

Chamber encouraged and looking to grow

Membership of Midlothian and East Lothian Chamber (MELCC) has remained stable despite challenging times. That was the message from Karen Ritchie, the chamber's chief executive officer, to members at the annual meeting in atmospheric Rosslyn Chapel.

Ritchie explained that this was one of a number of leading venues in Mid and East Lothian used to host events organised by the chamber and over 1,000 people attended events last year.

They included networking and awards ceremonies and Ritchie said she was always keen to know about businesses, locations or institutions keen to host events for up to 50 people.

Ritchie stressed that the organisation was also keen to increase membership by 20 per cent in 2023 and those joining receive business support and access to potential customers.

Membership, she said, also opened the door to lobbying at national level through the Scottish Chambers national organisation which she attends every month to review Government policy.

MELCC is, she confirmed, involved in collaboration with West Lothian Chamber and, hopefully, Edinburgh Chamber plus East

Renfrewshire for joint events during the year and Ritchie said that there is room to add more where they can.

The chamber is also seeking links to tourism outlets and educational institutions to boost business even further.

Initiatives like Lothian Women in Business are part prompted by the chamber and there is a special event in March. The chamber is also involved with the hosting of Young Professionals in Work, a regular network event for those aged between 18 and 35 and a monthly sales club is being arranged where participants can access free advice and networking.

Ritchie added: "You can be a one-man-band or a business of over 200 and everybody is welcome to become involved with Midlothian and East Lothian Chamber of Commerce."

PICTURE: Keith Barbour, president MELCC), addressing the haggis during the annual meeting