

CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT

Another year already! For us at Old Quarry Cottage B&B it has somehow been a bit up and down but ok in the end. It maybe what others of you have experienced too.

Throughout 2016, your Association has continued to actively support and market Bridgnorth & Much Wenlock & District with the production and distribution of 12,500 copies of an attractive and well received Where to Stay Guide. A revised Town Map is currently being produced, and the Visit Bridgnorth website continues to be successful in the number of visits achieved. We also have continued to enjoy joint membership with Shropshire Tourism in that we have a very good working relationship with them which brings benefits to our relatively small Association which are not immediately apparent.

As you all appreciate, web presence is becoming a critical part of the marketing mix, although our Where To Stay Guide for 2016 has been very well received. In my opinion it is still too early to completely put aside this more traditional form of advertising, and the new 2017 edition with an increase in advertising revenue will be in circulation before Christmas. Thank you all for your continuing support for this.

As you know, we continue to work very closely with Shropshire Tourism and our clear intention is to continue with this. It has been agreed *that membership will be free* from your next renewal, but there will be a charge for entry onto the Shropshire Tourism website, as indeed there is presently a small charge for web entry on the Visit Bridgnorth website. Thus you will continue to enjoy the mainly hidden benefits of Membership and the feeling of being part of the Association for free, with the option of electing paid web entries as you feel to be most advantageous to your particular business. You will see from the accounts that BDTA enjoys good financial reserves carefully husbanded over the years, and our continuing aim is to administer the Association with financial expedience

Another major development of which many of you may be presently aware is that *quality grading is no longer a requirement of membership, brochure advertising, or any web entry*. However, we personally intend to continue with official grading for Old Quarry Cottage B&B as we feel it gives that degree of certainty of quality the customer can expect. Also bear in mind graded properties are to be given priority on the websites.

BDTA has continued to be well represented on any County wide initiatives, but very disappointingly Shropshire Council in this year of "Brexit" has now seemingly washed its hands completely of promoting the County as a place to visit. This I am sure is a very negative approach in that the amount of money and jobs that tourism related industries brings into the Bridgnorth area alone is estimated to be in the region of £92million. However, we do not let this get us down and we continue to act in the best interests of all our members, and involve ourselves in all tourism co-ordinating initiatives as we believe working together achieves more than acting independently. We trust that this epitomises the view of you all in being such loyal supporters of our Association.

Finally, this will be the last Chairman's statement you will receive from me as I will be stepping down as Chairman following the AGM, but intend for a short time to stay in the background as a Board Director if so elected.

Anthony Webb
Chairman
November 2016

