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## Chairman's Report AGM 2014

It is a great pleasure to tell you that we now have 50 members of the Bala & Penllyn Tourism Association. Much of this growth is to do with the development of VisitBala and its prominence on the web, including Snowdonia Mountains & Coast, Go North Wales and Show Me Mid Wales (new Mid Wales website). We also have a huge representation on You Tube - its really worth a look at all these sites. Also be sure to update your images on [VisitBala.org](http://VisitBala.org) and your special offers to maximise your bookings. VisitBala is receiving a huge number of hits for the area, 76,000 last year and therefore your business must benefit.

Your committee have been collaborating with the Bala Business Group, Partneriaeth Penllyn, Gwynedd Council and the Town Council to develop the new GoBala website. This work was grant aided through the 'Experience Gwynedd' project which began over 18 months ago. Ray Hind has done the lion's share of this work - he has been tireless in his efforts. We have had wonderful input from photographer Hazel Price and Dinah DelChambre with her drawings of local nature. Bill Taylor, Snowdonia National Park Lake Warden, has been a mine of information on wildlife for us too. Our volunteer translators have once again been hard at work and we thank them sincerely for their continued support. As a small Tourism Association funds are limited and therefore the support of volunteers has been paramount in producing the new trails. The trails brochures are now available from the TIC store within the Leisure Centre. I am sure you will find these new resources invaluable not only to our visitors but friends and family too.

Our new notice boards are also up and have been admired by the Town Council our visitors and even other Tourism Association's across Gwynedd. They are also being respected and not plastered with posters as the old ones were. Remember you can put posters into the display board outside Ria's shop - she also has a key.

We have been successful in receiving grant funding to support our Dydd Gwyl Dewi/St David's Day events beginning on the 28th February and then on the 1<sup>st</sup> March 2014. These events sees the tourism association working with the Bala Business Group, local businesses, the Town Council and the Rotary Club. We will be celebrating with a day of events and family fun in aid of local charities. An attempt will be made to put Bala into the Guinness Book of Records by cooking the largest Welsh cake in the world. Every tree in the High Street is to be decorated in the colours of the Welsh flag as shops and local businesses compete for Bala's "Best-dressed Tree" and "Best-dressed Shop Window". You will be able to follow the Historical Town Trail with a guide if you wish while to entertain children there will be story-telling, face-painting, a circus workshop and a Tegi Bach

treasure hunt. Snowdonia Market will be selling local produce alongside a range of craft stalls around the town.

On Friday evening *Sera*, a singer-songwriter from North Wales, performs at Plas yn Dre then on Saturday evening '*Cabaret Pontio*' (singer *Sian James*, guitarist *Gai Toms* and Nubian drummers *Nubanour*) will perform '*Damned Nations*' at Neuadd Buddug Sinema.

I am sorry to tell you that Neuadd Buddug is under threat of closure. It would appear that it is virtually impossible to acquire films that are not digital. The cinema needs upgrading or there is a proposal to possibly provide the facility within the new Lifelong Learning Centre to be developed at Ysgol y Berwyn. There is an opportunity to develop a 'Friends of Neuadd Buddug' should people be ready to take on this role.

Cwmni Partneriaeth Penllyn are opening Canolfan Henblas and this will be a place to meet in the centre of town. It will be offering services for the community such as meeting rooms, conference facilities, equipped training room, offices for rent, hot desking facilities and a counselling room. This should be up and running by the end of May.

We were invited by Gwynedd Council, as were all groups in Bala, to take part in a 'Walk around the Town' to look at the state of the town Centre. Many issues were found such as inadequate and unmatched signage, uneven surfaces, broken flowerbeds, etc., together with needs to update and make the town more welcoming. Unfortunately only three groups groups attended, the sixth form of Ysgol y Berwyn, Town Council and ourselves. There is a long list of jobs to do but insufficient manpower to undertake all the work. We have volunteered to work with the Town Council to produce new banners for the High Street. The Town Council have volunteered to organise new Christmas lights for the town. There is £7,500 allocated to the town - if anyone is interested in helping with some of the projects and wishes to see the report I am sure the town would benefit.

On the 31st January I have been invited to a meeting to discuss the re-structuring of Tourist Information Centres across Gwynedd. I will keep you informed of the developments but your Committee will be fighting any suggestion of closure of TIC's.

It only remains now for me to thank you and your devoted committee members for continued support over the last 12 months and to wish you all a prosperous season in 2014.

Melanie Williams