



Newsletter

Spring 2010

PLANED's 'Valuing the Environment' initiative provides communities with the opportunity to get more involved with protecting and enhancing Pembrokeshire's environment for future generations. Together with our specialist partners, we aim to help communities gain the skills and knowledge to turn good ideas into reality.

PLANED, The Old School, Station Road, Narberth, SA67 7DU

Tel: (01834) 862101

ECO CITY ST.DAVIDS

by Gill Lewis

The St Davids Eco City group is a community group who meet monthly to work on environmental projects. Recent activity has included pursuing allotments (still), holding a series of public events in a concentrated period "Eco-Week", and getting a Community Supported Agriculture scheme started.

Allotments: after nearly three years of seeking land close to St Davids for allotments, the group decided to accept the offer of part of a field about ¼ mile from the centre, at Emlych Farm. The City Council has supported the provision of allotments for the community and was happy to lease the land ... but made enquiries of the National Park about planning issues. National Park responded that there was no *planning* problem with the site as such, but it was too far outside the "urban core" of St Davids to be suitable and anyway there would be planning issues with parking, access, and ancillary developments. This has put a

halt to the project for now. But the City Council is arranging to meet with Park officers to iron out the problems so that planting and growing can start this season. The Dewi Sant Allotment Society is now the official body, a spin off from Eco City Group.

Eco-Week: started badly as we had to postpone the launch of the allotments and its entry in the Dragon Parade (see above), but there was a brilliant turn out for a Newgale beach clean and film organised by Surfers Against Sewage.



On St Davids Day we had a busy stall in the Cross Square, talking and listening to friends, neighbours and visitors about various projects and issues. There was a showing of "Age of Stupid" and then a discussion of issues around waste, recycling

and disposal with a County spokesperson and Surfers Against Sewage. A beach clean at Porth Llisky on Thursday was well attended... just as well as there was a huge amount of plastic washed up on the beach. Then finally on the Friday a public meeting, with exhibits from Transition Bro Gwaun, Friends of the Earth, PLANED, Newport Eco Centre and GM-Free Wales. We had a presentation by Andy Middleton on the "Do Lectures", then Gerald Miles introduced Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) and proposed setting up a scheme locally. Finally we showed the Film "Food Inc".

Community Supported Agriculture : Nick Weir of Stroud facilitated a meeting to set up a CSA / Food Hub scheme locally. It was well attended with a strong feeling of commitment to promote local food and support struggling local organic producers. A core group has been set up and anyone interested should contact Eco City for more details. PLANED are also organising a visit to the successful CSA site in Stroud for Sat 24 April. For more info, or to book a place contact rupertd@planed.org.uk



Cronfa Amaethyddol Ewrop ar gyfer Datblygu Gwledig; Ewrop yn Buddsoddi mewn Ardaloedd Gwledig
The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: Europe Investing in Rural Areas



Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

A FAIR WIND FOR PSEEG

By Janet Roberts

Pembrokeshire South East Energy Group's renewable energy survey of South East Pembrokeshire continues apace. Their consultants Dulas have now undertaken extensive studies in the area. It has been an exhaustive and intensive process. No stone has been left unturned. A plethora of factors have needed to be considered.

At a very early stage in the process one fundamental truth became apparent; the only viable option for this area was wind. Tidal power is not yet a commercial prospect. Hydro has real potential in many parts of Wales, but sadly not in South East Pembrokeshire. Short streams give an inadequate head of water.

Bending to the task, Dulas consultant Andy Warrington first needed to assess the varying wind speeds over the whole area. But this was just the start. Of equal importance were considerations of accessibility; any potential site would have to

be served by adequate roads. Close proximity to electricity transmission lines was also essential. Other factors included interactions with air traffic control, telecommunication facilities and a wide range of environmental concerns. Prominently featuring among the latter was the prevailing attitude of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority.

Long renowned for its reservations in respect of wind turbines, much applauded signs of change have recently been noted. In their latest Development Plan there is a clear acceptance of the principle of community wind turbines no larger than 330KW. It is indeed gratifying to see such progressive thinking.

More important however than all the above was concern for human well being. All sites identified had to be at least 400m from the nearest human habitation. No one should be exposed to the fear, however unjustified, that their daily lives should be adversely affected.

Bringing together all these factors was not an easy task but after many weeks of intensive analysis, Andy has recently been able to present his initial conclusions. At least ten suitable sites have been identified. For reasons of commercial sensitivity these may not as yet be

published. However each of these sites will now be subjected to further scrutiny to establish which is the best option. It is anticipated that plans for development will soon follow.

Members of PSEEG would like to stress that all this has only been made possible by the continuing support of PLANED. Without their backing this community project could never have been contemplated.

And the importance of such community projects cannot be overstated. Medium sized wind turbines can, even after payment of running costs, put sums in excess of £100,000 into the local economy. This income can be used in many ways for community benefit. It is surely better for the proceeds of development of a Pembrokeshire natural resource, namely wind, to go to the local community rather than shareholders in distant lands.



Pembrokeshire wind for Pembrokeshire people

FERN *Accessing Our Wetland, Freshwater East*

By Malcolm Griffiths

The Pembrokeshire Coast National Park (PCNPA) own a big patch of land in our village and they want us to make it into a Local Nature Reserve.

What a wonderful opportunity!

Who Are We? - enthusiastic villagers from Freshwater East

and the surrounding community. Some of us formed the **Freshwater East Reserve for Nature** group and worked to get objectives and constitution together.

Our Local Nature Reserve is for both people and wildlife. It is a place with features that are of special interest locally. It offers opportunities to learn about

nature, or simply to enjoy it. The LNR is made up of different natural habitats – Dunes, Dune Meadow, Marsh, Scrub and Woodland.

The Marsh area is about the size of 6 or 7 football pitches. It is bounded by the seashore, a caravan park, a holiday complex, farmland and National Trust land. It consists of reed bed, a main

water course, lots of springs and a strip of wet woodland.

During Have Your Say meetings, facilitated by PLANED and the PCNPA a wish was expressed for a boardwalk in the Marsh area. We drew up several plan options but needed access. The route was obvious, regardless of which plan was adopted. Our ideas enabled PLANED to give Christmas a meaning for us and in January 2010 we literally dived into the bog! We started creating a path and boardwalk and enhanced the entry with fences, gates and minor landscaping. Some small trees had already been planted, our contribution to mark the formation of F.E.R.N. and participation in the Tree



Volunteers working on the boardwalk

O'Clock project.

National Park Ranger Tim Jones brought us all together on the job and did a splendid job of organising. Over a period of three months, the workforce consisted of National Park Wardens,

Voluntary Wardens, FERN group members, the LNR Helpers group, National Park Volunteers, Students, and a Contractor. Materials for the boardwalk and other facilities were purchased and assembled in a workshop at Sageston and then transported to site.

The boardwalk would contain more than 2 km. of decking and 70 kg. of nails! There is a direct correlation between volunteer hours and the length of the boardwalk. Without the volunteer hours a lot more of the funding would have gone to contractors.

Two sessions to account for and it has taken 90 hours for Ranger Tim, 44 hours of contractor time, 64 hours of Warden time and 173 volunteer hours.

Everyone who has helped has really enjoyed it. Every volunteer session made a big contribution, and everyone got great satisfaction out of seeing their efforts extend the boardwalk further and further.

At time of writing, it will take one more full day session with contractors and then some finishing touches, but it is on schedule and on budget. No wonder we are smiling.

The First Finale

The launch of what we now call phase 1 of the boardwalk will include a Nature Workshop - a spring walk with an investigation of our world of water, to be held in May.

What is the Water World?

It is a beautiful wilderness area and home to specialised creatures and plants not found in any other habitat. In our case it is a space for relaxation, recreation and study.

The Wet Woodland provides shelter and food for animals. There is a wide diversity of invertebrates, thriving on dead wood, breaking down waste matter and provide correct

nutrients for plants to grow. The Marsh Marigold has already shown itself to us, so what else is to come?

Wetland creatures are not easy to spot. Their resting places, tracks or droppings are often the only evidence of their presence, but we have already spotted elusive birds such as Snipe and Water Rail. Our wetlands are vital to many birds who use them as refuelling and resting points or as their winter feeding grounds.

The Wet Woodland and Wetland forms a mosaic with other habitats resulting in a large variety of species and features in a small area. It is an ecological link between the beautiful National Trust Scrubby Bottom, the Burrows, the Beach and Marine Nature Reserve and the SSSI Cliffs.

Our Marsh reduces the risk of winter flooding. It acts like a giant sponge, slowing the flow of surface water.

This same sponge helps to reduce the fertiliser and pesticide pollution of the River Lliw which runs onto our beach and helps reduce the growth of harmful algae. Wetlands can filter as much as 91% of the phosphorus and 86% of the nitrogen. Wetlands can remove and store greenhouse gases from the Earth's atmosphere.

Sediments suspended in running water can also be removed by wetlands. As the running water enters a wetland, the water slows and the sediments settle out. Some wetlands can retain as much as 94% of the sediment (dirt). Clean sediments are important because they contain air pockets that aquatic life depend upon to exist. These spaces provide habitat for aquatic organisms to lay their eggs and contributes oxygen that is essential for their survival.

We were alarmed to see some

More FERN

water discolouration around railway sleepers we had used to support the boardwalk. These had been well weathered so it was puzzling. It was no problem. It was part of the above processes. The discolouration was occurring all around the Marsh but it was more obvious at the boardwalk. Laying the boardwalk created a vibration and the products of natural decay had been brought to the surface as a kind of an oily film. The reeds will start growing again during the summer and this will be consumed.

The Future

Simple pleasures such as observation and photography of Birds, Butterflies, Plants, Insects, Animals and the changing seasons will be enjoyed and add to our Sense of Place.

Britain's wetlands are being destroyed at an amazing rate. Each year an area of coastal wetlands the size of 2,000 football pitches is lost. **We must sustain our place.**

Thank you PLANED for helping with phase 1.

ALLOTMENTS SAUNDERSFOOT HUB AREA

By Liz Talboys

Last year, out of interest really, I attended an allotments network meeting organised by PLANED. I was amazed that out of about eight groups represented there, about five had no land and had been looking for land to rent or buy for some time as Pembrokeshire County Council was unable to provide. One group had been trying for 20 years and had just agreed to lease some land. I had heard vaguely, of a possibility of land to rent in our area and determined to follow this up. Today, 10 months later, the Llwynceilyn Community Allotments Association is up and running, with plots to rent, both ½ and full size, a constitution, a bank account being opened and

26 paid up members.

Our members come from Saundersfoot and surrounding areas, with our most intrepid members coming from Manorbier! New members appear at every meeting – we haven't needed to advertise! Everyone is very keen to get going despite the fact that the field is virgin grassland and it will be a hard slog for the first year. We have just applied for a grant from Pembrokeshire Impact Fund to cover the cost of rabbit-fencing the field and eagerly await the outcome. Water pipes have been laid and we hope to purchase materials to improve access to the field though this will be dependent on finding funding.

We meet on the second Tuesday of the month in Saundersfoot Sailing Club, and are hoping to run some social events such as barbecues, seasonal events and so on. We welcome new members and still have a few plots available.

If you want more info, contact Jetske at PLANED

☎ 01834 862111

✉ jetske@planed.org.uk

FORTHCOMING EVENTS & WORKSHOPS

PORPOISE AND SWALLOW WATCH

5th April 2:30_{pm} - 4:00_{pm} at Strumble Head lookout. Contact Cliff Benson for info

☎ 01348 875639

✉ info@seatrust.org.uk

BAT AND MOTH EVENING

8th April 7:00_{pm} - 9:00_{pm} Castell Henllys £3-00 per person - booking direct with the fort

☎ 01239 891319

HABITAT MANAGEMENT TOUR

6th May 2010 showing how you can manage your community site. Contact for bookings:

✉ lizt@planed.org.uk

☎ 01834 862113

ADOPT A PATH WORKSHOP

8th May 9:30_{am} - 12noon in Newport. The workshop will

inform you how you can get involved in managing the Rights of Way in your area with funding, insurance and local authority info.

Bookings through Jetske

☎ 01834 862111

✉ jetske@planed.org.uk

WILDLIFE ON YOUR PATCH ROCK POOLING

in Broadhaven
1st June 2:00_{pm} - 4:00_{pm} activities will include rock pooling, talk, look & collect marine life on the shore. Bookings through Jetske

☎ 01834 862111

✉ jetske@planed.org.uk

WILDLIFE WITHIN THE FORT

2nd June 11:30_{am} and 1:30_{pm} Castell Henllys - normal admission + £1. Booking advisable direct with fort

☎ 01239 891319

PEMBROKE COMMONS

WILDLIFE ON YOUR PATCH

5th June 2:00_{pm} workshop looking at your local wildlife. More details to follow - contact Jetske

☎ 01834 862111

✉ jetske@planed.org.uk

GREEN FAYRE

Sat 12th June 10:00_{am} - 5:00_{pm} Picton Centre, Haverfordwest

MANORBIER

WILDLIFE ON YOUR PATCH

26th July (evening) workshop looking at your local wildlife. more details to follow - contact Jetske

☎ 01834 862111

✉ jetske@planed.org.uk