

Notes of the Ogwen Forum Users Meeting

May 3rd 2017 4.30 p.m.

Present

Emyr Williams (chair)	Snowdonia National Park Authority (SNPA)
John Roberts	SNPA
Gwyn Thomas	Blaen y Nant
Edward Jones	SNPA
Carys Dafydd	SNPA
Arwel Johnston	Tenant
Edwina Johnston	Tenant
Rhys Thomas	National Trust
Andy Harbach	Ogwen Mountain Rescue
Dewi Roberts	National Trust
Mark Roberts	Site user
Naomi Jones	SNPA
Catrin Roberts	Glan Llugwy
Hywel Roberts	NRW
Catrin Williams	Translator

Apologies

Iwan Jones; Jeroen Verbeek; Saskia Wardeinier; Mal Creasy; Jon Cawley; Alan Pritchard; Godfrey Northam; Dewi Davies; Paula Roberts; Guto Roberts

1. The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked them to introduce themselves. He said he wanted to remind everyone why the Forum has been

established, namely to improve the experience people get from using the new resource that the Authority has invested in. He went on to say that he was certain that the investment made in the building ensures that the public will have a better experience and service.

2. Minutes of the Last meeting.

Accuracy and matters arising

- a. Traffic problem - a site meeting had been held with Iolo Tegid.

According to Arwel Johnson several different 'scenarios' have been discussed, such as reducing the speed to 40 mph, yellow lines. He said that he believed that it the issue was money behind the unwillingness to do anything about the situation.

All agreed that no progress has been made with the situation despite letters being sent to the two ministers and regular contact being made with Iolo Tegid.

Carys Dafydd said that he had said in an email that there would be more justification for a restriction on parking on the road if it would be possible to have more parking spaces in the vicinity. Everyone agreed that it should not be an expectation that there should be more parking spaces before some form of restriction on the traffic on the highway is established.

Gwyn Thomas asked what had happened re: the idea to create a path on the inner side of the wall - which would be safer than having to step out into the road to avoid cars. **Dewi Roberts agreed to ask Guto Roberts if he'd had an estimate from a contractor to get an idea re the costs involved.**

3. Update on recent activities in Ogwen in the absence of Guto Roberts,

Dewi Roberts read out his report

4. Capital Works 2016 – 2018

Path work at the back of the Cwm - bags have been flown up with a helicopter, large sections of paths have been repaired. The drains have been cleared of stones and the junction at the upper circuit path of the Cwm and the Twll Du path has been repaired.

Capital Works 2017 – 2018

The path work at the back of the cwm is ongoing along with repairs to the stairs on the way to Idwal rock and a bridge will be installed over Nant Efan.

Shepherding

The shepherding is continuing this year using the same shepherds as last year i.e. Hefin Hughes, Gwyn Thomas and Ioan Doyle.

Conservation Work

There is an intention, in partnership with John Moores University Liverpool and Bangor and Aberystwyth Universities to look into the possibility of having a project that will monitor the impact of climate change on rare habitats such as heathland mountain. This will mean putting square cages in various locations in the Cwm.

In September Ogwen Valley School pupils will undertake voluntary conservation work in the Cwm as part of the John Muir award.

Traffic

On Easter Saturday, the Highways Agency and North Wales Police set out 'cones' along the side of the road to prevent cars from parking on the roadside. This was in response to a 101 call complaining that the parking situation endangered public safety.

A copy of a poster featuring a picture of a sheep killed by a dog was shown, the poster has been produced jointly by the agricultural unions and the police.

No one had an objection to the poster being displayed.

Emyr Williams said that the three partners responsible for Cwm Idwal Partnership would meet in the near future in order to have an agreement on a way forward regarding developments over the next 5 years. Forum members asked if they had any messages they would like him to convey to the partnership.

- Arwel Johnson said he would like to see the partnership put more emphasis on management - he said that some people who come to the area think they can do as they please.
- Edwina Johnson felt that there should be a greater presence of on-site staff. She said that people come there and ask them for information. Emyr Williams replied that it was difficult to find the balance between having a presence on the site and the Rangers work programme.

- Andy Harbach said that he, on behalf of the Ogwen Mountain Rescue Club would like to see a clear message being given about safe mountaineering.

Emyr Williams replied that these coincide with National Park purposes i.e. to educate people about the special qualities of the park and make sure they get home safely.

Gwyn Thomas suggested that it should not be the responsibility of the Park to promote safe mountaineering - the audience is constantly changing and the message has to be repeated time and again. Arwel Johnson said that visitors to Cwm Idwal have changed over the years and now ordinary people rather than mountaineers are here and they unaware of countryside issues.

5. Current situation on site – Edward Jones

- Figures for those using the car park has increased by 27% this year - this is true for the rest of the park, he thought this was the case because of the recent marketing undertaken, including the 'EPIC' year last year.
- There have been shortcomings within the service provided by the contractors who clean the building, and this is due to staff changes.
- Over the coming weeks water tanks will be installed, which should improve the water pressure and the associated problems.
- The empty desk in Guto's office will be let in the near future – therefore if Forum members know of anyone who is interested – he would be grateful if they could get in touch with him.
- The drains have blocked this afternoon - a contractor is on the way to empty the tank.
- The numbers paying by card for parking has increased steadily. The aim is to change to a card only payment system over the coming years.

Gwyn Thomas asked how the parking money is spent. It was stated that it goes towards footpath improvements and maintenance work. Emyr Williams added that the money collected in the area around Snowdon goes towards work on the footpaths or to contribute towards the Sherpa bus service.

6. Interpretation on the site – Naomi Jones

- The company that looked at the 3D model has submitted recommendations on what can be done in order to respond to the various problems that exist with it, including problems with the projector. The model itself will remain but will not work interactively now.
- There has been no negative feedback regarding interpretation within the building recently.
- The film 'Up on High' by Rob Johnson has been set-up. Arwel Johnson said that the film is popular and asked whether it would be possible to obtain a copy of the film so that it can be sold.

Naomi said that she would make inquiries.

7. Update on the Ogwen Cottage

- In the absence of Dewi Davies – Dewi Roberts gave an update on the Ogwen Cottage. Three seasonal rangers were appointed recently and they will ensure presence in the area between eight and six o'clock, seven days a week
- Outward Bound has had a successful season so far.
- The cafe is now open on weekends and during holidays. The sign will go up in the near future.
- Two members of staff have been appointed to work in the café. Catrin Roberts commented that perhaps there is a link between the cafe and an increase in the number of cars parking on the road.
- The team of estate workers will move back to Pentre – and will therefore reduce the parking pressure to some extent.

Everyone agreed that the whole area is under pressure during peak times.

8. Update on the Heritage Lottery fund scheme - Carneddau – John Roberts

John Roberts explained that he has been seconded from his work as the Park Authority's archaeologist to develop the scheme over the next two years, putting more meat on the bone of the initial application. Lois Jones, who used to work at Storiell in Bangor, has also been appointed on a part-time basis to assist with the task.

The development phase extends from March 2017 to March 2019. The final scheme will be submitted to the Heritage Fund at that time, with the delivery period taking place between June 2019 and May 2024.

He distributed pamphlets amongst Forum members that included detailed information about the scheme.

The main aim of the scheme will be to protect and gain better control of the Carneddau by means of the following -

- Developing a shared vision for the future of the Carneddau, by increasing understanding of the ancient history and ecology of these fragile uplands, across a wide range of communities, individuals and organisations
- Protecting and maintaining the heritage of the uplands, demonstrating sustainable land management practices that protect rare habitats and species, archaeological remains of international importance, and societies and traditions of the high mountains and the culture that's under threat.
- Engaging with a wide range of people about the Carneddau through events, new interpretation and education initiatives, whilst ensuring that the overall numbers of visitors remains stable. A partnership will be created that will bring different organisations together. The success of the work will depend on the cooperation and goodwill of landowners – it will not be compulsory for landowners to become involved in the scheme.

Emyr Williams added that such schemes could be a means of achieving due to leaving Europe.

9. Any other business

- Arwel Johnson said that the Sherpa bus has resumed its service on weekends but that it is not widely used. He stated that more marketing efforts are required.
- An application has been received from the Home Office for permission to install a mast in the area. The request is for a significant compound - 10 x 10 meters with a height of 30m. Edward Jones said that it appears that this is a desktop exercise at the moment and one that will require great care

and consideration when it is being installed in order to ensure that it does not affect the beauty of the area. EE have secured the contract to run the service - some Forum members were surprised that it was only one company getting the right.

- Catrin Roberts stated that, in her experience, the companies are difficult enough to work with.
- Arwel Johnson enquired about undergrounding the electricity cables – the whole thing has gone quiet lately. Emyr Williams promised to make enquiries. He said that personnel within the company had recently changed and are more difficult to get hold of.
- Gwyn Thomas asked whether there had been any developments regarding the movement of cattle grids in relation to the development of Lôn Las Ogwen. Carys Dafydd promised to ask Gwynedd Council when she raises the matter of passing places along the old road.

The Chairman thanked everyone for coming and the meeting came to an end at 6.00 p.m.