

Minutes Bala and Penllyn Tourism Association
Plas yn Dre
Thursday 26th June, 6pm

Attending: Melanie Williams, Ray Hind, Katrina Le Saux, Stella Welch, Dorothi Evans, Olwen Davies, Jack Reeves. Anna and Seth from Capel Clay.

Apologies: Stephanie and Toby Hickish, Peter Tooth, Carol Keys-Shaw, David Mitchell, Wendy and David Pryce-jones.

Last meetings minutes were read by Melanie Williams.

Approved Jack Reeves

Seconded Ray Hind

Chairman's Report presented by Melanie Williams.

Many thanks to all who helped with the Dydd Gwyl Dewi Event on the 1st March this year. The highlight of the day was the World Record attempt of making the biggest Welsh Cake in the World! The consistency of the mix, the rolling to size and then the cooking all came together on the day to meet the criteria of the Guinness Book of Records of a 20kg cake. The cooked weight was 21.9kg and the diameter was 1.5 metres! We still await certification from the Records office. I should like to thank the team of cooks led by Lindsay Hind who spent hours trying out different mixes and textures to ensure success on the day. Also the team of hands on people including:

Peter Cottee, Katrina Le Saux, Mari Elin Davies, Michael Williams, Andrew Roberts, Dai Lazarus, Tyly Roberts, Ray Hind, Hazel Price, Huw Price, Gwyn Evans.

The town began celebrating on the Friday as local businesses competed by decorating the 25 trees lining the High Street in the colours of the Welsh flag. Shop windows were dressed and flags were hung, it was a glorious spectacle. There was a buzz of expectation for the following day, March 1st, to celebrate Dydd Gŵyl Dewi. The children loved the Circus Workshop, the Magician and the storytelling. There were smiling faces from adults and children alike as families rushed around the town to see; the world famous Choir 'Cor Godre'r Aran', to follow the Tegï Bach Treasure Hunt (son of our Lake Monster), buy from Snowdonia Market and local artisan craft stalls, whilst enjoying an historic Town Trail and having their faces painted en route. Everyone wearing their daffodils, some wearing Welsh costume, and smiling broadly.

The cooking of the Welsh Cake drew a huge crowd and there was a rush to buy a piece of the Biggest Welsh Cake in the World. There were a few tense moments as the team of cooks rolled the cake to the correct depth and then cooked the cake over very hot coals. The temperature was monitored and the cake was twisted and turned to cook evenly.

Then came the flip and in came the team to lift the metal plates with the 3 stone Welsh Cake in the middle! There was a roar from the crowd as the flip was successful and a cheer of joy when the top came off and the cake was perfectly browned! The whole cake was sold, including offcuts and crumbs, within 15 minutes!

The day ended with prize giving and the local school children leading the crowd with well-known Welsh songs.

The day exceeded all our expectations. We launched GoBala.org our new web portal for trails in Penllyn; we enticed hundreds of people into the town to shop, we created a feel-good factor with fun for all and managed to bake the biggest Welsh cake in the World! Money was raised for; Macmillan, Ty Gobaith, Gobowen, Rotary, and The Urdd. We achieved a real sense of community. This event was funded through ticket sales for the concert and sponsorship.

I should like to draw your attention to the fact that the GoBala Trails sets are available from Bala Adventure and Watersports Shop as they have kindly offered to look after them for us. They are also available as pdf downloads from GoBala.org

The town centre was a picture as Katrina LeSaux organised for the shops to decorate the trees once again for the Urdd Eisteddfod in May. Many of the towns people love the decoration and there has been a request made by the Town Council for the decoration to remain up for the summer season.

I have been busy once again applying for grant funding from Gwynedd Council Town Centre Improvement and Revival Scheme. I was successful in getting money to pay for banners for the High Street in Bala. I am extremely grateful for the support of volunteers once again. This project has been brought in on an extremely tight budget but due to their generosity we have a great representation of things to see and do in the area. Many thanks to Evan Dobson, Hazel Price, Simon Keates, Katrina LeSaux and the Town Council who have worked with me and contributed to the project. I am thrilled to bits with the results and I am sure this will entice more people into the town centre. There are 10 banners in all depicting all aspects of local life in Bala and Penllyn. The banners are double sided so there are 20 images. We have also bought the urls: BwrlwmBala.org (GoBala.org) and YmweldBala.org (VisitBala.org)

As you will all know the TIC has now been closed. We now have a TIP (Tourist Information Point) in the Leisure Centre as before but it does have an extensive range of leaflets within the foyer which is kept stocked by Gwynedd Council. The Leisure Centre staff are helping visitors as much as they can with questions on a voluntary basis. Our websites - VB & GB are also on the initial screen that users see when they access the computer in the foyer. Ann at Manna (Christian Bookshop), Cafe Tegid and Bala Adventure & Watersports are also displaying tourist information. For the future I have been speaking to Henblas about having a TIC within the building. We managed to secure

much of the furniture from the closing TIC office for the purpose of relocation at a future date. This all hangs in the balance at the present time.

All that remains is for me to wish you all a prosperous season.

All best wishes

Mel Williams

Treasurer's Report presented by Ray Hind.

Treasurer's Report

Based on the last statement, the bank balance is £4,271. The income from membership, so far, is £2,115. Not everyone has renewed their membership yet.

Recent expenditure was the lamp-post banners (£3,550) mainly paid for by a grant from Gwynedd Council.

Potential Commitments:

- Reprinting Trails leaflets.*
- Updating the VisitBala web platform which is now not fully supported and is not compatible with mobile devices. In addition the look needs updating.*
- Website hosting, marketing, membership 2014 (circa £500).*

St David's Day

<i>Summary</i>	
<i>Income</i>	<i>£ 2,477.40</i>
<i>Grant contribution</i>	<i>£ 2,756.74</i>
<i>Expenses</i>	<i>£ 4,680.70</i>
<i>Net Proceeds</i>	<i>£ 553.44</i>






Distribution of proceeds

- Urdd donation: £140*
- Hope House/Ty Gobaith donation: £140*
- McMillan Nurses donation: £140*
- Tourism Association: £133*

In addition the Rotary Club collected £239.75, which was distributed as follows:

- Rotary Club Good Causes: £60*
- Hope House/Ty Gobaith donation: £60*
- McMillan Nurses donation: £60*
- Tourism Association: £60*

Therefore the following funds have been raised:

-  *Rotary Club Good Causes: £60*
-  *Urdd donation: £140*
-  *Hope House/Ty Gobaith donation: £200*
-  *McMillan Nurses donation: £200 (which should be doubled by Barclay's Bank)*
-  *Tourism Association: £193*

Total donations for charity/good causes: £600 (£800 with Barclay's Bank matched funding)

The banners in the High St were discussed. Many have offered their congratulations and approval; they brighten the High St and are a colourful welcome for visitors to the Town. Mel and Hazel are responsible for these inspiring images of Bala life, and the Association is grateful for all their hard work.

Mel asked Dorothea if the Town Council would take the banners down at the end of the summer season and replace them once again at the start of next year's season.

The Bible Society are to open their new centre in Llanycil on 4th October.

There is to be a parade from Capel Tegid to Llanycil at 1.30pm and a singing festival at 5.30pm.

Details to be posted on Visit Bala.

'The Sacred Mountain', a talk about the artist James Dickson Innes, is to take place at Bryn y Groes on 8th November, 6pm. The talk will cover the history of both his life and his art, with specific reference to the paintings he made of the Arenig mountain. Please let Katrina know if you are thinking of attending this event. The hall can only hold 100 and if there is a stampede for tickets then we may have to reconsider the venue. Speakers: John Hoole, Margaret Simons and Keith Bowen, are *the* experts on the life and work of Innes. It's a bit like Luis Suarez coming to discuss tooth enamel, or Derek Brockway talking about precipitation, or Katherine Jenkins demonstrating breath control. Well.....I'm sure you've got the general idea.

Some good news.

We now have confirmation from the Guinness Book of Records that the bid to make the largest Welsh cake in the world has been achieved. The official certificate arrived last week and a press release has been sent to spread the good news.

It is a fantastic achievement by a dedicated team of volunteers, and a wonderful accolade for the town.

And now some sad news.

Ray Hind announced at the meeting that the time has come for him to hang up his figures,

spread sheets, and mathematical wizardry, and retire from the Association.

Ray has not been seen by Lindsay for many a year since he first became involved with the Bala Tourism Association. 'I'm really looking forward to having some quality time with my husband' she remarked, 'There's a nasty bit of damp in the cellar which needs seeing to, and my alchemilla mollis could do with a prune'.

Without Ray the Visit Bala and Go Bala websites would not exist. We would not have the quality maps of the area or the fabulous Bala brochures. He has worked tirelessly for us all, and the association has benefited from his ability to see projects through to the end, even when the goal posts have been frequently moved. (I think I've got football fever). He has been treasurer, web-master and chief toiler through numerous grant application forms. We will all be the poorer after his departure.

May I just say, 'Elvis has left the building'.

The next meeting is to be held Thursday 11th September 7pm, at Plas yn Dre.