

NEWSLETTER 49 – AUTUMN 2023

AGM

This year's AGM was the first "live" event since 2019. We were fortunate that Y Talbot once again kindly allowed us use of their meeting room and also laid on coffee all free of charge. Thanks to the wizardry of Aidan Yorath we were able to "Zoom" the meeting to members who were unable to attend in person.



The fact that more people were able to attend the meeting certainly increased the participation and discussion. Apart from the normal presentations on the hostels, membership, health and safety and the financials, there was discussion about rubbish collection, whether we should provide food packs for Cambrian Way walkers, and how to increase membership of the Trust.

The positions of Membership Secretary and Warden Co-ordinator became vacant following the resignation of the existing holders, Allan Hanson and Frances Passey. Both were thanked for the tremendous work they had done over the years. We were very fortunate that two members had put themselves forward to fill these posts, Wyn Morgan and Jim Stott.

As is customary, the formal part of the meeting was followed by a very pleasant buffet lunch, this year at Ty'n Cornel.



Dolgoch

Overnight bookings have been good so far. For the first 6 months of the year (April-September) we had 1,203 overnights. This is 6.5% up on the same period last year. The army booked the whole hostel for 2 weeks in October as part of their Cambrian Patrol exercise and this will give a further boost to overnights. Given that last year we had a record of just under 2,000 overnights we are in a healthy position.



Summer hostellers. One of the delights of spring and summer at Dolgoch is the return of the house martins and swallows. This year we had a swallow's nest in a very surprising location just above the front entrance door . It was certainly not a very peaceful location for the three young inhabitants. They did not seem to be unduly worried however and simply returned the stares of people entering and leaving the hostel. They also left quite a mess on the entrance and we were glad that they left for warmer climes in early October.

Painting. We were able to take advantage of some warm dry weather after the AGM to paint the outside of the warden's room. This is quite an exposed part of the hostel and gets a real battering from the winter weather so it was good to get it looking in good shape. We also took advantage of a few visitor free days prior to the army visit to paint the Dolgoch common room. The visit of the army requires us to remove all of the bedding in advance and replace it afterwards.



Timber collection. In recent years we have bought supplies of timber from the forestry companies when they were carrying out felling in the area. This worked out quite cost effective as we did all of the processing, sawing, splitting and stacking of logs ready for the stove. However, when we enquired about another load we found that prices had virtually doubled. Fortunately, Andrew Phillips, our H&S advisor, has good contacts with one of the forestry operators and they agree to let us have some of the smaller, older stacks of timber for free, as long as we collected it.

Ty'n Cornel

Overnights - Ty'n Cornel has had a busy year with 880 overnights so far in 2023, including future bookings. Although bookings have gone quieter now that summer is over, we are still getting a good number of last minute bookings to keep the hostel fairly busy.

The total of 879 beats the 2022 total of 829, which itself was the best since 2009.

The new shepherd's hut (which opened in April) has proved popular, with over 40 nights booked. Everyone who has stayed in it has left good reviews. The hut also provides a self-contained space for the warden when there is a big group in the hostel.

The Track - Ceredigion Council have at last carried out some work on the approach track to the hostel, including mending a broken culvert. So the track is now much better for vehicles. So far, no work has been done on the badly damaged track over to Soar y Mynydd Chapel. However, back in July, Council workmen inspected that length of track to plan repairs, and we are assured that it is going to be repaired.

The Future – the front porch is much in need of replacement and Richard is looking into options. We are monitoring plans for new forestry in the area and (slightly further away) plans for a wind farm. Dialogue is being maintained on the possibility of Dafydd Edwards selling us the small field above the hostel, and possibly his yard too.



As Autumn progresses and winter approaches, Ty'n Cornel, as always provides a cosy and welcoming place to stay. Its lights are a welcome sight when rounding the last bend of the track.

My first visit to Dolgoch

My first recollection of the inside of Dolgoch was the open fire in the lounge. It was absolutely freezing inside and out and the wind was blowing a gale. There was ice on top of the puddles, the wind had blown away the puddles underneath leaving the ice on top! I'm sure there's a technical phrase for this but fun for kids and adults as you stand on the cracking ice on the footpath. My mate hadn't brought a coat!

What a wind blew up, two doors slammed at the same time and the glass shattered in the frame, a howling wind was blowing through the hostel.

Sarah was the Easter warden she took us halfway to the bothy as we couldn't cross the river. We turned back, not wanting to get our feet wet or even more cold! The open fire was no match for this wicked weather.

Luckily the snow never came to much but it was a weekend to never forget. Did I mention the wind was so strong it blew some tiles off the roof! I did stand on the bottom of the ladder as Sarah replaced them – I've no head for heights! I also learnt how to put more glass in the frame.... to be continued

Richard Pepler

Warden's training

Our next training weekend for prospective wardens will be held on 19th-21st April 2024. We currently have a good number of wardens but there is always a regular turnover as some wardens retire and new ones come on board. If you think you might like to warden then why not get in touch with Frances Passey (frances.adelaidecottage@gmail.com)

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