

Canolfan in the Community

The Newsletter of Canolfan y Fron

July 2021

STOP PRESS: The 2021 AGM has been deferred to the 18th July to avoid a clash with the EURO Cup Final. Further details overleaf.

The Siop

Gwynedd Council Licencing Committee have granted a licence for the Siop and café to start stocking alcohol. Eriona Williams has started a survey of footfall so that the Board can review the opening hours. An option under consideration is to bring back lunchtime closing to allow the Siop to open later. This would allow Llety guests to check-in and buy provisions later than the current 17:30 closing time. Our new Chef uses vegetables so the Siop will again start stocking some vegetables.

Cegin Fron

In the last Issue we reported the recruitment of Chef John Davies to run Cegin Fron. John decided that his long commute from Holyhead was not good for his family life, so he handed in his resignation and left at the end of April. Cegin Fron was closed for a time. Our new Chef, Jude Jones, started on May 15th. She lives only a short walk away so apart from rainy days her commute is no problem. She is a highly experienced Chef specialising in delicious home cooked food. Her pies and puddings are superb but old favourites such as pizzas and burgers remain on the menu. Covid-19 restrictions have been relaxed to allow indoor opening but with social distancing the capacity of the original café is just 5 people, so the South Hall has become part of Cegin Fron. Sandy Barthorpe spent a great deal of time turning the hall into a lovely place to eat. With social distancing Cegin Fron can seat up to 25 people indoors and there are three outdoor tables. Takeaways are also still available, call 01286 882048 to order a takeaway or book a table.

The Llety

Prior to reopening the Llety was given a deep clean by contract cleaners and it received its first post-lockdown guest on the 15th April. Covid restrictions initially prevented us from opening the shared Llety Kitchen and this acted as a brake on bookings, but we were able to reopen it on the 17th May and bookings then took off. Shôn Wyn Thomas joined the Canolfan team on the 3rd May and his responsibilities include the Llety. Since the 17th May Llety bookings have taken off with peak season occupancy already up to 77%.

Hall Rental

The relaxation of restrictions from the 17th May has seen the welcome return of events to the North Hall. Dog training, Yoga, Baby Yoga, Kick Boxing and Pilates are just some of the events held since then. There has been a quiz night and the welcome return of bingo. If you would like to book the hall, contact Shôn Wyn Thomas at the Canolfan.



Cegin Fron Chef Jude Jones (left) and Mandy Hindle exchange contracts at Canolfan y Fron

The Board

John Rowlands stepped down from the Board on May 27th to concentrate on his business. We thank him for the enormous contribution that he has made to Canolfan y Fron. As reported on April, Sandy Barthorpe has stepped back from the role of treasurer, but has decided to stay on the Board to focus on Cegin Fron. Sadly, we have to report that Mandy Hindle's mother passed away in April, we send our condolences to her.

Staff

In addition to our new Chef, Shôn Wyn Thomas joined the Canolfan team on the 3rd May as Llety and Hall Rental Administrator. He is from the Fron area, a fluent Welsh speaker, and he brings with him a wealth of experience picked up while working for 5 years at the Wales Millennium Centre down in Cardiff.



Volunteers

Mandy Hindle is back home and keen to expand our dedicated band of volunteers. Volunteers are essential to keep the Canolfan running smoothly so if you would like to become involved with our community venture as a volunteer, please contact mandy@canolfanyfron.org.

Annual General Meeting

The AGM could not be held in February this year due to lockdown. Covid restrictions have now been relaxed enough to hold an AGM, but we still need to make it Covid-secure. Limits on numbers at meetings both outdoors and indoors mean that if more Members wish to attend the AGM than is permitted the Meeting will be adjourned. All Members on the register at the 9th June 2021 have received notification that the AGM would be held on the 11th July but at the request of Members it has been rescheduled for the 18th July 2021 at 19:00 at Canolfan y Fron to avoid clashing with the Euro Cup Final.

The Future of Canolfan y Fron

As we emerge from the Covid crisis and with an AGM coming up it is important that we look both back and forwards if we are to secure the future of Canolfan y Fron.

Canolfan y Fron was founded by a dedicated group of local people who had a vision of turning a derelict school into a wonderful Community Centre. They secured Lottery and other funding and then through sheer hard work turned that vision into reality. When the Canolfan opened, sadly it became a source of division with differing views amongst some in the community about how it should be run. Directors resigned because of disagreements and a small group formed aiming to change the composition of the Board. The result of their endeavours was that the Canolfan lost the services of three valuable people who had dedicated a great deal of time and effort to it. A new Board took over and for a time peace seemed to reign, then in the middle of a global pandemic history began to repeat itself. Some boycotted the Siop due to dissatisfaction with Board actions, anonymous memos were sent demanding that the Board be sacked or that the Board was disregarding the law, signs were vandalised and much more. Eventually those opposing the Board tried to use the Companies Act to force the Canolfan to hold a general meeting that would have been illegal under Covid-19 legislation. Knowingly attempting to force the Canolfan to break the law is not compatible with Membership of the Company. In an attempt to reduce conflict, Members of the Board held a Zoom meeting in late May with a group calling themselves 'Concerned Members of Canolfan y Fron'. The meeting went over ground that had been covered before, the Board accepted that there had been some failings which were being addressed but the other side gave no indication of what they sought to restore unity. I have 50 years of experience of North Wales village life, mainly in Porc Peis Bach territory but for the last 14 years in Fron. In any village there will be some divisions and groups with differing objectives. The Canolfan was meant to be a unifying force in the community but so far it has clearly had the opposite effect. To secure the future of the Canolfan we have to change this, not by one group imposing its views over others, but by everyone coming together and accepting compromise. Covid-19 has made dialogue difficult for 16 months and the bitterness of some divisions in the community has hindered reconciliation. Two things have changed that give me hope for the future. Firstly, we have expanded the Membership base up to 130, still way too low, but a good start. Secondly, at the AGM we have enough candidates to elect a Board of up to 12 people, the maximum permitted under the Articles. Broadening the base of Membership and the Board opens the door to a Canolfan that has broad support in the community, but only if the divisions of the past are replaced by willingness to compromise. I urge all members to use their right to vote at the AGM and to use it thoughtfully.

This is a personal view from Mike Elsdon, not necessarily the views of the whole Board

The Canolfan Magazine – an ever-shrinking review of events

The Roof Two ridge tiles sat on the scaffolding for some weeks because John Rowlands was too busy to install them. A handyman working at the Canolfan was asked if he could do the work when it was noticed that John had sneaked in and done it! Many thanks to John for sorting it out. The scaffolding has now gone.

Cegin Fron British Gas has reappeared and have indicated that are still prepared to fund a solid path to Cegin Fron We are awaiting details of their proposals.