

Bala and Penllyn Tourism Association  
 Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> January, 7.30pm  
 Plas yn Dre

Present	Apologies	Action
Peter Tooth            Mel Williams	Mary Gareth	
Peter Field            Katrina Le Saux	Gwyneth Jones	
Sarah Lind            Dorothi Evans	Gwenlli Davies	
Wendy Pryce-Jones Val Hawkins	Edith Roberts	
Lindsay Hind        Rosina Jones		
Ray Hind              Jack Reeves		
David Mitchell      Olwen Davies		
Stella Welch        Cristine Rhisiart		
Zoe Hawkins		

**Presentation by Val Hawkins, “Why use Guestlink”**

This was an extremely informative talk and Val may be contacted via a direct line on 01654-703732 for any member’s questions arising from the evening’s presentation.

**Presentation by Christine Rhisiart, Business Development Adviser from Coleg Llandrillo Cymru.**

Christine gave a very useful brief talk about the courses and funding that is now available in Dolgellau. The Business Skills Hotline number is; 0845 6066160.

The Minutes of last year’s AGM were read by Mel Williams and were approved by Peter Field and Lindsay Hind.

**Chairman’s report** was presented by Mel Williams, this will be available to read on Visit Bala website.

**Treasurer’s report** was presented by Ray Hind, this will be available to read on Visit Bala website.

**Election of Officers:**

Chairman: Melanie Williams

Proposed: David Mitchell, Seconded: Lindsay Hind.

Vice-Chairman: Sarah Lind

Proposed: David Mitchell, Seconded: Jack Reeves

Treasurer: Ray Hind

Proposed: David Mitchell, Seconded: Jack Reeves

Secretary: Katrina Le Saux

Proposed: David Mitchell, Seconded: Lindsay Hind

**Any Other Business:**

Stella Welch has some, “Bag-y-Bala” bags for sale. They retail at £4.00 each, cost is £3.00 with the seller making £1.00 profit.

The next cake stall, on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> June will be selling the bags with the profit made being donated to the Tourism Association.

The meeting was brought to a close at 9.25pm.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> March at Plas yn Dre, 7.30pm.

## **Bala & Penllyn Tourism Association Chairman's Report 2010 - 2011**

Firstly I should like to thank members of the Bala & Penllyn Tourism Association for their support over the last 12 months. My especial thanks must go to Ray Hind for being Treasurer and to Katrina LeSaux our Secretary. Work has been continuing throughout the year on the website. Ray has been working tirelessly on gathering and uploading information and I would like to thank him on behalf of the Tourism Association for all his considerable effort on [www.VisitBala.org](http://www.VisitBala.org). Elfyn Pritchard and Gareth Griffiths have also begun the work of translation and once again our sincere thanks as an association must be extended to them for all their volunteering.

Fund raising has continued throughout the year and thank you to all who have supported us with your time and effort. This work has enabled us to once again buy bulbs for the town and the TIC.

Ray Hind has been working with 'Cwmni Caban' in adding information to the 'Discover Gwynedd' website. The information points are to be placed throughout the Gwynedd area. They will be in the format of an interactive screen which will have internet linkage to Gwynedd Council site. Each information point will have its own home page highlighting the local history, culture and areas of special interest. The idea is to inform through, "sound bites", so, for example, visitors will be able to learn of the diversity of wildlife found in the Penllyn area and where this might be found. They will learn of local folklore and legends which will help connect to the area they are visiting and enhance a sense of place. Local businesses and restaurants will be included to increase visitor awareness of what is available in the designated area. No accommodation providers will be listed but there will be a link to [www.VisitBala.org](http://www.VisitBala.org). Elfyn has also been translating this work.

To promote the area further, another advert has been placed in the Snowdonia Mountains & Coast brochure. This should benefit all members. We have also made a number of press releases.

Work has been continuing with the eMid Wales Networking Group in order to attract more people into Meirionnydd by working together to raise the quality of the tourism product. This work is supported by TPMW and a meeting is planned for the 11<sup>th</sup> February 2011 at Canolfan Cywain when we will need your presence, input and advice. Some great ideas have come from these meetings such as: journalist visits, promotional events etc., but we need more of our members to get involved to make these ideas feasible. Many hands make light work.

We have also looked at the provision of leaflets for Bala & Penllyn. The need for reprinting has been identified for some of the leaflets. [www.visitbala.org](http://www.visitbala.org) and 'WaW' will be added to any reprints or new publications. The town Council gave us a contribution of £50.00 to produce a pdf version of the 'Town Trail' which you can now find on the 'brochure request' section of 'Visit Bala'. The Town Council are in the process of creating an updated version of this successful brochure as a colour version.

During March I was approached as Chair of the Tourism Association to give a presentation on our role within the tourism industry to a group of young people Gyrfa Cymru – 'Brolio Tref Y Bala!' The young people thoroughly enjoyed the day and went on to produce some great artwork which could be used to promote Bala. See the artwork on You Tube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sWdf6UxnwSc>

The 'Walkers are Welcome' application has been completed. This involved a lot of form filling and research and I once again must thank Ray Hind for helping me to complete this work. We are now waiting for a response to see if we have met all the criteria.

Members of the Tourism Association supported the North Wales Country Fair held at Cywain last summer. We worked together to both promote the event and also with manpower over the August weekend. This is now an annual event and should be a great boon to the town.

Thank you to Carol Keys-Shaw who has been researching the Pride of Place Scheme and Tidy Towns in Wales for possible funding/suggestions. She has passed on her research to the Town Council to follow up.

Katrina LeSaux has managed to persuade Gwynedd Council to add the wording 'Sinema/Cinema' to Neuadd Buddug and signs will hopefully be up very soon. The Bala & Penllyn Tourism Association has proposed that we contribute financially to this project. This should be a great benefit to our visitors this coming season.

We were surprised to be informed by Gwynedd Council, without consultation, that the TIC in Bala is now to operate on seasonal opening terms. This means that it will be open for 26 weeks of the year – April to September over 5 days. As you will remember I contacted members to make their views known to Gwynedd Council on this issue back in the autumn. Since then the Committee were informed by Gwynedd Council that

they are trying to create a workable solution for the operation of our TIC. Their proposal is that the building could possibly be shared with a business or even the Town Council in order to raise additional revenue. Unfortunately this still won't affect the seasonal opening times as decided by the Councillors. Tenders are being invited over the next few weeks from interested parties to share the building. Gwynedd Council stated that there were different options for opening times over the 26 weeks. We have a further meeting with the Council on the 3<sup>rd</sup> March at the TIC.

As an Association we have 42 members but unfortunately our meetings and the groundwork needed to make the Association viable is only supported by a handful. As was raised by our members in the past our new web site also needs to be translated into Welsh. This work so far has been undertaken by volunteers outside of the association. I should be grateful to take advantage of the different expertise I know is amongst our membership over the next 12 months. We need members' assistance on several areas, including translation, seeking funding, a Town Map, Interpretation Boards and publicity leaflet/brochures.

Best wishes

Mel Williams

## **Bala & Penllyn Tourism Association AGM - 4 February 2010**

### **Treasurer's Report** (accounts prepared 31 January 2010)

The projected net asset (after future liabilities/income) is £1,650, of which the major part is allocated to the development of the website as this was provided in a grant from Magnavox for this purpose. The sum of £326 is allocated to the TIC flower bed.

The income for the year was £8,245 which comprised £5,016 in grants from the Tourism Partnership Mid-Wales and Magnavox, and £1,000 from our website partner (Bryniau Golau) and a further £1,000 from website page sponsors (Cysgoed-y-Coed, Bala Adventure & Watersports, Whitewater Centre, Plas-yn-Dre Restaurant, Bala & Penllyn Rotary Club). Membership and web fees raised £1,070. Fund raising at Late Night Shopping raised £160, while the two Cake Stalls raised £474. Note that the Committee have contributed £1,400 of the Website partner/sponsor funds raised, as well as significant amount of their time.

The outgoing expenditure for the year was £5,262 of which £4,294 was the website and £968 for promotion and publicity, e.g. publicity cards and advertising on Snowdonia Mountains and Coast brochure and Wrexham triathlon Club.

To conclude, membership is now 40 and the Association's finances are in a sound position.

### **Marketing/Website Report**

Phase I of the VisitBala website development is complete. The website has been professionally developed by Future Studios Ltd with Committee members writing and loading the content, which has been a major activity. We have received significant financial assistance from Tourism Partnership Mid-Wales for this Phase.

We are pleased with the new website and have received many favourable comments, including: Tourism Partnership Mid-Wales and Gwynedd Council while one member has suggested that we nominate the site for an award.

Some further improvements are planned including:

- A video gallery with rafting, high-ropes and canyoning videos.
- Adding brochures in PDF format to the website.
- Improvements/additional pages, e.g. villages of Penllyn, more community information
- Images will be added to some pages.
- Additional images in the gallery.
- A map of Bala.

Phase II of the website development, is now under way and this will add a capability so that members will be able to update their own entry. Again Tourism Partnership Mid-Wales are providing significant financial assistance for this Phase.

Phase III of the website development, which will include a Welsh language capability to the website. The cost of replicating the website is around £2,500 the grant from Magnavox has provided £1,200, thus we need to raise £1,300, excluding translation and checking costs which we hope to avoid or reduce by using volunteers.

In order to publicise the website, the following have been carried out:

- Snowdonia Mountains and Coast brochure entry and website link
- Wrexham Tri-Club website link
- Requests to other tourism organisations for reciprocal links
- Visit Bala flyers in the form of a postcard that is available to members and through the TIC.

We would also like to reprint brochures (e.g. walking) and develop a new brochure for Bala & Penllyn. A longer term aim is to qualify for the Walker's Welcome Towns and Villages scheme.

There are many ways in which members can help, these include:

- Provide a link from their websites to Visit Bala
- Provide a link in their E-mail signature to VisitBala
- Volunteers to improve/provide new content for the website, e.g. local information, villages of Penllyn.
- Also good local images including the villages of Penllyn would improve the website.
- Volunteers to develop brochures or write "aditorials" (publicity articles) for magazines also in Welsh.
- Volunteers for the Welsh version of the website - this may include translation or applying for grants for translation, loading content and checking.
- Recruitment - we need more members, so please encourage other businesses to join.

Finally I would like to thank everyone who has helped make the website possible, including:

- Tourism Partnership Mid-Wales and Magnavox
- Website partner: Bryniau Golau
- Website page sponsors: Cysgoed-y-Coed, Bala Adventure & Watersports, Whitewater Centre, Plas-y-n-Dre Restaurant, Bala & Penllyn Rotary Club
- Committee members and others who have helped, including Stella for her review and comments.

Ray Hind

31 January 2010