Cwmystwyth; A way ahead

Prior to the purchase of the mines I drew the attention of the Crown Estate to the condition of the surface remains and my intention to prioritize on getting them fenced. This actually resulted in the Crown Estate spending about £117,000 on the place in safety and consolidation work and fencing, they even went as far as fitting some new lintels in the remains of the crusher house.

Unfortunately, flash flooding has caused a lot of ground damage adjacent to the mill area. This was made worse by the fact that the original stream bed and culvert had become blocked with debris.

The site attracts many visitors all of year round, the mill area being the focal point of attraction, and the Trust feels that this should be the primary focus of attention in any work that is done on the site.

What follows is the Trusts ‘wish list’ of future works listed in priority order, bearing in mind the funding requirements and the necessity to obtain appropriate permissions relative to the SAM and SSSI status. To this end the Trust will work with relevant statutory bodies, reflecting the various historical and environmental designations of the site, also with planning authority and Environment Agency where appropriate, and with local community and other stakeholders.

Short Term

1/ A gateway signage system one both ends of the site, “Cambrian Mines Trust. Welcome to Cwmystwyth Mines” in Welsh and English. Subject to relevant permissions.

2/ The present interpretation board opposite Nantwatcyn (which faces the wrong direction) moving to the mill area inside one of the fenced enclosures. This would be replaced by a board describing South Cwmystwyth plus some social history. Subject to relevant permissions.

3/ A clean up of the land adjacent to the mill area which would entail the location and reopening of the original drainage culvert north of the road, the rebuilding of the original drystone walling to retain the fines dump, ( on the right looking up from the road) and reestablishment of the original stream bed, plus a cleaning up of the ground to the left of the stream as a convenient path for visitors. This could form part of a wider initiative to reduce pollution of the river Ystwyth due to wash off.

4/ Additional interpretation board with a plan and explanation of the site outlining a guide for visitors with regards to accessing the site, no overnight parking or removal of materials, no off roading etc. Subject to relevant permissions.
5/ Provision of extra parking in clearly defined places at various points along the road. The reservation of the existing informal parking opposite the mill as a farm turning circle. Subject to relevant permissions.

6/ The reopening of the original track to the mine yard and the fitting of proper gates to secure the site. These gates could also bear appropriate signage. Subject to relevant permissions.

7/ Further to the vehicle access provided by (6) the removal of the scrap red vehicle from Kingside Shaft. The shaft could then be partially restored and an interpretation board provided. Subject to relevant permissions

8/ Restoration of the portal of Level Fawr and the spiling through and reinstatement of the fall just inside, a replica of the original plaque could be made and fitted. The spiling through and reinstatement of the direct underground road to the skipway so as to enable men and materials easy access for the purpose of maintaining this underground features. Subject to relevant permissions

9/ The mucking out of Taylors Level to improve ventilation and the rebuilding of the packwall entrance cutting. The last vestiges of the old grill could be removed and a proper gate fitted just inside. Subject to relevant permissions

10/ The Trust is aware of the pollution issues at the mines. Currently water is draining from Pughs Level and the run in Kingside Level, the later is pectulating through spoil and draining over an area south of the road. The Trust is committed to working with NRW (formally Environment Agency Wales) to mitigate these issues and to this end suggests a reopening of Kingside Level so as to focus the point of emission and lower the water levels underground.

11/ The extending and flattening/surfacing of the informal parking area at Nant yr Onnen and the installation of an interpretation board relative to the importance of Copa Hill as an archaeological site (the later suggested by Simon Timberlake). This would be at the northern end of the area and protected from vehicle contact by carefully placed boulders.

Long Term

12/ The rebuilding of Nevill Place to as original condition as possible. This is a terrace of two residential properties. These properties could then be sold or let with constrains on how they are to be kept and maintained in line with their ancient monument status. The sale of these properties should return a surplus for the Trust which could then be appropriated to some of the other works.

Staff House also presents an opportunity, however being right on the road any new building would need to be further back from the existing building line. The remaining frontage could be made into a terrace perhaps, with a new building line further to the rear. The terrace frontage could retain original features and if filled with concrete would form a stable structure. Subject to relevant permissions

13/ Hydro Scheme.
I have been approached by a representative of a Hydro company who is interested in a scheme at Cwmystwyth which is radically different to the previous proposal which was turned down for planning. There would be no access road to cross Trust land, materials being moved in by helicopter to the land at the top. I have indicated that the Trust may be sympathetic subject to the generating station being housed in one of the original mine buildings which would have to be rebuilt to original specification. The ideal building would be the eastern end of the old mine offices with the pipeline coming down the hillside on the footprint of the original mine pipeline. Subject to relevant permissions and the Trust taking into account any concerns of the local community.

14/ The reopening of Lefely Ffordd (run in at Cwmystwyth fault) as an example of a typical mine entrance. It would be restored as near as possible with authentic timber lagging, gated, and lit internally for the benefit of visitors with LED lights. The power source could be from solar panels or provided by the Hydro Company if the scheme goes ahead. Subject to relevant permissions.

15/ The establishment of a ‘Mid Wales Mining Adventure Trail’ or similar involving a Park and Ride scheme between Llywernog Mining Museum and Theme Park, Devils bridge, and Cwmystwyth Mines. This would involve a third party and would not be run directly by the Trust.