

SIAMBR FASNACH A THWRISTIATH BRO FFESTINIOG
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND TOURISM
MINUTES 8th June 2015

Present: Clare Britton – Rheilffordd Ffestiniog ac Eryri (Cadeirydd); Iris Fosbury – Eifion Stores; Rhiannan Jones – Brethyn Blaenau/Oriel Moelwyn; James Cozens – Llechwedd Slate Caverns; Ceri Cunnington – Antur Stiniog; Kate Knowles – Llechwedd Slate Caverns; Jon March – Jon March Photographics; Rhian Williams – Teithiau Cerdded/Blaenau Active; Gail Jordan & Dennis Jones – Harlequin Jewellery; Diane Lea – Plas Blaenddol.

Guests: Mandy Williams-Davies – Cynghorydd Sir Gwynedd & Buy Local Scheme.

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** – Owain Williams – NatWest Bank; Chris Fosbury – Eifion Stores; Kevin Baldwin – Deniro’s Café; Sue Roberts – Sue’s Bookshop; John & Celia Whitehead – Bryn Elltyd eco Guest House; Richard & Barbara Hope – Isallt House; Steve & Linda Chesworth – Amazing Drapes; Steve Cunliffe – Pengwern; Alister Haveron – Dolawel Guest House; Annwen Daniels – Cynghorydd Sir Gwynedd; David Aylward – Post graduate researcher from Waterford Institute of Technology; Helen Hardy – Elen’s Castle Hotel; Vincent Frostick – Beaton’s Accountants.
2. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**
The minutes of the previous meeting held on 23rd March 2015 were approved.
3. **MATTERS ARISING**
 - 3.1 **RAWSON TWINNING (Item 2):** Clare stated that she had attended the Rawson Twinning Meeting and noted how large and modern Rawson was. During the meeting there was also a Skype call with some town members from Rawson who were all very keen and enthusiastic for the twinning. A total of three languages were spoken. Mandy confirmed that Blaenau Ffestiniog was now officially twinned with Rawson. It was suggested that members consider how to use this connection with Rawson to generate more business for the area. Clare had asked Bedwyr to provide information for adding to the Chamber’s website.
 - 3.2 **2014 ANNUAL ACCOUNTS:** The 2014 Annual Accounts were accepted. Proposed by Clare Britton and Seconded by Rhiannan Jones.
 - 3.3 **CIST GRANT APPLICATION (Item 6.4):** Clare had submitted the bid which had been considered by Gwynedd Council and Heather Williams had requested further information from the Chamber. It was agreed that Clare would send a copy of the bid to Ceri who would then add further detail to the bid. **ACTION: CERI CUNNINGTON**
 - 3.4 **BLAENAU FFESTINIOG TOURIST LEAFLET (Item 12):** Clare reported that the new leaflet which was released around Easter 2015 had been well received. Clare suggested that the next leaflet should be bigger in order to allow for more advertisers to participate. Dennis noted that when asking supermarkets to put the leaflet on display it appeared that a central department dealt with such matters and a charge would be made for any leaflets put on display.
4. **DHFFEST 25TH & 26TH JULY 2015 & OTHER EVENTS**
 - 4.1 The DHFfest is a mountain biking weekend that also includes music events held in the local pubs after 5pm. It attracts 150-200 riders plus a further 1,000 spectators. Camping is available on the rugby pitch. There are also stalls available at Llechwedd so members were asked to contact

- Ceri if they wanted a stall. It was thought that the Chamber might want to take a stall where the new leaflet could be displayed. Ceri said that parking will become more of an issue and that it would be good in future to consider shuttle buses from Blaenau Ffestiniog. Ceri agreed to obtain quotes from local taxi firms to consider the cost. ACTION: CERI CUNNINGTON
- 4.2 It was noted that there had not been much of an increase in visitor expenditure in town when Ras y Moelwyn was held this year although it started for the first time from the centre of the town. It was felt hoped that this would improve next year now that people were aware of the new starting location. Ceri agreed to obtain a .jpg of the Blaenau Ffestiniog leaflet to send in advance to all the competitors at next year's event. ACTION: CERI CUNNINGTON
- 4.3 It was also noted that visitor numbers had increased significantly on the Llechwedd website with a greater age range of visitors to Llechwedd, Zipworld and Bounce Below. Various suggestions were proposed regarding ways to encourage visitors to the attractions on the outskirts of Blaenau Ffestiniog into the town. Kate mentioned that it might be possible to put advertising on the back of the signage at Llechwedd. Clare suggested that the Chamber should pay for the printing of posters and Mandy stated that she might be able to access some funds for this from Gwynedd Council. Clare and Kate would liaise regarding possible posters to be put on display at Llechwedd. ACTION: MANDY WILLIAMS-DAVIES/CLARE BRITTON & KATE KNOWLES
- 4.4 Clare confirmed that posters could be submitted for display at the Ffestiniog Railway and their size should be 650 x 1000mm maximum size.
- 4.5 The History Society has an exhibition in Ty Abermawddach (by Ty Gorsaf) which is open between May and the end of August, Monday to Friday 10am-4pm and Saturday 10am-1pm. 1,800 people visited last year and over 2,000 visited the year before.
- 4.6 A discussion took place regarding car park charges in Blaenau Ffestiniog. Mandy would approach the appropriate person at Gwynedd Council to discuss this as the current Long Stay Charging rate was not appropriate for short visits to the town. Clare agreed to send a letter of support and Mandy agreed to send Clare the name of the person to send the letter to.
ACTION: MANDY WILLIAMS-DAVIES & CLARE BRITTON
- 4.7 Mandy informed the Chamber that Gwynedd Council was currently working on a bid for World Heritage Site status for the Slate Industry in Gwynedd. Events will be held in Gwynedd before the next stage of the application process in September/October and members agreed that the Chamber could run an event or two in support of the bid. It was agreed that Clare would invite Dr. Dafydd Gwyn, an expert in industrial archaeology, trains and the slate industry, to participate in events which could possibly be run in the same week that Dr. Gwyn is lecturing at Plas Tan-y-Bwlch and Ceri agreed to obtain the dates when he would be there.
ACTION: CERI CUNNINGTON/CLARE BRITTON
- 4.8 Mandy also reported that the Economic Impact Report had been impressive and that she would keep members informed of developments following the report. ACTION: MANDY WILLIAMS-DAVIES
- 5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**
- 5.1 INTERNET ISSUES: It was mentioned that when searching for Llechwedd on Trip Advisor, searchers are taken to Conwy. James said that they were aware of this issue and were currently dealing with it with Trip Advisor. It was also noted that there was no information about Blaenau Ffestiniog on the Visit Wales website.
- 5.2 CHOIR: There would be a conductor and choir performing hymns in Diffwys on 21st June 2015 at 7pm.
- 5.3 LAP OF WALES CHALLENGE: Clare reported that Rhys Meirion, the renowned Welsh Tenor, was fundraising on behalf of Organ Donation in memory of his late sister. The Ffestiniog Railway has

donated a train on the afternoon of 5th July 2015 where all ticket sales will go to the charity. Ceri agreed to contact Nicky Beech to get an update on other fundraising events taking place in the area that day and that information would then be emailed to all members.

ACTION: CERI CUNNINGTON

- 5.4 **DISUSED RAILWAY LINE FROM BLAENAU TO TRAWS:** Ceri was organising a public meeting to discuss what is planned for the disused railway line. The Town Council is to send official invitations to major interested parties and Ceri reported that he had a meeting with the Chairman on 9th June. Clare mentioned that the British Transport Police would be very interested in the line being cleared in the interests of safety. Clare also mentioned that Larry Davies was to retire from the Conwy Valley line and had offered to help in any way in future.
- 5.5 **NATWEST BANK:** It was reported that 3 branches in Gwynedd were due to close in September 2015 which included the branch in Blaenau Ffestiniog. Members agreed that with more people visiting the town this was not the time for a bank to close and Clare agreed to write a letter of support to keep the bank open. Clare and Mandy to liaise. **ACTION: CLARE BRITTON & MANDY WILLIAMS-DAVIES**
- 5.6 **GREEN TOWN INITIATIVE:** The Green Town Initiative are moving to accommodation above the Town Council Chamber. The Initiative is a 3-year project funded by the Lottery. The launch will be on 16th June between 3pm-7pm and members were invited to attend.
- 5.7 **BUY LOCAL SCHEME:** Diane reported that Plas Blaenddol and Helen from Antur Stiniog were trialling an Accommodation with Free Gift Voucher scheme which supported Gwynedd Council's "Buy Local" initiative. Plas Blaenddol offers a Free Gift Voucher to its guests to spend in Antur Stiniog's shops. This guarantees sales for Antur Stiniog and offers an additional benefit to guests seeking accommodation.
- 5.8 **BOB COLE:** members extended their best wishes to Bob Cole who was currently in ill health and who, together with his wife Ann, used to work tirelessly for the Chamber and on projects of benefit to the local community.
- 6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**
- The next meeting would be held on Monday 7th September 2015. Venue to be confirmed.