



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

CADWGAN BUILDING PRESERVATION TRUST

Tuesday 28th November 2023

Present: Members 17
Proxy lodged - 1
Observers – 4

Apologies: Members: Catrin Miles, Sue Edwards, Roger Geraint Thomas, Clive Davies

Circulation: Cadwgan Trustees, Joff Timms

The meeting commenced at 17.30pm.

Welcome by Cadwgan Chair – Non Davies. (address in Welsh)

The Chair checked that the translation facilities were working and thanked the translator for providing the meeting with the service. She welcomed attendees, staff, volunteers, trustees and previous trustees, and some with a special connection to the Trust and its work.

The Chair delivered her address reviewing another chapter in the Castle's history.

'It has seen times of change some happy some not so, but it has always benefited from the passions shared by those who appreciate the Castle, from the days of the Arglwydd Rhys, through times when it was lived in, and lately those individuals who worked so hard to establish the Cadwgan Trust and oversaw the renovation of the site.

Since it's reopening and reawakening it has benefited from the efforts of the volunteers and staff who have ensured that the Castle is still here and continues to offer community benefits and historic significance. One person who deserves a special mention is Jonathan Thomas. We are in a fortunate position this evening in that we have not only an outgoing Director present, but we also have a past Director - Sue Lewis - and a future Director in our company.

It is an opportunity this evening to thank Jonathan for all his work as he leaves the Castle to return to his previous employer Kinetic. Even though we are incredibly sad to see his time at the Castle come to an end, we wish to thank him. I am sure that he returns to them with a new skillset! as a wedding planner and a housekeeper who works in record time! I hope they will appreciate that! To be serious, Jonathan guided the Castle and the Trust through a very tempestuous time, he was forced to overcome the challenges of the Covid 19 pandemic resulting in the closure for some time of the site. During that time, he managed to introduce new initiatives within the Castle, the rejuvenation of the pavilion, new interactive exhibitions for children with the new characters, establishing the new laundry and the exciting venture of the Escape room, whilst continuing to offer the community a raft of events. These are very important to the trustees, as they entice and welcome new people to enter the Castle. It is a testament to his contribution that so many people have in the last few weeks expressed their appreciation and thanks for his efforts, and sorrow at his leaving. This reflects the respect the local community has for Jonathan and his work.

We are most grateful to you Jonathan for all your work, and we wish you well and we are delighted that you have joined us tonight to deliver your director's report. We now move to a new chapter for the Castle, and we are pleased to welcome our new Director, recently appointed, in Meirion Davies as Jonathan's successor. He again is from the locality and will join us officially on the 4th of December.



Welcome Meirion. I'm sure he will be available to chat after the meeting. We wish you well and look forward to working with you to enable some exciting plans, especially from the community's perspective, both culturally and from a heritage point of view.

I would also like to thank all the staff at the Castle, we are most fortunate to have a small but highly effective staff. They are always ready to adapt and respond to new challenges. Thank you also to all our volunteers, their contribution is very important, be it in the gardens, the archive and research room, or as front of house at events. I also thank the trustees gathered here around me for their time and their unstinting support for the benefit of the Castle.

As I say we look to a new chapter in the Castle's history where the Trust's focus remains to ensure the strong foundation to sustain and support the Castle to be able to retain it for future generations; and it is important that we continue to work to create new opportunities and to make sure that this unique site is of benefit to the local community and the people of Cardigan and the area. Not only from an economic perspective but from that of well-being, and that Cardigan's people hold the Castle as their castle.

I would like to thank you all for your presence tonight and I ask you all to continue to support and promote the Castle and to share with others in the community the attention that the Castle deserves.

We will now move on to look at last year's minutes from the 29th of November Annual general meeting here in the Tower room. You should all have received a copy. Can I ask if they are a true record?'

1.0 To approve the minutes of the AGM held on 29th November 2022.

- 1.1 Proxy voting papers were sent out to all members prior to the meeting. 1 was returned.
- 1.2 The minutes of the 2022 AGM were accepted as a true record.

Proposed by Joff Timms

Seconded by Arwyn Reed

The 15 voting members present were in agreement.

There were no actions raised from the minutes, or any queries raised by those present.

2.0 To report on the Trust's activities during the year and to approve the Trustees Report and Accounts for the year to March 2023.

- 2.1 The Trustees' Report and Accounts for year ending March 2023 have been displayed on Cardigan Castle's website, and electronic copies were distributed prior to the meeting.
- 2.2 Jonathan Thomas presented the Trustees Report giving a summary of the reporting period and activities since March 2023.

'Visitor numbers to the Castle continue to show a small increase in 2022/23, despite comparison with 2021/22 figures that benefited from the post-Covid staycation boom. At the same time, local community involvement with Cardigan Castle showed a further marked increase, including events that catered for wide interests and all age groups. This trend is continuing in 2023/24, with 20 smaller events held during the first 7 months of the financial year, in addition to the main summer concerts and performances.

Numerous local groups are using the castle as a base for their meetings, including Welsh Language classes, the Photography Club, the Archiving Group, Dyfed Family History Society and the Only Boys Aloud choir. The castle also hosts a fortnightly meeting of a local poetry group, led by local poet, Ceri Wyn Jones.

The Castle continues to expand links with heritage and cultural organisations in Wales. The research room and its team of volunteers continues to go from strength to strength and recently presented its first exhibition on the 'History of Cardigan's High Street' where Glen Johnson also provided a talk. From a heritage perspective, one of the exciting things was the geophysical survey of the Castle grounds which had not been undertaken prior to this and allowed a look beneath the site. This threw up more mysteries perhaps, but also found some really exciting things as well. In the garden behind the Tower, it was found that the



Castle was probably a much larger site than was once thought. A large rectangular feature was also discovered where it was thought Lord Rhys's Great Hall could have stood but more work needs to be done on this.

COVID-19 had a severely detrimental impact on the availability of guided tours at the Castle in recent years, with tours being contrary to COVID-19 legislation. However, a new group of tour guides were trained in preparation for 2023, and tours are now available daily between Monday and Friday, three or four times a week.

Partnerships with Aberystwyth University have placed Cardigan Castle at the forefront of Welsh language education courses for adults. Once again these were affected badly by COVID but have now made a very strong comeback. There are now a number of activities held in Ty Cadwgan throughout the year, following its dormancy, these included the Citizens Advice Bureau which was a positive use.

The Castle also played host to a Welsh language and culture event held in conjunction between Cered and a local community group (Gwyl Cynhaeaf) on Barley Saturday. This event, 'Bwrlwm Barlys', was a great success and included local schools performing songs, a number of agricultural workshops during the day and a concert in the night.

Summer 2022 saw the return of the first large-scale outdoor concerts. In 2022 Other Voices returned to Cardigan post Covid, with the official reception including an address from the First Minister of Wales, Mark Drakeford. The outdoor summer concerts once again took place in 2023 with tribute acts like The Bootleg Beatles drawing an audience of over 900 as well as Natalie Imbruglia drawing an audience of over 1200 people. Other performances included Cor Cymry Gogledd America as well as harpist Catrin Finch performing. Total ticket sales for the concerts approached 4000 providing the highest level of ticket revenue for the concerts so far.

Other Voices took place again in October 2023, with the Castle once more hosting the official reception in the Pavilion. In the weeks leading up to the event the Castle held other events in the Pavilion making use of the Other Voices staging, including a tribute concert and the Castle's first ever Oktoberfest, which sold out for 2 consecutive nights, and another sold out concert drawing in a different sort of audience to the Castle.

With the Cymru football team qualifying for their first World Cup since 1958, the team and their following have quickly come to represent a strong part of the national Welsh identity, particularly in promoting the Welsh language. The Castle held sold out events to show the Cymru matches at the World Cup, with commentary provided in the Welsh Language. This was repeated with the Six Nations Rugby into the winter.

In December 2022 the Castle worked in partnership with Small World Theatre and Wired Wood Ltd to install a winter light trail in the grounds of the Castle, based on the stories of the Mabinogi. The event was named 'Ffabl' with customers purchasing tickets to enjoy the spectacular light-scapes created on the site. This was an amazing spectacle. This will not take place in 2023 due to the lack of availability of 'Wired Wood', but the usual Lantern parade through town will again finish up in the Castle.

The Castle also hosted many events for Gwyl Fawr, including the launch on the lawn with the Cica group performing, the annual lecture on the Map of the river Teifi by Dr David Thorne and the Talwrn y beirdd held in the pavilion. It was great to see the reinstatement of these events.

In terms of the local community, the Research Room continues to provide the community with free information on an invaluable trove of historical records and photographs which have mainly been donated by Glen Johnson. This is a co-venture between the Dyfed Family History group, the archiving group and volunteers led by Glen himself.



The Castle has also provided a home for Cardigan's Citizen Advice Bureau after damage to their building meant they were unable to offer in person services.

Adult Learning Wales also offered a number of evening and weekend course including an archaeology course, the students of which partook in the aforementioned Geophysical Survey project. This shows that having so many stakeholders in the Castle when they work together, they can be greater than the sum of parts.

In March 2023 the Castle was used by the Urdd to host Eisteddfod yr Urdd, Cylch Aberteifi. This included a number of local primary school children competing for a place in the regional Ceredigion County Eisteddfod. The event was fantastically well attended and was the first official Eisteddfod held at the Castle since 1176. A great event supported by local schools and parents.

Also, in March 2023 the Castle hosted its first ever Science Fair which was remarkably well attended by local families. Many of the stalls/exhibits were provided free of charge by some of the Castle's newest volunteers as well as organisations such as Coleg Ceredigion, Aberystwyth University, Cardiff University, Ysgol Bro Preseli and the Castle's team of volunteers. They contributed to an event which was an affordable and fun educational experience which a wide variety of the community enjoyed.

Finally, I would like to thank the Castle volunteers and the staff for their help and support during my time at the Castle, as well as the trustees who provided me with nothing but fantastic support – it didn't really matter what my idea was, if it made sense, they were supportive, be it the escape room, the geophysical project, or holding an Oktoberfest. It has all added to the Castle, in addition to what had gone before, and I look forward now to what the new Director will introduce. A huge thank you to everyone, and I look forward to being a member of the Trust.'

The Chair responded noting her thanks on behalf of everyone and welcomed his membership of the trust, noting that no doubt he would continue to contribute in the future. She asked for any questions or further comments. There were none. The Chair then invited the Trust's auditor from Ashmoles to speak.

2.2 Ian Badham from Ashmoles, presented the financial accounts, outlining the key points.

Income was recorded at £504,000 in comparison with the previous year of £522,000. That year included the tail of Covid support with furlough payments and some grants. Excluding Covid support, income increased year on year. After expenditure the accounts show a net deficit of £40,000 compared with a net deficit from the previous year of £13,000.

Both these figures were struck after depreciation, which is a non-cash item and includes a charge to write down the value of all the heritage buildings to nil value at the end of the lease. Excluding depreciation there was a cash surplus of £59,000, down from £86,000 in the previous year which was boosted by grants. Underlying profitability was steady. The balance sheet shows that reserves have dropped slightly, reflecting the write down of the heritage buildings, but unrestricted funds have gone up by £54,000 taking the total to £1,0034.

Questions were invited but none were raised.

The Chair thanked the auditor for his contribution and invited members to accept the accounts.

2.3 The Trustees' Report and Accounts for the year ending March 2023 were accepted and approved.

Proposed by Kevin Taylor

Seconded by Steff Jenkins. 15 members in favour.

The 15 voting members present were in agreement.



- 3.0 To elect Trustees or re-elect Trustees retiring by rotation. Non Davies and Steff Jenkins retire by rotation and offer themselves for re-election.** The Chair handed this part of the meeting to Trustee Chris Hewitt, Chair of the Finance and General Purposes Committee, who led on this agenda item.
- 3.1 Non Davies was proposed for re-election.
Proposed by Steff Jenkins
Seconded by Glen Johnson.
The 15 voting members present were in agreement. No one opposed the proposal. Chris Hewitt then handed the meeting back to the Chair.
- 3.2 Steff Jenkins was proposed for re-election
Proposed by Chris Hewitt
Seconded by Kevin Taylor.
The 15 voting members present were in agreement. No one opposed the proposal
- 4.0 To approve the re-appointment of Ashmole & Co as auditors**
- 4.1 The re-appointment of Ashmole & Co as auditors to the Trust was proposed.
Proposed by Joff Timms
Seconded by Chris Hewitt
The 15 voting members present were in agreement. No one opposed the proposal.
- 5.0 Any other business at the discretion of the Chairman.**
The Chair shared that she had not received any correspondence regarding any other business prior to the meeting, but invited those members present to take the opportunity if they wished to do so and ask questions or raise any issues they wish discussed.
- 5.1 Glen Johnson requested that the new Director consider putting in place a designated member of staff with responsibility for the Volunteers. He also shared an idea that volunteers should gather as a larger group on a regular basis for a coffee or lunch. The Chair acknowledged the request, noting how important volunteers were to the Castle and how we should support them. The idea would be passed on to the incoming Director.
- 5.3 The Chair thanked everyone for their contributions and with no further agenda items brought the AGM to a close at 6.15pm.

ENDS