

LLANTRISANT TOWN TRUST

[Registered as a Charity]



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FREEMAN'S NEWSLETTER

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Clerkship and Trust's administration

It was pleasing and with a great sense of relief at 2014's Freeman's General Meeting that Freeman Derrick Pounder, Roll No. 2753, offered himself as a Trustee and accepted the role of Clerk. Subsequently his influence and experience has progressively been brought to bear, particularly in reorganising and clarifying the Charity Commission Scheme in relation to the Trust and Trustees and in presentation of the Trust/Freemen to the community at large and donors and partners in our charitable aims. It was accepted that the 'team' approach to administrative matters, introduced as an interim measure following the very unexpected passing away of Howard Thomas in February 2014 is to be continued, with steering of fundamental roles of Finance/Accounts by Trustee Gareth Griffiths; Guildhall Renovation HLF Project by Trustees Martin Hooker, Gareth Griffiths and Dean Powell; Court Leet and Court Leet Dinner by Trustee Dean Powell and Specific Projects by individual Trustees or groups agreeable to administer such projects.

General Meeting 2015

The 2015 General Meeting of Freeman of Llantrisant will be held 7.00 pm, Friday 9th October, at the Church Hall [also now known as Parish Hall], Swan Street, Llantrisant (please note this venue as the Guildhall is out of action in preparation for the physical dismantling/rebuilding part of the renovation) for Freeman 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 term of office of Freeman's Trustees Huw Rees expires at the meeting therefore an election must take place; Trustee Huw Rees may allow his name to be resubmitted for consideration and wishes so to do. Any Freeman may stand for election as a Trustee, it will be necessary for him to be proposed and seconded by Freeman 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.

Guildhall

Intensive work on the project was undertaken throughout the past twelve months. Following last Autumn's 'Round 2' start-up meeting a "charge" on the Guildhall premises by HLF was proceeded with including its registration with Companies House and the Land Registry. The Trust is grateful to the Borough Council's officers for procurement guidance and to our local Welsh Assembly Member, his staff and officials of 'Visit Wales', for their input resulting in a fruitful bid for pivotal match funding. CADW responded enabling formal conditional listed building planning consent to be issued and the majority of outstanding match funding was finalised by the end of 2014 with the remainder in the first quarter of the new year; generous contributions and donations from local businesses, organisations and Freemen being included and greatly appreciated. Detailed cash flow projections were reviewed and showed it being likely that the Trust's own £35,000 contribution could be required early on.

In the new year the Project Director for the Insole Court Trust [a larger and more involved HLF renovation project] gave an overview of his experiences, particularly in the recruiting, utilisation and administering of volunteers – this was enlightening and helpful; also the Trust was exceedingly grateful for the Community Council's £3,000.00 funding from their 'project money' allocation and for their invaluable expression of support. At this time it was announced that 'Visit Wales' confirmed approval of funding of £33,000.00, also the Garfield Weston Foundation backing was confirmed and with remaining funding secured meant the match funding target had been met enabling the HLF's "Permission to Start" to be requested - this news was greeted with immense pleasure and relief.

An invitation was received to give a presentation of the history of the Freemen/Trust [by Trustee Dean Powell] and the Guildhall project [by Trustee Hooker] to the Cowbridge and Llanblethian Town Council and civic/history groups. In the following months Ken Skates, AM, Wales Government Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism, visited the Guildhall in relation to its future tourist potential, this with other visits of our local AM, MP and Borough Councillors was welcome confirming their continued support and providing excellent photo-opportunities for publicity purposes. Party wall, access agreements and traffic management enquiries relative to neighbours were put in hand as well as investigations of temporary storage for the Trust's archives/documentation/furniture.

Preparatory investigations were undertaken [foundations & drainage, level reduction of part of the ground floor, open-up the fireplace] and regular meetings, which are ongoing, held with the specialists in presentation/interpretation of the Trust's vision "Llantrisant Guildhall: Sharing a Unique Heritage" for the interiors of both floors to achieve a 'wow factor' from the very start - the upper floor devoted to Freemen related aspects with the Mace centre stage and the lower primarily for locality/community related aspects and genealogy/Freemen's Roll research with IT facilities. Dialogues are underway about possible collaborations with such as St. Fagans National History Museum, the authorities at Crécy, the establishment for the Knights of the Garter, Mary Rose and the Royal Mint including prospects for exchanges of artefacts.

The recruitment of a manager and volunteers for the completed Guildhall has been put in hand over the past month or so, it being necessary at this seemingly early stage so the appropriate detailed structure can be forged and training and programmes put underway; the manager's post was advertised in the press, Website and Facebook with assessment of applications being in accordance with the Trust's Equality Policy.

Recently the tender process for the main works was defined and the invitation to tender issued to three potential conservation specialist contractors, their responses are to be assessed on a combination of quality and price with the anticipation that physical phased dismantling, demolition and construction is to commence within the next few weeks with a targeted completion of late summer 2016.

The Clerk's research has given a new insight into the origin and presentation of the Mace to the ancient Borough in 1633, so much so that consideration is being given to its relevance comparative to the Trust's crest with two of the existing shields [corresponding to i) the Castle and ii), the Charter] being retained and the third being substituted for that akin to the Mace.

Trustees feel that one of the artefacts that would be good to have displayed and utilised in the refurbished building is the original Town Crier's bell which 'disappeared' some time ago during a Beating the Bounds celebration and probably sits on someone's side-board, mantle piece, garden shed, garage or similar and most likely its owner doesn't realise its significance. It would be appreciated, therefore, if Freemen and the local community make a search and bring any promising bell to the Trust's attention on a "no questions asked" basis.

Court Leet & Court Leet Dinner 2016

2016's Court Leet to be held Friday, 6th May at Llantrisant Church Hall (also now known as Parish Hall), Swan Street, Llantrisant [the Guildhall being unavailable due to the renovation work being underway], where applications for enrolment onto the Freemen's Roll will be fulfilled in the usual manner. The dinner follows at Llantrisant Rugby Club, and its format, ticket price and availability will be made known nearer the event and Freeman enrolment forms/packs will be on hand at or shortly after the Freemen's Annual General Meeting of the 9th October 2015.

Valedictions

The Trust learned with sadness of the passing away of Freemen: -

Aneurin John, Roll No. 1945, on 26th February 2014; William Naunton Grother, Roll No. 2099 – uncle of Trustee Gareth Griffiths; Griffith John Evans, Roll No. 2354; Howard Gwyn Griffiths, Roll No. 2251 - uncle of Trustee Martin Hooker – of Senghenydd whose funeral was held on 14th January 2015; Aneurin John Jones, Roll No. 2207, late of Bridgend having lived for many years in Talbot Green and Pontyclun who died on 28th December 2014 age 92 years; Leonard Alexander Martin, Roll No. 3019, of Garth View, Church Village, died 22 March 2015; Paul Michael Hill, Roll No. 4349, of Penygawsi, who died at age 45 years on 1 May 2015; Norman Williamson Megins, Roll No. 2129, on 13th May 2015 at the Princess of Wales Hospital, Bridgend, aged 90; John Evan Burton Morgan, Roll No. 4237, who died in March 2015; John James Watkins, Roll No. 2551, whose funeral was held 18th June 2015 at Glyntaff Crematorium; a stalwart servant of Pontypridd Rugby Club, amassing 436 appearances over a twelve season stint between 1952 and 1964 and nominated as club captain in 1958; William Thomas (known as Billy "Bom Bom" Thomas), Roll No. 2334, of Heol-Y-Sarn, Llantrisant who died July 8th 2015 – his father, Stanley, was Clerk to the Trust 1946-1950; Haydn Arthur Strong, Roll No. 2069, of 54, Breakwater House, Cardiff who passed away 5th September 2015.

Llantrisant Common

Following negotiations with Natural Resources Wales their formal consent was given for the Trust's Rolling 3-Year Management Plan (covering 2015 – 2018) for the Common, this consent being necessary because of its SSSI status. The Overseer felt that local young Freemen/residents as well as members of the Rugby Club would be willing to participate in management tasks but there has been no coordination so far to achieve this. Usual mechanised summer cutting of overgrown vegetation was undertaken in accordance with the plan.

Discussions were resumed regarding the Welsh Government scheme as, it was understood, all commons are now being offered Glastir Advanced - a top up payment, for additional grazing management and capital works such as bracken, heather and other habitat management – the Trust has made a ‘commitment free’ expression of interest but no funding is likely until the 2016 budget. Trustees have recently completed an extended consideration of Grazing Bye-laws & Regulations aimed at simplify/clarifying/updating to a single document making it more readily understood by all Freeman and obviate possible confusion, particularly since additional regulations were introduced in June 2013, and this latest version has been published on the Website and it’s intended that copies will be made available at the forthcoming Freeman’s General Meeting.

The limited efforts within the Trust’s capability make little difference to irresponsible driving on the Common roads that have resulted in ever more accidents with increasingly serious consequences. In the lead to Christmas 2014 a car collided with the fencing at the Town cattle grid, involving injuries necessitating an ambulance attendance – no animal was implicated, a fly-grazing horse was hit by a car and seriously injured and the RSPCA called who dispatched the animal, Police attended later and indicated that the driver reported the incident but the driver’s name was not divulged so as to try to recover costs – consideration may be advantageous for future for steps to absolve the Trust of implied responsibility and associated expense. In the case of the Town cattle grid fencing the Trust pursued the Borough Council for speedy rectification as animals could easily step/jump over the damaged portion and escape from the Common up into the town. In the spring the Borough Council’s attention was drawn to a possible safety hazard and potential flooding hazard due to the displacement in a car collision of the whole of the stone parapet of the bridge over the small stream by Yr Hofal Farm entrance; emergency services attended and the occupant(s) cut from the vehicle – again no animals were involved.

A proposal has been revived for mixed use development (new rugby club and pitch, training pitch, improved access and parking and 74 dwellings with a 10% affordable housing element) at Maes Cefn Mabley. The site is to extend from the existing rugby club/pitch to the bounds of the Common/Brynteg House/Newbridge Road/Brynteg hill. Planning application hasn’t been submitted to date but monitoring is ongoing to safeguard the Trust’s interests of management of the Common boundary, drainage effects on the Common and ensuring access is retained by means of the footpath and vehicular track to the gateway(s) alongside Bullring Farm.

The Commons Overseer regularly deals with fly-tipped material ranging from clothing and soft toys, mattresses, bedding and furniture, building, garden and general household rubbish. The Borough Council’s Wastebusters team are very co-operative in removing piles once gathered alongside the roadside for ease of loading and on one occasion ‘evidence’ was found in the form of a very weather beaten label but whilst the Council’s enforcement officer considered it was felt it to be insufficient to proceed with investigation.

Graig Common

The Graig has continued to be grazed throughout the year to good effect and the Trust has been commended by Butterfly Conservation and the biodiversity officer of RCT for the effective management work that’s been undertaken. The highland cattle are expected to be put on the Graig this autumn to fit in with the rotational conservation grazing plan and it is aimed they’ll graze all year through.

The Trust and the executor of the estate of the late occupier of the house ‘Rhiw-Y-Gog’ negotiated a mutually acceptable agreement as to arrears of rent in respect of the lease giving access to the premises over the Graig. Furthermore the new owners of the house introduced themselves to Trustees, the yearly rent rate covering up to July 2019 - when a further 5-year review is scheduled – was settled and the lease correspondingly assigned.

A trial of growing juniper plants at undisclosed locations on the Graig was sanctioned by Trustees, this co-operation being with the Eccentric Gin Co., based at the Wheatsheaf public house, and it is envisaged that the plants' cones, commonly called juniper berries, will be used freshly as the flavour base for a special seasonal gin which may be called such as "Llantrisant Freeman's" or similar – the results of this year's planting will be assessed shortly. The plants are managed by the company and it is intended the harvest, if the trial is successful and a bigger planting scheme is undertaken, will eventually take the form of a Freeman/community festival with any production profits raising funds for the Trust and/or other charitable causes giving fantastic public relations opportunities to the company, the Trust and the historic town itself.

Trustee Huw Rees with the co-operation and assistance of the Borough Council's Ecologist put forward a case for potential funding for qualifying habitat management for reptiles projects to the Wales Project Officer of Amphibian & Reptile Conservation – in mind was the north-east section of the Graig above the track to Rhiw-Y-Gog. It appeared that the funding pot was exhausted for this year but there is a prospect that it may be considered in next year's allocation.

2015 Court Leet & Dinner

Thirty four new Freeman were enrolled on Saturday, 23rd May, at the Court Leet actually held at the Guildhall as the anticipated 'start' date for preparation of its renovation work was delayed – this will no doubt be the last such ceremony housed in the building in the condition as it's stood for very many years; the Trust is indebted for the experience of Freeman Noel Israel in undertaking the verification of documentation and checking of the Freeman's Roll.

The planned coupling together of the Court Leet festivities with celebrations for the Town Trust's 125 years anniversary gave the opportunity for greater community participation and fund raising towards the Guildhall project with a dinner-dance instead of the usual formal dinner. This was held in a large marquee erected on the pitch of Llantrisant Rugby Club accommodating 250 guests with special flooring, luxuriant decoration and entertainment provided by Jeff Hooper and his Seven Piece Band, with bars in the marquee and club hall and drinks waiters in attendance.

Trustee Dean Powell was congratulated by his colleagues for the successful organising of the Court Leet ceremony and the dinner-dance; in turn he thanked those who helped out on the evening which resulted in a memorable and enjoyable occasion with in excess of £2,300.00 being raised including donations/raffle/auction sales, all possible as the result of the generosity of local businesses and Freeman themselves, and in addition to which for the Guildhall refurbishment Abbey Glass offered to consider provision of the glass and Howdens Joinery fitting out the kitchen area.

Crécy

The Mayor, his deputy, eight other adults and three children representing Crécy were welcomed to Llantrisant 27 Feb - 2 March '15 by the partnership of Llantrisant Male Choir, the Community Council and the Trust; mainly their programme was reception/entertainment by the Choir, a tour of the Town and a reserved table at the Cross Inn for the France/Wales rugby match, a reception followed by signing/presentation of the 'charter' (French/English/Welsh) of the twinning at the Guildhall. Local businesses/organisations were represented at the ceremony which was open to everyone, speeches ensued on behalf of both communities; the Mace, Loving Cup was passed around and an exchange of gifts made including Freeman's ties to the Crécy Mayor/Deputy Mayor. On the main routes into the town new Crécy – Llantrisant 'twinning' road signs were erected and the Community Council organised a return visit to Crécy in August, attending the annual festival and battle re-enactment. Trustee Huw Rees represented the Trust, entirely at his own expense, and made every effort to 'get our arrows back' but returned empty handed; however he was greatly

impressed and picked up enlightening ideas for activities appropriate to such as the Beating the Bounds/tourist attractions and activities/regeneration of the locality. The regenerated Guildhall will undoubtedly be a focus in future fostering of this historic towns relationship.

Freemen's Website – www.llantrisant.net/Communications/Comprehensive Roll

Throughout the year Trustee Dean Powell has made a colossal commitment in the areas of:-

i) Regularly updating the Website with increased social media links.
ii) Compilation of Freemen's email addresses into a database for use in publicising events, fund raising and broadened communicating with Freemen (particularly as Newsletters are no longer sent by post); thus please ensure yours and Freemen relative/friends/etc email details are sent to him at 'dean@llantrisant.net' – the names on the database are growing steadily although disappointingly slow so there are many more required, please respond.

iii) Corrections to and enhancement of the Freemen's Roll: Feedback from many parts of the world has exposed numerous gaps/inaccuracies in the Website Freeman's Roll hence it is being progressively checked/corrected also some truly amazing and interesting facts are coming to light, so much so that a separate expanded version of the Roll is underway in terms of historical and family details; data-protection considerations will necessitate relevant information will not be for public issue only for Clerk's/Trust's use but full information may be made available in the case of deceased Freemen. Particulars required include of dates - birth, marriage - occupation(s) of present Freemen and those also, with date of death, of Freeman ancestors; their addresses, and any background details and an image of them

Beating the Bounds 2017

June 2017 seems a long way away to the next Beating the Bounds but it's time to start planning so a sub-committee steered by Trustees Dean Powell, Gareth Griffiths, John Dickason and Huw Rees has been formed and their initial thoughts are that in addition to the usual Freemen's church service, the march to the 'bouncing' at Cross Inn and the ceremonial walk routed as near as practicable to the ancient boundary, there'll be many supplementary functions making a exciting whole weekend of entertainment and activities encompassing the whole community.

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