



Cymdeithas Parc Bannau Brycheiniog

The Brecon Beacons Park Society

Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting held at The Bear Hotel, Crickhowell
on Tuesday, 12th April, 2011 at 5.00pm.

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

1. **Apologies:** Chris Barber.
2. (i) On a vote, it was agreed, *nem con*, that members' forenames should continue to be used in the Minutes, reversing the decision, at the last meeting, to use initials.
(ii) The **Minutes of the last meeting** (on 1st March, 2011) were approved and signed.
3. **Matters Arising:** (i) 3(i) done. (ii) 3(v) Chris Morgan is to be invited to the next meeting. Terms of reference were agreed. (iii) 4.2 Two courses in Rescue and Emergency Care have been arranged. It was agreed that, as members of other organisations will attend these courses, the cost will be split between us. (iv) 4.2 Walks for the Hay Festival will not be pursued. (v) 4.6 Ruth Chambers will attend the next meeting of the Planning Committee. (vi) 4.12 done. (vii) 6 Stephen Flynn is not keen to continue as Rights of Way Officer and a replacement will be sought. (viii) 7.1 in hand. (ix) David agreed. (x) 9 done. A walk has been arranged. (xi) 10.3 Charles has had no reply to his email and will send it again. **ACTION: Charles.**
4. **Reports:**
 - 4.1 **Financial and Membership** - see Ben's report (previously circulated). There was full discussion and the report and Accounts were accepted. It was agreed that formal approval will be given by Charles, Ben and Jim, when the Accounts have been audited. It appears that we are one of very few Park Societies which have increased their membership. Car-sharing appears to have made a promising start. A request has been made that membership communications should be addressed to both individuals in joint membership. It was agreed that fuel expenses for Exec members will be considered at the next meeting. It was proposed, and agreed on a vote, that a resolution be put to the AGM that the membership subscription be raised to £15 for single membership and to £22 for joint membership.
 - 4.2 **Guided Walks and Events** – see Anne's report (previously circulated). It was agreed that the number of walks outside the National Park is acceptable.
 - 4.3 **The Beacon** – nothing to report.
 - 4.4 **Web-Site** – nothing to report.
 - 4.5 **Beacons Way Steering Group** – meeting scheduled for tomorrow. Chris's revised guidebook is eagerly awaited. Anne will take responsibility for updating the Beacons Way on the website. It was agreed that £25 can be spent on updating the route-map. BW markers will be discussed tomorrow.

4.6 Planning and Development Control – see report by Liz (previously circulated). The required measures at Gilestone appear to be well in hand. Although the Park Authority lost the appeal, in the High Court, against the inspector's overturning of their decision to refuse the anaerobic digester at Great Porthamel, they did learn of the full reasons for this, and this might aid them in future similar situations. Reference was made to the 'Silkin Test', in which an adverse transcription error was made when it was brought into Welsh Assembly law, and which requires urgent legal change.

4.7 Art in the Park – see reports by Liz and by Sunita Welch. There may be money available to finance further visits during the next two years.

4.8 Walls of Llangynidr – see William's report (previously circulated). It is hoped that further courses can be arranged, particularly for Park Society members.

4.9 Brecon Beacons Trust – Clive explained how the Trust has decided that it will endeavour to raise money again, once its reserves have become significantly depleted. It has definitely ruled out the suggested method of gaining income by the adding of a donation to hotel bills, by visitors to the Park. This will be discussed with John Cooke.

4.10 Rights of Way – nothing further to report beyond Stephen's wish to relinquish the post.

4.11 Publicity/Press Releases – Ceridwen attended, on our behalf, the European Geoparks Networks Conference exhibition at Pontneddfechan on 31st March, with poster displays, copies of the Beacon and membership leaflets. There were about eighty delegates, from many different countries, and they showed great interest in the Society, the Beacons Way, the Dark Sky project, and the relationship between our Society and the Geopark. Ceridwen has made arrangements to meet Samantha Games, PR and Events Officer at the NPA, and Norma Barry in the near future. She has also emailed Harveys to enquire whether or not they would be prepared to offer a discount on their new 1:40,000 maps of the Brecon Beacons to our members. Ceridwen brought along some draft posters, which she had produced, with photographs. There was discussion about our requirements and about the acceptability of using photographs which have people in them. It was felt that people should be asked for their permission if a photograph is likely to be used in this respect. It was suggested that we should have some posters in Welsh and some in English. Ceridwen intends to produce a newsletter again in the near future. It was agreed that there should be more content on the website relating to our non-walking aims and activities.

4.12 Geopark Management Group – no further report.

4.13 Area Advisory Forums – nothing to report.

4.14 Welsh Advisory Committee – topics included the Silkin Test, the National Trust's planning of an attack on rhododendrons, and the visitor payback scheme, which was brought up again by the BBNPA.

4.15 CNP Matters – The fees have been increased again. We have been asked whether or not we would be interested in hosting the next but one Annual Societies Conference – to be discussed at a subsequent meeting.

4.16 Waun Fignen Felen – The report on the hydrological survey should be available in 2012 and stabilisation work should commence in the summer of 2013.

4.17 BBPS/BBNPA Relations – Charles recently sat upon an interviewing panel of the National Park Authority Standards Committee for the appointment of two lay members.

4.17 cont.

There was extremely strong reaction and objection to the statement on the Park Authority website, regarding walks organised by us, viz “ ... the National Park Authority is not responsible for the work of the Park Society, so it is the responsibility of intending participants on walks which are organised by the Park Society to ensure that they are comfortable with their Health and Safety procedures before booking for them”. This statement seems to imply that the Park Authority believe that the Park Society safety procedures are in some way inappropriate for the participants on the walks in our Guided Walks Programme. Charles will write to John Cooke in the strongest possible terms.

ACTION: Charles.

5. Annual Report – Charles has received reports from most Exec members. It was agreed that Charles will include a reference to the proposed increase in membership subscription. Ben will send a suggested wording to him. **ACTION: Ben.** As previously agreed, Charles will edit the reports and send them to David for collation and printing. **ACTION: Charles and David.**

6. AGM – Liz has this well in hand. Communication formats were agreed. It was agreed that the proposed subscription increase will be an Agenda item and Ben will email the wording to Liz. **ACTION: Ben.** Liz will send official invitations to Eric Saxon, Julie James, John Cooke, and Norma Barry. **ACTION: Liz.**

7. Annual Park Societies Conference – to be discussed at a subsequent meeting.

8. Dark Sky Park Status – nearing the end of the feasibility study; the completion of the proposal/business case, to be put to the Exec and to the NPA, is the next step. Good communication and collaboration with others and the University of Glamorgan is very keen to be involved. It is important that it is recognised that we, the Society and the Park, are the prime movers in this and that it is our project. Negotiations are underway regarding the proposed boundary of the reserve and possible funding.

9. Any Other Business – (i) It was agreed that the consideration of possible redactions in the Minutes will, henceforth, be included under Approval of Minutes in Agenda item 2. It was considered whether or not item 4.17 of the last Minutes should be redacted and it was agreed that it should remain.

(ii) It was agreed that we should endeavour to have another Dinner next year. Richard will begin preliminary investigation for this after the next meeting. **ACTION: Richard.** It was agreed that the Society will underwrite any unforeseen financial loss. It was suggested that we all consider a potential suitable speaker for the evening, with a topic which is not associated with walking.

10. Date of Next Meeting – Tuesday, 24th May at 5.00pm. at the Bear, Crickhowell.

The meeting ended at 7.24pm.