



Promoting, developing and supporting tourism in the Wye Valley and Forest of Dean

Chairman's Report

Welcome to the AGM and to our May members meeting, as always it is great to see so many of you here and to be able to showcase so many members in our mini exhibition, please do take the time to visit the stands and have chat.

This is the formal part of the meeting, where we as Co-Chairs and Vice Chair, give you a Chairman's report and our treasurer reports on our financial position.

Since our last AGM we have had many changes within the organisation, all of which have seen us move forward at pace and with huge success. Before we move forward, we would like to thank the two past chairs, Ian Officer and Fiona Wilton for the hard work and dedication they gave to the association and for the efforts they put into their roles, making sure the association is in the great position it is in today.

We are also hugely grateful to the Forest of Dean District Council for extending our SLA for a further 2 years, this is not only great for the destination but also rewarding as it shows that we are delivering over and above the initial expectations, that we are trusted to do so and that this key strategic partner has faith in us as an organisation and wants to support us and our members.

We have welcomed Liz Marshall as our treasurer and Cerys Watts as our book keeper, Tim Davies as our marketing and communications manager, and new faces on our board including co-opted members who are standing for formal election today.

We have delivered a number of high profile marketing campaigns, and have great plans for the future, which Maureen will take you through; we have held our 4th Tourism Forum and are already working on plans for next year's; we have represented members on key national issues and have ensured that the Forest of Dean and Wye Valley has a voice and a profile where it is important – we have made sure we are noticed and taken notice of; and we have supported and developed you, our members, in your businesses and your efforts on our behalf. We have also worked tirelessly to seek out new partners, grant funding and innovative new ways to make sure that we keep the Forest of Dean and Wye Valley firmly on the map – both in marketing terms and also in terms of investing in the future, particularly with our new approach to apprenticeships which is gaining traction and recognition nationally.

It's an easy job to promote our beautiful area of the country, it's a harder job to keep up with the competition and compete in the market place, we need you our members to keep working with us not only to support our activities, but also to encourage new members to join us, to stay with us and to give us the content we need to actively provide new and exciting stories and hooks for visitors and the media.

We have welcomed a number of new developments, and we are very proud of the work of you, our members, in consistently and creatively developing your offer and your business. We have

had times where we have not been able to take an active stance on planning and political issues, as this is not our role, but we do work to provide routes for communication for those who wish to challenge political or planning decisions as well as evidence and intelligence for information gathering and background information.

We have also welcomed new members, we have developed plans for how to attract and retain members and we are always open to your views on what we should be doing in this regard, so please talk to us.

We are refocusing our approach to members meeting, based on your comments, to give you all more time to talk to us and to plan with us – we are also refreshing our destination management plan and what we see as the priorities for the destination to make sure it develops in a sustainable and relevant fashion, again, this is something we will be bringing back to you our members to make sure your views are recognised and included.

Again, at an AGM we can say this is an exciting time for us as an organisation, and a destination, we cannot be complacent, we must continue to move forward and build on the strong foundation of membership and activity. We rely on you to work with us, to talk to us and to support us, we are here for our members and for the destination and we remain committed to doing our absolute best to build on the work of the past to not only leave a lasting legacy but also to create a sustainable future.