

# **REPORT from TONY BLANEY**

## **Lakes Hospitality Representative**

Update regarding LHA.

1. TIC – You may have seen the articles in the Gazette, and on local radio, but for those who haven't, here are the facts: Over the 2 ½ years from when LHA took over the prime lease of the TIC from SLDC in April of 2011, the TIC itself was operated by a sub-contractor. That business went into administration in December 2013 leaving the LHA with quite a few problems. The LHA was committed to provide a TIC until April 2014 under the terms of its lease, and so kept it open over the winter. The LHA is firmly of the belief that it is important to keep a TIC on the location, and in fact that was the reason it took over the operation in 2011. Even though many more people now book by accommodation and attractions online, there is still need for an information centre at such a key location. However as there is no public funding for TIC's any more, a TIC has to be self-supporting now, and that means a vastly increased retail offering. With the benefit of the knowledge gleaned from it the experience over the period December 2013 to May 2014, the LHA realised that in order for the Windermere TIC to be self-supporting by means of retail, it needed substantial investment and an injection of suitable expertise, of which the LHA had neither. It was therefore necessary for LHA to ask SLDC to be released from the lease early so as to allow in an operator who could provide both of those. SLDC have been most cooperative, and have agreed that LHA should continue to operate the TIC during the 2014 season. That will then give time for a new operator to be appointed, and the winter period for any changes before the 2015 season starts.

2. The annual trade show at the Daffodil will be on 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> February next year, and promises to be our biggest ever with more stands and a new 'networking' area for refreshments.

Date: 31<sup>st</sup> August 2014