

Bala and Penllyn Tourism Association
Minutes of Meeting held on: 14th September 2011
Plas yn Dre, 7pm

Present:	Apologises:
Mel Williams-Chairman Ray Hind-Treasurer Sarah Lind-Deputy Chairman Katrina Le Saux-Secretary Stella Welch Jon Smith Lindsay Hind Eirian Davies Jack Reeves Toby and Stephanie Hickish Peter Field	Carol Keys-Shaw David Mitchell Dorothe Evans

Previous Minutes were read by Mel Williams.

Approved by Jack Reeves

Seconded by Ray Hind

Ray Hind read the Chairman's report, see attached document RH

Toby and Stephanie Hickish said that they had not been receiving any e-mails
Katrina to look into this and correct the error. KLS

Walkers are Welcome, more bilingual stickers required. RH

Mel Williams gave a further report:

Firstly offering a vote of thanks to Ray Hind for all his work in grant application funding and
to Katrina Le Saux for her continuing work as Secretary.

News of the TIC

As you know there are huge changes at the TIC and it closes for the winter at the end of
September. It is now only open 26 weeks of the year.

You may not know that Nora is retiring.

Nora has worked at the TIC for 25 years, would we as an association like to present a token
of our thanks on one of her last working days?

Stella Welch suggested a bouquet of flowers made by Rosina Jones.

There is to be a party, at some point in Porthmadog, should a representative attend?

The TIC building is being considered for considerable renovation, in order to accommodate a
third party, who have tendered to share the building.

Talks are ongoing.

Gwynedd Council are aware that the Tourism Association supports this option, now that
access to the TIC is only for 26 weeks per year.

While the TIC is being altered, work is in progress to upgrade the information provided by
the Leisure Centre.

Leaflets should be available in the vestibule just past the seating area.

It has been agreed by the Town Council to allow Gwynedd Council to use the broken existing posts in town to display information maps.

The Town Council told Gwynedd that we are now organising the other two notice boards for the town.

Antur Penllyn (post meeting correction Penllyn Partnership) is in the process of taking over the old Chemists in Bala High Street.

The idea is to offer a, “hot desk” to anyone wishing to work from Bala.

Gwynedd Council have approached Antur Penllyn to ask if they would be prepared to have an information point there.

This may also include an info-point computer;

Experience Gwynedd info and Visit Bala

Croeso Cymru-destination management have a new fund of money.

Gwynedd Council have made an application for funding, from this money, for a Digital Kiosk in Bala.

This was suggested by Aqua Marketing, with whom Bala Tourism Association has been working closely, over the past few years.

Through the work produced by, A Sense of Place and Meirionnydd Cluster networking and training, it had been noted that Bala would benefit from such a facility.

A grant of £20,000 needs to be secured in order to afford the kiosk, i-phone links, geo-cashing, etc.

Dr Peter Cottee presented his talk, “The Trouble with Wind Farms”

This was a talk which explored the history and development of alternative sources of energy. It looked at the spread of Wind Farms across Britain.

It explored the funding and subsidies behind such developments, their efficiency in energy production and whether they have the capability to reduce carbon emissions. It also explored whether wind energy was a realistic alternative to nuclear production and thermal electricity production.

The plans by Scottish Power to erect 25 of the largest turbines in Britain at Mynydd Mynyllod was discussed, and also the effect that this may have upon our surrounding area.

Dr Peter Cottee is a member of STEMM, stop the exploitation of Mynydd Mynyllod, and more information is available from contact@stemm.org.uk

Following Dr Peter Cottee’s talk a lively question and answer session took place.

After Dr Cottee had left, the discussion turned as to whether Bala Tourism Association should have, “an opinion” to approve or oppose the planned local development, or if it should be up to each individual member to make their own decision.

Everyone was in agreement that as an Association we are making enormous strides in grant applications, with future plans that will benefit the Bala area and promote tourism, and that these plans should not be jeopardised by splitting the group.

Mel Williams suggested that all members should be e-mailed and that they should make their individual decisions about the Mynydd Mynyllod development. Mel said that she didn’t

want us to lose the impetus that we had as a Tourism Association, as our work is progressing so well.

Stella and Sarah were anxious that the group should not be divided by a, “for” and “against” camp arising.

Jon Smith thought there were benefits to be had by the development of the Wind Farm, but Bala Association could be assured of his membership, no matter what the outcome.

It was agreed by those present that the Tourism Association would not take a stand either for or against on this issue. Minutes and information regarding the proposed Mynydd Mynyllod development would be circulated to members in order for them to make their own informed decision and act accordingly.

<http://www.mynyddmynyllodwindfarm.com/about.asp>

Local Action Group STEMM (Stop the Exploitation of Mynydd Mynyllod) – Peter Cottee 01678 521782 or contact@stemm.org.uk Meeting 6.30pm on Monday 19th September, 2011 at Llandrillo Village Hall

Any Other Business

Opinion was sought by the group as to whether an advert is once again to be placed in Snowdonia Mountains and Coasts annual publication.

Cost £300.00

Stella asked if the photograph could be swapped.

Ray thought that would be at an extra cost.

Ray thought the picture could be lightened.

Everyone voted for the advert to be placed for next year.

Mel asked if Bala website should have its own Face book page. Sara Lind said she would look into organising this.

Sarah said that she was inundated with requests for accommodation for the Bala Triathlon.

Stella wondered if e-mails could be circulated around the Tourism Association group, of people looking for accommodation.

Lindsay Hind suggested that this was the job of the Tourism Information Centre, when they're open.

Mel thanked everyone for coming; she welcomed Erian Davies as a new member, and said that the next meeting would be called when we had news about the Grant Applications.

The meeting closed at 20.55hrs.

Bala & Penllyn Tourism Association – Report for Meeting, 14 September 2011

Since the last meeting on 26 January, the Committee have been busy and also those members that supported the meetings for specific purposes.

Meetings for specific purposes

- Meirionnydd Tourism Network Workshop, with Wyn Roberts, AQUA Marketing, 18 February 2011, held at the Cywain Centre
- Sense of Place Review by Hilary Churcher, VisitWales consultant, presentation and discussion, 11 May 2011, held at the Cywain Centre.
- Informal meeting to discuss issues facing small businesses with Joyce Watson AM (Mid & West Wales) held at Cysgod y Coed on the 16th August.

Meirionnydd Tourism Network Workshop

Previously we have participated in the Meirionnydd Tourism Network program – a series of meetings to share ideas and best practise with the Tourism Groups in Meirionnydd. Because the groups were at different stages of development, it was decided by MWTP to hold workshops and produce action plans, so that the groups can reach a similar level. An Action Plan for each group has been produced.

Sense of Place Review

Hilary recommended that we should develop a “Sense of Place” Plan for Bala & Penllyn. The first step would be to seek business advice, to develop a business plan for the Association which would be used to seek funding to develop a “Sense of Place” Plan. Following local business advice, we contacted the Wales Cooperative who suggested Mantell, we held a meeting with Mantell who suggested the Wales Cooperative. We have asked these organisations to talk to each other on this subject.

TIC Reduced Opening

Members of the Committee attended a further meeting with Gwynedd Council regarding the reduced opening for the TIC. Now implemented as 5 days per week in the summer and closed in the winter. No progress had been made by Gwynedd Council on other options such as an information point or sharing the building. This process was very frustrating.

Wales visitor information on-line survey (VisitWales) the deadline is extended until 16 September. This is an opportunity to provide your views with us on tourist information provision and the role of Tourist Information Centres.

Gwynedd Economic Partnership

The Treasurer attended the Gwynedd Economic Partnership Tourism Sub Group meeting on 8 September. The aim is to involve the Tourism Groups in Gwynedd.

Marketing/Website Report

The Welsh version of Visit Bala website is under developed. The website has now been replicated with a Welsh menu - in the absence of Welsh content the page will default to English content. With regard to members entries (where to stay, eating out, shopping, things to do) members will be able to add Welsh to their entry.

We need volunteers to progress the Welsh language capability, either for translation, checking or loading content.

Grant Applications

We have submitted applications for the following grants:

- Gwynedd Voluntary Development Fund: up to £10,000
- Experience Gwynedd: £10,000 plus assistance of consultants for 2 years

The Gwynedd Voluntary Development Fund is to produce artwork and a set of bilingual publications, including the following:

- Town map for use on the website and in publications
- Area map on the website and in publications
- A Map Brochure incorporating the Town and Area Maps
- Publicity Brochure incorporating, inter alia, the Town and Area Maps and local information and panoramic views of the area
- New leaflets (3) based on the successful Penllyn Trails theme promoting the area, the local culture and walking

With regard to the Experience Gwynedd application, we have proposed a number of topics, such as:

- By “branding” to give the area its own identity
- Through Ambassadors: local or famous people that promote the area through press, TV, etc.
- Through digital marketing including web and social media including video, building on the Gwynedd Council Snowdonia Mountains & Coast activities
- A set of Trails Bala Town Trail, linking the Penllyn villages, etc.
- Talking Interpretation Panels using Smartphone technology or local sound play
- A factual town map and an area map that are interactive

For both grants we have received support and intention to work together on the projects from:

- Town Council
- Penllyn Partnership
- Business Group
- Antur Penllyn

Walkers are Welcome

In February, Bala was recognised as a “Walkers are Welcome” town with associated marketing benefits. Bilingual window stickers are available for members and business. More information on www.Visitbala.org.

Treasurer’s Report

The bank balance is £3,359. Potential Commitments are:

- Website enhancements (£500) sense of place related
- Website promotion (£200) Snowdonia Mountains & Coast brochure
- Town map, Area map, replacement of brochures (£2,000)
- Experience Gwynedd (£250)

There is also £220 raised by the Cake Stall and allocated to the flower bed projects. Of this amount, the Triathlon Cake Stall last Sunday raised £180 – thanks to all those that baked or sold the cakes. The Cake Stall fund raising has resulted in the Cinema now having signs, which cost £200.