

Siambwr Fasnach a Thwrystiaeth
Bro Ffestiniog
Chamber of Commerce & Tourism
Cofnodion / Minutes 29/04/13

Present: Rhiannon Jones – Brethyn Blaenau, Roger Clear – Taurus Designs, Bob Cole – Cyngor Tref Ffestiniog / Blaenau Ymlaen, Ann Cole – Blaenau Ymlaen, Debbie & Malcolm Jones – Debbie’s Cake’ole, Alister Haveron – Dolawel, John Whitehead – Bryn Ellyd, Sue Roberts – Sues Book Shop, Kevin Baldwin – Deniros Cafe, Chris & Iris Fosbury – Efion Stores, Clare Britton – Ffestiniog & Welsh Highland Railways, Zoe & Ann Pritchard – Parti 4, Owain Williams - NatWest, Steve & Linda Chesworth – Amazing Drapes, Annette Davies – The Bear Mountain, Jodie Catlin – Trawsfynydd Holiday Village, Gill Vescio – Isallt Guest House, Tracy Warner – Glasspirations, Gaile Weir – Bridge Café, Dave Taylor – GPS 4x4 Discovery Treks, Christine Rhisiart – Coleg Llandrillo.

1. **Apologies** – Mandy Williams-Davies - Cyngor Tref Ffestiniog / Cyngor Gwynedd, Carwyn Jones – Y Siop Werdd, Ceri Cunnington – Antur’Stiniog, Paul Thomas – Cyngor Gwynedd / Cyngor Tref Ffestiniog, Meirion Ellis – Cambrian News, Nia Roberts – Siop y Gloddfa, PC Dylan Jones – NW Police, Huw Jenkins – Campbell’s Cottage,.
Clare welcomed everyone.
2. **Minutes of last meeting & matters arising:** Change to point 8 of minutes requested – that Delwedd were not blaming Chamber rather the operational system. Rest of minutes agreed. Bob confirmed that 2 more bins were on order from Balfour Beatty, one to be placed in observation point, other near Royal Welsh. Roger enquired whether Town council will sponsor Blaenau in Bloom this year – Bob confirmed this will be discussed in sub group soon. Confirmation received that CCTV is fully operational now; there are 3 individuals as well as police responsible for them. This announcement has not gone public yet – this is up to the police to publicise.
3. **Police** – PC Dylan Jones and other PCSO’s unable to attend, but happy for any issues to be passed on to them. Roger enquired whether community service people are still available to do general duties around town – Zoe to enquire with Police. Roger and Chris reported on the bike safety meeting they attended, police had discussed their intention to visit all accommodation providers in the area to discuss bike safety as well as hold open day to laser engrave bikes – accommodation providers present hadn’t received visit. Zoe to enquire with police.
4. **DYFODOL** – Christine Rhisiart from Coleg Llandrillo was present to discuss the DYFODOL scheme which is available to all self-employed and businesses. Business pays £50 per member of staff, which then gets them access to long list of training including Food Hygiene, World Host, First Aid, Chainsaw course, solar panel installation, social media for businesses and many more. Scheme comes to an end in July 2014. Coleg Llandrillo would be willing to hold certain training courses in Bl.fest, but need minimum 10 to attend. Please contact Christine on 01341 424904 to discuss what training is available, please note that Christine will be on maternity leave at the end of May, but other members of staff will answer and assist. If you are interested in holding a training course here in Blaenau, please contact Zoe.
5. **Treasurer’s Report** – Iris confirmed that there were 51 paid up members and £785 in the chamber bank account. Money will be kept at present to be able to support website once free supported period ends.

6. **Membership Officer's Report** – Sue in contact with new members, with 2 brand new members attending the meeting for the first time. Sue still recruiting more. 2 new members gave brief introduction about their business:
GPS 4x4 discovery treks: Based in Manod, offers a range of services including wild camping, transport links and 4x4 holidays.
Glasspirations: Fused glass items for the home including glass coasters, clocks, tealight holders and soap dishes. Hoping to link with Parti4 to sell produce in the shop. In the middle of establishing and purchasing kiln to be able to produce items at home. Contact details will be on Bl.Ffest website soon.
7. **Marketing Officer's Report / Website** – Alister confirmed that it's nearing the point of deciding which businesses to pull from website if membership payment has not been received soon. If you need to change your business details, send photos and latest deals to contact Alister. Website stats distributed during meeting. CB asked whether the business page could be categorised or include search facilities as long list is unpractical, especially for businesses right at the bottom. Alister to put first newsletter on the website. Clare thanked Alister for all of his hard work and time taken to tend to the website.
8. **Blaenau Ymlaen** – Regeneration work snagging nearly complete, apart from more planting elements. Secret Shopper exercise was held in the town during the Easter break, the reports will be circulated to each business confidentially. Meeting arranged for **Monday the 13th of May, 2013** 7pm at the Council Chamber to discuss general findings. All welcome to attend.
 Chamber member suggested that Blaenau map and commercial activity was placed in the town centre to highlight the whole high street, BC agreed to raise this at next project board meeting. The regeneration work has been shortlisted for 3 major awards, raising the profile area with it.
 Postcards with Blaenau photos have been printed and will be distributed free around the shops. Around 2000 old town guide books still in the chamber offices if any businesses would like more copies. Toilet work is underway and hopefully open in next few months – will include unique art work.
9. **Antur Stiniog** – Apologies from Ceri Cunningham whom was unable to attend due to unforeseen circumstances. Zoe read his report to the chamber:
- 5300 bikers have visited site.
 - Bought 3rd mini bus due to high demand.
 - Visitor Centre to open mid-May.
 - Job advertisements for mini bus drivers and cooks in the paper this week. Antur Stiniog will be employing 13 local people by the start of June.
 - Exciting plans on the horizon to move to a new building in the town centre to promote their work and to be like a Visitor Centre / Outdoor Activities shop / Information Point / Training centre in collaboration with Coleg Meirion Dwyfor – so watch this space!
 - DhFFest biking festival happening on 13 and 14th of July with 300 bikers and estimated 1000 visitors with music entertainment being arranged around the town's pubs by Gai Toms.
 - Red Bull has shown an interest in sponsoring us.
 - The build for the Llyn Tanygrisiau path will begin in the next 2 months – open by the end of the year.
 - Link path from site to town centre will be ready by the end of the year.

- The Velorail scheme still on the horizon – clean-up day has been arranged jointly with Y Dref Werdd, Town Council and Network Rail for the 15th of May
- Working with 'Cofio Cwmorthin'(Remember Cwmorthin) on a lottery bid to renovate and place information panels there.
- Our door is always open for a panad and a chat.....

10. **Tourism** – Clare detailed on the 150 steam anniversary the Ffestiniog and Welsh Highland Railway will hold during the bank holiday weekend. Princess, one of the steam engines has been placed in Paddington station with 10k flyers distributed during its stay which mentioned Blaenau Ffestiniog and the website address. Leaflets also distributed during a recent gala and Peterborough model railway event.

Iris and Clare elaborated on recent visit by Llandudno Hospitality Association to Blaenau Ffestiniog, and were very impressed with the work of the chamber and recent regeneration works. Betws y Coed's tourism association also keen to visit and opportunity to collaborate and promote Blaenau's offering to Betws y Coed visitors. Clare will co-ordinate a visit.

Sat the 4th of May, Llechwedd are holding a Victorian fair in the morning then all activities will move down to the station platform in the town centre, for Ffestiniog Railway activities, actors etc. Chamber member raised point that no posters were distributed to local shops to promote the event, Clare noted that this should have happened. Businesses also requested copies of the 2013 timetables to place in their businesses. Reminder that TIC is placed in the old Post office book shop.

Huw Jenkins passed on some info to the chamber via e-mail, including link to Ras y Moelwyn's you tube video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rhLI92yK-A> , a number of walks around Blaenau Ffestiniog including visit to Falcon Hildred's mill arranged by the Snowdonia Society on the 4th of May. Snowdonia Society also welcomes new local business members FR, Plas Tan y Bwlch and Bryn Elltyd. EcoBro fair will be held at Penrhyndeudraeth on 18th May from 10 until 4 pm.

Other date reminders: 16th of June – Fun in the Park. 23rd of June – Tanygrisiau Carnival.

11. **AOB** - *Members raised concern an disappointment that Cartrefi Cymunedol distributed home improvement vouchers to residents recently which were only valid for businesses outside of Bl.Ffestiniog. Disappointment that these vouchers could not be used in Blaenau Ffestiniog businesses to support the local economy. Request that Chamber approach Mandy and Paul as councillors to raise the issue. Clare to write letter. *Linda raised point that no more free dog fouling bags are available. Annette requested that her shop also supplies the free bags. ZP to contact Paul Thomas to enquire about more bags.*Letter to oppose the changes to the Blaenau hospital sent to Betsy Cadwaladr but no response as of yet. ZP to re-send and send copy to members. *Chamber members raised issues regarding empty properties and homes causing a nuisance to their own business premises – a request will be sent to the Empty Homes officer from Gwynedd Council to attend the next chamber meeting to discuss issues and current schemes in place. *Next chamber newsletter to be distributed by the beginning of June so please send any info you have to either Clare or Zoe.

12. **Date of next meeting Monday 15th of July 2013 @ 7pm venue Council Chamber 5 High Street.**