



NEWSLETTER 57 – AUTUMN 2025

AGM

We had a very successful and enjoyable AGM on 18th October. As usual we were very fortunate that Y Talbot kindly provided us with a meeting room and a welcome supply of coffee and biscuits. As has been the case in recent years, Aidan and Sophia set up and managed an external link via Zoom so that those not able to attend in person were able to join the meeting. In the event we had 20 “live” attendees and 22 via Zoom.

For the first time in many years our Chair, Marilyn, was unable to attend in person due to a positive Covid test and the meeting was chaired by Colin. Marilyn was, however, able to give her report on the year activities. Our Treasurer, Malcolm James, reported on a healthy financial position and pointed to expenditure at the hostels in the previous year with a new porch at Ty’n Cornel and new windows at Dolgoch. Malcolm also reported that our healthy financial position will allow us to continue to invest in the hostels over the coming years.



The hostel managers Richard and Colin outlined these investments in more detail as well as covering hostel overnight numbers which are likely to show modest growth in the current year. On a less positive note Richard outlined the threats posed to Ty’n Cornel by a major tree planting project and the very recent proposals to develop a large wind farm site in the vicinity.

Helen Boothman gave an update on membership numbers which have fallen slightly but are just under 240. Andrew Phillips gave a report of Health and Safety matters and finally Kevin Merrison gave an update on safeguarding matters.

Following the meeting there was a buffet lunch at Ty’n Cornel after which two members of a local group outlined some of the proposals for wind farm developments in the area and the very significant threat that these pose to the unspoilt environment of the Cambrian mountains. It was particularly galling that the electricity generated by these massive developments would, it appears, not be used in Wales but would be “exported” via the grid to England!

Dolgoch

For the current year, 2025/26, the number of overnight visitors is likely to be modestly higher than in the previous year. With a fair wind, we could well get an annual total of over 1,750 .

One feature of bookings this year is the high number of visitors of Indian heritage, mainly family groups. There is a Hindu temple at Skanda Vale in Carmarthen and Dolgoch is a convenient stopping point for those travelling to the temple from the midlands.

We also had some other, late summer visitors from far afield. They, however, decided to stay in a very inconvenient spot just by the front door. The hostel comings and goings did not seem to disturb them very much. They have since departed but will no doubt return next year, hopefully to a better location.



We arranged a meeting with members on 23rd September to outline our plans for the next phases of the electricity upgrade at Dolgoch. This “internal” phase involves fitting plug sockets, lights etc. The meeting was generally supportive of the plans although there was some discussion about the fitting of USB charging points and whether ceiling lights in the upstairs dormitories were necessary. Some useful suggestions came out of the meeting including providing an additional fridge in the kitchen and providing a fridge in the disabled annex/warden’s accommodation.

Following the members meeting, the trustees met in early October to agree any final changes. One additional factor that was taken into account was the advice of our H&S advisor, Andrew Phillips, over the risks of allowing device charging in the dormitories. The trustees therefore have decided not to have USB charging points in the dormitories but to have them only in the common room.

The provision of a permanent hot water supply at Dolgoch was very much welcomed at the members meeting and was discussed at the AGM. Although investment in gas heated hot water might seem to be at odds with our environmental policy, the new system will be much more energy efficient than the current practice of boiling kettles of water on the gas stoves. The new appliance will take pre heated water from the solar heating system and, where required, boost the water temperature.

Having a mobile signal, and hence internet access, at Dolgoch has not been generally welcomed by the majority of trustees or EWH members. It clearly poses a danger to cosy chats around the fire side that have been such a feature of visits to Dolgoch. While we cannot do anything about the mobile signal we can encourage visitors to limit the use of their devices when they are in the common room.

The acquisition of the paddock field from NRW has been completed and we are waiting for this to be registered with the Land Registry. The land was originally purchased as a location for the ground mounting the solar panel array as part of the electricity upgrade project. Although this is no longer a requirement, now that we have opted for roof mounting the panels, the acquisition of land immediately adjacent to Dolgoch should be of long term benefit. Our environmental officer, Lisa Tomos, has proposed to the trustees a plan to develop the site as a hay meadow. This plan has been agreed by the trustees. It will, however, not prevent EWH choosing an alternative use for the land at some point in the future

Although it now seems a long time ago, this summer was extremely dry for long periods. In August the Llyn Brianne reservoir was at a very low point and some of the previous features emerged, including an old bridge which would have linked some of the long disappeared farm buildings.

We have been advised by NRW that Roger Davies' lease of the land towards the river will not be renewed and that trees will be planted on this land. Roger kept the horses which were such an attractive feature of staying at Dolgoch. NRW has assured us that the planting will be mainly deciduous trees.



Ty'n Cornel

The hostel has had plenty of visitors. The total for 2025 is currently 782 overnights (at 29 October), and we've still got plenty of availability left for Christmas bookings. We're hoping to achieve a total between 800 and 900, equivalent to recent years. The shepherd's hut has done well – it's been booked on 56 nights. There were only 14 nights of whole-hostel booking, so most of the overnights have come from small groups and individuals.



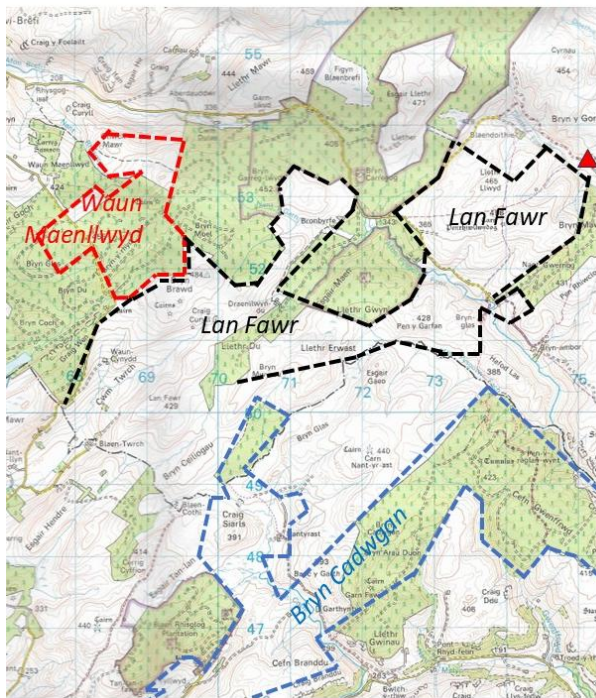
Facilities for e-bike charging were installed in the “hovel” in July. The hovel is a small building, of concrete block construction, that stands separate from our other buildings, and any risk of fire from unsafe charging equipment is confined to the hovel. Users must provide their own charging equipment to plug into the sockets provided. The hovel is also fitted with lighting, a fire alarm, and a “shut-off” switch outside the building where power can be switched off in the event of a fire. Steps will be built to provide easier access down to the hovel.

We have had encouraging discussions with the forestry company TilHill about their plans for new planting on the land around the hostel. In September, Tilhill issued a new planting map which incorporated many of the features that we had requested in our July response: areas are to be left unplanted around our spring, around

rights of way, and a substantial unplanted space closest to the hostel. In October, we visited the spring with a member of the Tilhill team, and we walked the access route and the path of the water pipe which will be left unplanted.

We have been aware for some time of proposals for wind farms in the surrounding area, but new proposals have recently emerged for turbines that would be much closer to the hostel. Three developments are now proposed, the largest of which – Lan Fawr – extends onto the hills that face Ty'n Cornel across the Doethie Fawr river. The proposed turbines are about 230 m tall, much taller than any existing turbine in Wales, and their construction would affect the character of the hostel. To put the size of the turbines into context, the hills on which they would be built stand only 100 m above the river, so the turbines would certainly dominate the view from the hostel. There is strong local opposition to the proposals, and two representatives gave a presentation at Ty'n Cornel during the afternoon following our AGM. EWH has submitted objections to the pre-application planning consultation for the first of the wind farms, and will oppose the other developments in due course.

The long dry summer provided a good opportunity for external maintenance at the hostel. The front wall of the terrace, the front windows, and the seats and picnic benches were all re-painted, and protective oil was painted on the timbers of the shepherd's hut. Bill Hine and his team cut the grass and the hedges. The “EWH” sign on the front of the hostel has deteriorated after 10 years of exposure to weather, and a new aluminium sign is ready to be fitted.



Ty'n Cornel



Christmas Stays

We have got a few bookings over the Christmas period but there is still plenty of dates available for anyone wanting a complete get away at one of our lovely hostels. What could be better than sitting round a cosy fire with a few drinks chatting after a hearty meal! Check the website for availability.

Events calendar

When	What	Further details
8 th February 2026	Open meeting	barglam@yahoo.co.uk
20 th – 22 nd March 2026	Warden's training weekend	frances.adelaidecottage@gmail.com
6 th -8 th March 2026	Dolgoch work party	huwscol@hotmail.co.uk
27 th June 2026	AGM	barglam@yahoo.co.uk

Membership

If you are not yet a member why not join us? EWH will only survive and prosper if we have a continuing inflow of new people. Even if you are not able to help in an active way there are a number of jobs that can be done remotely including a grant applications officer and marketing roles. To become a member the easiest route is via our website <https://www.elenydd-hostels.co.uk> or send an email to our membership secretary email members@elenydd-hostels.co.uk

Colin Hughes huwscol@hotmail.co.uk (On behalf of the Trustees)