

## **PADSTOW TOWN COUNCIL: 28 SEPTEMBER 2021**

### **AGENDA ITEM 14: GORSEDH KERNOW**

Council may recall that it was back last year that a request was submitted seeking Council's view in respect of hosting such an event for 2022. At the time Council requested more information. This has only now just been forthcoming, appendix 1 offers further detail in this regard. The Town Clerk has also approached Bude Town Council, who hosted this year. They did advise that it was somewhat of a different year due to COVID however, it is a large-scale event, over a number of days for the event and facets to the same. They were fortunate to have a large venue owned by the Council.

The Town Clerk has also now spoken with Daphne Hicks from the Padstow Old Cornwall Society who had originally suggested Padstow as a host for 2021 as it tied in with the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary when it last occurred in Padstow in 1951. However, due to COVID-19 this moved the timescale onto 2022. When speaking with her, she advised that she would be happy to be involved and lead in this project. She knows several of the people involved, attended such events and has the connections and understanding in this regard.

As Council will know it is the Queen's Platinum Jubilee next year with Council having yet to properly look at this in terms of celebrations for Padstow, this alone will involve a lot of linking up and support from our community and work in progressing the same.

What are Council's views in respect of Gorsedh? Perhaps Council may wish to show support to such an event but that it be led by the Padstow Old Cornwall Society but for 2023? Consideration also needs to be given as to likely venue for a minimum of 150 for a sit down as advised at the time following the original request (Appendix 2 to this report).

### Gorsedh Kernow and Esedhvos Kernow

Gorsedh Kernow was established in 1928 and is the counterpart of the Welsh Gorsedd of Bards and the Breton Gorsez. It exists to celebrate, support, and promote the Celtic culture of Cornwall. New bards are proposed based on their work for Cornwall and are received into the Gorsedh at the bardic ceremony in September. This takes place in a different town each year, giving the opportunity to showcase different areas in turn.

Esedhvos Kernow is the programme of events which surrounds the Saturday ceremony, and which celebrates both the culture of Cornwall and of the locality in which the festival is taking place that year. Normally events include: a book fair, reflecting the annual Gorsedh publishing awards (Holyer an Gof), a presentation evening for the annual Gorsedh Kernow awards, a conference, a troyl (ceilidh), a concert, a Cornish language introductory / activity session, a guided walk and a Gorsedh service in a local church or chapel. These are the basics, but the intention is that programme can be tailored to the locality so that other events can be added to reflect local interests and specialities, as long as they fit with the ethos of the Gorsedh.

### How we work with towns

Each year a Local Organising Committee is established in the town which will be hosting the Gorsedh, ideally including the local Council and representatives of other organisations and under the Chairmanship of the Deputy Grand Bard. The LOC takes responsibility for ensuring that the necessary arrangements are made but also brings local knowledge to the table to make the Gorsedh their own for that year, reflecting the town itself.

LOC responsibilities include:

- Identifying a site for the ceremony and venues for events
- Dealing with the logistics
- Selecting a Lady of Cornwall and attendants to take part in the ceremony
- Collaborating on local publicity
- Engaging local suppliers
- Advising on any additional activity that the town would like to include / organise – additional events are always welcome

The main events noted above all have a designated officer from the Gorsedh who will lead on them: book fair, awards, concert, service, ceremony etc. and these officers will also attend LOC meetings. The Gorsedh deals with the invitations to the other Gorsedhs and the hosting of representatives from them

In addition to the main weekend – which is always the first weekend in September – a Proclamation ceremony is held in the preceding April, which prefigures and advertises that the Gorsedh will be taking place in the town in September. This involves a small procession and ceremony with bards and town representatives and provides an excellent opportunity to publicise the coming Gorsedh.

## **Finance**

The intention is that the Gorsedh will at least break even.

- Some expenditure is paid directly from the Gorsedh itself e.g., the costs of sound engineering and live streaming for the ceremony.
- The Gorsedh provides the LOC with a starting budget and takes responsibility for any losses incurred at the end, though this is rare. Equally any profits go to the Gorsedh to assist with future events. There is therefore no risk to the Council or LOC.
- Events such as the concert and the troyl are open to both bards and the public and are ticketed, with the price set by the LOC.
- The only closed event is the bardic tea, and bards pay the costs through booking their own tea tickets.
- There is an opportunity for stalls – cultural and commercial at the Gorsedh ceremony and the LOC takes responsibility for these
- If the LOC can raise additional sponsorship or support, or source support in kind, that can help, particularly if the LOC would like to mount additional events.

## **Promotion**

The Gorsedh will work with the LOC on promotion, with the LOC providing local knowledge and expertise. GK issues a quarterly newsletter and deals with the main press releases and draws up a comms plan in association with the LOC.

## **Summary**

We see the Gorsedh as a chance to showcase the historic and contemporary culture of different towns and areas of Cornwall. The aim is to benefit and celebrate the towns we visit. The organisation of the event is carried out jointly by the Gorsedh and the town to achieve a festival that works for both. Often local organisations will mount their own events to coincide with or as part of the programme. The Gorsedh is different every year, depending on the community in which it is held – a large town like Truro will do things differently from St Just, St Columb or Bude. It is a basis around which to build an event which works for the town and the Gorsedh on an appropriate scale.

For photos of past Gorsethow, see:

[www.gorsedhkernow.org.uk/galleries](http://www.gorsedhkernow.org.uk/galleries)

Other general information can also be found on the website.



Appendix 1



30-6-20

Syrra/Madama hweg,

My name is Pol Hodge and I am Kannas Bardh Meur / Deputy Grand Bard of the Cornish Gorsedd. I hope that Padstow has come out of lock-down relatively unscathed.

Last year I was in contact with Padstow Old Cornwall Society who suggested that Padstow would be a great location for the Gorsedh. The Gorsedh Council are in complete agreement. Since then we have been working hard planning the Gorsedh for Bude-Stratton. Then the pandemic struck and so it was decided to have a small celebration at Lys Kernow and to live stream it. The Bude-Stratton Gorsedh will now take place September 2021. So, it was proposed to hold Gorsedh Kernow at Padstow in 2022.

Obviously, we would need the support of the Town Council and would need to find a sit-down venue for a minimum of 150 – perhaps the extended Social Club? Anyhow, I would be grateful if you could discuss the possibility at your earliest convenience and get back to me.

Oll an gwella,



Pol Hodge

Mab Stenek Veur

Kannas Bardh Meur Gorsedh Kernow

cc Liz Carne, Melenek, Bardh Meur, Ms Daphne Hicks.