

Minutes of the AGM of Cambrian Mountains Society held at the |
Hotel Metropole Llandrindod Wells on Saturday 28th October 2017

Present: Roger Earis (Chairman) and 32 members together with guest speaker, Julian Jones, Chief Executive of Radnorshire Wildlife Trust.

Apologies were received from 15 members.

1. The Chairman welcomed Trustees and members to the meeting.
2. The minutes of the meeting held at the Hotel Metropole on 29th October 2016 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. There were no matters arising.
3. The Chairman reported on a number of matters that had taken place during the year:
 - (a) Report of Lord Elis-Thomas' working group following Marsden and its 69 recommendations had generally been noted by those interested in landscape and conservation. E-T claimed that Marsden was following the spirit of the Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and Environment (Wales) Act 2016 – the guiding principle to ensure understanding that the role of designated landscapes should emphasise inclusivity in the treatment of the whole of the Principality's landscapes as exemplars of good practice in developing sustainable management of natural resources and related practices. The Welsh Government did not appear to accept the existing management arrangements and apparently the Sandford principle, but had little to put in its place. A ministerial announcement was anticipated.

(b) Powys LDP. Roger thanked Margaret Tregear and Peter Foulkes for their work in support of CPRW and CMS in securing the removal of Local Search Areas. The Society had been represented by Geoff Sinclair. The Inspector had announced her intention to hold a further hearing into Powys policies on renewable energy generally given the changes which had been introduced continually to the Plan over a period of months on which the public had to be consulted before she could determine whether they were soundly based. It was apparent that the failure of the County to accept the Special Landscape Areas concept suggested by the Society would leave a gaping hole in landscape protection in applying policies proposed by the plan for wind and voltaics.

(c) The Parc Naturel, a French concept primarily to encourage rural development through economic activity including financial incentives as effectively an alternative to the existing AONB and National Park. There were issues in that local communities could opt out and a limited time scale. The Chairman believed that the Society should continue to campaign for the AONB, but might have to consider whether there was any merit in the designation, The Society would need to judge any new proposals in light of its constitution and the extent to which they would promote the landscape as well as the wellbeing of its residents and wildlife.

(d) Poultry establishments: Concerns manifest on discharge, methane, smell etc. Virtually every unit (58 out of 59 approved) and the County seem to have little in the way of policy to stem the tide. Representations would be made through the LDP inquiry if these sheds were erected in the Cambrian Mountains.

(e) Welsh Government policy. The reclassification of middle sized wind schemes as Projects of National Importance together with transfers of powers from Westminster were likely to result in a speeding up in the turbine programme – hard road lay ahead with the Hendy Bank (near Llandrindod Wells outside the CM) inquiry following the sidelining of TAN8 at Mynydd y Gwynt which seemed to set aside the Strategic Search Areas as the only sites for large and medium wind factories. Nant y Moch was still on the tabs should appropriate electrical connections be established.

(f) The chairman concluded by acknowledging the support of members of the society in championing the landscape throughout the year and in particular Richard Wilson, Malcolm Tunley, Peter Foulkes and Margaret Tregear.

4. Treasurer's report: Nick Foot stated that it complied with Charity Commission rules and had been independently examined. It had been prepared on the cash basis and circulated. On income £1300 of gift aid had been collected for the last three years despite the rise in subscription £500 had been lost in the change. The only restricted monies related to donations specifically for wind farm matters. On expenditure £1500 had been paid to Mr Sinclair and £60 per month as the treasurer's fee. RESOLVED THE ACCOUNTS BE APPROVED AS PRESENTED.
5. Membership: Peter Foulkes stated that the numbers appear to have been reduced from 390 at the beginning of the year to 325 which he ascribed to natural wastage. A membership putsch was urgently required.
6. Iolo Williams to continue as President with Nick Foot as Treasurer (but not as a Trustee).

7. Elections: The remaining Trustees were reappointed as follows: Roger Earis: Chairman, Michael Rolt: Secretary Brian Davis, Peter Foulkes, Judy Johnston, Dafydd Morris-Jones, Clive Myhill, Ken Thomas, Margaret Tregear, Ann West. The Chairman expressed his anxiety once again at the lack of interest from the membership in being prepared to undertake office as the Society executive meetings were poorly attended and it was difficult to cover all the work that needed to be done. He appealed for more support.

Julian Jones concluded proceedings with an amusing talk about his experiences in walking between the Nature Reserves in the care of RWT over 2 days in June where he had met members of his Trust and discussed conflicting interests which the organisation had to reconcile. The audience appreciated his humour and the command of his subject.