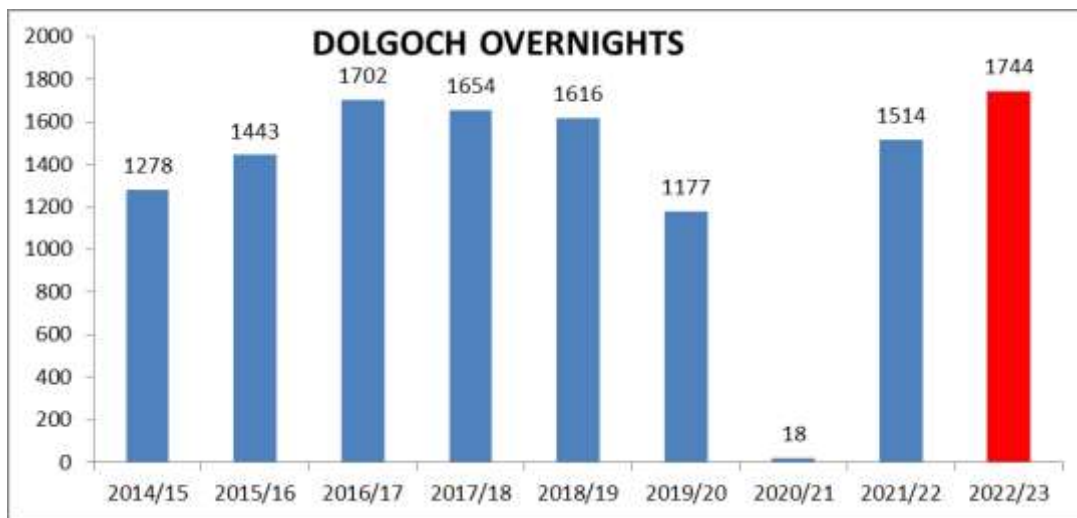


NEWSLETTER 46 – WINTER 2022

Dolgoch

Record Overnights. Taking forward bookings to March into account, we have now reached a record high for overnights at Dolgoch! Our best ever year up to now was 2016/17 when we had just over 1,700 bed nights. At that time we were still benefitting from our tie in with the YHA. We have now reached 1,744 over nights stays and , with the likelihood of further bookings to come the hostel is busier than ever. The figure for this year does include a record number of campers, who pay just over half the hostel overnight rate, so the income figure will not be quite so buoyant. Nevertheless, it is great to see so many visitors enjoying the hostel.



Trapped! The recent cold snap resulted in one hosteller experiencing a longer than expected stay at Dolgoch. Having booked a one night stay on Friday 9th December the lone female hosteller was finally able to drive out on Wednesday 14th, thanks to Powys CC gritters. Both she and the warden David were quite content during their stay and received additional support from our neighbour Charles.

Electricity upgrade. Now that Natural Resources Wales (NRW) have agreed to sell us the paddock area at Dolgoch we have contacted our preferred supplier for the work to upgrade the electricity supply at Dolgoch. Their response was positive with a suggested installation date of late spring/early summer next year. We have set up a small technical committee comprising Richard Hollins, Aidan Yorath and Colin (non technical!) to liaise with the supplier prior to a formal proposal being considered by the Trustees.

Work party. We had a very successful work party in late November. A group of 9 keen volunteers worked really hard over the weekend despite somewhat challenging weather conditions. The main outside tasks were to refill the log stores and repair the holes in the track. On Saturday we really got stuck into the logs and 5 of us were able to saw, split, barrow and stack almost 16 cu m of wood, almost a year's supply. We were able then to concentrate on the track repairs on Sunday. In addition the defibrillator was installed inside the hostel, the insulation around the water filters in the barn was greatly improved (just in time for the cold snap!) and lots of cleaning done in the common room and kitchen.



It was not all work and we shared an enjoyable communal meal on the Friday and Saturday nights together with a few drinks and chat around the fire.

Many thanks to Matt Scriven, Andrew Phillips, Lyn and Owen Rook, Malcolm James, Caroline and Paul, Mark Ward and Allan Hanson. Richard Ward came on Sunday and helped to finish off jobs during the week.

We have already arranged a date for the Spring work party 10th-12th March! If anyone would like to attend please get in touch with Colin huwscol@hotmail.co.uk.

We hope by then to have installed a new wood burning stove as the existing one is really showing its age with 2 of the grate bars having collapsed. A more efficient stove should also mean that our wood supply will last that much longer – to the relief of some on the work party!

Christmas at Dolgoch ? At the time of going to press we have not yet had a Christmas booking at Dolgoch, although the hostel is fully booked for New Year. So if you fancy a perfect, last minute Christmas get away, get in touch with Gill Keen or go to our website.

Ty'n Cornel

Overnights. Ty'n Cornel has also done well for bookings with a total of 844 overnights for the calendar year. This is the highest number we have had since 2009 ! These were nearly all bookings in the hostel, as the camping area has been closed since early July because of the building work for the shepherd's hut.

Shepherds hut. After a long wait for the necessary permissions, the electrical upgrade at Tyncornel is finally taking place. National Grid have installed the new transformer on the electricity pole in the farmer's field, and the power now goes via a new underground cable to new switchgear in the lower shed. The hostel now receives its power via the new cables under the yard. We're tantalisingly close to having power in the shepherd's hut but we're not there yet: we need a new electricity meter that can supply both of the two 100 Amp supplies that we now have. Bad weather prevented our electricity supplier British Gas from visiting the hostel on 14 December, so that will have to wait till the New Year. Our groundwork contractor has restored the condition of Dafydd Edwards' track into his yard after the final batch of trenchwork.



More luxury accommodation. We have installed a nest box for red squirrels in the garden at Ty'n Cornel. The Mid Wales Red Squirrel Partnership sent us a design that has been successfully tried out in Anglesey and the box was carefully constructed by Peter Drake of Tregaron, kitted out with clean straw and even has a ledge for when the kits venture out. Peter managed to fix the box which weighs 20kgs about 12 feet up an oak tree.



The officer from the Partnership recommended that we keep a check on what is using the box by fixing up a 'trail camera' on a nearby tree. This takes photos of anything that moves including infra red ones at night. So far we have a lot of wind-blown branches, a barn owl (see picture) and some unwary wardens. A neighbour tells us that they have 12 reds in the forestry 2 miles away and that runs to the river Doethie so it isn't impossible that they will visit. It seems that two of the nest boxes on Anglesey have been occupied by pine martens, so that would be interesting.

If anyone has an old laptop they could donate please get in touch with Janet or Bill then we could keep it at Ty'n Cornel for wardens to look through pictures on the SD card.

New forestry . Tilhill Forestry has contacted the Trust to let us know that they are in the early stages of planning a new plantation behind and beside Blaendoethie, less than a mile from the hostel. The 40 hectare site was owned by the late Mr William Busk who died about 2 years ago (he owned the whole farm round the hostel until about 1999). The site will be planted with 75% conifers of 4 species and there will be some open spaces by the rivers and power lines and some native woodland along the stream and round the edges. The right of way through the plantation will be maintained, they say. The planting is likely to be done next winter. I expect the Trust will make some comments when we have discussed it.

Tilhill has replanted the strip of forestry opposite the hostel which was felled several years ago and Janet is trying to get the Footpaths Officer to sort out the permissive route to the forestry road that was there before the felling.

Designating the Cambrian Mountains as an AONB

The Welsh Senedd recently debated the motion, "Protect Mid-Wales' unique Cambrian Mountains: designate them an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty". The motion had gathered over 20,000 signatures on a petition thus crossing the threshold for debate in the Senedd. There was widespread support from all the political parties during the debate. However, the minister did point out that their main energies in this session of the parliament will be directed to establishing a new National Park in the Clwydian hills in North Wales. It was also pointed out that establishing an AONB would impose additional costs on the local

authorities, who have not yet been very vocal in their support for the idea. Nevertheless the idea has now got some official notice and will be considered by the Senedd again.

Warden's Training Weekend

We already have 9 candidates for the next warden's training weekend which will be held 22nd-24th April. The training weekend is always an enjoyable event. It covers the hands on aspects of wardening at both hostels as well as the administrative side of wardening. There are a few places still available so if you think that you might be interested contact Frances , frances.adelaidecottage@gmail.com

Communications masts



A new communications mast has been installed just off the track leading from Soar y Mynydd. This is identical to the one above Nant yr Huwch which can be seen on the skyline from Dolgoch. There are two further towers between the Devil's Staircase and Beulah. These towers are part of a UK Government programme to replace the communications system used by the emergency services. The Government have said, "As part of the government's commitment to increase digital connectivity EAS masts will be available for other mobile operators to

offer commercial services ". The programme is due to go live by 2025. When this happens it may well be that both hostels will have mobile phone and internet access

Local bus service cuts

The 585 service between Lampeter and Aberystwyth calling at Llanddewi Brefi and Tregaron is to be severely cut in the New Year from 7 runs a day to 3. The T1 service Lampeter to the railway at Carmarthen for trains to Swansea, and to Aberystwyth for trains to the English Midlands and for the T2 to North Wales. There are beautiful walks to Ty'n Cornel from Llanddewi Brefi (7 miles) or from Tregaron to Dolgoch (10 miles) but the long-term survival of the 585 is still in doubt

A Big Thankyou

Finally, the Trustees would like to thank all of the wardens who help to keep the hostels open and offer such a warm welcome to our visitors.

Nadolig llawen a blwyddyn newydd dda i bawb!

Colin Hughes (huwscol@hotmail.co.uk) (On behalf of the Trustees)