

## Mood buoyant at Exmoor Tourism Day

Tourism businesses from across Exmoor, West Somerset and North Devon got together to hear the latest news, gather marketing tips and advice and network and swap leaflets at the annual Tourism Networking Day at Wheddon Cross on Wednesday.

Organised by Visit Exmoor, the mood was buoyant with membership of the area's official tourism organisation up by 40% year on year. New initiatives such as the #EatExmoor food & drink campaign, increased social media presence and partnership working with local and regional groups has all helped to boost numbers. *"The more members we have, the more representative of the industry we become and the louder our voice,"* says Visit Exmoor Development Manager Jennette Baxter. *"More members also means more funds to help us to further promote Greater Exmoor."*

Newly elected Chairman Andy Parsons began the day with a short tribute to the previous Chairman Richard Havers, who sadly died late last year. This was followed by AGM business and a report on activity and progress during 2017. Presentations included an update from Exmoor National Park Authority's Dan James, Top Marketing Tips for small businesses from Bella Given, owner of award-winning glamping site Longlands, and a lesson in how to make short video films on a mobile from social media expert Matt Young.

Visit Exmoor are delighted to welcome Andy Parsons as new Chairman. Previously Vice Chairman, Andy is also Chief Executive of South West Lakes Trust and has a keen eye for business and tourism opportunities in the south west region. He has been an active supporter of Visit Exmoor for the past few years. *"I am looking forward to raising the profile of Greater Exmoor and taking the organisation forward,"* he stated. *"We got off to a great start yesterday, there was a real energy and buzz in the room and a motivation to work together to promote the area. We have some excellent local businesses here."*

After lunch at the Rest and Be Thankful Inn, the networking afternoon and leaflet exchange took place in a very busy Moorland Hall, with free tea and coffee provided by local company Miles.

Participants were very pleased with the event. Rob Shaddick, Director of The Lynton & Lynmouth Cliff Railway exhibited at the afternoon event. *"It was an excellent and invaluable networking day for Exmoor based attractions & businesses"* he reported.

*"It was the perfect opportunity to meet the faces behind the emails and websites of Exmoor businesses"* said Jason Broughton, of Highcliffe House, Lynton in Devon. *"We felt part of a like-minded community all striving to deliver the best experience for people visiting Exmoor,"* he added.

*"We are relatively new to Exmoor, and this was a really worthwhile day – even a normally dull AGM was interesting!"* enthused Katherine Daniel from Little Quarne Cottages, Somerset. *"The marketing*

*presentation included very practical tips that everyone could action. It was lovely to meet business owners from across the area over lunch and I came home from the leaflet exchange with bundles of information for our guests."*

Pics:

A busy afternoon for tourism businesses at the Visit Exmoor Network Day in Wheddon Cross.

The new Eat Exmoor guide being distributed in March.

Andy Parsons the new Visit Exmoor Chairman.

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