

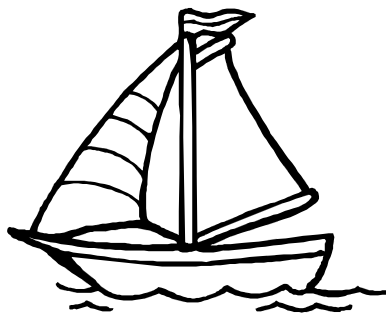
Dale

Pembrokeshire



Action Plan

2006



Revised Dale Action Plan Draft

Prepared by

The Community of Dale

In Conjunction With

PEMBROKESHIRE LOCAL ACTION NETWORK FOR
ENTERPRISE AND DEVELOPMENT
(PLANED)

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Appendix 1

The Community of Dale met on the 14th November 2006 at a Community Workshop to review the Action Plan and celebrate past achievements. A number of new proposals have been added to the Action Plan, achievements listed and the progress of existing projects noted. The revisions were circulated around the community and the Revised Action Plan was agreed on.

BACKGROUND TO THE ACTION PLAN AND REVIEW.

In 2002, the village of Dale was rocked by the news that the village school was to close. The Community Council decided that it was time to take stock and invited PLANED, which has extensive experience in assisting villages to construct and implement action plans, was approached and they agreed to help.

Between 50 and 60 members of the community took part in two visioning workshops held in June 2003 where they carried out a strengths, weakness and opportunity analysis, a skills and resources audit and an exercise in translating ideas into action. Reports were written using the information gathered at these workshops and distributed to the participants.

A follow up meeting was held at the beginning of September 2003 which gave the community an opportunity to identify potential proposals to be included in the draft Action Plan from the information gathered at the visioning workshops.

In September 2004, Dale Community Forum was formed open to all members of the Community to take forward the Action Plan and help to implement the projects identified.

By 2006, considerable progress had been made by the Community, therefore, Dale Community Forum decided in the summer of 2006 that a workshop would be arranged to update and add new opportunities to the 2003 Action Plan which will contribute to the long term sustainability of the community, looking at ways projects could be implemented that would help them to become more self sufficient, healthy and energy conscious. The workshop would also strengthen community understanding and enthusiasm for sustainable living.

Invitations were sent to all households in the community, and posters were distributed to encourage a wide participation at the event.

WAY FORWARD

The intention of this Action Plan for Dale is to record the issues and ideas identified as important to local people, which if addressed over the next few years, will improve the quality of life in the community.

This Action Plan aims to encourage both local residents, potential partners and funders to realise the benefits that the proposals can bring to the community and assist in achieving them.

HISTORY OF THE COMMUNITY

Dale is a small village nestling beside the Milford Haven Waterway. The name Dale is of Norse origin, which gives some idea of the antiquity of the site. However, there are several remains of Iron Age settlements nearby, so the area has been occupied for even longer. The village is situated in a valley bounded by wooded sides, with the Dale sea front overlooking the Milford Haven Waterway at one end, and West Dale beach, overlooking open sea, at the other. At the East end, the old part of the village and waterfront are sheltered by the high ground of Dale point which accounts for the location of the village, it's past importance as a seaport and it's current and rising attraction as a venue for water-based recreation. At the West end of the settlement are the listed parish church of St. James and the imposing Dale Castle, some of which is medieval, although the most prominent part is early nineteenth century. Other notable buildings are the lighthouse complex on St. Ann's Head, with associated houses: West Blockhouse, a Victorian Fort now used as holiday accommodation: and Dale Fort, another Victorian Fort, now used as a Field Centre by the Field Studies Council (FSC).

The parish lies wholly within the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park. For the most part, the coastline is undeveloped. There are several Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) within the Parish because it is such a rich area for marine biology, geology, and wildlife generally.

In the sixteenth century Dale was a flourishing port, with many dwellings and eighteen inns. By Victorian times the population had declined. Today the Griffin is the only surviving inn, and ruins of some of the dwellings can still be traced. Fishing was once an

important occupation for the local men, and fishing still takes place on a small scale, mainly for lobster and crab.

Agricultural activity is mostly dairy and beef. The recent growing of new potatoes has dwindled significantly. This, and the increasing mechanisation of farms, means that agriculture is no longer such a major employer or contributor to the local economy.

Dale village has the following facilities: Parish Church, Coronation Hall, Women's Institute (WI) Hut, Griffin Inn, Post Office/Shop, Sailing and Yacht Club, Shop/Wind Surfing School, Café, seasonal Art Gallery, car park, toilets, launch ramp, seasonal shore pontoon and all-year offshore pontoon. Disabled parking has been provided on the sea front. With the closure of the school, the future of the school buildings is currently under discussion.

There are several old houses in Dale, but much of the housing is relatively recent. There is an extensive group of military houses, built in the 1950's, and some local authority housing. Several of the local authority houses have been sold privately. Over half of the houses in the parish of Dale are holiday homes.

During the winter, therefore, Dale can be very quiet. However, during the summer it can be frenetically busy, with the car park very full, the pontoon lined with boats and a queue of boats on trailers waiting to use the slipway. There can be considerable congestion, often caused by informal parking without consideration for others. There is a windsurfing school in Dale, and surfing at West Dale beach. A wide range of water based activities utilises Dale Bay, such as wind surfing, yachting, dinghy sailing, canoeing, power boating and fishing. Permanent moorings stationed off the waterfront provide summer accommodation for some 50 to 100 boats, some of up to 2 metres draft and are mostly registered for the use of individual owners. Those craft involved in cruising, water skiing, diving etc which take place outside the Bay, also use the launching ramp and pontoons.

Employment opportunities in Dale are few, and tend to be seasonal and low-waged. Most villagers commute to Haverfordwest or Milford Haven for full-time employment. Buses are infrequent, so a car is practically a necessity for getting to work and shopping. As with many other local communities, house prices are beyond the reach of most of the young people born in the area, and they are often obliged to move away. There is a

shortage of catered accommodation in the parish. This means that people involved in activities in Dale, such as walking the magnificent coast path or taking part in events on the water, often have to stay elsewhere.

The average age of the inhabitants is rising, and this is a growing problem. An increasing number of villagers are having to give up their cherished independence and rely on others. There is currently no sheltered accommodation in Dale, and no available meals delivery service.

For most of the year, however, Dale is extremely popular, with glorious sunshine, beautiful scenery, and, of course, the sea. It is very precious to many people, and some inhabitants, as well as the regular visitors, would like Dale to remain as it always has been. The time-honoured pastime of sitting on the wall at the Griffin corner is as popular as ever. Dale needs to carry its best features into the future, but also address its shortcomings, whilst remaining the friendly and unpretentious place that is so dear to so many people.

REVIEWING DALE 2003 ACTION PLAN

The following lists the activities that have been achieved since the last Action Plan:

Community Facilities and Activities:

- *Community Forum established*
- *Coronation Hall Feasibility study completed*
- *Dale Website established*
- *Gardening group established*
- *WI, Bowls Club, Poetry Group and church thriving*
- *Needlecraft group established*
- *Dale Amateur Drama Society (DADS) presented 2 productions.*
- *Fresh water at end of pontoon.*
- *Work begun on new block at Fort.*
- *Digital Photography Course at Fort.*
- *Friends of PCNPA repaired Cemetery Wall.*
- *Yacht club roof terrace created and internal refurbishment by members.*

Heritage & Culture:

- *Coastland local history group Established*
- *Maritime Exhibition organized*
- *Producing a Dale heritage leaflet*
- *Obtained a grant for New display Screen*
- *8 public walks organised*
- *Saints to stones pilgrimage route established*
- *Restoration pf churchyard wall*
- *Gallery opened at woodside Dale*
- *Rented former RAF building for storage & further study*
- *Website on-line*

Environment & Enhancement:

- *Open Garden & Musical evening organized*
- *Footpath cleared behind church*
- *Information session on Nature Conservation organized*
- *Environment Group established*
- *Restoration of Windmill under discussion.*
- *Limekilns cleared*
- *Geology field trip to Marloes Sands.*

Transport and Highways

- *Road Signs - speed signage around Dale*
- *Enforcement of parking restrictions during the peak tourist season*

1-COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND ACTIVITIES

Commentary

The Coronation Hall, situated near the waterfront and at the heart of the village is the community's main facility and has regular use covering over a hundred days per year. These include: Bowls club, whist drive, church fete, craft fairs and art exhibitions, dances, parties, weddings, courses, exhibition, harvest festival supper, bring and buy sales, cream teas, public lectures, amateur dramatics, sporting events and school outing support and council meetings.

It is felt by the community that the Hall could be used for many additional activities but its facilities and its condition are in need of major improvements in order to meet reasonable standards for the current level of use. In planning such improvements it is vital to include provision for future needs.

Dale has an active Women's Institute (WI) that meets in the WI hut and provides various activities including a history group and a poetry group.

There is a need for local inhabitants to have access to leisure and learning within the community as local provision would enhance community participation. At present the nearest provision is in the towns of Milford Haven and Haverfordwest. Many new activities have been suggested such as courses, training and events during the day and over the winter, live entertainment for young people, new interest groups and a film club.

The community has identified a need for IT training. It is felt that the Coronation Hall would be a good venue for basic computer courses whereas more advanced courses could make use of the equipment available at Dale Fort.

Dale Fort (FSC) is discussing a partnership with Pembrokeshire College to provide computer training and support, for the community. It is hoped this will include transport and a support facility.

The closure of the school in Dale was seen as a great loss and it is the community view that the building should be used to benefit the

community. Suggestions include an art and craft centre, as there are many artists living and working in Dale, a local heritage centre to house the vast collection of information and artefacts collected by the WI, a venue for selling local produce, a community café, a youth club or an interpretation centre.

Local communication is considered good in Dale with the Church funded Peninsula Papers providing information on local activities and giving a voice to the community, but it is felt that this newsletter could be further developed to encourage community spirit and keep everyone even better informed. The development of a community website would strengthen communications by providing up to date information about events and activities as well as providing the opportunity to promote Dale to a wider audience.

It is generally felt that Dale should strive towards becoming a self-sufficient community with strong links between the generations. To this end reinstating some of the community activities that bring people together but that no longer go on in the village such as the carnival, maypole and the best kept village competition could be a start but it is important to gauge public interest and commitment for these events.

Ongoing Proposals

- Investigate the potential of the Old School for community benefit, to meet needs that cannot be met in the Coronation Hall.
- **Leisure Learning** -a working group is required to assess the needs of the community with a view to promoting and providing leisure and learning activities within Dale. (to be linked with the Coronation Hall Developments)
- **Develop a Community Directory** - a directory of local skills and resources to be included in the Peninsula Papers. Some idea of insurance cover for certain skills is needed i.e. electrical work.
- **Community Events** – There is a need for new events and the combining of events to make a bigger impact. These could include the Regatta, a fun day, the Christmas fair and the church fete.

New proposals (2006)

- Implement the developments for the Coronation Hall as designed in the feasibility study. The Community Forum need to encourage local groups to express their support for the developments in writing and to research ideas for new uses. The Community forum to research ways other village halls in Pembrokeshire are used and managed.

Future possible new uses for the Hall suggested by the Community were:

- Tourist Information Point (see tourism, economy and business)
 - Heritage Exhibition
 - Community learning
 - Art Gallery
- Encourage solar panels etc in new buildings such as the Hall

2-Environment & Enhancement

Commentary

The community feels strongly that its environment is precious and needs protecting and enhancing.

Local people have identified some areas of the village that they would like to become community assets, for example the walled garden and orchard.

Rubbish is a major issue. The local beaches are tidied by the Friends of the National Park and the WI group but regardless of how often this is done each tide brings in more rubbish. The work that the FSC at Dale Fort does to keep some of the beaches tidy is appreciated as is its role in making students aware of the issues relating to litter on beaches.

One of the reasons for an increase in rubbish may be the increased number of people visiting or holidaying in the community during the summer. Rubbish from holiday homes is often left on the kerbside for a number of days if departure does not coincide with a council rubbish collection day as does the rubbish from visiting boats.

The majority of people in the village would like to see the woodlands preserved, managed, made safe and more attractive.

It would be nice to have more cycle tracks and bridleways around Dale.

Ongoing Proposals (wording amended 2006)

- **Village Enhancement** - carry out a study into the possible improvement of the waterfront in a sympathetic way to raise the standard of the area around the Coronation Hall, Boatyard and waterside.
- **Litter and Refuse** - Blue Flag status has been awarded to Dale Beach. To continue to work with Pembrokeshire County Council to help clear West Dale beach as part of a Coastcare scheme. To take over from Sue Burton the autumn Beachwatch survey for West Dale, when additional volunteers will be required. To continue to monitor other litter on the peninsular and to liaise with PCC as necessary to deal with problems as they arise. To clarify the Council's overall litter-collection policy. To investigate the re-instatement of the local litter-warden
- **Woodlands** – To plant saplings in bare areas of Woodlands (Dale Castle Estate has given the Tree Warden permission to do this)
- **Rights of Way** - work with Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority (PCNPA) to investigate the possibility of more cycle tracks and bridleways around Dale, possibly on the Airfield. Investigate the possibility of opening up the footpath from the school to the castle and footpaths in Point Wood and Castlebeach Wood.
- **Information** – To continue with a programme of occasional walks and talks providing information about local Wildlife and conservation sites.

New proposals (2006)

- Bait-digging – To continue to work with other bodies towards trying to minimise the damage bait-digging and other activities (eg. gill-netting) cause to marine invertebrates and their habitat on the Gann Flats.

- Dale Windmill – To replace the roof and floor, and paint the walls of the windmill using money raised by the community during 2006. To raise more money for this cause if necessary.
- Dale Churchyard – To maintain the path cleared in the wood behind the church, and to extend this path if possible.
- Limekilns- To finish clearing and possibly restore the Pickleridge and Castlebeach lime-kilns.
- Meadow Wall – To consider the possibility of restoring the meadow wall and to carry out appropriate repairs. Consider the use of local skills and materials and explore funding opportunities.

3-Heritage and Culture

Commentary

The Dale Peninsula has a unique and valued heritage stretching back to the fortification of Great Castle Head during the Iron Age, the landing of Henry Tudor at Mill Bay and in more recent times the fortifications at Dale Fort and West Blockhouse Fort built in the 1850's to protect the Haven. During World War II the area was extensively used by the Royal Air Force, Royal Navy and Royal Artillery.

In 1999 the WI group began collecting and recording the history of the area. They spent thousands of hours talking to local inhabitants, looking up names, dates and events and consulting many primary and secondary sources. The culmination of this work was the production of a book "Dale an illustrated History" launched alongside a local history exhibition at the Coronation Hall in July 2000 and again in 2001. Since then 2300 copies have been sold, the profits from which have been designated for the promotion of Local History and Heritage.

In 2004 the Coastlands History group was formed to continue the work of the WI, which is open to all members of the Communities of Dale, Marloes, St Brides and St Ishmaels, who have since driven the research of the history of the area and have organised several exhibitions

There are many artists living in Dale including three painters, a wood turner, a wrought iron expert and a wood carver. It is felt that the community could benefit from these artists sharing their skills and it is important a local artist is involved in the leisure learning committee. There is also a need for a permanent showcase for local art which could possibly be incorporated into plans for the communities use of the old school building.

Ongoing Proposals

- **Heritage Exhibition** – continue to seek premises where displays and artefacts could be exhibited more regularly or permanently- establish the feasibility of using the former school building or a space in the Coronation Hall.
- **Web Site** - continue to produce more history CD ROMs and Web pages for the community web site.
- **Initiate Further Research** - into the history of local buildings and organisations and seek funding for these projects.
- **Invite a local artist to join the leisure learning committee.**
- **Art and Craft Showcase** - Explore the possibility of a permanent showcase for local arts and crafts within the village.

New proposals (2006)

- As the need is perceived, to inaugurate action to preserve our heritage.
- To work in conjunction with the Environment Group on relevant projects.
- Continue to promote and publicise the local heritage and history of Dale among residents and a wider public, seeking to actively involve all who express an interest in the subject.

4-Tourism, Economy and Business

Commentary

Dale is situated on the sheltered waters of the Milford Estuary and as a result is popular with both tourists and boat users. There is no tourist information centre serving the area and very little in the way

of accommodation for visitors and boat users : The need for more restaurant and coffee shop provision has also been identified

Working patterns have changed with the majority of people working outside the village and it is felt new businesses in the hospitality industry would help address this problem, by providing local employment and boosting the local economy.

It is felt that there could be more tourism related activities in the community such as windsurfing, canoeing and sailing courses and eco tourism based activities could be developed such as bird watching and walking holidays. Dale Fort Field Centre already provides a programme of holidays for families based on bird watching and seashore discovery.

Dale has one shop which also serves as a post office but it is has limited stock and is only open for a few hours each day. Whilst it is felt that there is a need for longer opening hours and more variety of stock, this would require a commitment from the community to support the shop. Dale is also visited by mobile shops selling fruit, vegetables, fish and meat.

Ongoing Proposals

- **Tourist Information Centre** - utilise the future developments of the Coronation Hall to investigate the development of a tourist information centre to provide a booking service for accommodation, courses, trips etc.
- **Accommodation Provision** - encourage more people to provide accommodation such as Bed and Breakfast and provide training and information for those wishing to set up a tourism business. Encourage the opening of a hotel and a Youth Hostel.
- **Marketing** - help tourist facilities in Dale to access marketing support.
- **Support the development of more facilities for eating out**
- **Continue to promote the sale of local arts and crafts** - build on the success of the Pembrokeshire Craft Market by continuing to holding art exhibitions in the Coronation Hall during the summer months.
- **Investigate the possibilities of holding a permanent Art Gallery with the future Coronation Hall developments.**
- **Encourage the use of existing website to market Dale**

5-Housing and Local Services

Commentary

Because of the beauty of the area and easy access to the beach and sheltered sailing waters of Milford Haven, Dale has become a popular location for holiday and second homeowners.

It is felt that there are too many second homes and that the increased competition for housing means that affordable housing for locals is lacking. Property prices do not reflect local earning power and there appears to be no commitment to build any new local authority houses in the area. It is felt that young people may have moved out of the area due to the lack of affordable housing and this has led to an unbalanced community.

Dale has an ageing population and there are currently no services for the care and transport of older people.

Ongoing Proposals

- **Affordable Housing** - restart the process of identifying land allocated for affordable housing in conjunction with Pembrokeshire Housing Association, Pembrokeshire County Council (PCC) and PCNPA. Explore the possibility of using the old school site.
- **Provision for Older People** - carry out a survey to establish the needs of older people in Dale in respect of meals on wheels, sheltered housing and transport.
- **Survey of Housing Stock** - carry out an audit of housing to ascertain the make up of housing in Dale - how much is in private ownership, council ownership, holiday homes, rented accommodation and the number still owned by the Castle Estate.

New proposals (2006)

- Community Forum to investigate the possibilities of using existing houses to provide affordable housing by buying up when available and letting to tenants
- Community Forum to Investigate possibilities for retirement accommodation (e.g. by converting existing buildings)

6-Transport and Highways

Commentary

Dale is a popular spot for visitors, the majority of whom arrive by car and therefore both parking and road congestion are of particular concern to local residents.

There is a car park owned by PCC situated close to the beach. However many people choose to park on the waterfront regardless of the parking restrictions in place. This represents a hazard but is also leading to the erosion of the roadside edges and spoils the ambience of the waterfront.

Speeding is seen as a problem and it is felt that there needs to be a review of speed restriction around the village and out of the village, particularly where the coast path runs along the road.

The waterfront area particularly around the Griffin Pub is a favourite spot for people to sit, however the road is used regularly and poses a danger at peak periods. Access only restrictions have been suggested to overcome this. This could be done as part of a village enhancement scheme.

The Puffin Shuttle provides transport for visitors and locals during the summer months.

Ongoing Proposals

- **Road Safety** - Explore the options for restricted access along the waterfront from the boatyard to Eaton Hall as part of a village enhancement scheme.
- **Boat trailer Storage** - Investigate the siting of a storage yard for boat trailers, out of the village.
- **Resident Parking** - Explore the potential of more designated parking for residents.
- **Puffin Shuttle** -The community support the service but would like to see it running all year round.

New proposals (2006)

- Community Forum to investigate possibilities of Community owned & run bus