



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 9 MAY 2018

- Date: Wednesday 9 May 2018
- Time: 11.00 to 13.00
- Venue: [Forest Hills Golf Club](#), Coleford

We held our AGM at Forest Hills Golf Club, Coleford, with seventy attendees gathering to also showcase their business and network.

The [Chairman's Report](#) from Co-Chair Yvette Farrell of Harts Barn Cookery School outlined the positive changes in the organisation in the last twelve months including the taking on of full time staff and successful marketing initiatives, with WVFDT representing the region's tourism interests at both regional and national level. The two most recent Chairs, Ian Officer and Fiona Wilton were thanked for their hard work and contributions to the Board. Thanks were also given to strategic partners and funders including Forest of Dean District Council for their ongoing support. She also described how the organisation has worked tirelessly to seek out new partners, grant funding and innovative new ways to 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 WVFDT's new approach to apprenticeships which is gaining traction and recognition nationally.

Liz Marshall as Treasurer, gave her [Financial Report](#) next introducing our new Bookkeeper Cerys and explaining that the Tourism Association has moved to a new accounting system. Turnover is slightly down, staff costs are up (but offset with less spend on external agencies). The retained profit will be spent this year. There were no questions and the accounts were approved.

Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Tourism's Executive Director, Maureen McAllister reviewed the last twelve months, highlighting that the Tourism Association now had dedicated full-time staff, was successfully recruiting additional members, had launched new products and provided training initiatives for 78 businesses in 2017, while



continuing to promote the region in the UK and internationally through press coverage and digital marketing.

After the election held at the AGM, the elected Directors are as follows:

Helen O’Kane has managed [Puzzlewood](#) for nearly 7 years and grown the business from a relatively small attraction to one of the leading attractions in the area. The business has gone from strength to strength and attracted worldwide attraction with Star Wars, helping to put the Forest of Dean and Wye Valley on the map. Helen also owns [Forest of Dean Adventure](#) with its Adventure Ropes, Archery and the Climbing Tower at Beechenhurst and is Co-Chair of the Board of Directors.

Francesca Newell is the owner of a luxury glamping site, [Seven Hills Hideaway](#), on the outskirts of Abergavenny, Monmouthshire. Francesca has created a successful business and was proud to be shortlisted for the Monmouthshire Business Awards in 2016 under the category Hospitality, Travel & Tourism. Prior to starting her business Francesca was a H&S Advisor within Cardiff City Council and still provides support to businesses throughout the country on a consultative basis.

Lynda Searancke came to the Forest of Dean over 30 years ago, and has created three thriving local businesses, one of which is [Forest Barn Holidays](#) which began with a single self-catering barn growing over the last 18 years to 11 units over two sites. Mark Terry-Lush has been a member of the board since 2014 and a member of the Association for about 10 years running a self-catering business in Chaxhill. He is a former press photographer and today runs an international communications agency with offices in London, USA and China.

Nick Penny is the owner of Nick Penny Event Services – a complete solution for all aspects of event design, production and marketing. Examples of Nick’s events include Coleford Music Festival (co-director), Coleford Busking Festival and many of the Coleford Town Centre events including the Big Screen Weekend for Wimbledon held in 2016.



Sarah Orchard is a stalwart of the marketing profession of over 25 years – a Chartered Marketer, who worked for 16 years in the travel industry for brands like Kuoni, Hogg Robinson business travel, and Avis car rental. For the last 10 years, she has been working as a strategic marketing consultant advising small businesses in particular those in the tourism, leisure and lifestyle sectors on how to get better returns from their marketing efforts.

Paul Williamson is the founder and Director of Hillside Brewery, where he is involved in all aspects of running the business, including brand development, business strategy and sales, and process improvements. His previous experience includes communication and events, project management, event logistics and corporate hospitality, digital and SEO marketing and web content management and design, best practice and quality standards, performance management Pendragon – Business Development & Group Operations.

Closing the formal part of the meeting and inviting members to the informal networking session, Co-Chair Yvette Farrell said “This is an exciting time for us as an organisation, and as a destination, we cannot be complacent, we must continue to move forward and build on the strong foundation of membership and activity.”

Feedback from the meeting from those who attended has been very positive, especially the chance to sit and chat with Sarah Orchard about social media, Mark Terry-Lush on PR and Tim on content/stories/news.

Our thanks to Forest Hills Golf Club for hosting the event.