

## CYMDEITHAS ERYRI the SNOWDONIA SOCIETY AGM

Held on Saturday 27th October 2018 at Coed y Brenin, Dolgellau

### 1. Apologies

Apologies were received from: Warren Martin, Angela Roberts, Max Grant, Peter Weston, Jacob Buis, Kate Gibbs. *And 13 other members.*

### 2. Matters Arising

- i) The minutes for the AGM held in 2017 were approved (proposed by David Firth and seconded by Netti Collister)
- ii) There were no matters arising

### 3. Chair's Report - David Archer

- i) Introduction: David Archer thanked the members for attending the AGM and for their support and involvement in the Society's work.
- ii) DA reported that the new Minister for the Environment, Hannah Blythyn has listened to the views of the Society, environmental bodies and individuals. She has published her report **Valued and Resilient** which sets out the Welsh Government's priorities for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and National Parks. It confirms that all existing designated landscapes will be retained. She also stated that the safeguard known as the Sandford Principle will be retained. The Minister has partially reversed the projected cuts to Park Authority budgets.
- iii) DA reported that the Snowdonia Society is responding to the consultation paper *Brexit and our Land*, as they have to other national consultations including draft Planning Policy Wales and an Ofgem consultation related to the National grid's under grounding programme. And this includes proposals for the removal of high voltage lines and pylons over the Dwyryd estuary. And the SS have been active in responding to local consultations.
- iv) DA reported a successful 12 months for the volunteer conservation and training programme. And this year the programme has been nationally recognised by winning a Special Commendation at the 2018 Park Protector Awards, run by the Campaign for National Parks. All this is due to the hard work and skills of Project staff, Mary Kate, Owain Thomas and Dan Goodwin.
- v) Success at events: To date, the Society has organised or had a presence at 31 events including walks, talks and workshops this year. Almost all have been very well attended and the target set for Claire Holmes, Engagement Officer, to recruit an average of one new member per event has been exceeded - 36 new members so far this year. Thanks given to Claire.
- vi) The 50th anniversary appeal closed in February having raised a remarkable £50,627. More than half came from members and supporters' donations, with the rest from local businesses and events. Thanks given to all who contributed.

**vii)** Membership: The membership pages of the website have been rebuilt to make joining and renewal more user-friendly. Membership has increased by 3% over the year. Our social media pages are busy and reaches a growing audience. Business membership has increased significantly; 36 businesses active in Snowdonia now support our work.

**viii)** Finances are healthy due to effective fundraising and generous legacies. We have moved our investment management to Rathbones, a company with experience in the charity sector, and established a sub-committee for oversight of financial matters.

**ix)** During the year, the Society trustees have embarked on training in both governance and financial investment. One outcome of this has been a review by both staff and trustees of the Society's **core values**. Four core values were agreed by which all trustees and staff now operate. These are:

To be **OPEN** - open and honest about the decisions and actions we take and accountable to the members of the Society.

To be **INFORMED** - keep ourselves informed of issues affecting Snowdonia and explore new opportunities to deliver our mission

To be **RESPECTFUL** - respect the views of all and fulfil our mission in a manner that encourages discussion and co-operation.

To be **BOLD** - to be bold and stand up for Snowdonia.

**x)** Staff:

Debbie Pritchard has been appointed as Membership and Communications Officer, Dan Goodwin joined us as Conservation Project Officer.

Claire Holmes' role evolved into Engagement Officer, developing events and recruiting new members. We said goodbye to Frances Smith, one of our longest-serving members of staff, and we wish her the very best for the future.

**xi)** Trustees:

Paul Gannon, Sarah McCarthy and Gareth Roberts have all retired and were thanked for their valuable service to the society over several years.

The Society has been fortunate to attract two new trustees, bringing valuable skills and experience. Julian Pitt and Jane Parry-Evans.

Margaret Thomas, one of our longest serving trustees stands down as Vice-Chair but will continue as a trustee.

Charles Hawkins is now standing as her successor as Vice-Chair.

John Lloyd Jones, President, is presiding over the Society's AGM for the last time. John has been appointed as Chair of the National Infrastructure Commission for Wales. Congratulations to John on his new appointment, and appreciation for his period as President. Trustees are now actively seeking a new President.

#### **4. Snowdonia's Ecosystem Project report - Mary-Kate Jones**

Mary-Kate Jones gave a summary of the Project's work during the year:

**i) Points arising:**

Since January 2018, over 100 workdays have been run which is the equivalent of 650 Volunteer days. The Society's volunteers have worked over 3800 hours.

MKJ gave a special thanks to Owain and Dan for all their hard work in co-ordinating the various events. Thanks was also given to the many volunteers who took part in the events.

**ii) Key events:**

MKJ gave an overview of key events such as the successful Make a Difference weekend, which was held over 3 days and included 11 volunteer tasks and 500 volunteer hours, and the Volunteer Week both of which involved landscape work, managing habitats and litter picking.

## **5. Director's Report - John Harold**

**i) JH expanded on the Chair's report on the Environment Minister's statement on National Parks and AONBs titled 'Valued and Resilient':**

The Snowdonia Society has played its part in effecting the turnaround which the Minister's statement suggests. The Society has worked hard to bring the issues into the light.

The Society played a significant part in campaigning against the National Park Authority's budget cuts this spring and by early summer the Minister announced a surprising partial reversal of planned cuts.

Another positive move is the decision to give more notice of future budget settlements – essential to the Park's ability to properly plan ahead. Essential also to avoiding the travesty – or perhaps tragedy – of staff being made redundant based on budget cuts which are later reversed.

**ii) The Society have stepped up and taken our share of responsibility for moving forward with collaborative ways of working, by putting a great deal of time and effort into developing and delivering;**

**-Snowdon Partnership Plan** – piloting the approach

**-Cynllun Eryri** – partnership plan for Snowdonia – the new management plan

**-Carneddau Landscape Partnership** project, which if successful with funding will bring about several projects over a 5-year period.

The Society has also put considerable effort into the review of the **Local Development Plan** for Eryri – having been involved at every stage: Preliminary Consultation, Deposit Draft, Focused Changes, Public Examination, Matters Arising Changes (Inspectors report and Ministers decision expected by end of year)

At each stage we have highlighted any potential conflicts with statutory purposes and protection of the National Park.

The Society has continued to respond to consultations on planning, policy and legislation where relevant to National Park interests. Following a protracted process, the Planning Committee recently approved the proposed bypass application for Llanbedr. They did so without all the essential issues being presented to them by their planning officer. We have asked that deficiencies in the process be reviewed and if necessary rectified before the planning notice is issued - we await a response from the Authority.

iii) JH echoed David's expression of thanks and appreciation to our staff. Owain, Dan and Mary-Kate, Debbie, Claire and Judith.

Thanks also to the Trustees – dedicated people with a wide range of experience, skills and knowledge.

iv) Members were invited to complete a questionnaire to let the Society know their thoughts and invited to get in touch with JH or any of the trustees.

## **6. Financial Report - Judith Bellis**

The Financial summary was included with the autumn magazine and the full report can be found on the website.

i) JB started by clarifying the results of the financial year 2017-18. There had been an operating loss for the first time since 2013 but this was planned in the light of strong reserves. A one-off commitment of £25k was made towards events and activities to properly mark and celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and to use it as a vehicle to raise the profile of the Society and the work it does. The Society now commits £10,000 per year of its own resources to the Society's practical conservation work programme to supplement the funding by grants.

ii) JB explained that a generous legacy of more than £140,000 was received after the 2017-18 financial year end in June; this will result in a surplus in 2018/19.

iii) JB thanked all members for their financial support, their subscriptions and donations and time.

## **7. Questions to officers and Staff**

- Fran Holmes: Asked for clarification of the financial graph shown during JB presentation. Answer: The blue line represents income which does not vary greatly from year to year. The red line represents expenditure which tends to be slightly over our core income and again does not vary greatly. The big difference is when the Society receives a legacy, represented by the green line.
- Peter Southgate: Asked what time span does that graph represent?

Answer: It is not representing any time interval. It shows trends. Legacy income is variable where we might get a few in a year and then nothing for a few years. We cannot budget for legacies.

- Gareth Thomas: Expressed concerns about the age of members being on average 50+ and not seeing young people joining.

Answer: This is why we have been pushing the membership drive to try to target new members, particularly younger members.

- Jos Marien: The costs against Ty Hyll for 2017 vary greatly from 2018 and he is mystified by this.

Answer: There were significant and substantial building repairs in 2017 which resulted in additional costs to the Society.

- Karin Bruns: Do we have a famous patron of the society?

Answer: We don't have a patron, but we do have the president and we are now seeking a new president following John Lloyd Jones' retirement. If you have any suggestions please contact David Archer.

Additional questions were referred to the trustee question session scheduled later in the morning

**8 (i). Motion to formally adopt the Annual report and Accounts** for the year ending 30th June 2018 was proposed by Glynis Archer, seconded by David Firth and passed *nem con*.

**8(ii). Motion to reappoint Bennet Brooks** as independent examiners of the society's accounts for 2018/19 was proposed by Charles Hawkins, seconded by Netti Collister and passed *nem con*.

**9. Motion by the Executive to set aside for 12 months clause 14 (4) of the constitution (which requires the maximum period served by the Chair to be limited to six years) to allow the present Chair to stand for one more year only.**

Proposed by Helen Hawkins, seconded by Sian Roberts and passed *nem con*.

## **10. Election of Officers and Trustees of the Executive Committee**

### **President**

*Vacant*

### **Vice presidents**

*Huw Morgan Daniel, David Firth, Sir John Houghton, Sir Simon Jenkins, Dr Morag McGrath*

**Chair:** *David Archer* and **Vice Chair:** Charles Hawkins

**Trustees**

Robert Lowe, Jane Parry-Evans, Julian Pitt, Peter Weston

Proposed by Sian Roberts, seconded by Helen Hawkins and passed *nem con*.

**11. AOB**

**i)** Charles Hawkins trustee gave a mention of the new Snowdonia Society caps:

More than 8 million tonnes of plastic reach the sea every year and Society volunteers collect a huge quantity each year. CH has been struck by how few people have heard of the Society or the great work that they do. Was there a way to tackle those 2 current issues? So, the search for the elusive eco cap began. CH found a UK source who could provide caps made from recycled plastic bottles with an excellent ethical and environmental audit standard that is internationally recognised. The eco caps with the Society logo are each made from 5 recycled plastic bottles and are now for sale.

**ii)** David Firth proposed a vote of thanks from members to David Archer for agreeing to stand as Chair for another year and to John Lloyd Jones for his service as President.

**12. Date of next year's AGM:**

19 October 2019 (provisional)