

## **Ymddiriedolaeth Nant Gwrtheyrn Trust**

### **Introduction to the AGM**

2020 was a unique year for Nant Gwrtheyrn, just like everyone else, because of Covid-19.

From the end of 2020, the site was closed for most of the year, except when restrictions were relaxed for the summer months.

As a result, the Trust's financial performance was significantly affected and the accounts show this in the loss for the year of £ 151,886, compared to the surplus of £ 232,534 in 2019.

Nevertheless, we can be glad that the situation is less gloomy, and the loss smaller, than it could have been. This was due to a number of factors.

The UK Government Furlough scheme ensured that the jobs of the great majority of staff could be protected. Those positions that would need to continue operating throughout the period were identified, with some returning part-time for periods, and the majority of the remainder were registered on this scheme.

The National Centre for Learning Welsh has been very supportive of the efforts of our Education department to adapt very quickly to provide lessons online, rather than face-to-face. Experimentation has taken place with learning methods and this experience will be relevant and valuable for the future. A substantial proportion of the expected grant funding was continued.

Applications were made for Covid grants for businesses and other organizations where available, all of which contributed to reducing the inevitable loss due to the closure of the café and the cancellation of all weddings and conferences. Sensible discussions were held with those who had made arrangements to come to us and it was possible to agree new dates in 2021 and 2022 for the majority.

During the year, we completed the sale of two parcels of land on Anglesey which had been donated to us by Ms Heulwen Richards in 2007. The particular circumstances of both locations had previously created considerable barriers to selling, but with perseverance the sales were brought to a successful conclusion meaning that our emergency reserve was strengthened at the exact time it was needed. The Trust would like to record once again its sincere thanks to Ms Richards for her generosity.

Also, its thanks to Mair Saunders, the General Manager, and the small team who have carried the heavy burden of ensuring proper arrangements for protecting, maintaining and developing the site, dealing with customers over the telephone and online, submitting requests for assistance and preparing for reopening and closing in line with the regulations.

There has been a partial re-opening from April this year but the need to comply with Covid rules, which change from time to time, while responding to customer expectations and requirements, especially when planning weddings, has been a huge task for Mair and the staff. At the moment, we are expecting the latest announcement from the Welsh Government in the context of new expectations of 'freedom' created by UK Government announcements.

On-site activities, including some language courses and group visits, have resumed, and the café has been re-opened to serve the many visitors who arrive daily, doing so with the necessary respect for Covid and for the sensible guidelines that still need to be implemented. As the main language courses are still being held online, we have quite a few empty rooms this summer, so we decided to

remind people from all over Wales of the Nant's potential as a holiday destination, through an advertising campaign on S4C. The results are promising.

The lock-in period provided an opportunity to progress some schemes which were in the pipeline. 'Caerffili' has been completely remodelled to create a fitting place for every bride who comes to the Nant to celebrate her big day, and the house next door, Nantyffynnon, has also been transformed internally providing an idea of the type of layout, resources, décor and use of space, which could be introduced to the other houses should funding allow, given that 12 years have elapsed since the last major refurbishment.

A new heating system has been installed for the Trem-y-Mor terrace. As before this is an air source heat pump system but now ensures a constant flow of hot water and heating as required by residents.

There will also be new attractions on site - most notably the re-created Old Surgery from Llithfaen where Dr Carl Clowes will be seen on video telling his story of treating patients there in the 70s, and how the idea of restoring Nant Gwrtheyrn as a Language Centre was born there. The voice of renowned actor Rhys Ifans will be heard on a new presentation of the history of the Nant which will be constantly showing at the Heritage Centre. We will be reorganising the chapel foyer and there will be a new presentation there on a digital screen outlining the history of the Welsh language.

There is one more change facing those who have not visited the Nant for some time. After years of allowing free use of the access road and the car park, even by those who do not visit the café or lodging, it was decided to charge for parking. It is a very simple arrangement, depending on people's willingness to respond honourably to a request to put £2 in a box for up to a day's parking. It's good to say that most people find this to be a very good deal, and the sums being collected are more than were expected.

In closing, I'd like to say a big word of thanks to our Trust Board members for their work and support throughout the year. They all give generously of their time and expertise, without payment, to make sure that the Nant - the location and what we do - are in the best possible condition to meet the challenges of the future.

It is more difficult than ever to predict what this year will bring. Already a third of it has been lost, but assuming no further excess waves of the pandemic are encountered, we are reasonably confident that the desire of people to come together, to enjoy the natural beauty of the Nant, to learn the Welsh language with dedicated teachers, to celebrate and interact, all mean that Nant Gwrtheyrn's resources and unique features will once again be in great demand.

Huw Jones

Chairman

9th July 2021