

RADNOR FOREST DARK SKIES PROJECT

INAUGURAL MEETING OF INTERESTED COUNCILS

In Attendance:

New Radnor Community Council – Cllrs. Nigel Dodman and Jenny Hodge, Clerk Tracey Price.

Penybont Community Council – Cllrs. Derek Turner and Andrew Willemson, Clerk Geraint Evans.

Llanfihangel Rhydithon Community Council – Cllrs. Elizabeth Newman, Robert Shelton.

Guest Speakers - Kerem Asufroglu, Dark Source and Leigh Williams, Powys County Council.

Apologies: Cllr. A. Tite (Whitton Community Council).

Llangunllo & Bleddfa Community Council had asked to be involved but no one attended.

Cllr. Dodman opened the meeting and thanked all those present for attending. He explained that a resident of New Radnor had suggested creating a dark sky park for the Radnor Forest area and that he and Cllr. Hodge had been interested in taking the project forward. He had looked into dark skies in Wales and it seemed that Wales fared well nationally with relatively low levels of light pollution in many areas already.

Kerem Asfuroglu then spoke to the meeting on achieving dark sky status and next steps, suggesting that community involvement was key and that often astronomy clubs and environmental groups were interested in this type of project as well as the general public because of boots to tourism etc. There would be a need to take a series of sky brightness readings, using a number of locations and on a number of occasions. Street lighting would need to be reviewed if not done already.

Leigh Williams was able to confirm that the review in New Radnor was complete and the work largely done (some shades were awaited) while the surveys of the other villages were complete but the work not yet carried out. He added that all lighting in Powys was being reviewed over a ten year period and that the project was currently in year two. The standard new light fittings were 3000 kelvins whereas in Presteigne (currently in the process of obtaining dark sky status) 2200 kelvins was being fitted. 3000 kelvins had therefore been fitted in New Radnor and changing these would come at a cost that the County Council would wish to re-coup.

Both Kerem and Leigh answered questions before leaving the meeting. Cllr. Dodman thanked both for attending.

Cllr. Newman stressed the need to take the idea to the individual communities and felt that the impact on tourism would be good. She asked about grant funding and Tracey Price stated that Presteigne had approached a number of funders but most would not consider a project involving street lighting as they considered it to be a statutory duty on Councils. She clarified that the 'statutory' aspect had been explored but funders were still not interested adding that for later stages of any project there might well be a chance to apply for funds for related aspects such as night walks/signposting/education etc.

First Steps were agreed as –

1. Members present to report to the next meeting of their Councils and ask for support to go forward with the project.
2. A Steering Group be formed to continue the project if support is obtained to continue.
3. Each Council to appoint one or two representatives to attend future group meetings.
4. To make further approaches to those Councils not present as it was felt the project would not work without all the Councils involved.
5. Further meeting to be arranged in due course.
6. Cllr Dodman to try to find someone to take the night sky readings.
7. Tracey Price to ask her contact in Presteigne if he could suggest anyone to take the readings.
8. Spaceguard Centre to be contacted for information and advice in due course.

The meeting closed at 7.31pm.

Useful links for some background and nearby sites/applications are -

<https://www.darksky.org/>

<https://www.elanvalley.org.uk/darkskies>

[Elan Valley International Dark Sky Park | Elan Valley](#)
www.elanvalley.org.uk

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/qsv9n-presteigne-dark-sky-masterplan>