



FBHVC SUBMISSION: FFOS-Y-FRAN COAL MINE APPEAL

Introduction

The Federation of British Historic Vehicle Clubs (FBHVC) exists to maintain the freedom to use Yesterday's Vehicles on Tomorrow's Roads and to encourage the preservation and promotion of all types of vehicles within the broader context of our national heritage. FBHVC treats all historic vehicles equally and recognises cars, motorcycles, buses & coaches, lorries & light vans, military, agricultural and steam vehicles. FBHVC represents over 500 historic vehicle clubs and museums with a total membership of a quarter of a million historic vehicle owners and enthusiasts. Interest in historic vehicles sustains economic activity worth £7.2 billion annually to the UK economy and supports the employment of nearly 35,000 people.

Ffos y Fran mine

The FBHVC wishes to lend support to the appeal to extend the period of mining at the above facility. It does not do so blindly and without awareness and analysis of the competing considerations in retaining activity at the mine including local concern about remediation following closure. However, our overall view is that the appeal should be allowed, and mining be permitted to continue until exhaustion of the current seams.

Our supporting rationale is sustained by three principal pillars; heritage, environmental and economic.

Heritage

We have alluded above to the significance of historic vehicles in the role they play in living history, demonstrating and educating to current generations the development of technology and how science & engineering has advanced in the last 200 years. The interest in historic vehicles is immense and over 10 million visitors from all walks of life have attend over 1200 steam events and museums each year. Any factor which adversely affects the ability to operate safely and economically steam vehicles will inevitably have a deleterious affect on this country's transport heritage.

Environmental

Heritage vehicles make an insignificant contribution to polluting emissions. The 6000 or so road steam engines in the UK contribute just 0.0014% of the overall UK CO2 emissions.



Whilst that contribution is extremely small, the FBHVC recognises that it should support initiatives which reduce or address CO2 emissions. One way is to maintain and support more sustainable and clean sources for the lump coal required by steam engines. If coal is not available from the Ffos y Fran mine, it has to be imported from overseas from countries such as Columbia, Poland and Kazakhstan with the extra CO2 emissions associated with shipping. In addition, the imported coal is of a quality distinctly less suitable for steam engines, producing higher smoke emissions and reduced efficiency.

Economic

The historic vehicle movement as a whole produces an estimated £7.2 billion as the total spend in the UK economy and £946 million is the annual value of overseas spending with British firms on historic vehicle products and services. The National Traction Engine Trust which is a member of the FBHVC estimates that road steam alone contributes upwards of £3/4 billion to local businesses and charities each year. Rising prices for imported coal obviously jeopardises the ability for mainly volunteer enthusiasts to pursue their hobby thus affecting economic activity. In addition, the FBHVC understands that premature closing of the mine will jeopardises jobs in the local community.

Conclusion

The FBHVC respectfully requests that the appeal by the owners of the Ffos y Fran mine be supported and mining be allowed to continue for the benefit of heritage and the community.