

Bala & Penllyn Tourism Association
Minutes of meeting held at Plas yn Dre at 7.00pm on
Thursday 17th May 2010

Present:

Mel Williams (Chair)
Ray Hind (Treasurer)
Carol Keys
Jack Reeves

Apologies:

Katrina LeSaux
Peter Tooth
Wendy
Stella Welch
Mary & Mike Garah
Megan Pugh
Dave Mitchell
Olwen Davies

Welcome:

Mel welcomed everyone to the meeting. Mel thanked Ray Hind (Abercelyn) for his constant work on the Visit Bala web site as far as content and photography is concerned and also for his continued reviewing of the performance of the site. Organising subtle changes and working with Richard Thoroughgood at Future Studios to ensure our site is fully optimised and easy to use. He has also been meticulous in checking that we are getting value for money and that all work has been carried out as specified in our quote. Thankyou Ray.

Mel also thanked those who have the link to www.visitbala.org on to your website and email. This makes a huge difference to our position on the web.

Mel also thanked Katrina LeSaux (Bryniau Golau) for all her hard work with organising the flowerbed overhaul at the TIC. She also made her thanks to Lindsey Hind (Abercelyn) for some hard graft too when it came to planting and digging. Katrina is also working in partnership with the Gardening Group to ensure that the town looks good for the summer. It is planned to give some of the funds raised from the Triathlon to support the Gardening Club in buying flowers for the town. The Business Group are planting up the bed outside Midland Bank.

Chairman's Report:

Katrina made sure that the Bala Triathlon once again enabled us to raise some money – thanks to all our members who donated their time in making cakes and to Katrina, Lindsey and Barbara who I joined on the cake stall last Sunday.

As you will remember Ray and I are part of the E-marketing cluster – Tourism Groups in Llwyngwril, Harlech, Dolgellau, Barmouth, EcoDyfi Biosphere, Aberdyfi, Tywyn, and Blaenau Ffestiniog. Over the past month we have been working on ideas to encourage our visitors to really appreciate Meirionnydd. The plan is for each Tourism Group area to hold an event in order to publicise their patch. All members from all groups across Meirionnydd will be invited to take part. This will enable us to learn, first hand, about our neighbours attractions, accommodation etc., ensuring our visitors get the best experience. The events will need a lot of work setting up and I appeal for volunteers to help with this work. So please get in touch if you wish to be involved either as an organiser or as a service provider.

Members have been invited to a presentation at Llwyngwril which is in addition to these events. See the invite below:

Llwyngwril Tourism and Trade Group invite you to a presentation at the Garthangharad Hotel at 2pm on Monday 21st June for a cream tea and to meet Gerwyn Jones who is going to show you everything that is available to us and our visitors from the Cambrian Line Partnership. ([trains](#))
The session is **FREE for members** of Llwyngwril Tourism group. Non members will need to pay £5 to cover costs.

Ray and I have also taken part in E-marketing training to help with the visitbala.org website. The presentation was extremely valuable and will be sent via email to members in order to be eco-friendly.

With reference to the Welsh Language provision on VisitBala.org I appeal to Welsh speaking members to step forward and take the reins on this. We have had one volunteer come forward offering to do some translation. I have been liaising with the Town Council and they have earmarked a small sum of money to help with costs to help with translation. I have also been in touch with the Meirionnydd Regeneration Officer (Hannah Edwards) and she is very willing to help and support us in applying for funding. Unless we have a few more volunteer/s in our midst! As a trial Future Studios has added the Google translate button to Visit Bala (above Major Events) as a check of

the translation, see: <http://visitbala.org/index-translate> Could some of you please have a look at this and see if it is helpful as an interim tool? (This is only accessible through this link at this stage – it's not live on the real site.) I am aware that we have been receiving a few comments about the Welsh version not being available and possibly this could be helpful?

Would you like to be more involved in working for the development of tourism within Mid Wales? TPMW is seeking to elect two new Trade Directors to its Board. More details are available on our website www.tpmw.co.uk.

Town Map/Sign/Notice Boards – Katrina has been looking into funding to help produce a town map. It would appear there may be match-funding in the Autumn through the Countryside Council for Wales (Charlotte Barnett contact). Stella went to the Coed y Brenin Forest Trail open day on Thursday 20th May 2010 and spoke to Dan Boys, the Creative Director of the new Audio Trails. It would appear that he would be prepared to assist with the research and presentation. Steven Richards-Price can help with design and is the Interpretation Manager. I also met with the Town Council and the Bala Business Group and Partneriaeth Penllyn earlier this year and all agreed that new notice boards and leaflets were needed also reprints of existing leaflets. Therefore a partnership would be the best way forward on this in order to share funding.

“Walkers Are Welcome” – Steady progress has been made with the collection of names supporting our application. Many thanks to our members the Town Council and Awen Meirion for their help. Once again this is a project for the whole community and I have been liaising with Partneriaeth Penllyn, Bala Business Group and the Town Council in order to gain their support in this. (Please continue to collect local signatures.)

Country Fair - Work has been continuing on the Country Fair (14th & 15th August) at Cywain. The web site is getting more and more information see www.countryfairnorthwales.co.uk In order for the website to be seen could members please send the information to as many people as possible.

Treasurer's Report:

The bank balance is £3,822, since the last meeting we have received membership and web fees from those members who have renewed their membership and we have paid for Phase II of the website development.

Potential Commitments:

- Website enhancements and hosting: £630
- Welsh language capability for Website: £880 (static pages) £2,300 (static & dynamic pages) £5,110 (static & dynamic pages + members log-in).
- Town map/information boards
- Replacement of brochures

It may be possible to obtain grants towards these items; however, grants are typically require matched funding.

Marketing/Website Report

Members log-in to the Website is now available so that members will be able to update their own entry.

The committee has been busy improving the content and layout of the pages and picture gallery including additional images.

Current enhancements to the website either planned or being considered include:

- Google translate option
- Modification to the banner as requested at the AGM
- Late availability/Special offers page
- Improvements to static page layout
- Live feed of events from Mid-Wales Tourism
- Booking option via Mid-Wales Tourism

Based on the funds available and commitments, it is proposed to continue with the website enhancements and that the initial Welsh language capability is for the information pages in Welsh with members able to make their own entry bilingual, Welsh or English as they choose. This is subject to volunteer effort being available for translation or grant funding for professional translation. We need volunteers to progress the Welsh language capability, either for translation, checking or identifying and applying for grant funding.

Review of Brochures

The following table provides a list of brochures already available for the Bala area.

Brochure	organisation	notes
Y Bala croeso i Benllyn Welcome to Penllyn	Bala & Penllyn Tourism Asso	TIC have none left
Penllyn crwydro The Penllyn Trails Mountains & lakes of Penllyn	Bala & Penllyn Tourism Asso	TIC have some left
Penllyn crwydro The Penllyn Trails Valleys & rivers of Penllyn	Bala & Penllyn Tourism Asso	TIC have some left
Penllyn crwydro The Penllyn Trails A circular walk around Bala	Bala & Penllyn Tourism Asso	TIC have none left
Beicio o amgylch y bala Bike routes around bala	Antur Penllyn	8 boxes at Cywain
Y Bala Tro Trefol Town Walk	Bala Town Council	Town Council unable to find artwork
Llyn Tegid	SNPA	
Y Bala Gateway to Snowdonia	Gwynedd Council	

The printing cost of an A4 folded brochure is £350 for 5,000 +£35 for each additional 1,000. Note that existing brochures need some updating.

Any other business:

Snowdonia Mountains & Coast Partnership Prize – Mel agreed to write a letter on behalf of the Bala & Penllyn Tourism Association in support of their application.

Use of Wheelchairs on the High Street – Carol reported that she had had a friend staying who was a wheelchair user. She had great difficulty negotiating the High Street in Bala and was very disappointed therefore in the Town. Carol was asking her friend to write a letter outlining the difficulties in order that we can report this back to the Council.

Talk on E Crime - Ray announced that the Bala & Penllyn Rotary Club are having an E-crime talk & meal on the 5th July at Plas yn Dre. At a previous meeting we had discussed the idea of having a speaker on this very subject at one of our meetings. It was suggested that members should be approached to gauge their interest in such a meeting or if they would be prepared to join the Rotary Club. NB. Mel has written to members since the meeting but has had no response as yet.

Brochures for Bala & Penllyn – Ray had very kindly been doing some work on the availability of brochures (see the table above). It was agreed that Mel would write to the Town Council, Business Group, Antur Penllyn and the Partneriaeth Penllyn asking them to join with us in looking at this issue.

Support on membership listing on the www.visitbala.org website: Carol said that she found logging in to be very easy and that she had found no problems. Therefore it was agreed that there was no need to deliver the training session as planned.

Wind Turbines – Carol requested that this issue was put on the agenda for the next meeting.

The Bible Society – have written to us outlining their intention to create a Faith Heritage Centre in Llanycil. Bala. They asked for our support in the form of a letter. Jack agreed to draft a letter by the next meeting outlining our concerns but supporting in principle.

Mel thanked Plas yn Dre for their hospitality in allowing us to use their wireless internet access and also for providing coffee and the room.

Next meeting – to be confirmed by Katrina.