

Grwyne Fawr CIC

1st AGM

8th July 2016 at Nant y Bedd

Present: Ian Mabberley, Ian Mitchell (Directors), Sue Mabberley, Sarah Paterson, Iain Paterson, Vicky Jones, Grant Muter, Jo Barber, Tim Barber, Chris Butler, Richard Kenward, Caroline Fairclough, Oliver Fairclough

Apologies: Tim Collins, Jacqui Collins, Marie Mount, Rupert Edwards, Judith van der Voort

Ian Mabberley welcomed Members to the first AGM.

Agenda Item 1: Director's Reports - Financial

Ian Mabberley (IM) advised members that all statutory requirements to date had been met. Accounts were being prepared on a Pro Bono basis by the Mitchell's accountants and these would be forwarded to HMRC and Companies House (in the latter case along with the required Community Interest Statement) in due course.

The bank balance at present is £327.30, made up of membership payments and a few extra donations. Costs incurred are the website and statutory costs involved with Companies House.

IM proposed to the meeting that the £10 membership fee be carried on to the current year. This was approved unanimously. IM will therefore be pleased to receive this amount from all those who wish to remain Members for 2016-7 as soon as possible.

IM noted that a grant of £10,000 had been received from Welsh Government and that this had been an "in and out" payment. More on this later in the meeting.

It was noted that there were currently 17 paid-up members (2015-6) and two more had joined for the 2016-7 year. This represents a significant percentage of the permanent residents of the valley.

Agenda Item 2: Director's Reports – IT

Ian Mitchell reported on efforts to improve both Broadband (BB) and mobile infrastructure in the valley. It appears that BT have decided that we are not going to get fibre optic BB here – whatever the Government says we are the % that is "offline".

Ian has been working closely with a Trevor Mosedale who is hoping to deliver BB to at least part of the valley via various microwave and cable links. This all depends on getting a suitable base, which at present is a building site!

It was noted that a similar proposal some years ago led to nothing but it was hoped that improvements in technology would make this one work.

Iain Paterson has also been working with Trevor Mosedale, so it is to be hoped that something will come of this in the near future.

Ian Mitchell was thanked for his efforts in this.

Grant Muter asked about mobile phone signals, but this seems to have similar problems to the BB situation.

Agenda Item 3: Director's Reports – Conservation

Ian Mabblerley gave details of the processes, which eventually led to us getting a grant of £10,000 from Welsh Government for works on the forestry barriers in an attempt to restrict the ingress of off road motor bikes.

All the barriers from Car Parks and the valley road have been improved by: adding an additional beam to the barrier, installing horse passes, fencing around the barriers, putting in disabled access 'kissing' gates, placing large stones on areas where bikes could get through, adding large and very clear signs showing that motorised vehicles are not allowed in the forest and also some covert security cameras.

IM noted that the cameras were not yet in use as official permission was still awaited from the NRW legal department. He is chasing this up with the Forest Manager, Mike Cresswell. IM said that the cameras would not only be useful for identifying illegal motorised access but also for showing when legitimate users were not locking the barriers when they access the forest. This is an important point as open barriers negate all the above efforts.

There was a discussion about the effectiveness of the horse step-overs in preventing motor bikes getting into the forest. IM is trying to find a way of improving these and is attempting to discuss the matter with the local representatives of the British Horse Society.

IM said that the number of off road bikes seems to have decreased, but that those remaining to use the forest are probably those with little or no regard for the law and so will be hardest to beat.

The meeting thanked IM for his hard work in this area.

Agenda Item 4: Re-election of Directors

With both Directors agreeing to continue, the meeting unanimously agreed to their being re-elected.

Agenda Item 5: Election of additional Directors

The meeting decided that additional Directors were not needed at this point in the Company's existence.

Agenda Item 6: Black Mountains Land Use Partnership

Iain Paterson (IP) gave a presentation on the Black Mountains Land Use Partnership (BMLUP), an organisation that "works above the tree line, in a similar fashion to the CIC which works below the treeline". It was set up in early 2015 and consists of the eight landowners of the Common Land, the relevant Grazier organisations plus the BBNPA, Welsh Water, Natural Resources Wales, Natural England and the Young Farmers. There is an independent Chairman. As yet it is not a formally constituted body, but this is being addressed in the near future.

The objectives of the BMLUP include: habitat, grazing, soil erosion, improved access and visitor experience.

One of the key actions to date, and ongoing, is the blocking off of the 'grips' (channels dug to take water off the hill, which has led to the reservoir water becoming unusable). This allied to improvements to the path will help in many different ways.

The BMLUP has a number of current applications for funding under consideration for sustainable management (bracken control, peatland management and visitor management) and for on-going wardening of the area.

IM pointed out that the synergies between the BMLUP and the CIC, particularly in terms of visitor management, meant that the two bodies could / should work together for the mutual benefit of both.

The meeting thanked IP for this insight into an organisation that many were unaware of and agreed that there was 'mileage' in working together on some aspects, including the ongoing pursuit of mobile phone signals which would aid the proposed wardening service.

Agenda Item 7: Future Projects

a) In the absence of Tim Collins, there was a brief discussion of the paper previously circulated on the subject of community energy sharing. It was pointed out that there are currently three hydro-electric schemes operating in the valley, generating around 25KwH at peak plus solar PV at a number of properties. There is also the possibility of two or three more hydros on the NRW land in the forest. Ian Mitchell agreed to take forward investigations into the feasibility of this proposal. Tim was thanked for his research.

b) The Directors proposed a sign at Five Ways which would indicate to delivery drivers and other visitors the approximate location of all the properties in the valley and nearby (e.g on the Gaer). The allocation of post codes at the bottom of the valley causes a lot of confusion for drivers relying on SatNav systems; equally at the top of the valley SatNavs claim “arrival at destination” well before the final five properties. There was some concern that this would “suburbanise” the area. Ian Mabberley said that the system seemed to work well in rural France and offered to draw up a draft for people to comment on.

Agenda Item 7: Any Other Business

There being no Other Business the meeting closed and members took the opportunity to socialise.