

Chairmans Report

Helen and I, as Co-chairs would like to welcome you to the 2022 AGM and our October members meeting. *This is our first AGM since the pandemic of 2020/21 as we were all working on survival.*

This is the formal part of the meeting, where as Co-Chairs we present our Chairman's report and Kelly Berryman, our Treasurer, reports on our financial position.

Since our last AGM the great news is that we survived the pandemic. There were many highs and lows, and it has been extremely difficult, however, we are now financially secure.

There's a long list of thank yous: Kelly Ballard for giving us the confidence to set up our new website. Thank you to Sarah Orchard, Alex Sore and John Bosley for their time and dedication in launching and maintaining Visit Dean Wye. Thank you to Jo Butler for her work on experiential travel. In accounts thank you to Liz Marshall and Libby Sherman for supporting us especially with emergency Covid grant applications and Cerys Matthews in bookkeeping. Thank you to Kelly Berryman for stepping up from bookkeeper to Treasurer and for Ian Officer's financial guidance.

We are, as always, hugely grateful to the Forest of Dean District Council for our SLA, secured for a further 3 years. Their continued support and guidance has been critical to our survival throughout the pandemic. In addition to the SLA, they have contributed:

FODDC Welcome Back Fund £10,000 used to launch our Enjoy Summer Safely campaign
FODDC Contain Outbreak Management Fund £35,000 for our Find your Freedom campaign
FODDC £8,000 Reopening High Street Safely funding for Coleford, Lydney, Cinderford and Newent
FODDC Contain Outbreak Management Fund £5,000 Tour of Britain Cycle Race, cycling campaign

Further grants include:

Visit England

Discover England Funding in partnership with The Cotswolds £750

Emergency Covid Funding for DMOs £19,964

GFirst LEP

£3,000 Covid funding

We would also like to thank our other strategic partners: Forestry England, GFirst LEP, AONB and MCC.

In December last year, we appointed Ignyte Ltd for three years to manage our partnerships. In under 11 months, Ignyte have created more promotional opportunities for partners by starting up the monthly consumer and partner newsletters again, running competitions and increasing partner communications. Since January 2022 we have had 47 new partners join Visit Dean Wye and have given existing partners extended package options which has seen a good number of partners upgrading to different packages to gain further benefits.

Ignyte has also launched the new wedding section of the website, which highlights the wonderful venues, suppliers, and activities that the area has to offer. This gives existing partners the opportunity for inclusion in these categories and it opens up our partnerships to a whole different area of businesses.

Mid November, Rebecca Clay joins us as our Head of Tourism and not a moment too soon. Rebecca can't be with us today as she is working out her notice, but has recorded a message for us.

The Board had 6 Directors and we have all stepped down for re-election and we welcome 3 new Directors. This has negated the need for a vote from members, as together the 6 Directors fill the spaces required for the Board. We look forward to working with the new board members in the coming year and thank all involved for their support during this difficult period.

We would like to take a moment to reflect on members who are no longer with us as the pandemic enforced their closure.

However, we look forward optimistically to a bright future for Visit Dean Wye, it's partners and increased visitors to our unique and wonderful area. We rely on you, our partners, working together to promote our destination.

Finally, we would like to say a special thank you and good luck to John Bosley on his retirement and to Alex Sore on her new position with Publica. Our best wishes for the future.

Thank you Yvette Farrell and Helen O'Kane Co-Chairs