



*Dedicated to research, restore and protect
Mynydd Twmbarlwm - Gwent's most iconic landmark*

*Ymroddedig i ymchwilio, adfer a gwarchod
Mynydd Twmbarlwm - tirnod mwyaf eiconig Gwent*

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Trustees' Meeting

7.00pm on Monday 13th March 2023

at The Philanthropic Inn, Twyncarn Road, Pontywaun. NP11 7DU

MINUTES

1. ATTENDANCE and APOLOGIES

- i. Terry Evans (Chair); Sue Evans; Norman Liversuch; Bill Fearnley-Whittingstall; Martyn Vaughan; Rob Southall; Sam Southall; Charles Ferris;
- ii. **APOLOGIES**
Sally Davies; Les Murphy; Howard Vicary;

2. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING – and MATTERS ARISING

- i. Terry and Martyn Dennehy attended a seminar presented by CPAT in Brecon. We attended because our archaeological dig would feature. It was very interesting and Chris who presented the piece on Twmbarlwm didn't reveal anything we didn't already know from the report they have given us – yet it was good to see that the rest of the audience was very interested and asked lots of questions.
- ii. Charles should have been included in the list of attendees.
- iii. Minutes reviewed and approved. Prop. SE. Sec. NL

3. MEMBERSHIP & FINANCE

- i. Current membership is 72 – including FREE memberships we gave to archaeological volunteers. There were 2 new members at recent Talks.
- ii. Current bank balance is £12,705.96
- iii. Cost of Audit was £150
- iv. A vote of thanks was given to Martyn for his many years of service as Treasurer.
- v. MV handed over a cheque book and paying in books to TE. We agreed to arrange to take back paperwork and computer files for the accounts and membership lists at a later date.

4. RE-CAP OF AGM and APPOINTING OFFICERS

After holding our AGM on 14th November 2022 we elected officers as follows:

- i. TE remains as Chairman
- ii. NL remains as Vice Chairman
- iii. SE will become acting Treasurer until a suitable volunteer comes forward.
- iv. SE remains Secretary.

- v. Full List of Trustees is as follows: Terry Evans, Sue Evans, Norman Liversuch, Martyn Vaughan, Bill Fearnley-Whittingstall, Les Murphy, Howard Vicary, Charles Ferris, Rob Southall, Sam Southall and Sally Davies.
- vi. It has been reported to us that long serving member Alun Booth has been seriously ill yet he even came to the last litter pick, and he has recently given a generous donation to the Society, it was therefore decided to honour him with a free lifetime membership – and that we should send him a card of thanks and to acknowledge this.

5. MYNYDD MAEN WIND FARM

- i. There are currently plans underway for the development of a wind farm on the Penyrheol end of the Mynydd Maen ridgeway - this will consist of at least 15 x 150m tall windmills. This has been discussed in previous Trustee Meetings where we have been concerned with the possibility that RES (the project developers) are considering acquiring Twmbarlwm as land to offset the Common land the development will occupy. See their website here: <http://www.mynyddmaen-windfarm.co.uk/consultation/> In a telephone conversation with Terry earlier today, HV said that there was no real news on the Mynydd Maen Wind Farm project as they are still going through the consultation period. However he did say that it now seems very unlikely that Twmbarlwm is being considered for the offset area of Common Land due to the fact it is not contiguous with the common land it is replacing and various other legalities. He also said that the company was close to agreeing an area for the offset with Jack Hanbury, which included land that Howard himself uses on the Penyrheol side of the common.
- ii. TE brought to our attention another group of 5 turbines planned above Newbridge and Abercarn – these have no impact on the Common Land like the other development – but they will be extremely visible from Twmbarlwm, and indeed some are on land owned by Howard.
- iii. NL attended the public exhibition held in Newbridge, to see what the plans entail and to introduce the developers to CTS and he has provided us with the following notes:
 - a. This wind farm of up to 5 turbines is being proposed for three areas of land on the hill to the east of Newbridge (see attached map). Two public consultation events were held by the developers Pennant Walters last week, one in Llanfach and the other in Newbridge. I popped into the one at Newbridge to see what is being proposed.
 - b. The information on display closely mirrored that which is already available on their website https://trecelyn-windfarm.co.uk/?fbclid=IwAR31eQU5FAYd7Q0ZQv_6dtYjq6Lo3JHpz9A8LoSc7KDnbQ72VNUYPLY7qak. I spoke to the consultants running the exhibition and to the director of Pennant Walters who will be leading the project. The following is what I found out.
 - This was an initial consultation to gauge public views.
 - Whilst land has been identified for locating the turbines no decision has been made as yet as to their actual position.
 - Studies are ongoing to look at a variety of matters e.g., ecology, ground conditions, noise levels, visual effect. These should be completed by September. Following their completion another consultation exercise will be held which will show the position of the turbines and associated works and I assume the results of the various studies.
 - An application will then be submitted to Planning and Environment Decisions Wales (PEDW) and considered by an Inspector before a final decision is made by Welsh Government Ministers. If this is successful then it is anticipated that the work will be completed by 2026/27.
 - Pennant Walters are keen to ensure that the local community benefits from the windfarm. Whilst the electricity generated will go straight into the National Grid they are suggesting that, over the life of the scheme, they may be able to financially support community projects. They have not yet

identified what area or communities will be eligible for this support or the level of grant aid which will be available but are keen to speak with community groups. I have given myself as the initial contact for the Society.

- This type of support is now common for developments of this nature. In other areas where similar developments have taken place a 'committee' has been set up, involving local representatives, which considers all applications for grant aid against set criteria.
 - Apart from the turbines being visible from Twmbarlwm it is difficult, at this stage, to identify any other possible effects. Hopefully the next round of consultation will allow us to make a more informed decision. However, it is possible that, if the proposal goes ahead, then we could benefit from some financial support for our work.
- iv. It was generally agreed that the Society should ensure to stay abreast of these developments and gauge the opinions of the membership to establish a policy for the society.

6. ARCHAEOLOGY and CADW

- i. TE had a telephone conversation with Will Davies (of Cadw) and we have now realised there is approx £6,000 remaining in the original budget. It is unlikely that we can justify any further digging on the Twmp so Will has suggested that we use the remaining budget to get more accurate OSL dating done to the sample taken from the original dig – the sample had been extracted for this purpose but the tests were never completed. WD will get quotes from CPAT and when approved we will need to apply to Cadw to reassign the funding.

7. SWARD MANAGEMENT PLAN

- i. We have received the management report from Andy Karran of Gwent Wildlife Trust and with Amelia have agreed how to proceed. We have recommendations for grazing, bracken bashing, re-seeding and path management.
- ii. We had a meeting on Twmbarlwm with AP and Gethin of CCBC and have decided on a new course of action to repair the pathway across the Twmp – Gethin will supply his recommendations how to proceed.
- iii. We have today received the invoice for work so far from GWT (£2,659) and we have the grant money in place to pay this.
- iv. Need to speak to AK about Bracken Bashing event and contact scouts to see if they wish to get involved.

8. CCBC / TORFAEN / COMMONERS WORKS

TE spoke to HV on phone earlier for an update on the Adventure Triangle Project.

- i. Floating path from the Twmp to the wall is finished – but we have noted that originally there was going to be a Radar gate at this location.
- ii. Wider, stone steps have been installed at car park – but it's still not brilliant
- iii. Floating path around the trig-point has been installed.
- iv. Remaining to be done: repair to steps up the Twmp; repair or replace knee rails where necessary; replace/repair chain mechanism on the corral at entrance to ORPA.
- v. TE's work on interpretation boards is not yet finalised - but we are also waiting for a reply from Dewi at CCBC to see if the boards will come within the Adventure Triangle Budget.

9. EVENTS

The last few talks held at Crosskeys RFC have been reasonably successful and there is just one left in this winter's series - TE asked for suggestions for what next and NL has volunteered to organise a series of talks for the following autumn/winter.

Still to come are:

- i. 5th April 2023 – **The Newport Medieval Ship** – Jeff Grosvenor, Friends of Newport Medieval Ship
- ii. 7th April – The Hot Cross Bun walk – this will follow the same format as previous years? Walk from the Stoney Bridge through Ty-Sign – give out Hot-x-Buns (donated by Tesco's) at the top – Rob to arrange walk from Cwmcarn? Maggie or Andrew G to lead?

Other possible events:

- iii. Walk to Pwll Tra?? and/or Llanderfel?? – Rob volunteered to lead it
- iv. There should be a report of this year's Archaeology by CPAT (with Will and Amelia) some time in Spring 2023 - hopefully with some activities for children.
- v. Re-schedule Rob's Talk on the Lost Farmsteads
- vi. Stephen Lyons and Roger Morgan have a list of talks they could do – NL to approach them for details.

10. TIDY TWMP

- i. The Litterpicks/Workdays continue to be well attended with at least a dozen people every month - and the council continue to be supportive and collect the rubbish fairly promptly after the event.
- ii. Next scheduled litter pick and volunteer day will be 26th March 2023 which Bill has volunteered to organise because Sue and Terry can't be there.

11. A.O.B.

12. Date of next Trustees' Meeting

– TBA