

CCB CYMDEITHAS ERYRI the SNOWDONIA SOCIETY AGM
Held on Saturday 17 October 2020 online

MINUTES

Present:

Trustees: Julian Pitt (Chair), David Archer, Sue Beaumont, Netti Collister, Jane Parry-Evans, Jacob Buis, Richard Brunstrom, Dennis McAteer, Richard Neale, Mathew Teasdale

President: Roger Thomas

Staff: Judith Bellis, Daniel Goodwin, John Harold, Claire Holmes, Mary-Kate Jones, Debbie Pritchard, Mary Williams.

Members: 36 members.

Apologies were received from:

Peter Weston, Bob Lowe and 2 other members

Introduction by Roger Thomas, President of the Snowdonia Society.

- Tribute was paid to Sir John Houghton who recently passed away. He was the Vice President of the Snowdonia Society and world-renowned environmental scientist.
 - Tribute given to staff and trustees of the Snowdonia Society who have worked together to ensure that our Society has been able to play the fullest possible role in these difficult times.
1. The minutes of the Annual General Meeting held in 2019 were approved as a true record.
Proposed by Laura Grant and seconded by Jacob Buis.
 2. **Matters arising**
 - i. No identified matters arising.
 3. **Chair's report, Julian Pitt**
 - i. Chair's report previously circulated and included with the autumn magazine, members encouraged to read.
 - ii. JP thanked the staff and trustees for the help they have provided during this unprecedented year. And special thanks to previous Chair David Archer for his guidance.
 - iii. For 9 months of the year under review, July 2019 to March 2020 there has been a varied and successful programme of volunteering work and other events which the Society can be proud of. But from March onwards it was frustrating that events and volunteer work had to be postponed due to the pandemic and resulting lockdown. Some staff were furloughed for 10 weeks, other for shorter periods, whilst the remainder worked from home. Staff have adapted quickly and supported each other brilliantly.
 - iv. Chair's report sketches the outlines of our policy work during the last year. We are seeking to influence Welsh Government Policy on National Parks and on inter-related farming, biodiversity and climate change matters through joint representations with likeminded organisations.
 - v. Particular places of concern at present are the two so called 'Enterprise Zone sites at Trawsfynydd and Llanbedr airfield. Members will be kept posted especially if it looks like a campaign is needed.

- vi. How the society moves forward in challenging times is a matter for all members of the Society. Members will have received a questionnaire with the autumn magazine. It can also be completed online. Members encouraged to respond with their views and ideas.
- vii. In the report it stated that one trustee was resigning when in fact two are resigning after many years of service - Peter Weston and Netti Collister. JP thanks them for their years of service. Thank you cards will be posted.
- viii. JP is confident that the Society will get through to better times and be well prepared for practical action to conserve and enhance Snowdonia, and to protect it from harmful change.
- ix. JP thanked members for attending the AGM and for their support and involvement in the Society's work.

4. Project Manager's report, Mary-Kate Jones

- i. Mary-Kate Jones gave a brief summary of the Helping Hands project's work during the period between July 2019 and March 2020. After practical work was put on hold in mid March, a great deal of effort was put into preparing to work with the National Park Authority and the Outdoor Partnership to respond to visitor pressures and litter problems over the summer, under the heading of 'Welcome Back'. Special thanks were expressed to Dan and Mary for their hard work during this intense period of activity.
- ii. Dan Goodwin gave a presentation on the 'Welcome Back scheme' and the work the volunteers have done over the summer across the Snowdonia National Park along with the National Park Authority staff. The scheme ended on the August bank holiday with volunteers collecting and transporting by hand large quantities of litter from Snowdon summit building. Efforts were publicised by many news outlets. Some 55 volunteers over the 8 weeks of July and August gave 840 volunteer hours and collected over 500 bags of litter. Thanks were given to all who took part in the scheme.

5. Director's Report, John Harold

- i. UK Agriculture Bill: MPs in Westminster in effect voted to throw both farmers and conservationist under the same bus, by opting to allow lower standards. Small and traditional farmers in Eryri are facing a bleak and uncertain time ahead.
- ii. Wales Environment Link wrote to Welsh Government about environmental governance after the EU transition period ends on 31st December 2020. WEL noted that from 1st January 2021 Wales will have the weakest environmental governance arrangement of any western European country.
- iii. Recently published UK biodiversity indicators report states that 'the UK is seeing relentless declines in wildlife, with public sector investment in conservation falling in real terms by 33% in 5 years'.
- iv. But there are reasons to be cheerful: 1. Seeing the potential for real change –chance now for positive change to embed. 2. Seeing our work making a difference. 3. Proud of our staff and volunteers and proud of our work.
- v. Thank you to our members for attending the AGM and for their support.

6. Finance Report, Judith Bellis

- i. JB displayed on screen an extract from the accounts which was sent to members along with the magazine and on our website.
- ii. JB explained the impact the pandemic has had on the Society's financial position. While income had dropped in the last 3 months of the financial year, this was offset by a decrease in expenditure. When public-facing staff were unable – because of lockdown restrictions- to carry out their work, the Society made use of the Job Retention Scheme. This government funding contributed just over £10,000 and allowed us to retain all staff. Grant income was not seriously affected, as some staff were able to focus on areas of work which we could do online. The long-term effects are not yet known as it will take some time to see what effect the pandemic has had and will have on member recruitment. We may also lose existing members due to the wider financial effects of the pandemic.
- iii. Value of the Society's investment portfolio had fallen by about 15% in March but there was a partial recovery by the end of June.

7. Questions to Director and Officers

Q. Should the Society be using a more ethical bank than HSBC?

A. There have been problems with HSBC for over 2 years. Two complaints have now been submitted to and upheld by the Ombudsman. Once the issue of compensation has been resolved the Society will be moving away from HSBC. Members invited to suggest suitable alternative bank.

Q. Accessing AGM and meetings by public transport. Welcoming the web-based AGM, which offers people living remotely without a car a valued opportunity to contribute to the Society's work. Suggestion to encourage more web-based AGMs.

A. The events of this year have revolutionised our way of life. Hours no longer spent driving to attend meetings in person. Environmental footprint can be reduced by having many meetings and events online. However some things are to be missed - being with members, to shake hands and to share a friendly word. CH is busy organizing a number of web-based talks in the months to come.

Q. The old familiar debate about charging people to climb Snowdon has resurfaced again. Should the authorities make companies such as Airbnb contribute towards the maintenance of the landscape, and does the Society have a view on this?

A. This issue comes up every year, always makes the headlines, but fails to address the real questions. How is the National Park to deliver equitably for all if there is a cost barrier for a family to go up Snowdon? If implemented the logic would be that to generate more resources for looking after the place, we would need more visitors to come and pay the fee! It is a distraction from the bigger picture of developing genuinely sustainable tourism.

Q. To what extent will the National Development Framework affect developments in the Park?

A. The latest draft is with the Senedd scrutiny committee. We are responding with concerns about the lack of substantive policy content on National Parks, and lack of recognition of their importance and the need to resource them. Welsh Government is moving towards plans for a Small Modular Reactor at Trawsfynydd. Our concern is that there is no information on what that involves and how it would be assessed, - it is too early for Welsh Government to be making a commitment.

Staff undertook to respond by email to those who had questions which had not been answered in the AGM.

8. Adoption of Reports and Accounts

i. Motion to adopt the Annual Report and Accounts for the year ending 30th June 2020

The motion to adopt the 2019/20 Annual Report and summary of the accounts for the year ending 30 June 2020 was proposed by Netti Collister, seconded by Jacob Buis and carried *nem con*.

ii. Motion to reappoint Bennet Brooks as independent examiners of the Society's Accounts for 2020/21

A motion to appoint Bennett Brooks as independent examiners of the Society's accounts for 2020/21 was proposed by Sue Beaumont, seconded by Netti Collister, and carried *nem con*.

9. Election of Officers and Members of the Executive Committee

The election of all of the following was approved (proposed by David Archer, seconded by Netti Collister, and carried *nem con*):

- President: Roger Thomas.
- Vice-presidents: His Honour Huw Morgan Daniel CVO, KStJ, David Firth, Sir Simon Jenkins, Dr Morag McGrath.

The election of all of the following trustees were approved (proposed by Netti Collister, seconded by Rory Francis, and carried *nem con*):

- Julian Pitt as Chair, Richard Brunstrom, Jacob Buis, Dennis McAteer, Richard Neale, Jane Parry-Evans, Mathew Teasdale
- Trustees not up for re-election therefore continuing as trustees: David Archer, Sue Beaumont, Bob Lowe.
- Trustees resigning: Netti Collister and Peter Weston. Thanks given for long service.

10. Any Other Business

None received

11. Date of Next AGM: 9th October 2021 (provisional)