



## COETIR MYNYDD

### Minutes of the Annual General Meeting 26<sup>th</sup> February 2016

The meeting began at 8:30pm at Neuadd Goffa, Mynydd Llandygai

#### 1) Apologies and attendance:

Apologies were received from: Gwen Griffith, Martin Daws, Jean Williams, Claire & Mike Lynch, Mark Goddard, Helen Berry, John Farrar  
17 members attended plus 2 visitors

#### 2) Annual report:

The annual report for activities since the last AGM was summarised by Tim Radford (TR), and printed copies were made available. This will also be translated and posted on the CM web page

**Storm damage:** the recent very wet and windy weather has caused some disturbances in the woodland, including fallen trees, damage to the surface of the public footpaths and damage to the small bridge over the stream from Parc yr Ynys. This highlights the need to have funds to support maintenance needs. Repairs will be needed.

**Biodiversity:** The return of a breeding pair of Pied flycatchers was noted. The last time this species was recorded in Parc yr Ocar was over 10 years ago. Several events were organised during 2015, including a shore walk on Lavan sands, led by Gabe Wyn, a bat walk in the woodland & village, led by Sam Dyer and a dawn chorus event, led by Chris Allen & Sharon Sweeny.

**Unauthorised cycling:** the number of cyclists using the footpaths in the woodland is believed to have decreased and no recent posting of the Parc yr Ocar route on the STRAVA website seems to have been made. However, two members noted that there had been confrontations between themselves and cyclists, and that the smaller 'no cycling' sign had been uprooted. Members were asked not to confront cyclists, but to pass on any sightings of cyclists using the footpaths in the woodland on to the board.

**Removal of Himalayan balsam** throughout the village and woodland has been ongoing and involves much less time than when it first began, in 2007.

**Llais y Goedwig:** Jenny Wong (JW) represented Coetir Mynydd (CM) at the Llais y Goedwig annual gathering in March 2015, and Bryan Dickinson recently met the new Capacity building officer for North Wales (Sara Wynne Pari) in Llanrwst.

#### 3) Financial report:

This was presented by Mike Yates standing in for Chris Allen. It was noted that with the payment of £740.46 due for 2015 from NRW for woodland management is the final instalment of the 5 year management grant. There are no longer grants for woodland management available so there is a need to meet recurrent expenses amounting to around £250 per year for insurance, Companies House registration and hire of the Neuadd Goffa for meetings. A sum of £9,621 has been granted from the Communities Investment Fund (administered by Mantell Gwynedd) to fund community consultation on the hydro which must be spent before November 2016.

#### 4) Election of the Board:

TR listed current members of the board and asked if there were any nomination for new Board members. Chris Allen (not present) has stated that she wishes to step down as assistant Treasurer and Mike Yates also repeated his wish to step down as Treasurer.

No other board members expressed a wish to stand down so TR suggested that if there were no objections, a vote would be taken to re-elect all the current members of the board for another term.

Maggie Adam proposed that the current board be re-elected, and Pat Yates seconded. This was passed by a unanimous vote.

Board members are confirmed as:

Chair – Tim Radford  
Vice-chair – Gwen Griffith  
Secretary – Jenny Wong  
Treasurer – position unfilled  
Sharon Sweeny  
Bryan Dickinson  
Mike Vitkovitch  
Gabe Wyn  
Martin Daws  
Chris Allen

**Commented [JLGW1]:** Is she stepping down from the Board or just as Treasurer?

No-one came forward to act as Treasurer. Bryan Dickinson agreed to assist Mike Yates in collection of subscriptions in the interim until the position is filled.

Ex-officio officers are: Assistant Treasurer – Mike Yates and Dam engineer – Bryn Williams

5) Parc yr Ocar Management:

JW summarised the current status of the woodland management plan: As the old plan is coming to an end, a new plan is now needed but this can probably be done 'in house'. In the past, grant support for plans has been received, but this is no longer available – again this highlights the need for a regular income to CM.

Footpaths damaged in the recent floods may require repairs and advice will need to be sought by suitably qualified people on how to best deal with run-off water and repairs to the small bridge. Einir Frodsham suggested that she could approach the Community Council to see if they could provide any financial assistance for these works.

It has been some time since a formal report on the Coed y Parc dam structure was prepared. JW suggested that a suitably qualified dam engineer should be contracted to survey and report on the dam. Funding for this cannot come from a grant as it is the responsibility of the owner to undertake such surveys. If necessary costs for the survey could perhaps come from the dam reserve fund.

6) Micro-hydro development

TR gave an outline summarising previous work CM has carried out towards developing a micro-hydro scheme utilising the Galedffwrdd (river passing through Parc yr Ocar). CM has recently looked into developing a scheme running from Pont Aman (Llyn Pen y Bont) to the lowest part of Parc yr Ocar, which could potentially generate 240kW of electricity. There have been recent changes to the 'feed-in tariff' (FIT) that may mean that this government subsidy may not be available by the time a scheme is developed here, however, this should not prevent it from being economically viable.

JW explained that whilst CM would benefit from being one of the land-owners over which any scheme might operate, it should primarily remain as a woodland and environmental group. The hydro scheme has been given the preliminary name 'Ynni'r Ocar' and CM has obtained grant funding from the Community Investment Fund towards the costs of community consultation on a micro-hydro scheme and set up an independent hydro development group.

TR stated that whilst the high intake hydro scheme at Parc yr Ocar is considered by other hydro developers to be a very good scheme both practically and financially, several issues would need to be tackled:

- a) There would be some short and possibly longer-term disturbance in the woodland due to any engineering works and the original aims to protect the woodland site will need to be addressed. Two objections to any hydro development, primarily on this basis, have been received.
- b) Any decision to proceed with a hydro development will ultimately be up to the entire CM membership.
- c) The proposal to develop a micro-hydro in Mynydd Llandygai will need to be opened up to the whole village.
- d) Even before any final decision to go ahead is made, several detailed surveys (Archaeology, Habitats, Trees, Bryophytes, Bats and Otters) will be needed for the application for planning consent. However, the results of these surveys will still be useful for Coetir Mynydd even if the hydro scheme is not completed.

Ian Martin asked if there were any noise implications from the turbine house. TR responded that this was not known at the moment, and that answers to many similar questions would be needed for the public consultation.

Sian Turner and Gabe Wyn commented that much of the Parc yr Ocar site is effectively an ex-industrial site and that the site had quickly recovered from the disturbance caused when the other dams were destroyed and the cast iron hydro pipes removed.

Jean Scholes asked what risks were associated with taking water from the river. Gabe Wyn and JW commented that the river originates as compensation flow from Marchlyn Mawr though most of the water drains from the Gwaen which is an extensive store of water which will not be drained as it is an European protected site. The amount of extracted from the river would be strictly controlled, and returned to the river at the turbine house upstream of the waterfall upstream of Felin Fawr.

John Sweeny suggested that before the committee go ahead any further, a vote be taken by all members present at the AG and proposed voting on the question "**Is Coetir Mynydd in favour of developing a micro-hydro scheme on Coetir Mynydd-owned land?**" TR made it clear that this was not a vote that any hydro scheme should definitely go ahead, but an expression of support for continuation of development of a hydro scheme.

Voting was as follows:

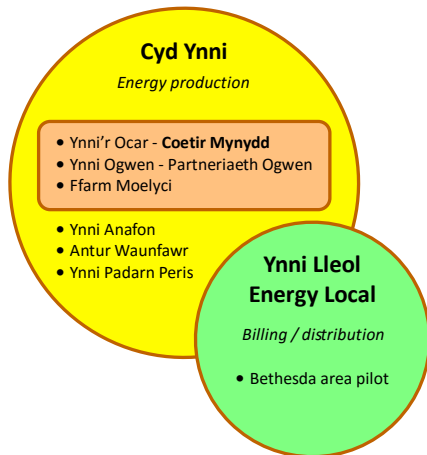
Yes – 15 (14 by show of hands, one member left early but indicated a yes vote)

No – 2 (written submissions)

Left meeting before voting: 1

## 7) Cyd Ynni

The new organisation Cyd Ynni is a consortium of six groups looking to develop community energy schemes. Three of these are in Dyffryn Owgen (CM on behalf of Ynni'r Ocar; Ynni Ogwen and Ffarm Moelyci) while the others are in Abergwyngregyn, Llanberis and Waunfawr. Two of these (Ynni Ogwen and Ynni Padarn Peris) are launching their share scheme on the 28<sup>th</sup> February 2016. There is also the Energy Local (based in Oxford) pilot scheme which will trial a scheme to operate local energy markets which, if successful will give higher prices to generators and lower prices for customers of power in close proximity to each other.



In addition to the generation of electricity by hydro JW has suggested to Cyd Ynni that firewood for domestic use is also an important source of renewable heat in the local area. Initial discussions with Arloesi Gwynedd Weldig (Leader) suggest they may be willing to fund work on firewood. Previous work done by CM and Llais y Goedwig on firewood gives figures for firewood demand in Mynydd Llandygai while the consultations done in Mynydd, Rhiwlas and Tregarth give a good indication of what people value in Parc y Bwlch which was intended as inputs to the development of the Forest Design plan. NRW are presently developing new "Resource plans" to replace the former Design plans. It has been suggested that Parc y Bwlch might be a good site to pilot the new Resource plans. This could potentially be a good opportunity to take forward several strands of work from previous years. JW will report back on development of these ideas.

#### 8) Forward plans for 2016

BD suggested organising a 'clean-up day' including a litter pick up and practical work day in Parc yr Ocar – BD to follow up with a date.

Gabe Wyn said that as follow to a failed project proposal which involved Ysgol Bodfeurig she and Martin Daws were intending to organise some activities with the school. Ideas being developed are 'Pond dipping'; poetry and an introduction to the OPAL science projects (biodiversity recording). Anyone is welcome to help out – the next step is a risk assessment of the walk from the school to Ynys Uchaf for the pond dipping.

BD said that more biodiversity walks are planned for 2016 including another dawn chorus walk and a small mammal and/or bat walks – BD to follow up.

#### 9) AOB

A) Lynn Coulsting requested that the large dead Scots Pines overhanging her boundary from Parc yr Ynys be inspected regularly in case remedial work is needed to make it safe. John Sweeny stated that he had surveyed both the dead trees near the boundary with Pen Llyn, and suggested removing one and continuing to monitor the remaining tree. John Sweeny asked to indicate how much tree work is required including Lynn's tree and the limb that has fallen into neighbouring fields.

B) TR gave details of a "Green Flag Award" that Coetir Mynydd had been approached to apply for. However, it was difficult to see any great benefit for this award unless publicity was needed so as to increase visitors to the woodland, or unless it could assist in winning grants. TR suggested taking a vote on whether to apply for the award. The unanimous decision of all present was not to apply for the award.

C) Gerry Lynch requested a vote of thanks for all the hard work of the committee over the last 12 months.

10) Date of next meeting: TR suggested a similar date in 12 months time. i.e. Friday 24<sup>th</sup> February 2017

Tim thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 10:25pm

<http://www.coetirmynydd.co.uk>