

Thu, 23 Sept, 12:40

Ystradgynlais Town Council

Dear Sir/Madam,

I attach a document which indicates an application by the Town Council to purchase freehold land from Powys CC to be incorporated into Diamond Park.

The Plan indicates the intention to build a footpath through land to link up with the existing footpath network.

I would be grateful if you would indicate with documentation what the sequelae of this application to were?

Yours faithfully

24 Sept 2021, 11:40

Mr. D. B Rees, Clerk,  
Ystradgynlais Town Council

Dear Mr. Rees,

You telephoned me this morning. I asked you to respond to my enquiries in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act.

If you propose to report my enquiries to a full Council Meeting I would be grateful for a copy of your briefing document? I told you that I am unable to attend Council Meetings on a Thursday due to attending Welsh classes.

I am at present collating information, on behalf of the Friends of Diamond Park, concerning all stakeholders who have an interest in Nant Gyrlais with a view to supporting those stakeholders in a coordinated response to management of the local natural resources.

I note from your Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty Report 2019 of January 2020 that "*Biodiversity was at the heart of much of the work with tree planting and thinning undertaken using a Woodland Grant obtained through the Forestry Commission, Lottery Funding provided through the New Opportunities Fund led by PCC's Biodiversity Officer and further funding from the environmental funder WREN to develop the Riverside Walk. The Environment Agency undertook works to improve fish spawning in Nant Gyrlais which runs through the park.*"

I would be grateful if you would provide information on the inputs and outputs of the Woodland Grant, the PCC led biodiversity project and the Environment Agency project? I would like to know the details of how these projects were produced and what the outcomes were?

From your Well Being Report 20-21 please could you disclose the proposals of the "footpath improvement scheme" that has commenced in Diamond Park and what was achieved?

Yours sincerely

## FINAL RESPONSE TO FOI REQUEST DATED 24<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2021

To (Applicant)

I refer to your e mail dated 24<sup>th</sup> September 2021 regarding the above matter. The Town Councils response, which the Chairman and Vice Chairman have now approved for release, are as detailed below and in the attachments provided.

1. Land at Diamond Park, Ynyscedwyn. With reference to this request the only two documents available are the 'Expression of Interest Form' sent by the Town Council to the Powys County Council dated 16 October 2015, a copy of which you already possess, and which initiated your enquiry as detailed in your e mail of the 24<sup>th</sup> September. The only additional document available following this is the actual Land Registry Title Deed CYM4999390, a copy of which is attached for your attention and dated 25 January 2017.
2. Well Being Report 20-21 – Proposals of a 'Footpath Improvement Scheme' at the Diamond Park- There are no documents available relating to this matter as it relates to **ongoing** annual path maintenance and improvements required which are normally identified at the time the work is undertaken to the paths at the Diamond Park. This work is usually carried out over the autumn/winter period.
3. Grant Funding Projects at Diamond Park over the period 2003 to 2014, as detailed in your e mail dated 24<sup>th</sup> September. In response to this request the Town Council attaches a detailed report for your attention covering the grant project work undertaken over this period.

I hope this information will be of benefit to your Group.

On Behalf of the Ystradgynlais Town Council

Regards

D B Rees  
Clerk ,Ystradgynlais Town Council  
19<sup>th</sup> October 2021

## **DIAMOND PARK DEVELOPMENT FROM 2003**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The Diamond Park owned by the Ystradgynlais Town Council has been incrementally developed since 2003 as a valued public asset supporting biodiversity and promoting safe walking access to all sectors of the community and providing a suitable location for a mining memorial. The land area is around 15 hectares and it abounds the Wern Plemys Conservation area which is managed by the Brecknock Wildlife Trust. The development of the former colliery land was triggered because of regular nuisance being created by wild fires in the gorse which had proliferated the site.

### **2. PARTNERSHIPS**

Although the park is owned by the Town Council the development has been a true partnership of a number of interested parties which are outlined below :

- Ystradgynlais Town Council
- Community First
- Forestry Commission ( now NRW)
- Powys County Council Biodiversity and Rights of Way
- WREN funding
- Environment Agency fisheries ( now NRW)
- Ystradgynlais Heritage Society
- Local and International Volunteers

### **3. DEVELOPMENT TIMELINE**

2003 Volunteer input led by Community First / Forestry Commission  
2004 Woodland Trust Grant  
2005 Environment Agency fish spawning scheme in Nant Gyrlais (Salmon and Trout)  
2006 Big Lottery Fund grant aided site development (NOF)  
2007 WREN funded scheme  
2014 Ystradgynlais Heritage Mining Memorial Project

### **4. PLANNING CONSENTS**

Powys County Council granted planning consents on:  
May 2005 Landscaping works  
September 2012 Mining Memorial trail

### **5. GRANTS OBTAINED ( YSTRADGYNLAIS TOWN COUNCIL ONLY)**

Woodland Grant	£ 7,127
Big Lottery New Opportunities Fund Revenue)	£ 21,369 (£17,910 Capital : £3,459
Wren Grant	£ 30,000

## 6. PROJECT SUMMARIES

### 2003 COMMUNITY FIRST / FORESTRY COMMISSION / VOLUNTEER ACTION

Gorse was trashed and signage erected. International volunteers carried out works on fencelines .

### 2004 WOODLAND TRUST GRANT

This project was carried out and led by the Forestry Commission as agent to the Town Council . It comprised of the following elements:

New tree planting	£ 2,835	( Local schoolchildren participated)
Community woodland	£ 1,995	
Public Access	£ 1,148	(Fence and footpath creation)
Undermanaged woods	£ 1,066	( Thinning and chipping)
Management Grant	£ 1,190	( Five years)

The total cost was £8,234 and the additional £1,107 was funded by the Ystradgynlais Town Council. Contractors were engaged through competitive tender.

### 2005 ENVIRONMENT AGENCY FISHERIES

The Ystradgynlais Town Council were approached by the Environment Agency in May 2004 and a presentation was made on the objectives of the Fishing Wales Project. This scheme was supported by the Welsh Assembly Government , Environment Agency , Forestry Commission and Objective One funding. The aim of the project was to improve the sustainability of the fisheries of South Wales by increasing the number of fish to catch through habitat improvement and fish-passes. The meeting advised that the Nant Gyrlais tributary was considered to be an important spawning habitat for salmon and sea trout. It was explained that the drawback of the habitat at Nant Gyrlais was the lack of sunlight due to the extent of the tree canopy. A tree thinning proposal to create a dappling effect on the watercourse was approved by the Town Council together with a second phase introducing spawning pools utilising vee weirs and bank protection from secondary usage of the thinned woodland.

### 2006 BIG LOTTERY NEW OPPORTUNITIES FUND (NOF)

It should be noted that a grant application had been submitted by the Powys Local Biodiversity Action Plan to NOF for an allocation of £106K being made available for expenditure throughout Powys by March 31<sup>st</sup> 2007. An element of this application had originally been put forward by the Brecknock Wildlife Trust for their use on the adjoining Wern Plemys site which had included suggested elements regarding the use of some of the Diamond Park meadow areas for the natural colonisation of the Great Burnet *Sanguisorba officianalis* and Devil bit scabious *Succissa pratensis* . Unfortunately the Wildlife Trust were at the time unable to guarantee the required £7,500 volunteer time contribution and had suggested the bid was discontinued. Following discussions the Ystradgynlais Town Council in partnership with the Powys Biodiversity Officer decide to step into the funding breach and develop a project to ensure the grant monies were utilised.

In the event the Ystradgynlais Town Council following competitive tender awarded a construction contract in the sum of £ 35,768 .

The works commenced on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> August 2006 and were completed on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2006.

The construction works built on the previous woodland and stream improvement works and have now created much improved access ( *including disabled access* ) to the park.

- New access inclusive of disabled gate at Glantawe Row
- Bituminous footpath from Glantawe Row to Blue bridge
- Provision of strategic drainage crossings , ditches and channels
- New graded footpath to viewing area
- Installation of link path network
- Permanent installation of footbridge over Nant Gyrlais
- Relocation of gates to Gough Arms entrance
- Installation of controlled entrance to lower plateau
- Erection of bilingual information board with partner logos.
- Improvements to Glantawe Row Car parking area

### **2007 WREN GRANT FUNDED SCHEME**

This second phase of the Diamond Park project built on the first phase and was aimed at further improving public access to areas omitted from Phase One ( NOF ) on grounds of cost.

The primary objectives were based on improving public access to all by the provision of further sound , safe and commodious footpath routes ( some of which were surfaced ) for all sectors of the community to use and enjoy in pursuit of the environmental features available in the Woodland Park including a riverside walk.

One of the objectives was to overcome the main drawback of the site in the form of a tendency to become muddy during wet periods and the provision of strategic grips and ditches were fundamental to the design. Associated improvements through enhanced landscaping, improvement of a bridge crossing of the Nant Gyrlais together with interpretation boards. The works commenced on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2007 and were completed in March 2008.

### **2014 YSTRADGYNLAIS MINERS MEMORIAL PROJECT**

This project was managed by the Ystradgynlais Heritage Society who raised their own funding ( including another contribution from the WREN ) and is therefore not elaborated upon as the Town Council role was to permit its installation on its land and provide some grant funding.

## **7. BIODIVERSITY**

Since the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2006 the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act came into force in England and Wales, Section 40 of the Act states that: "Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity".

Although the works to develop Diamond Park predated the above legislation ( Planning Consent granted by Powys County Council on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2005) the Town Council nevertheless has taken biodiversity into account in developing its project proposals.

Biodiversity has however been at the heart of much of the work with tree planting and thinning undertaken via a Woodland Grant obtained through the Forestry Commission , Lottery Funding provided through the New Opportunities Fund led by the then Powys County Council Biodiversity Officer and further funding obtained through the Environmental funding provide by WREN to develop the riverside walk. As indicated the then Environment Agency undertook works to improve fish spawning in the Nant Gyrlais. Increasingly Biodiversity has been referred to on Project leaflets.

The affordable maintenance regime is a monthly cut ( May to October ) to a large proportion of the park with other areas cut bi-monthly. Annual grass cutting is developing a sward on the ground that had very little previously. Fringe areas and woodland areas are left uncut to support the growth of wild flowers etc.

Indeed the Town Council in 2012 concurred with a suggestion from a local resident with regard to the leaving uncut a large section of the upper embankment to promote the production of wildflowers with grass cutting only taking place at the end of the season

## **8. RISK ASSESSMENT**

In obtaining planning permission in 2005 ground sampling was undertaken and a condition to submit a contamination report Powys County Council was discharged prior to permission being granted. Risk assessments are prepared for each construction contract awarded and the HSE informed as CDM regulations require.

## **9. INPUTS AND OUTPUTS**

The main input from the Town Council has been project partnership or direct management combined with capital and revenue funding as required and budgeted for. In particular the Town Council undertakes to insure the projects and enable their long term sustainability through maintaining of the assets. Members scrutinise the approval of projects and the release of funding together with ensuring the needs of the community through ensuring access for all or meeting biodiversity principles are met.

Outputs or project Benefits are seen to be:

- Improves the quality of the local environment in a sustainable manner
- Increase biodiversity and local countryside access
- Encourages local participation and social inclusion through training and volunteer participation.

## **10. OPENING CEREMONIES**

It is worth noting that the projects were innovative enough to attract the attention of two First Ministers of Wales with Rhodri Morgan AM First Minister opening the first phase of the park on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2007 and First Minister Carwyn Jones opening the Mining trail on behalf of the heritage society in 2014.

Land Registry  
Transfer of part of registered title(s)

TP'

If you need more room than is provided for in a panel, and your software allows, you can expand any panel in the form. Alternatively use continuation sheet CS and attach it to this form.

Leave blank if not yet registered.

When application for registration is made these title number(s) should be entered in panel 2 of Form AP1.

Insert address, including postcode (if any), or other description of the property transferred. Any physical exclusions, such as mines and minerals, should be defined.

Place 'X' in the appropriate box and complete the statement.

For example 'edged red'.

For example 'edged and numbered 1 in blue'.

Any plan lodged must be signed by the transferor.

Give full name(s).

Complete as appropriate where the transferor is a company.

Give full name(s).

Complete as appropriate where the transferee is a company. Also, for an overseas company, unless an arrangement with Land Registry exists, lodge either a certificate in Form 7 in Schedule 3 to the Land Registration Rules 2003 or a certified copy of the constitution in English or Welsh, or other evidence permitted by rule 183 of the Land Registration Rules 2003.

1	Title number(s) out of which the property is transferred: CYM499390
2	Other title number(s) against which matters contained in this transfer are to be registered or noted, if any:
3	Property: Land at Ynyscedwyn, Ystradgynlais, Swansea  The property is identified <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> on the attached plan and shown: Edged Red  <input type="checkbox"/> on the title plan(s) of the above titles and shown:
4	Date: 25 <sup>th</sup> January 2017
5	Transferor: <b>POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL</b>  <u>For UK incorporated companies/LLPs</u> Registered number of company or limited liability partnership including any prefix:  <u>For overseas companies</u> (a) Territory of incorporation:  (b) Registered number in the United Kingdom including any prefix:
6	Transferee for entry in the register: <b>YSTRADGYNLAIS TOWN COUNCIL</b>  <u>For UK incorporated companies/LLPs</u> Registered number of company or limited liability partnership including any prefix:  <u>For overseas companies</u> (a) Territory of incorporation:  (b) Registered number in the United Kingdom including any prefix: