1 Welcome & Introductions: Peter Austin – Chair.

Apologies were received from Paul Edwards NRW
Attendance list follows the notes. Those present introduced themselves.

2 Explanation of the day: Peter Claughton

It was noted that the transfer of ownership of the Cwmystwyth mines site from The Crown Estate to the Cambrian Mines Trust was completed in May 2013. The Welsh Mines Preservation Trust had originally been approached to take over the ownership but the Directors of that Trust felt that as that Trust had an All-Wales remit it would be inappropriate for it to focus all of its efforts on one particular site. Mr Roy Fellows had then undertaken the task of forming a separate trust with a more specific remit, to bring the site back into community-based ownership.

The group was reminded of the wide importance of the Cwmystwyth site from an archaeological and biodiversity perspective, hence the level of protective status it has been awarded – Site of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM).

The question of what SAM status actually meant was raised. It was noted that this was a status awarded to sites of National importance. In brief it means that there is a comprehensive list of activities on the site which would be deemed as illegal if undertaken without prior consent from Cadw.

3 Presentation on the importance of the subterranean Archaeology: Robert Protheroe Jones

The group was given a pictorial presentation showing some of the underground workings across the different parts of the site. The presentation showed the extent of the workings and also some of the artefacts and items of note within the mine. It also showed the extent of the geological asset available underground.

It was noted that many of the images were historical and that it was known that much decay had occurred since they were taken in some parts of the mine. In some places the archaeology shown was no longer accessible or no longer existed due to decay.

The importance of permitted access and the urgent need for a thorough assessment of the condition of the underground workings was put to the group.

It was noted that the site is also important for the quality of its prehistoric workings. Geochemical data is now available that can show industrial activity from prehistory through the Roman and early Medieval periods. This makes the site unique in Wales and possibly in the UK.

4 Cambrian Mines Trust and the future for the Cwmystwyth Mines site: Roy Fellows

The purpose of the previously distributed discussion document was discussed. It was noted that the name Cambrian Mines Trust had been chosen because the trust also has interests in other sites – namely BwlchGlas and Goginan.

The Trust:

- has acquired the Land, mineral and sporting rights to Cwmystwyth Mines including South Cwmystwyth (major part)
- has acquired Mineral and sporting rights only for South Cwmystwyth Mine
Will act as Access Controlling Body. (As an ACB member of British Caving Association) for Goginan Mine

It was reported that the Trust currently has 3 directors and will shortly increase that to 5. The relevant documents and much more information including the articles of incorporation are available on the Trust website at: http://www.cambrianmines.co.uk/

The main aim of the Trust is the preservation and conservation of surface and underground archaeology and biodiversity and to make it available for the public good in order to encourage further education and research.

It was noted that the Trust was disappointed that the Cwmystwyth site was not featured in NRW’s priority plans for remedial work on water quality. It was proposed that the Directors should arrange a meeting with Paul Edwards from NRW to discuss this.

The importance and urgency of the need for monitoring the underground remains for degradation and deterioration was again expressed.

A general discussion was had covering the following points:

- Gateway signage at entry points to the site promoting the Cwmystwyth Mines – a recommendation was made not to situate the sign close to the highway to avoid highway regulations etc.
- Interpretation across the site including the relocation of the existing panel
- The provision of car parking
- Concerns over casual entrance to the underground (esp Level Fawr)
- Concerns about unsympathetic underground exploration – it was noted that a set of conditions for underground access had been posted on the website. A suggestion was put forward for a code of conduct board to be displayed in Level Fawr.
- Production of a leaflet that could be provided on site and replenished locally
- WMPT have a small fund available to use in the production of interpretation that promotes the message against fly-tipping and illegal dumping.
- Vehicle access and gating of parts of the site.
- Water contamination and the fact that certain clean-up actions could have consequences for other areas of the site
- The consequences of flash flooding – erosion etc and the recent inappropriate redirecting of a culvert which now exits directly on to a slime dump

It was noted that a number of the group were concerned that there appeared to be a fragmented approach to the wish list and how it might be implemented. This is a complex site and various issues need consideration in concert. A work plan should be produced which prioritises work and considers how a funding package might be developed. It would be dangerous to start some work now because that might compromise future funding applications.

It was proposed that the Directors might wish to have talks with those with the right experience before undertaking too much on site.

Polly Groom, Cadw, commented that when taking the above into consideration there is a danger that the very landscape the Trust wishes to protect could be changed.
drastically from what it currently is if interpretation, gates, leaflet holders, signs etc are introduced. Also these works would need to have SAM permission if within the boundary.
It was suggested that the discussion document should be formalised into a structured and prioritised work plan.
Simon Timberlake offered to update the Cwmystwyth Conservation Management Plan that was drawn up as part of the PLWM project, as that could help to inform a work plan.
Peter Austin offered to investigate if there might be some funding available to buy in professional services to work with the Trust to bring the plan together and offered to meet with the Trust to discuss ways forward.
Geraldine Delaney also offered to meet with the Trust to discuss how to move forward.
A discussion was had regarding the merits of the introduction of a hydro generating scheme at the site. In short, a generating company would install a system on site from which the trust would receive a rental/return from the tariff. The pipeline would follow the line of the earlier system which was historically on site. This would be discussed further during the site visit.
A number of concerns were raised, in particular the physical impact on the site. Again any such project would need to apply for SAM permission and probably SSSI permission.

5 Elenydd HLF bid, Metal Links & other relevant work by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments in Wales: Stephen Hughes

It was reported that the Royal Commission (RC) has access to a comprehensive archive relating to the Cwmystwyth site. This includes drawings, photographs and research. The RC has carried out a comprehensive Uplands Archaeological Survey which includes the site and much information can be accessed via the historical record on Coflein. http://www.coflein.gov.uk/
The Royal Commission has recently won awards for their work in reconstructive animations and access to these can be had via the Metal Links facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/MetalLinksProject or the Youtube channel: http://www.youtube.com/user/MetallinksProject
Metal Links is now in its third and final year but an application for an extension has been made.
Meanwhile the Royal Commission is working on an HLF application for a project called the Elenydd Landscapes Project. This project is looking at the use of water across history in the Elenydd area, into which Cwmystwyth has been included given its importance and proximity to the project region. If successful the Royal Commission would hope to work with the Cambrian Mines Trust to undertake some research – and possibly to include some animated reconstructions of the site and the underground workings. The Cambrian Mines Trust will be invited to the next meeting of the project board to see what opportunities might arise.

6 Summary and close down

The Cambrian Mines Trust Directors thanked everyone for attending and were very appreciative that those present had given time to be present. The meeting was very useful and the experience needed to guide the Trust was available from those in the room. A request was made for an email contact list so that the Trust could call on
those with experience when they needed to contact them. The Directors agreed that formalisation of the discussion document was a good idea and this should be done as a matter of priority. The Directors thanked Peter Claughton for arranging the day.

Actions:
1. Peter Austin, CCC, & Geraldine Delaney, RCAHMW, to meet Directors to discuss way forward for the action plan
2. Peter Austin, CCC, to investigate possible funding for creation of work plan
3. Polly Groom, Cadw, to forward to the Directors information on SAM scheduling and a site ownership form
4. Karen Heppingstall, NRW, to forward information and ownership form for SSSI
5. Simon Timberlake, Early Mines Group, to update the Cwmystwyth Conservation Management Plan
6. Peter Austin/Dewi Roberts, CCC, to investigate funding opportunities for land clearance
7. Tom McOwat made a request for volunteers for a bat study
8. Peter Austin, CCC, to circulate email list with meeting notes

PM Site visit

Attendance list

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