

Hosteli Unigeddau'r Elenydd



Elenydd Wilderness Hostels



## NEWSLETTER 59 – SUMMER 2026

### ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

Arrangements are well underway for our double anniversary celebrations. 2026 marks the 20 year since EWH was founded, following the YHA decision to close a number of small rural hostels including Dolgoch, Ty'n Cornel and Blaencaron. It is also 50 years since Dolgoch was opened as a youth hostel .

To mark these special anniversaries there will be a buffet lunch and get together at Dolgoch . This will take place after this year's AGM at Y Talbot on Saturday 27th June. We hope to have a collection of photographs of Dolgoch over the years , pre and post EWH. Dave Matthews, who was heavily involved with the YHA era at Dolgoch will give a talk. We plan to record this so that those who cannot make it will be able to hear Dave's talk.

The AGM will commence at 11 am in Y Talbot. Thanks to Aidan Yorath the meeting will be live streamed for those members who cannot attend in person. After the formal business of the AGM, we will travel to Dolgoch for food and drink and the anniversary celebrations. We would love to have as many members as possible attending so please make an effort. There are still some bed spaces available at Dolgoch and also at Ty'n Cornel for those wishing to stay over.

### Dolgoch

**Electrical work** – After several years of discussion within EWH and 50 years after first becoming a youth hostel, Dolgoch now has a comprehensive electricity supply. Following the installation of the roof panels last year, the additional safety work required by the local fire officer and our insurers was completed in March. Our contractor, Afan Electrical, then set to work in April. They installed the storage batteries and inverter and began the work of laying cables and installing sockets and light fittings throughout the hostel. On 16th April the first switch was flicked and behold we had light! By the end of the month most of the work was completed. The team from Afan will be finishing off the work soon. We will also be doing some necessary decorating and painting in time for the AGM and anniversary celebrations.



Switching the lights on 16<sup>th</sup> April



The Afan Electrical team

During the summer months we will have plenty of power. This will enable us to run virtually a domestic kitchen with electric kettles, toasters, fridges and even a microwave. The real test will be during the winter months. We do have substantial storage batteries to tide us over a period of gloomy weather when the roof panels will not generate much power. However, we may still not have enough capacity to do more than keep the lights on! We can, however, monitor the performance of the system remotely and will have the ability to switch parts of the system off e.g. sockets, fridges. It will be interesting to see how we get on during the winter!

Why not come to the AGM to see the set up? Failing that you can book an overnight stay and experience it for yourself.

**Stove** – In April we also installed a new wood burning stove. Despite the valiant efforts of several wardens we were never able to solve the smoke problem with the Stockton stove. Almost every time that the door was opened for refuelling smoke would come out into the room. We now have a Chadwick stove. This looks slightly smaller than the Stockton but it has the same capacity at 12 Kw. The good news is that early experience suggests that the smoke problem has been solved. The installer thinks that he might be able to sell the Stockton stove so we may be able to recoup some of the additional cost.

**Trees** – unlike the threats posed to Ty'n Cornel's tranquility by the expansion of wind farms and commercial forestry Dolgoch's future surroundings seem to be fairly stable for the foreseeable future. We have been contacted by Natural Resources Wales (NRW) who own all of the land surrounding Dolgoch. They are developing plans for replanting in the area. The good news is that they will be planting broadleaf trees in the immediate vicinity of the hostel, to the south and along the track to the north of the hostel. They plan to leave the area running down to the river open and have designated it for agricultural use. This area was formerly leased by a local person who grazed horses and it was a delight for hostel visitors to see the young foals. This lease has now been given up and it seems most likely that the land will be given over to sheep. If this does happen we will press NRW to ensure that the fencing is improved as we already suffer from stray sheep getting into the hostel grounds.

**Overnights** - We had 1,525 overnight visitors at Dolgoch in the financial year 2025/26. This was slightly down on the previous year. The decline was solely due to a sharp fall in whole hostel bookings. Bookings by individual and private rooms showed an increase while campers were particularly high at over 200 accounting for 15% of all overnight stays. Campers do get a particularly good deal at the hostels as they can use all of the facilities that visitors staying inside the hostel get while only paying £10.

Looking ahead to the 2026/27 year, as at the end of May we have just under 700 overnights including forward bookings. This is similar to last year's level which would suggest an annual total of between 1,500 and 1,600

## Ty'n Cornel

The hostel has emerged from a difficult winter into a much better spring. The track has been repaired and improved following the damage caused by heavy work traffic over the winter, and the newly-planted forestry looks much better in the spring sunshine. Overnights are healthy. However, a new wind farm has been proposed – this time to the north of Ty'n Cornel, placing the hostel in a narrow corridor between two large proposed developments.



*The improved hostel track*



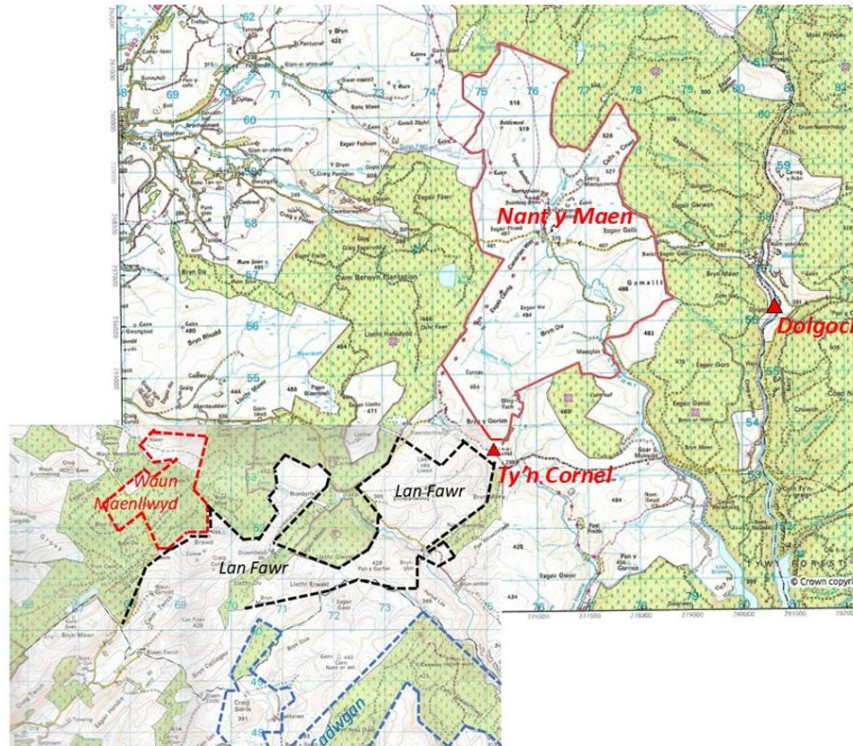
*New forestry track above the spring*

All the organisations involved contributed to rebuilding the track. Tilhill Forestry and National Grid paid for repairing the damage done by their machines, and EWH paid for improvements to the track. The land-owners Foresight Group contributed roadstone from the on-site quarry beside the track – this enabled considerable savings. The track has been widened and its surface is now cambered to steer water into the ditches at the side. The infamous “steep section”, where cars used to have to drive over bedrock, has been graded out. The track has been improved considerably – in fact some drivers are now driving too fast, and signs are needed to restrict speed. Some new tracks have been built through the forestry, and they open up new walking routes up the hillside.

In early June, the French electricity company EDF announced its proposal to build a wind farm immediately to the north of Ty'n Cornel. The proposed site encompasses several thousand acres of land – the “famous phone box” on the Tregaron mountain road lies close to the centre of the plot, and one southern edge is the boundary of the new forestry beside Ty'n Cornel. The eastern edge is about 2 km from Dolgoch. The project is named after [Nant y Maen](#) farm, which forms a large part of the site. Few details have been announced so far: the scheme will include up to 27 turbines, and the planning timeline ends with a decision by a Welsh government minister in 2029. The proposed positions of the turbines have not been announced, but it seems likely that one turbine would be placed on the Bryn y Gorlan hilltop just 500 m from Ty'n Cornel. EWH has requested further information about the proposal; we have already objected to the erection of two wind-sensing masts on the site, which were proposed a few weeks ago.

EWH continues to engage with the planning process of other wind farms close to Ty'n Cornel. Bute Energy has announced the proposed positions of the turbines for the [Lan Fawr](#) wind farm to the south of Ty'n Cornel.

Four turbines are proposed on hilltops that face the hostel across the Doethie valley, at distances 0.9 km, 1.0, 1.3 km, and 1.7 km from the hostel. EWH submitted objections at the non-statutory engagement stage during winter 2025, and will also engage in the statutory consultation stage in autumn 2026. Noise measurements were performed at Ty'n Cornel during November 2025, to establish existing sound levels in order to support the definition of noise restrictions.



***Map showing the locations of proposed wind farms close to Ty'n Cornel. The full extent of the Lan Fawr development is not shown – it extends further to the south-west away from the hostel.***

Ty'n Cornel has had a busy spring after a quiet winter. At 8 June, we have 578 bookings for the year including forward bookings, and 406 of those overnights have already occurred. We are well on the way to matching the 2025 total of 850 overnights. We achieved our 15,000<sup>th</sup> EWH overnight at Ty'n Cornel during June. All the usual maintenance and re-decoration activities are in progress. The water systems at both hostels were cleaned and chlorinated in April, and the entire electrical installation at Ty'n Cornel has had its five-year inspection.

This year is 60 years from 1966, the year during which a group of YHA volunteers discovered the disused farmhouse that became Ty'n Cornel hostel the following year. It's appropriate to look back at the condition in which they found the building, and to think about the many improvements that have been made over the years and all the hard work that has been done by innumerable volunteers. EWH has occupied Ty'n Cornel for almost 20 of those 60 years, so we have been responsible for a significant share of its history.



## Helping out

We are still keen to get some additional help with various aspects of running EWH. This year's AGM will again have the important role of marketing officer unfilled. Even if volunteering to take on this role might seem daunting there are aspects of it such as contacting groups who might want to stay at the hostels, e.g. walking, cycling, bird watching groups which would be a lot more manageable even for someone without marketing experience. Most of the "big" roles in EWH, even managing the hostels, have activities like this that could be taken on by someone else and could be done without the need to visit the hostels. 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
27 <sup>th</sup> June 2026	AGM	barglam@yahoo.co.uk
12 <sup>th</sup> – 14 <sup>th</sup> March 2027	Warden's training weekend	frances.adelaidecottage@gmail.com
7 <sup>th</sup> -8 <sup>th</sup> November 2026	Dolgoch work party	huwscol@hotmail.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

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