

LLANTRISANT TOWN TRUST

[Registered as a Charity]



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FREEMAN'S NEWSLETTER

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General Meeting 2012

The 2012 General Meeting of Freemen of Llantrisant will be held at Llantrisant Guildhall, 7.30 pm, Friday 12th 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 John Dickason and Richard David expire at the meeting therefore an election must take place. Both 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.

Town Trust – Review

Progress on the review to date has been disappointingly slow, somewhat understandable for this complicated and far reaching examination, but it is the Trustees intention to give greater intensity to the aspects of 1) Commons Management; 2) Management of Buildings; 3) Social Changes and the Freedom; 4) Trust's Finances; 5) Administration, all as Trustee Martin Hooker's paper entitled "Llantrisant Town Trust; Review of Duties and Objectives".

It remains the case that in due course undoubtedly this paper will be the foundation invoking profound and probably long term soul-searching by all involved including, ultimately, the body of Freemen.

Court Leet & Court Leet Dinner 2013

The Court Leet for 2013 will be held on Friday, 10th May 2013 where applications for enrolment onto the Freemen's Roll will be considered, followed as usual by the Court Leet Dinner. For 2013's dinner Trustee Dean Powell gave a sound line of reasoning which persuaded his fellow trustees to agree to return to the Llantrisant Rugby Club after many years absence. The rugby club is in the 'town' and is in relatively close proximity (walking distance) to the Guildhall. Trustee Powell is to organise and administer the dinner with tickets available from him closer to the event.

Enrolment application forms/packs will be available following the Freemen's Annual General Meeting of the 12th October 2012. Extraordinarily, the first application for enrolment at 2013 Court Leet has been received already.

In the past the Clerk has been amenable to accept payment for dinner tickets 'on the night' but in preparing the accounts for 2011 it was evident this arrangement was abused and three tickets not paid for thus the Trustees have ruled that starting in 2013 payment must be made prior to tickets being issued – all Freemen please take note.

Trust Clerkship

The situation of a new Clerk to succeed Howard Thomas when his clerkship will come to an end at the expiry of his trusteeship in autumn 2014, that is merely 2 years hence, is now very serious and if not resolved will become crucial jeopardising the future of the Trust hence the Freemen brotherhood itself.

Freemen should seriously consider this dilemma and hopefully proposals will come forward as to a solution – possibly some 'out of the box' thinking may be necessary.

Guildhall

The Trust, following investigative work by the Guildhall Sub-committee and the formation of a briefing document, are pursuing a Round 1 submission to the Heritage Lottery (Heritage grant programme) with the aim of achieving enhancement of the Guildhall and have appointed a consultant architectural practice to prepare a feasibility study in line with the briefing document and, due to the tight schedule (submission deadline mid November '12), to assist in preparing and making the submission. Trustees were greatly concerned about the Trust's financial commitment and aware that should the HLF bid be unsuccessful in the order of £10,000 will be spent with minimum apparent benefit. However, in any event it must be realised that major expense is necessary currently merely to undertake overdue running repairs to the building; Heritage Lottery funding will mean a totally revitalised Guildhall.

Freemen's Website – www.llantrisant.net

The Trust has purchased the Website enabling ownership to give more direct and frequent access to and control of the site to cater very much more conveniently for the seemingly ever accelerating introduction of new legislation and changes in regulations being experienced in terms of such diverse aspects significantly affecting the continued charitable purposes of the Trust such as animal traceability and welfare; common land management and SSSI requirements; road traffic; health and safety; inheritance and equality; communications; listed buildings and structures; etc.

Trustee Dean Powell is to administer the site on the Trust's behalf and he asks that all Freemen that can to periodically view the Website and give him feedback on any changes, additions, etc, they feel would be advantageous.

'The Freemen and Ancient Borough of Llantrisant'

This authoritative hardback book, author local historian J Barry Davies, published in 1989 is available for Freemen to purchase from the Trust at a special price of £10.00. Copies may be obtained from Clerk Howard Thomas at the address/contact details given above.

General Meeting 2011

The Clerk and Trustees were dismayed at the poor attendance at the 2011 General Meeting, only nine attended which included four Freemen Trustees and a Councillor Trustee. It's in the interests of all Freemen that as many as practicable attend these meetings - it's understandable Freemen in far-flung places cannot easily be present but those in the locality and South Wales region please buck up your ideas.

2012 Court Leet & Dinner

Twenty three new Freeman were enrolled at the Court Leet. The “Three Saints Hotel” opposite the Royal Mint just off the Common was again used very successfully as the dinner venue although the numbers were down. The main speakers were Owen Smith, MP for this constituency and Mr. Phil Bembridge who gave a distinctive lecture on the Battle of Crécy bedecked in Crécy period knight’s tunic and armour with an array of weaponry of the period – all of which was made available for enthralling examination after the formal part of the proceedings. Newly enrolled Freeman Tom William Thomas, a gentleman in his eighties, spoke on behalf of his newly enrolled colleagues – he is believed to be the most senior ‘new’ Freeman to be enrolled for many years and it is fascinating that his eligibility was not through his father but through his grandfather (as made possible by the amendment to the Trust scheme confirmed in 2009) and his claim required checking from the original register of Freeman. The evening was made to flow seamlessly under the polished chairmanship of Trustee Martin Hooker.

Valediction

The Trust has learned with deep regret and great sadness of the passing away in the last 12 months of i) Freeman Edward Alexander of Llantrisant, Roll No. 2039, who passed away on 31 October ’11- elder brother of the Commons Overseer and long serving Trustee Henry Alexander; ii) Freeman Arthur Evans of Llantrisant, iii) Freeman William Martin of Brynsadler, Pontyclun, Roll No. 2108, who died on 1 April ’12 and iv) David William John James of Pontypridd, Roll No 2195.

“Glastir” – Llantrisant and Graig Commons

Trustees have pursued throughout the last twelve months prolonged deliberation of the Welsh Government’s new “Glastir” sustainable land management scheme, particularly the Clerk and Trustee Martin Hooker. The latter having given immense effort, time and personal expense to this aspect mainly in an endeavour to achieve greater grazing densities than the scheme permitted so that it would not impede on the numbers of animals that usually graze the commons and not preclude any entitled Freeman from taking up their birthright to graze. Furthermore Trustee Hooker investigated the possibility of using Glastir funds for the greater good of the commons, enabling increased management, but the funds are as compensation to active graziers for restrictions on grazing (prevention of over-grazing) – payment would relate to about £4,300.00 pa for 5 years corresponding to the total area of both Commons. Trustees resolved that due to the Freeman’s birthright issue proceeding with the scheme could not be supported thus this topic is to be included on the agenda of the 2012 Freeman’s General Meeting, to which active Freeman graziers have been specifically invited, so the position can be clarified.

Graig Common

The aims of the partners in the Graig grazing project (Countryside Council of Wales, RCT Countryside Section, Butterfly Conservation, PONT [Pori Natur a Threftadaeth] and the Town Trust) to maintain grazing so that animals forage and trample vegetation encouraging the distribution of plants and reduce areas of bracken so supporting biodiversity and nature conservation are being frustrated due to the poor state of some neighbouring boundaries meaning that they are not stock-proof. These boundaries are the neighbours’ responsibility and are lawfully required to ensure they are kept adequately maintained so that any stock in their premises is kept in and any stock on the Graig is kept out. The Trust is endeavouring to secure funds on behalf of those responsible to rectify the boundaries so stock, ponies and cattle, can resume grazing within the next month or so in order to achieve the intended outcome.

Secure Storage of the Mace & Loving Cup [Min 12/123]

After probably 100 years of the historic mace and the cup having been safely stored in the Trust's bank locally at Pontyclun the bank's policy has changed whereby such items are now to be stored remotely – said to be centralised in Glasgow. New secure and convenient accommodation is therefore being sought.

Filming/Visual Record – 2010 Beating the Bounds

Trustees are increasingly concerned that a final version of the DVD has not yet been provided by the filmmaker despite part-payment having been made. It is intended to urgently iron-out the matter amicable, hopefully a compromise to the satisfaction of both parties, before being compelled to considering litigation.

The Common – Road Traffic Accidents

The danger to grazing animals and occupants of vehicles due to irresponsible driving on the Common's roads, particularly on Heol-Y-Sarn, does not relent. Accidents have been serious with widespread damage sustained to vehicles and severe injuries to drivers and passengers. Where involved in an incident Freeman's livestock have suffered major injuries and fatalities to ponies and cattle. It is felt that unless driving habits drastically improve it will be inevitable that, deplorably, a person's death will ensue.

Daughter of a Freeman

An application for admittance to the Roll was received from a Freeman's daughter suggesting that change in law on local freemen's freedoms allow daughters of freemen to be admitted to institutions such as Llantrisant Freeman, the new legislation being the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Constitution Act 2009. Investigation led the Trust to accepting the view that the legal amendment submitted by the daughter in justification of her application to become the first freewomen of Llantrisant did not apply to our situation in Llantrisant – essentially the relevant part of the Local Government Act 1972 to which the 2009 amendment applies does not apply to the Town Trust as it is not a borough or council (the Ancient Borough of Llantrisant was dissolved by the Municipal Corporation Act 1883 - the Llantrisant Town Trust, a Charity Commission Scheme, was established in 1889 to administer the Freeman's rights over the Commons/Charter/Mace/etc). The Trust has no plans to change the current criterion (Sons/Sons-in-law/Grandsons) for entry to the Roll.

Talyfedw Ancient Boundary Stone

The Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust has given notification that the information provided by the Town Trust regarding the Talyfedw Ancient Boundary Stone has been added to the Historic Environment Record (HER) under Primary Reference Number 06324m. This entry, with others relating to the area, can be viewed on GGAT's "Archwilio" records internet search site.

Llantrisant Castle

The Trust achieved action from the County Borough Council regarding the deteriorating state and need for consolidation/conservation of the Castle, a designated ancient monument, but due to financial restraints the only achievement was the introduction of three goats into the castle enclosure aimed at keeping down the ivy on the structure and clearing the surrounding vegetation. Pressure on the council is being maintained for a far more meaningful outcome but in the meantime the goats are proving to be very popular with the residents, young and old, and an attraction that surprises visitors.

Freemen's March – 'Beating the Bounds'

The composer of the march, Mr. Bill Hunt, graciously gave permission to the Trust to use the music without charge on the basis that he is acknowledged as the composer. The first public airing of the stirring piece of music was at the head of 2010 Beating the Bounds procession, Guildhall down to Cross Inn, played by the RAF St Athan Voluntary Band.

Community Route – Disused Railway Line

The Trust was supportive to the Borough Council for submitting a planning application for forming a community route of the Talbot Green to Cross Inn portion of the disused railway line, this section being part of the preferred route for the Beating the Bounds (follows very near the ancient boundary), but disappointingly it was later learned that the application had been withdrawn – most likely due to lack of finance but now it is understood that funding is in place to reintroduce the application next year.

Audio Trail

Brought about by the Borough Council a new audio trail for Llantrisant, downloadable onto MP3/iPhone from a specialist Heritage Trail website, is in operation.

Diamond Jubilee Celebratory Beacon

The Dyfed and Glamorgan Army Cadet Force, as a logistic training exercise, undertook the construction and supervision of a huge beacon, about 6 metres cubed, in the vicinity of the Graig Common's Billy Wynt. Ignited at 20.12hrs on Monday 4th June '12 to mark the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and at such an elevated prominent position it could be seen from miles around in every direction. The Trust together with the Llantrisant Community Council was pleased to support the cadets in this venture.

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