

Hosteli Unigeddau'r Elenydd



Elenydd Wilderness Hostels



NEWSLETTER 58 – SPRING 2026

ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS



When work parties really were work parties!
An early photo of Dolgoch in the 1970s shortly after its acquisition by the YHA

This year marks two important anniversaries for EWH. It will be 50 years since Dolgoch became a Youth Hostel after its acquisition by the YHA from the Forestry Commission who itself had bought the farm and its land in the early 1970s. 2026 also marks the 20th anniversary of the inaugural meeting of Elenydd Wilderness Hostels following the decision by the YHA to sell off a number of their rural hostels..

To mark these occasions we will have a joint celebration at Dolgoch after the AGM on 27th June. We hope to invite people who were involved in both the YHA running of Dolgoch and the early days of EWH. If members have any photographs or documents relating to either then please get in touch with Janet Hollins. We also want as many members as possible to join us in our celebrations.

Details of the AGM itself will be sent out to members nearer to the time.

Dolgoch

Electrical work - 2026 will be a significant year in the history of Dolgoch for another reason. The contract for the internal electrical work at Dolgoch was approved by the trustees in February. The work is due to start in early April and should be completed by the end of the month. The local fire safety officer required some additional fire protection compartmentation in the building, particularly in the area to be used for the storage of the lithium batteries (see photo). This work was undertaken by a local builder and inspected and approved by Ceredigion CC building control. It seems fitting that this transformation of the hostel will take place on its 50th anniversary as a hostel.



Work party – we had a very successful and enjoyable work party over the weekend of 7th-9th March. Fifteen members attended over the two days. We managed to get a great deal of necessary work done. Outside, we were able to fill in all of the pot holes on the track. This was quite a job as we had not had a work party since March 2025. We also filled the two empty log stores so we now have at least a year's supply of firewood on site. Our supply of unprocessed timber is now quite low and we will need to source more timber if we are to have firewood into 2027. We also produced a mountain of kindling, which we hope wardens will use economically. Inside the hostel, we painted the new fire compartments and did lots of cleaning and sorting out. Just as, if not more, important we had a great time socialising. On both the Friday and Saturday evenings we all shared a communal meal and spent lots of time chatting around the fire. Our next work party will be in the Autumn. If you are interested in attending contact Colin.



Overnights – Our overnight numbers for the full year 2005/2006, now look like they will be at a similar level to last year at just under 1,600. We have seen a significant growth in campers compared with last year. In contrast, whole hostel bookings have seen a decline in both absolute numbers and as a percentage of total bookings. A few whole hostel bookings can make a big difference to our total overnight numbers so the fact that we are at similar total levels to last year is fairly encouraging.

Ty'n Cornel

For Ty'n Cornel, this winter has been different from all the preceding winters throughout its history. The hostel has been open and looked after as usual, but the environment around it is changing in several ways. We knew that forestry was to be planted on some of the surrounding land, but the installation of an underground electricity cable to supply power to a communications mast has caused even more disturbance. Both projects have damaged the surrounding tracks through use by heavy machinery, but the opportunity is being taken for some improvements. Finally, a large area of land to the south and east of the hostel has been acquired for re-wilding by the organisation Tir Natur.

New forestry – Trees are currently being planted on the land sold by Dafydd Edwards to Foresight Group. Excavators arrived in February to create the mounds of soil in which the young trees are planted, and new access tracks are currently being dug through the forestry area – one of these tracks will provide a convenient access route to our spring. Following discussions between EWH and the forestry management company Tilhill Forestry, sections were marked to be left unplanted around several important features including our spring and the supply pipe to the hostel, and several paths including the Cambrian Way route across the open farmland. Tilhill expects to complete the planting in the next week or two.



Underground electricity cable – National Grid has installed an underground power cable that delivers power to a new communications mast on the hilltop beside the track to Soar y Mynydd hostel. The cable runs from the end of our existing electricity poles, across the farmland and uphill alongside the Soar y Mynydd track. There has been heavy traffic on both the main access track to the hostel and the track that continues down to the Doethie Fach ford, because many truckloads of stone backfill have been brought in from outside. The track down to the ford acquired quite deep ruts because there was little hard surface, and the thoroughfare through the hostel yard has also deteriorated. The track to the ford has been restored to a flat surface, but it will remain muddy until a hard surface is restored.

Track repairs – Before any of the work commenced, EWH had made arrangements to take advantage of the presence of machinery to achieve some much-needed improvements to the track. Tilhill Forestry is funding repairs to restore the damage caused by their own work, and EWH is using the same contractor to upgrade the track to a higher standard. Foresight Group has granted permission for stone from the on-site quarry

beside the track to be used as necessary – this stone provides a harder surface than the scalpings that the Council has usually provided for repairs. The surface of the track will be cambered to improve drainage, and ditches will be cleaned. Discussions are in progress with National Grid about an appropriate contribution to restore damage caused by their own work.

Re-wilding – The organisation [Tir Natur](#) has bought several hundred acres of land alongside the Doethie Fawr and Doethie Fach rivers from Nant Llwyd farm, for re-wilding. Tir Natur's plans include management of the existing pockets of ancient woodland, and light grazing of the pastures, principally by horses. The re-wilding offers a welcome means to control or even reverse the recent decline in the condition of many footpaths that cross the land – the land is no longer grazed by sheep, and the paths are rapidly being obscured by bracken and other undergrowth. Bracken has become a severe problem on the Cambrian Way path up the Doethie valley; Council workmen trimmed a long length of the path last summer, but it is unlikely that they would do so every year. Tir Natur is running an online appeal to raise the funds necessary to complete the land purchase.

The hostel – Alongside all the developments, Ty'n Cornel continues to operate. We achieved 850 overnights in 2025, compared with 849 in 2024. At the time of writing (11 March), we have 254 overnights for 2026 including forward bookings – this performance is consistent with recent years. Routine maintenance has been performed throughout the winter to keep everything working, and minor improvements were made to the water system to provide a more reliable flow through the tank. The water systems at both hostels will have their annual cleaning and chlorination at the end of March.



Business plan

It seems fitting that in a year when EWH is celebrating its 20th year that we should give some thought to what the future will look like. In November the trustees spent a day looking forward to the next 5 years and to the possible challenges and opportunities facing our hostels. In terms of the key assumptions, we decided that we will remain a fully volunteer run organisation, that we will remain a charity and that our charitable objectives will remain the same.

We recognised that we have a number of strengths, including owning the hostels outright, a large number of committed volunteer wardens and other office holders. One of the key weaknesses identified is our reliance on a few key individuals and the need to plan for succession.

We are in the process of producing a brief business plan document. When it is finished it will be available to EWH members on request.

Helping out

One of the challenges facing EWH is finding members who will take us forward for the next 5,10 and 20 years. Most of the founding members of EWH are still actively involved in running the hostels and fulfilling other roles. However, we are all getting older. It can appear intimidating to think of suddenly being asked to take on a role that someone else has been doing for a long time. A more manageable approach might be to take on a smaller, part role . We have, for example, not been able to fill the important role of marketing officer. Unless someone has marketing experience it could appear daunting to take that role on. However, the role could be split into more manageable “bite size” pieces. For example it would be useful to have someone target and contact groups that might like to stay at the hostels, e.g. walking, cycling, bird watching groups. Most of the “big” roles in EWH, even managing the hostels, have activities like this that could be taken on by someone else . This both reduces the burden on existing office holders and will help widen the pool of experience. If you think you might be able to help please contact Marilyn or Colin.

Events calendar

When	What	Further details
20 th – 22 nd March 2026	Warden’s training weekend	frances.adelaidecottage@gmail.com
27 th June 2026	AGM	barglam@yahoo.co.uk
27 th June, 2026	Anniversary celebrations	barglam@yahoo.co.uk

Membership

If you are not yet a member why not join us? EWH will only survive and prosper if we have a continuing inflow of new people. Even if you are not able to help in an active way there are a number of jobs that can be done remotely including a grant applications officer and marketing roles. To become a member the easiest route is via our website <https://www.elenydd-hostels.co.uk> or send an email to our membership secretary email members@elenydd-hostels.co.uk

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