



## Cymdeithas Parc Bannau Brycheiniog

# The Brecon Beacons Park Society

Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting held at The Bear Hotel, Crickhowell  
on Tuesday, 23rd November, 2010 at 5.00pm.

**Present:** Charles Henderson (Chairman), Jim Wilson, Elizabeth Gibbs, Ben Sladen, Clive Eiles, Anne Pritchard, Chris Barber, David Thomas, Richard Chandler (Minutes Secretary).

1. **Apologies:** William Gibbs.

2. The **Minutes of the last meeting** (on 12th October, 2010) were approved and signed.

It was suggested that the Minutes should be summarised before being sent to other parties and posted on our website. While it was accepted that this would, in theory, be good it was agreed that it would not be worth the extra work which would be involved.

3. **Matters arising:** (i) 3 (i) No reports from the other Welsh Societies have been received by Liz or by Richard. Charles will ask them again. **ACTION: Charles.** (ii) 3 (iii) Jim has met with the Marketing Manager of the Cotswold Company. It appears that we may be granted a discount of between 10% and 15% but this will depend upon Society members having spent £2000 overall in each year. Jim will complete and send off the necessary form and we will then receive a decision from the Company. **ACTION : Jim.** (iii) 3 (v) – to be discussed under item 4.2 (iv) 3 (vi) The Authority has sent designs for the beginning and end markers of the Beacons Way for cost estimates. No consultation with us. (v) 4.2 The Walks leaders get-together has happened. (vi) 4.7 done – see current report for 4.7 (vii) 5. done – Dilys will send details to David. (viii) 8 (i) with William. (ix) 8 (iii) with William. (x) 3 (ii) Ben will send reminders and membership cards in whatever is the most practicable cost-effective way.

#### 4. Reports

**4.1 Financial and Membership** – see Ben's report, previously circulated. A few new members.

**4.2 Guided Walks and Events Programmes** – see Anne's report, previously circulated. Clive reported that, at the Walks Leaders meeting, a number of misunderstandings regarding the furore over WL qualifications were cleared up. The Walks Team felt that it was inappropriate to push any suggestion of a need to obtain such qualification at the present time. There was some interest in undertaking further courses in Rescue and Emergency Care (First Aid) and these will be arranged. Clive feels strongly that we do need a budget for 'Walks Leaders Development'. Clive feels that these meetings should be held again, at irregular intervals, with the next, possibly, in about nineteen months from now. Jim stated that it is strongly recommended that Walks Leaders should produce a route card for each of their walks and should carry them with them, in case of sudden incapacity of the leader. It was felt to be impractical to suggest that they should have GPS monitors.

4.2 cont.

It was suggested that we look into the practicality of arranging our own, in-house, course modules and that we ask Allan Gibbs to be our Technical Advisor, as he has offered, and this was agreed. To that end, it was also agreed that, in order to have an understanding of the present situation and to be able to plan for the future, we do need, and should create, an accurate database of Walks Leaders, their current qualifications, if any, and their interests in undertaking various courses. Jim will send a copy of an old, out-of-date, database to Clive. **ACTION: Jim.** Angela has offered to update the database. Anne will prepare a risk-assessment for walks, as the insurance company has indicated to Liz that we should have one. **ACTION: Anne.**

**4.3 The Beacon** – Chris has a paucity of material at present. Various suggestions were made.

**4.4 Website** – progressing and nearing completion.

**4.5 Beacons Way Steering Group** – nothing to report.

**4.6 Planning and Development Control** – see report by Liz, previously circulated. Liz reported on the concern over the attitude which the planners are taking to the micro-hydro-scheme at Dyffryn Crawnon, apparently on account of its being put forward by a Community Interest Company. If permission is refused, then the matter will go to appeal. Liz will be making a response on behalf of the Society with regard to the Local Development Plan. Following what is thought to have been a particularly bad programme on the BBC, showing significant unwarranted bias against the planners in the National Park, it was agreed that Charles should write to Norma Barry at CNP to voice our concern and to hope that she will take this up with the BBC and with the Brecon and Radnor newspaper, which, subsequently, carried a similarly slanted article. **ACTION: Charles.**

**4.7 Art in the Park** – see report by Liz, previously circulated. The Usk Valley Trust has confirmed that they would be willing for £300 of the £1000 grant may be spent on staff costs, so further groups will be taken out before the end of the financial year. Applications to a number of Trusts for funding will be made in December.

**4.8 Walls of Llangynidr** – The first training course for the Young Farmers has been completed successfully and a second session has been planned to occur shortly.

**4.9 Brecon Beacons Trust** – a recent attempt to hold an AGM failed, as there was not a quorum present. It is now hoped that it will be held in December. Business continues in a satisfactory fashion. There has been only one application from west of the A470. Ben offered to include a note within a mass email to Society members living in the west of the Park, drawing attention to the Trust for the benefit of possible interested parties there. **ACTION: Ben.**

**4.10 Rights of Way** – Stephen had nothing to report. David raised the matter of two notices at Blaen y Cwm, which state, “No Entry, Except for Motor-cycles With or Without Sidecars”, despite the fact that it has been a Restricted Byway since 2006. Motorcyclists continue to drive at speed along there. David has written to Avril Barnes about it. It seems that Powys County Council is prevaricating about removal of the signs. David will contact Stephen and get him to write to the Powys member of the Park Authority. **ACTION: David and Stephen.**

**4.11 Press Releases** – to be discussed under item 7.

**4.12 GeoPark Management Group** – Dilys has stated that it is the turn of Fforest Fawr to host the European GeoPark experts meeting next March. She is seeking funding contributions from all partners within Fforest Fawr GeoPark to cover this. It was agreed on a vote, carried *nem con*, that we will contribute a nominal sum of £100.

**4.13 Area Advisory Forums** – David reported that here has been a joint meeting between the two Area forums. In addition to their normal presentations, they presented their three-year base-line budget, based on a 4% decrease in funding, year-on-year, from WAG. They envisage a reduction of about £0.5 million out of their grant of about £4.4 million, so they will face a serious shortfall in their resources. They are producing terms of reference for ‘Community Engagement’ for their relationships with Community Councils and other bodies. Members divided into work-groups to consider how the National Park might ‘perform better’ and in what areas they could save money. Conclusions will be made available in their Minutes. David will circulate details of the meeting and of the outcomes of its deliberations in due course. **ACTION: David.**

**4.14 Welsh Advisory Committee** – nothing to report.

**4.15 CNP Matters** – Charles attended a useful CNP meeting last week. Presentations were given by two members of the Corporate Forum – C E Electric and the National Grid. A presentation was also given by the Caravan and Camping Club.

**4.16 Waun Fignen Felen** – The Management Forum met at the beginning of November. The Park Authority intends to tender for a hydrological survey at WFF, which will take at least one year and the result of which will not be available until 2012 - the restoration programme began in July, 2004... There has been no statement of intention regarding further action at WFF in the meantime. The Park Authority appears not to have ruled out the possibility of again using plastics material for the creation of dams at WFF, whereas most of the plastics which has been used, hitherto, has been removed, following protestations from the Management Forum and others. Clive sought the support of this committee in objecting to the use of plastics. It was pointed out here that there are bio-degradable plastics available and on a vote, carried *nem con*, it was agreed to give our support to the insistence that only bio-degradable products are used. It has been stated that there is an annual budget of £5000 for restoration work at WFF. There remains ambiguity as to whether or not the Management Forum is, in fact, an Executive body. The representative from Dŵr Cymru suggested that they would be prepared to give the land, on which WFF stands, to the Park Authority. However, the Authority has stated that it will only accept it if it comes with an endowment...

**4.17 Relationship Between the Park Society and the Park Authority** – there is to be a further meeting between us and John Cooke and his team shortly. The Executive felt that there would be no harm in speaking, at that meeting, about the relationship and in raising the possibility of producing a ‘Memorandum of Understanding’ between us, provided that it not be construed as a statement of ‘no confidence’ in them on our part. It has transpired that the Fforest Fawr GeoPark is not part of the Park Authority and that the Park Authority, like others, including ourselves, is a partner in the management of the GeoPark. It appears, therefore, that the Park Authority was not and is not in a position to set rules with regard to walks leaders qualifications with respect to walks undertaken as part of the GeoPark Festival...

5. **A.G.M.** – Liz has been investigating the possibility of holding the AGM in Talgarth Town Hall next year. It was agreed that this would be a suitable venue and Liz will continue to pursue this. The date will be Saturday, 11th June and this is to be publicised in the next issue of The Beacon.
6. **Dark Sky Park Status** – nothing to report. Jim will raise this shortly with the appropriate Authority person and at the meeting with John Cooke.
7. **Publicity/Press Officer** – the email which was to be sent to members about this has not been sent, on account of problems with mass emailing. This is shortly to be resolved. It was agreed that members' details (should they so approve) will be circulated to all members by hard copy and not be put on to the website. This will be updated once a year and members will be encouraged to make necessary contacts, particularly with regard to car-sharing, based upon this. This understanding will be imparted to them in the forthcoming mass email.
8. **Any Other Business** – (i) Fund-Raising – Jim requested that a specific item on this topic be put on to a future Exec. meeting agenda – this was agreed. Clive will look out the report on fund-raising which was undertaken by the Beacons Trust. **ACTION: Clive.** (ii) Liz indicated that, with regard to Art in the Park, Sunita had suggested the possibility of our seeking Company advertising-related sponsorship and wondered what our response would be to that. Certain reservations were expressed and Liz will get back to Sunita about this. **ACTION: Liz.**
9. **Date of Next Meeting** – Tuesday, 11th January at 5.00pm. at the Bear Hotel, Crickhowell.

The meeting ended at 6.57pm.