, North Wales Wildlife Trust, Natural Resources Wales and CAIS.
 - ii. Core work of litter-picking, maintaining footpaths, clearing rhododendron and Himalayan balsam continued through the year.
 - iii. In addition a number of free courses were offered during the year: amphibian and small mammal ID, dry-stone walling, etc, engaging many new people with conservation in Snowdonia.
 - iv. As part of the CNP's 80th anniversary, the Society's 'Snowdon Tidy' project, whose aim is to reduce litter on Snowdon by re-educating walkers and visitors, was shortlisted for the CNP's Park Protector Award.
 - v. She finished by thanking Tamsin Fretwell and Owain Thomas, who do a sterling job organising all the workdays and other activities. She also thanked the numerous volunteers, many present today, without whom the Project couldn't exist.

Director's Report

- 5. JIJ introduced John Harold and congratulated him on how he conducted the Conwy Falls campaign, managing to turn the situation round in the face of NRW's failure to provide the SNPA with any ammunition against the application.
 - i. John Harold started by drawing attention to the credit deserved by the other organizations involved in the Conwy Falls campaign and their efforts to work together.
 - ii. JH expressed his pleasure at seeing such a full room of people.
 - iii. He reminded the floor of the Society's 50th anniversary in 2017 and that after 49 years the Society is still doing what it set out to do, ie being an 'action society' to serve the Snowdonia National Park.
 - iv. He reported that in the face of challenges, the Society stands in a good position with sufficient resources and very committed staff, trustees and volunteers who share concerns about Snowdonia.
 - v. He highlighted again the extent of the Society's partnerships, with statutory bodies, conservation bodies and community groups, eg 'Dre Werdd', 'Loving our Lake' and 'Save the

Conwy', all of which encompass the different strands of the Society's work of campaigning, practical conservation, and engagement and education.

- vi. JH explained that the guest speaker would talk about the Conwy Falls campaign. Meanwhile he drew attention to the vast amount of work undertaken on hydro-electric schemes and the absence of a long-term strategy for Snowdonia's rivers and the tendency to overlook the accumulative effect of hydro schemes on hundreds of its rivers and streams; currently each case is being dealt with in isolation. The Society is urging the statutory bodies to develop such a strategic view for hydro schemes in relation to the landscape, ecology and pristine natural features of the Park.
- vii. Other campaigns have included a significant amount of work on the Glyn Rhonwy pumped storage scheme and the proposed housing development on the National Park's NE boundary at Sychnant.
- viii. The Society's practical conservation work has grown enormously; the Society is now first in line for groups looking for volunteer workforce, but not enough work is being done to ensure people know about it; volunteer inputs have nearly doubled.
- ix. JH apologized on behalf of Owain Thomas for his absence and introduced Tamsin Fretwell, the new Tŷ Hyll Project Officer and encouraged people to have a chat with her about activities she is organizing.
- x. He expressed his pleasure at being involved in a day clearing Himalayan balsam near Bala, and how inspired and impressed he was by the difference the volunteers had made in the area. The local warden had said such a long-term plan would have been impossible without the six-year involvement of the Society volunteers.
- xi. JH highlighted other partnerships: the Snowdon Partnership, a practical effort between local groups and businesses to look after Wales' busiest mountain, including the piloting of a 'visitor giving' scheme, the Society's involvement including delivering training in traditional rural skills; and Fforwm Eryri, providing a platform to discuss and review the management of Snowdonia. He praised Helen Pye the NPAs new Partnerships Officer, who has introduced many fresh ideas.
- xii. He looked ahead to the 50th anniversary, for which some key elements are already in place, including an AGM conference, a mobile exhibition, a large-scale practical conservation event and an event at Dyffryn to mark the anniversary of the inaugural meeting in 1967. Communications will also be improved, including the launch of a new logo, and an emphasis on getting the message out to more people about the work we are doing.
- xiii. He finished by thanking everyone - members, supporters, friends, Trustees, staff, volunteers and officials - who has helped the Society this year.

Finance Report

6. JLJ introduced Judith Bellis, accountant.

- i. JB started by clarifying the headings in the financial summary as presented in the magazine.
- ii. The bottomline is good and has increased from £585 to £641k, an increase in total funds of over £55k. This can be explained largely by the receipt of a legacy of nearly £24k, and a donation from the Esmé Kirby Trust. Once these are stripped out there is a small operating surplus.
- iii. The value of investments has fallen slightly, with uncertainty about how these will change due to Brexit.
- iv. JB emphasised that core funding is made up of subscriptions and donations from members and supporters, investment income and fundraising efforts at Tŷ Hyll; legacies strengthen our

position and mean we can plan for the future with more confidence. Some quite substantial legacies have already been received in the current financial year and the Society can be confident of having an operating surplus for the coming year.

- v. JB thanked the staff who have been a great pleasure to work with.

John Lloyd-Jones paid tribute to David Firth for his role as Trustee of CNP for a number of years

Questions to Director and Officers

Mr JLJ invited questions from the floor.

7. **Stephanie Connor:** Do you not think your present logo isn't modern or attractive enough and how much will it cost to revamp it?
8. **JH:** When presented alongside other logos, on a report for example, it stands out as very inadequate and it doesn't convey the Society's work. Staff who use the logo all feel it doesn't serve a good purpose.
9. **Shan Roberts:** What is the budget for the change.
10. **DA:** £1,500
11. **Vic Hughes:** Regarding the undergrounding of electricity supply, where is it going to go and what will be dug up?
12. **JH:** DA and I have met with National Grid. The detail has not been worked out – it is a massive project, a very big piece of engineering and dependent on the outcome of the Wylfa 2 decision. We are confident that the landscape benefits will outweigh other issues.
13. **JLJ:** The timescale will have to meet strict deadlines.
14. **Andrew Smith:** (To JB) Re the Society's investments, bearing in mind climate change, can you ensure there are no investments in fossil fuels?
15. **JB:** The investments are currently managed by Barclays Wealth and we have stipulated some ethical investment criteria. Investments are currently in trusts or funds rather than single companies, so it is very difficult to fully exclude specific investments. The Society has a responsibility to ensure the security of the investments. We are conscious of the issues and are reviewing our approach to investment.
16. **Charles Hawkins:** Is it a Trustee's responsibility to maximize income from investments?
17. **DA:** As a charitable body we have a responsibility to ensure financial security which means getting a reasonable return.
18. **Charles Hawkins:** You have about a third of your monies in cash and 2/3 in equities or collectives, which is commensurate with the statement of the Chairman; my concern was the reference to *maximizing* the return.
19. **JB:** We have a responsibility to keep secure and maintain the Society's assets which includes ensuring a sufficient return.
20. **John Peckham:** Is it an appropriate forum to ask what the Society knows about the future of Llanbedr airfield.
21. **DA:** We don't know what is proposed there. Welsh Government is supposed to be putting a plan together. The National Park even don't know what is planned.
22. **JH:** I can add two things. 1. As it stands with the Enterprise Zone status (imposed on the NP from a higher level), the NP is entering a review of its Local Development Plan, and this will be an opportunity to develop policy related to that Enterprise Zone. We will feed into that policy development. 2. It does look as though the proposed 'insanity' of a space port is evaporating

along with David Cameron's public profile – a vanity project of his – and the phrase now being used is “if there's a commercial demand”.

- 23. Peter Foulkes:** Is there any news on “3-peaks challenge giving”?
- 24. JH:** In a loose sense, the Snowdonia Giving/Rhodd Eryri pilot is off the ground and has gained momentum. The next target is to tie into the big event organizers, especially the more commercial operators who should be encouraged to engage with the local community.
- 25. Shan Roberts:** Has the Society any input into the hydro scheme on the Croesor river – the original small scheme is being replaced by a new one.
- 26. JH:** I have heard mention of it, and it illustrates how many schemes are being developed. If work has started, then permission will already have been granted. Can I appeal to all of you: when these schemes are built, some breach planning permission; if you see anything of concern, *let us know!* There have been two examples very locally of pollution of rivers and gross breaches of planning permissions; we only know that because people have taken photographs and let us know.
- 27. JLJ:** Thank you to all four speakers for your presentations and thank you to the audience for your questions. It is wonderful to be involved in a Society that does so much practical work.

Adoption of 2015/16 Annual Report and Accounts

- 28.** The motion to adopt the 2015/16 Annual Report and summary of the accounts for the year ending 30 June 2016 was proposed by Morag McGrath, seconded by Peter Weston and passed *nem con*.

Appointment of independent examiners

- 29.** A motion to appoint Bennett Brooks as independent examiners of the Society's accounts for 2015/16 was proposed by Sarah McCarthy, seconded by Netti Collister and passed *nem con*

Re-election of President and Vice-Presidents

- 30.** The election of the following was approved *nem con*:
- President: John Lloyd Jones, was proposed by Margaret Thomas, seconded by Shan Roberts
 - Vice-presidents: Huw Morgan Daniel, David Firth, Sir John Houghton, Sir Simon Jenkins, was proposed by Margaret Thomas, seconded by Shan Roberts.

Election of officers and members of the Executive Committee

- 31.** The election of the following was approved *nem con*:
- Chair: David Archer, was proposed by Sarah McCarthy, seconded by Jacob Buis
 - Vice-chair: Margaret Thomas, was proposed by Stephanie Connor, seconded by David Firth
 - Executive Committee (Trustees): Netti Collister, Paul Gannon, Katherine Himsworth, Peter Weston.

Any urgent business

- 38. Geoff Gibbs** drew attention to the Bardsey holiday next July as part of the anniversary celebrations. Only a few places available, so contact his asap if interested.
- 39. David Firth:** Expressed a hope that the Society's input into CNP would continue. He asked if the date for the 2017 AGM given as Sunday 15th October is correct.
- 40. JH:** The date has been corrected on the agenda ie the correct date is Saturday 14th October.