

LLANTRISANT TOWN TRUST

[Registered as a Charity]



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FREEMAN'S NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2011

No. 31

General Meeting 2011

The 2011 General Meeting of Freemen of Llantrisant will be held at Llantrisant Guildhall, 7.30 pm, Friday 14th October, for Freemen to be acquainted with and debate the works of the Trust over the past year and to offer suggestions to improve its effectiveness. The five year terms of office of Freemen's Trustees Henry Alexander, Dewi John, Dean Powell and Gareth Griffiths expire at the meeting therefore an election must take place. The four afore-named Trustees may allow their names to be resubmitted for consideration. Any Freeman may stand for election as a Trustee, it will be necessary for him to be proposed and seconded by Freemen present at the meeting and he will be required to attend personally or provide a signed declaration to the Clerk or a current Trustee of his willingness to act as a Trustee.

Furthermore, as there was no nomination received at the 2010 Freemen's General Meeting for a Trustee to fill the role vacated by Freeman John Berry the remaining Trustees, at their meeting of 11th November 2010, unanimously invited and subsequently co-opted Freeman Huw Rees, himself a former Trustee of long standing, to fill the vacancy. Consequently, Freemen at the forthcoming 14th October meeting will be requested to formally endorse Trustee Rees to serve for the term of the following five years.

Town Trust – Review

Brought about by the proceedings of 2010's Freemen's General Meeting Trustees subsequently considered and debated extensively the matters concerned resulting in Trustee Hooker drafting a paper pulling together the thoughts and opinions which surfaced. This excellently drafted document brought together numerous and far reaching issues and is entitled "Llantrisant Town Trust; Review of Duties and Objectives", the various topics of concern being addressed systematically under the sub-headings of: -

- 1) Commons Management;
- 2) Management of Buildings;
- 3) Social Changes and the Freedom;
- 4) Trust's Finances;
- 5) Administration.

In due course undoubtedly this paper will be the foundation invoking profound and probably long term soul-searching required by Trustees, initially, and ultimately by the body of Freemen.

2011 Court Leet & Dinner

Twenty three new Freemen were enrolled at the Court Leet. The “Three Saints Hotel” opposite the Royal Mint just off the Common, being used for the first time as the venue for the dinner proved to be very successful with anticipated ‘teething troubles’ being very minor. Professor Dai Smith, Welsh culture historian and Chair of the Arts Council of Wales, was the principal speaker with John Robert Campbell speaking on behalf of the newly enrolled Freemen. Trustee Dean Powell presided over the dinner in his professional and polished manner and also led the Freemen’s Prayer and Grace.

Trust Clerkship

The search for a new Clerk is proving fruitless and the aspect is a major part of the ‘Administration’ of the “Review of Duties and Objectives”. The situation is that the present arrangements whereby clerical duties are approached on a piecemeal basis will definitely come to an end at the expiry of the trusteeship of Howard Thomas, being autumn 2014 – that is only 3 years hence.

It has been stated persistently in previous Newsletters that this matter requires serious consideration by Freemen and Trustees alike to achieve a resolution otherwise the future of the Trust hence the Freemen brotherhood itself will be in jeopardy.

The seriousness of the dilemma cannot be over emphasised, a permanent solution is vital.

Valediction

The Trust has learned with deep regret and great sadness of the passing away in the last 12 months of Freeman Brian Bowes Smith, Roll No. 2829 - notification received during March 2011 from his son Freeman Graham Morgan Smith, Roll No. 4045.

Court Leet & Court Leet Dinner 2012

The Court Leet for 2012 will be held on Friday, 11th May 2012 where applications for enrolment onto the Freemen’s Roll will be considered, followed as usual by the Court Leet Dinner which, for the second year, will be held at the Three Saints Hotel, Llantrisant. Transport between the Guildhall and the dinner venue is anticipated to be provided for those applicants and their sponsors attending the Court Leet. Special rates associated with any Freemen wishing to stay overnight at the Three Saints have been obtained. Enrolment application forms etc. will be available following the Freemen’s Annual General Meeting of the 14th October 2011.

Llantrisant Common

The past twelve months saw mixed fortunes for the Common. Unfortunately the more severe than usual snow and ice and extended freezing weather of last winter coincided with an outbreak of strangles, a disease confined to horses/ponies but very contagious with catarrh/quinsy type symptoms having severe consequences in the case of animals under par, healthy animals can cope with the illness satisfactorily. The Common Overseer and the Clerk were in the forefront organising notification, isolation and/or removal of infected ponies and precautionary publicity and quarantining the Common for a month. On the brighter side the diverse habitat resultant from the many years of management undertaken by the Trust and recognised by the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) status of the Common has attract its fair share of studies and nature awareness measures in 2011 - from a survey, to last 3 years, of amphibians and reptiles to an urban pollinators project in conjunction with a Bristol University researcher to a local schools project involving the collection of small quantities of devil’s-bit scabious seeds and their cultivation aimed at ultimately attracting the rare marsh fritillary butterfly back to the locality. All studies/projects have the Trust’s permission and Countryside Council of Wales consent and proceed under specialist close supervision.

Freemen graziers and Trustees have given many months of consideration to the Welsh Assembly Government's new "Glastir" sustainable land management scheme, this will replaced four separate previous schemes and whilst there could be a financial benefit for active graziers it appears that the administration requirements conflict with Freemen's Common's rights. Negotiations continue with the authorities to seek a favourable outcome.

Guildhall

A Pre-application for Heritage Lottery Fund funding for nurture and revitalisation of the Guildhall has been made, much work and dedication will be necessary if this project is to be seen through – the Trust would welcome thoughts and assistance, professional or otherwise, from Freemen in respect of such aspects as structural survey, peoples learning of their/others heritage, conservation of heritage, encouraging people's active participation/decision making about their heritage, establishment of business cases/business plans, financing of enhanced maintenance and management of the completed Guildhall, diverse/alternative/additional uses for the Guildhall, etc. If any Freeman can be of help please get in touch with the Clerk, Howard Thomas, at the above address, or by email at howard.thomas7@btinternet.com

Filming/Visual Record – 2010 Beating the Bounds

A DVD visual record of the 2010 event with voiceover commentary/explanations is in the 'approval' stage. It is envisaged the final edition featuring the music of the especially composed "Beating the Bounds" march will be available for purchase shortly with an abbreviated version viewable on the Freemen's Website.

Audio CDs of the full performance of this rousing march are also being considered for offering for sale to Freemen.

Ledgers

The Trust's Accounts book returned, after being 'missing' for many years, in a badly deteriorated condition needed to be renovated and rebound, this was put in hand and at the same time the Freemen's Roll, showing justified wear and tear in 120 years of use, was given similar treatment. These two unique historic ledgers should now be fit to serve well into the 2100s.

Llantrisant Castle

The Trust brought the impasse regarding the Castle's deteriorating state and need for consolidation/conservation to the notice of CADW (Welsh Assembly Government's historic environment service) in an endeavour to induce the County Borough Council to face its responsibility, even in this time of financial difficulty. Some slight headway has been made in meetings with the council's representatives, the Llantrisant community and the Trust.

Freeman's Newsletter

Following last year's Newsletter this one is the second to be included in Freemen's Website (www.llantrisant.net [*link to the latest Newsletter is included on the "Llantrisant Home" page*]) hence continuing to progressively decrease the number of copies necessitating copying and mailing. As previously, for those Freemen who have specifically so requested they will continue to receive a paper copy by post for the foreseeable future.

Llantrisant Freemen's Website: – www.llantrisant.net