

# Freyfystrop



# Action Plan

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# COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

For the community of Freystrop

Prepared in conjunction with



(Pembrokeshire Local Action Network  
for Enterprise and Development)

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This Action Plan was agreed at a Public Meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2007 following the circulation of the Draft Action Plan to all households in the community

## Background to the Action Plan

Freystrop lies on the 'Pembroke Road', two miles south of Haverfordwest and five miles of Burton. The scattered parish includes Lower Freystrop and Little Milford, which are located to the north of the main village. There is a tradition of encouraging community spirit and there is a particular interest in local history.

In 2006 it was agreed that an Action Plan should be drawn up to reflect project ideas and aspirations for the future of the local community. During the autumn two Community Visioning Workshops were facilitated by PLANED. This provided an opportunity to collect information to compile the Action Plan, to regenerate interest in community projects and involve newer residents in the process.

In addition, a brief questionnaire titled 'Your Community and You' was circulated to all households. Workshop participants were encouraged to complete them too.

Questions related to:

- Demographic spread – age groups living in the community
- Housing – length of residence and reasons for change
- Transport and Travel – to work and facilities
- Childcare – current and desired provision
- Business & Employment – current situation and potential opportunities
- Healthy Living – current and potential for local exercise opportunities

Information gathered through the questionnaire and at the workshops has been drawn up into this draft Action Plan. After reviewing it with the workshop participants, a draft will be circulated to the whole community. This will include an invitation to a public meeting, where the draft will be considered in detail and amendments discussed. The final version will provide an agreed plan for community action.

The 2006 Community Visioning Workshops consisted of the following exercises:

- Something Special – celebrating the special qualities of the parish.
- A Community Audit – listing the main features and facilities
- The Community in the Bigger Picture – considering global and local issues
- Weaknesses, Threats, Strengths and Opportunities
- The Vision for 2016 – an aspirational view of the future
- Skills and Resources Audit – illustrating the variety of local skills
- Translating Ideas into Action – using the information to plan projects

## The Action Plan Area

The parish of Freystrop consists of 1.637 acres, including 6 acres of tidal water and 30 acres of foreshore. The soil is chiefly clay, best suited to growing oats and barley but potatoes are a popular local crop too.

To the north, the parish begins near Mayfield Golf Course, at Culvert Bridge, taking in Lower Freystrop where there is a post box, bus shelter and church. Almost exactly two miles from Haverfordwest, the main village of Freystrop is announced. The southern boundary of the parish is at Troopers Inn. Cranham Farm marks the extreme west boundary whilst the river Cleddau at Little Milford, denotes the eastern limit.

The size of the community is deceptive, because in addition to the settlements of Lower Freystrop and Little Milford and the linear development of Freystrop itself, there is also a large amount of housing to the west, along Moorland Road and Targate Road. Crossing the main road, New Road leads to Hook via Maddox Moor. The buildings are mainly 20<sup>th</sup> century with a large proportion of bungalows and some new development.

Freystrop Village Hall stands beside the main road whilst the community's playing field and children's play ground is along Targate Road. There is a bus shelter and public telephone on the junction with the main road. North of Freystrop is Bethel Middle Hill Congregational Church and there is a church further north again at Lower Freystrop. There is no village shop but local businesses include the Slate Centre and Travellers Rest pub, the Pine Directory, Puddle Duck Fishery and a whole range of large and small businesses are located in Freystrop itself. See *Business & Enterprise*.

Despite the busy main road, Freystrop and its communities are set in agricultural land, scattered with farms, some of them such as Clareston are large and very old. Attractive National Trust woodland to the east drops down to the tidal river at Little Milford where traditional stone walling lines the road. An old school has been converted for residential use and the parish church of St Justinian's has a picturesque valley setting.

The attractive countryside is accessible through a substantial network of public rights of way in the Freystrop area, which are well signposted. Interpretation panels and car parks are provided by the National Trust, which owns some of the woodland.

## Local History

The community is proud of its local history and a record of it, 'Freystrop and Folk', was compiled by Mrs Beryl Davies in 2004 on behalf of the Millennium Committee.

Various suggestions exist for the origins of the name, 'Freystrop', the spelling of which has varied over the centuries. There appears to be only one in the world! The most likely derivation is from the Scandinavian 'Freya' – the goddess of fertility.

Physical evidence of earlier communities has been found over the centuries. Iron Age settlers left a legacy of artefacts which have been ploughed up. The font in St Justinian's Church dates from Norman times.

Lower Freystrop was the original main settlement and the parish church was situated there. Cottagers residing in the woods grazed their animals and collected wood. High Freystrop was centred on the crossroads and was mostly open moor land, scattered with farms and cottages. When mines were opened at Cardmakers Pool, in the west of the parish, more cottages were built to house the workers. In recent years Freystrop Cross has been the focus for development with new housing radiating in all directions.

The western part of the parish was originally common land and was once the home to gypsies who are still remembered by older people. Troopers Inn was taken into the parish after boundary changes.

The river was an important transport route and at one time was the main means of reaching Haverfordwest Quay from Hook. Departure and arrival times depended on tides and weather conditions and about four boats plied a regular market day trade, each carrying six or seven passengers. New Road, linking Freystrop to Hook, was built in 1921, partly paid for by local effort.

Agriculture has always been important. In Norman times, farming was a communal activity, with nucleated settlements surrounded by large open fields, divided into unenclosed strips and intermixed individual holdings. Freystrop was one of the last places to enforce the enclosure acts which were passed from the 1500s. Late medieval accounts suggest that by the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, much was still open fields but by 1790, most of Pembrokeshire was enclosed.

Mining went on from medieval times. Simple shallow pits were dug and when those collapsed and filled with water, another was dug nearby. The coal was mainly used for burning limestone to improve the fertility of the local soils. Limestone arrived from neighbouring areas by boat. Freystrop had three kilns which were specifically designed to burn culm, the waste dust from anthracite coal. One was located near Little Milford House and the other two further up the river at Black Hill.

Following the Second World War, new housing was built in 1948 for the expanding population. Council houses were built for local people along Targate Road – they were among the first in the area to have an indoor toilet and bathroom. St Clements Park and senior citizens bungalows followed in 1967.

There were several local shops where children purchased sweets and their parents collected essentials. A Church School had opened at Lower Freystrop in 1867, although there are records of schooling in the parish as early as 1674. The school was threatened with closure after the 1944 Education Act but survived by becoming the responsibility of the Education Authority. It finally closed in 1981. The school building, which had also been the base of the Parish Council and the venue for events connected with the Church, was sold for residential use.

Recalling the past, older residents recall a much slower pace of life when people worked hard but there was still time to stop for a chat or visit friends and neighbours. A local person would be proud to be known as 'a Freystrop'.

## **People & A Sense of Place**

An exercise carried out during the Community Visioning workshops encouraged residents to sum up the essential qualities of their village.

Strong community spirit, some great characters, pride in local heritage and the environment, were all identified as a source of local pride. The rural setting of the village and its association with local farms were mentioned.

Welcoming, caring people who value their roots and are proud of their community are among the features that make Freystrop special. The friendly neighbourhood, with its emphasis on traditional values, was also mentioned.

A sense of safety, security and trust were highlighted. Its setting in peaceful countryside which can be explored along well signed paths, the woodland, birdsong and the sound of geese on the river were all mentioned. Access to local towns and reasonable transport links were practical advantages to living in the village.

A local Entertainments Committee ensures there are plenty of occasions for socialising in the Village Hall and regular activities include the WI and Short Mat Bowls. The local churches and chapel are appreciated and the Clareston Fete and strawberry tea were mentioned.

Particular elements of local history were highlighted, including the mining and industrial heritage and the village's role in the 1904 religious revival. These are recorded in the village history book which is a considerable source of pride.

The questionnaire replies suggested that local people value the area's peacefulness and a slower pace of life. They are also proud that there is 'only one community called Freystrop in the world.'

## The Bigger Picture

There is awareness of global and local sustainability issues and concern about those that might affect their community in the future.

Global concerns included the cost of transporting food instead of using more local produce which led to the squandering of energy and other resources, whilst undermining local farmers and producers. The effects of poor diet on education and the health implications were highlighted along with the cost to the National Health Service.

Concern for the effects of big businesses on local enterprise, which impacts on the livelihoods of communities, was expressed. The loss of post offices, village shops, and banks were all regretted and the detrimental effect on village life acknowledged.

Consequently there is a reliance on the car, which adds to the increasing volume of traffic and has safety implications. Pollution from vehicle engines presented an extra disadvantage of which local people are particularly aware. Improved public transport and opportunities for car sharing were discussed as measures to counteract this trend.

It was felt that there should be more incentive to make changes and penalties for those who fail to consider the way in which they dispose of waste and squander energy through everyday actions like leaving televisions on stand by.

There was a sense that everyone should take more responsibility for their actions although caution was expressed about an overload of political correctness.

## The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Vision

During the Community Visioning exercise, participants were asked to envisage their ideal community in ten years time.

They shared a vision of 'a vibrant community, attractive to live in and not wholly dependent on the services of Haverfordwest.' Ideas towards achieving this included a community run shop to counterbalance the increasing threat of big businesses.

There would be emphasis on community life, with more activities in the Village Hall and the Playing Field and options for young people. The churches and

chapel would be well attended. A local newsletter would keep everyone informed and involved.

Pride in the appearance of the community would take the form of planting trees and establishing flower borders, whilst making the most of green spaces. A picnic site was suggested among environment and landscape improvements.

Road safety measures and improved pavements would be in place, improving access to village amenities such as the sports field and pub, without compromising the rural nature of the community.

Public transport would be easily accessible, with decreased car use and therefore less pollution through exhaust emissions. Alternative modes of transport, including walking and cycling, would be encouraged. A 'cycle track to town' was suggested.

Housing development would be limited to the available infrastructure and services.

## Action Plan Proposals

Issues raised in the workshops have been grouped into broad themes and, where appropriate, related to named sites, with specific proposals.

Communities are encouraged to form a Community Forum, an umbrella group, which includes representatives of the Community Council and all local organisations, to help get the Action Plan proposals underway.

A Community Forum can apply for funding to implement proposals – members provide mutual support for each other's projects and may identify opportunities for collaborative working. This is important because all funding bodies require evidence of community participation and collaboration between organisations. Other advantages of a Community Forum include greater capacity when organising events, seeking insurance cover or public licenses.

## Community Activities & Communication

### **Commentary:**

Traditionally, Freystrop has a strong sense of community spirit - the Church and Chapel work together and both hold weekly services. The WI is thriving and Short Mat bowls are popular. The Village Hall and Playing Field Management Committee are a dedicated group who take responsibility for ensuring that the Village Hall has all the required licenses.

An Entertainment Committee organises dances and residents enjoy an annual fete and strawberry tea. In the past there was a busy social calendar with

regular whist drives, dances, local drama productions and live music in the Village Hall. Celebrations marked special occasions such as royal weddings and more recently, the Millennium.

These days the Village Hall is regarded as a valuable asset. The competing attractions of home based entertainment and the dispersed nature of the community, makes it difficult to maintain a regular programme of activities. Lack of car parking space is a problem, especially as the Hall is beside a busy main road. There is a need to encourage Community interest and involvement for events at the Hall.



Maybe the range of activities needs to be broadened, as residents are willing to travel to neighbouring villages and towns to attend clubs and activities, including a philatelic society and gardening club at Scolton.

Currently, there is an interest in developing more activities and it was felt that they would be supported if they appealed to different age groups and were well publicised. The good turn out at the community workshops encouraged a positive feeling – ‘when push comes to shove, we get together.’ It seems that now is a good time to get action underway. There is a real will to support the existing Entertainments Committee, develop more community activities, and regenerate community spirit.

It was felt that more residents, and particularly younger people with families, should be encouraged to get involved in community life. They would provide welcome support to the existing group of organisers and bring fresh ideas and energy. This could provide the common focus that some feel is missing and draw people together through shared interests.

Suggestions for activities and classes in the Village Hall included:

- A Book Club – this has begun in a private home for 5 years.
- Luncheon Club
- Social Morning for older residents
- Drama classes
- Musical events and bands
- Cooking classes
- Flower arranging classes
- Bingo
- Chess Club
- Film Club

Formation of a Youth Club was a popular suggestion. A Club ran successfully for some years and it is felt that this is a feasible proposal but would need commitment and support from parents and helpers. A team willing to be trained for the purpose would ensure a successful club. Activities could include craft, circus skills and sport.

There was also an interest in healthy living, with suggestions for Keep Fit; gym and aerobics classes, along with salsa and other dance classes.

A range of events were also suggested, including 'a large carnival', a flower festival, events 'like the 2000 party Other ideas included a Christmas Fair, featuring the work of local artists and craft people. Also opportunities to sell local produce.

Extending the range of activities and events available to Freystrop residents is regarded as an important step towards re-generating community spirit and involving people who have not had a chance to participate in the past.

A Community Activities Survey would assist this process. It is important that this is not just a wish list but a practical indicator of need and commitment to offering, skills, experience and knowledge. It was evident from a skills audit carried out in the community workshops that local people have a range of skills ranging from gardening, cooking and sewing through to design, record production and IT skills. Resources offered included a computer and operator. Administration skills included bookkeeping and taking minutes.

Some feel that there is a declining interest in spiritual matters. The church and chapel have a loyal group of supporters but the ageing population and competing interests, poses a threat of closure of the church or chapel due to dwindling congregations. Freystrop featured in the 1904 religious revival and some felt that new energy should be put into attracting new members and broadening appeal.

Local people are keen to improve communication, this is especially relevant with the proposal to widen community activities which would need strong promotion to ensure success. Currently, word of mouth and local notice boards are the main way of sharing information. The [mypembrokeshire.com](http://mypembrokeshire.com) website is used and there is enthusiasm for a Freystrop village website.

In addition to an active Community Forum, a local Newsletter is an effective means of promoting local activities, featuring news items from local organisations and general information about community council decisions etc and bringing a community closer together through encouraging involvement in a common aim.

Community Newsletters can be used to advertise meetings and events, assess interest in community project proposals and encourage a wide range of residents to get involved in local activities. A small group of enthusiastic people is needed to run the newsletter and a commitment from local groups to

supply information for each edition. Some communities secure small adverts from local businesses to sustain the publication. PLANED runs a day's Newsletter course to assist this process.

### **Proposals:**

- Form a Community Forum – involving as many residents as possible and representatives of the community council and local groups, in driving forward the Action Plan proposals. It should meet regularly to review progress on each proposal and keep everyone informed and involved.
- Work with the Village Hall Committee to organise a Freystrop Activities Survey to assess interest in a range of activities and education options. Include specific sections for young and older community members. Ask for volunteers to run classes and request help from the County Council and other agencies.
- Consult with other communities who already have a busy Hall programme such as Llanteg – how do they encourage participation and sustain interest?
- Enlist the help of the Entertainments Committee to gauge interest in holding a Freystrop Food, Flower and Craft Festival. Hold a public meeting encouraging everyone to put forward ideas. Form a Festival Working Group, making the most of different skills and talents.
- Make an effort to regenerate spiritual life of the community. Find a niche e.g. – plan a celebration of the 1904 revival. See *Heritage & History*
- Young people should be encouraged to take an active role in all of these and may wish to run specific youth events, such as a band and talent evening.
- Encourage formation of Youth Club.
- Assess enthusiasm for starting a Newsletter, recruit volunteers and hold a planning meeting to discuss format, frequency, delivery and input. Involve young people who may have advanced computer and other skills.
- Research possibility of a community website.

## **Community Facilities & Sport**

### **Commentary:**

After many years of use and enjoyment, there is a feeling that the village facilities need updating. The aim would be to make them as efficient and flexible as possible, to meet the needs of a range of age groups. They should also meet modern requirements for access, energy efficiency, health and safety etc.

It was felt that the Village Hall needs to attract more users and would like to improve disabled access. The current building has been there since the 1950's and previous to that, the 'Hut' had stood there since the 1920's. The common thread running through the hall's history has been community effort

so it is appropriate that it is given the attention required and that maximum use is made of it.

Existing advantages include the fact that there is an active Village Hall Committee and the building is owned by the community. It has the necessary licences and some parking space but more is needed. Proposals for practical improvements included increasing storage space, sound proofing and redecorating the kitchen and toilet area. An annual maintenance programme and scheduled improvements should be agreed.

An energy audit was also suggested - to assess the potential for energy efficient measures such as the installation of solar panels. Research and visits to other community buildings which combine a traditional building with new technology would be useful. The newly refurbished Church Hall at Maenclochog is a good example. The west Wales Eco Centre offers advice on alternative energy sources and grants information for community projects.

In addition to enthusiasm for creating a programme of activities and events at the Hall, local people are keen to ensure maximum use of other local facilities, especially the Playing Field. The Village Hall and Playing Field Management Committee has worked hard to maintain this valuable amenity that many villages lack.



It was established in the mid 1970's after arrangements with local farmers were formalised. The land was purchased for a rugby field. From the initial ploughing and draining, it has been maintained through local effort. Freystrop had a flourishing cricket team and active rugby team. In addition to rugby, football and cricket, events such as donkey derbies were held there. More recently the Entertainments Committee organised Millennium and Golden Jubilee celebrations. A children's play area was established through local effort in the 1990's.

Today the situation is very different, there are no local sports teams so young people have no chance of developing their skills. This is a source of regret. When asked what measures should be taken to make daily life healthier, the majority of people at the community workshops said that sports groups should be set up at the under used facility. Cricket, rugby, football, hockey and netball were all suggested.

A re-generated Youth Club would be encouraged to use the facilities with assistance to form new teams being sought from the County Council's Sports Development Officer. It was suggested that younger people should be encouraged to get involved in planning the future of the Playing Field so that they can have their say about sport and recreation requirements.

The Playing Field is a valuable resource, there is plenty of space to develop better parking facilities which locals feel is needed. It has been suggested that this could be combined with a Recycling area which would need proper management. It might also be used for a wider range of activities. Suggestions at the community workshops included 'shooting or clay pigeon shooting' and even 'a bucking bronco'!

Improving the children's play area was discussed. This is seen as a valuable community resource – a safe environment for children to play, with a social aspect for parents meeting there.

### **Proposals:**

- Undertake Village Hall study to assess its condition – include energy audit to determine potential for energy efficient measures – heating, lighting etc.
- Agree and seek funding for Village Hall improvements and plan an ongoing maintenance schedule.
- Organise a Playing Field Survey to identify local sport and exercise needs. Encourage all ages to give it a new lease of life, regenerate interest and action.
- Organise a survey of local children and their parents to assess the type of facilities and equipment needed to update the Play Area.

## **Environment, Enhancement & Recycling**

### **Commentary:**

The local environment is regarded as a great asset by local people who are keen to enjoy and protect it. Among Freystrop's strengths identified by workshop participants were 'clean air and birdsong' and 'lovely scenery.' 'Woodland and footpaths' and 'countryside, environment & river' were all valued.

The connection between health and environment was highlighted, 'general healthy environment i.e. walking, fresh air and views.' In addition to walking, horse riding and cycling are popular. **Busy roads and heavy traffic are seen as a challenge to healthy living as pollution is seen as a threat, and speeding traffic is a hazard. Any form of alternative transport is to be encouraged for safety reasons, as well as offering health benefits.**

Guided walks were proposed as a way of encouraging residents of all ages to enjoy the rich local landscape and take healthy exercise in a social context.

Notable features include circular routes in Little Milford woods, local common land and a SSSI wildfowl sanctuary. **Questionnaire responses highlighted walking as a popular exercise. It is clear that well marked public paths and organised routes such as the coast path and the route along the disused railway line to Milford and Neyland are very popular. More routes of this type would be popular. Pavements would also encourage more people to walk on a routine daily basis.**



The formation of a Walking Group, with a programme of seasonal walks, was suggested. Walking Groups have proved tremendously popular in other parts of Pembrokeshire, where people of all ages and abilities have welcomed the opportunity to walk in a safe environment which gives them confidence and leads to a greater understanding of the countryside. A different perspective on walking was proposed at the community workshops a 'community family treasure hunt on foot' – a combination of stretching your brain having fun and taking exercise.

Producing a Freystrop Map showing local public rights of way and features of environmental interest, was another proposal. A number of agencies would be asked for help and advice, including local landowners, the National Trust, Countryside Council for Wales and the County Council. Many of the paths are permissive courtesy of the National Trust.

An early task would be to survey the public rights of way network and request help from the Pembrokeshire County Council rights of way team to improve problem paths. If the public paths are in good order, organising walks should be a straightforward and enjoyable pastime. It would also improve the situation for horse riders and cyclists who use bridleways. Interest was also expressed in developing more picnic areas and opportunities for quiet enjoyment of the scenery. It is advisable to inform landowners of path surveys, they may assist by cutting hedges etc.

All of these factors would have social and health benefits too. Recent research has shown that exercise in its own right is beneficial, but there is even more advantage to taking it in the green environment where a range of senses, including, sight, smell and hearing are stimulated.

There is a general enthusiasm for gardening and local produce. Locally produced food also gives health benefits as there is usually less intervention in its production and far fewer food miles involved. This would also be another potential activity to take place in and raise revenue for the Hall.

A shop at Mayfield selling local farm produce is due to open in May 2007.

There is interest in undertaking village enhancement and planting which could tie in with the gardening interest. A suggestion of 'tree planting, flower borders on green spaces' was made during the workshops. A working party could carry out practical improvements – a 'Weed and Wine Evening' was suggested. Examples include the Sardis project near Saundersfoot where local residents have transformed a village green with a planting and seating programme. Suggestions for village events and encouraging community involvement included an 'in bloom' competition.

Many residents are keen on recycling but more facilities are required to make this convenient and effective. One suggestion was to develop facilities at the Playing Field as part of a car parking area improvement. A Recycling and Composting Club was another suggestion to draw in more members of the community and to produce compost for community planting areas.

Rubbish collection could also be improved – the 'orange bag' scheme, where rubbish is sorted ready for recycling collection has been piloted locally and is popular. There would also be interest in learning more about opportunities for recycling a range of materials, including plastic and cardboard which could raise some revenue. A local recycling project was discussed where people of all ages would be encouraged to recycle and compost.

All of these interests could be covered by forming a Freystrop Environment Group that would meet regularly - inviting speakers to raise awareness and provide advice on various topics and undertaking practical works such as path surveys and organise litter and dog mess collections. Local organisations could be invited to get involved e.g. the WI movement undertake environmental projects in some areas.

There is good support available to such groups. PLANED's Valuing the Environment officer works with local environment groups, providing training and support. The Pembrokeshire Biodiversity Officer will assist in carrying out habitat and species audits; the County Council will give advice and support for rights of way issues. There is also a variety of funds available for community environment projects.

## Proposals:

- Form an Environment Group to provide information on a range of topics including local biodiversity. It could also encompass walking, gardening and recycling. A programme of speakers and practical projects would engage more residents and extend the Village Hall's programme.
  - Walking enthusiasts could survey paths and undertake improvements. They could then organise local walks and monitor path conditions. This would also have health and social benefits.
  - Gardeners could pool knowledge and exchange produce or even sell it locally. They might organise an 'in bloom' competition.
  - Review Recycling practice in the community e.g. investigate possibility of 'orange bag' scheme and research community composting.
- Compile a map of Freystrop's paths and environmental features.
- Organise a 'village walk about' to note areas where enhancement, such as seating and planting, might be appropriate and litter removal.
- Work with local volunteers to organise the planting and improvements – all licenses and permissions to be secured first. PLANED can help with this.
- Plants should be chosen that are suitable for the local environment and should enhance habitats where possible. Advice is available.
- Work with local landowners and the appropriate agencies to ensure an informed and effective approach to environmental matters.

## Heritage & History

### Commentary:

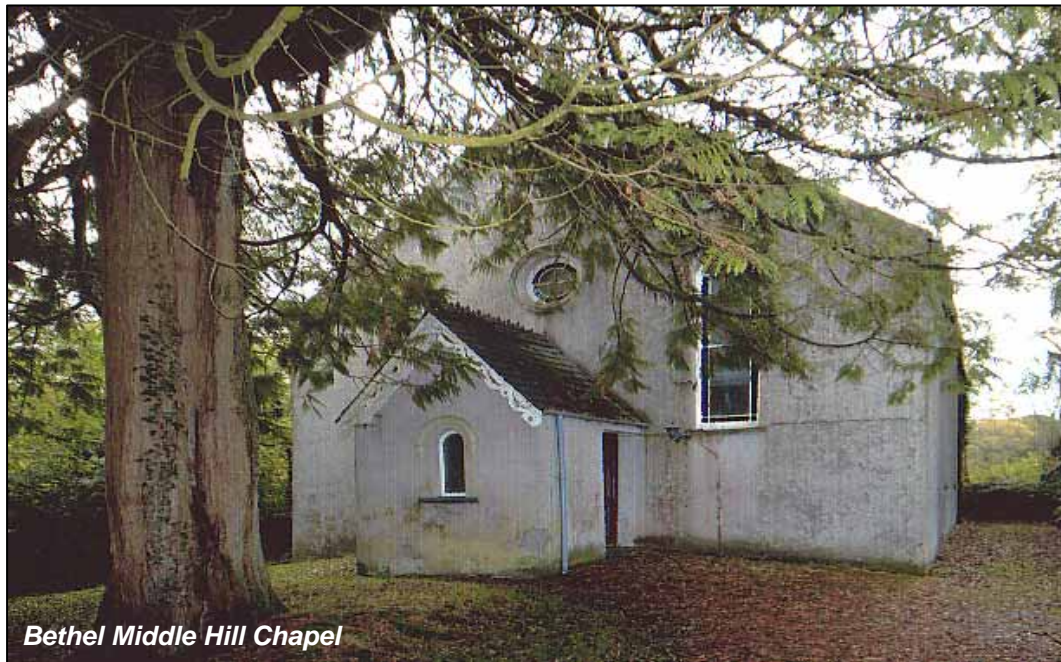
Freystrop has a mix of history, with a rich religious legacy due to its involvement in the 1904 Revival. Coal mining, quarrying and agriculture all have a story to tell as well as records relating to the school, church and chapel.

Local features of note include the St Justinian's Church, the Bethel Middle Hill Chapel, the mining history, the lime kilns, Little Milford and the Millennium stone. Buildings include Clareston and several local farms. The history of village institutions like the School and the Village Hall have fascinating histories with people still alive to give personal testimony.



Local people feel that despite the much appreciated book, 'Freystrop & Folk', local history seems to be undervalued. The village is on the Saints and Stones Riverside route which is launched in May 2007. St Justinian's (*left*) is a lovely building. However, it is in a secluded location that could well be missed by the casual visitor.

Another suggestion is to celebrate the village's part in the 1904 religious revival – this could take the form of an annual festival, respecting the importance of the event, but celebrating the development of Bethel Middle Hill Chapel in the intervening years with a selection of hymns, music and verse. This would be in keeping with a suggestion that there should be 'a willingness to look forward without forgetting the past and local heritage.' It would also compliment the desire to have more local events, drawing people together and raising the profile of spiritual life in the community.



The formation of a local History Group was suggested to cover a range of activities and projects. A village history exhibition proved very successful and created great interest with residents old and new. This could become an annual event with a social and fund raising element. Everyone has something to contribute – an artefact or newspaper cutting that has sat on a shelf for years, can be fascinating.

A Heritage Trail is another possibility – considering the interest in forming a Walking Group and the pride in local heritage. This would be an opportunity to combine heritage and environment, with a health perspective along the way. There is scope for further interpretation boards as it is clear that people are interested in gathering local history information without feeling that they have to take a more formal approach. This would also be an opportunity to agree the best position for interpretation panels.

These measures would also have the added advantage of involving local people in community projects that do not involve attending meetings or classes - it is all about making the most of what is available locally – walks and heritage.

Older residents could be invited to share their local knowledge and memories of all sorts of features – from attending the local school to the joy of past community celebrations. A Community Newsletter could advertise these activities and publish reports about experiences of the Heritage Trail. Another Photo Exhibition of the History of Freystrop is planned for June 2007.

### **Proposals:**

- Form a local History Group to make the most of local heritage.
  - Organise a ‘Revival Revival’ – to celebrate the village’s role in the 1904 religious revival.
  - Research and design a village leaflet – PLANED can help with this.
  - Audit local historical features – help is available from Cambria Archaeology’s Ancient Sites and Monuments register.
  - Collect further photographs and other memorabilia of local life.
- Work together as a community, involving landowners, history and walking enthusiasts, to establish a Heritage Trail.
- Agree locations for interpretation panels and compile an accompanying leaflet.
- Organise a special event to launch the Trail.

## **Business & Enterprise**

### **Commentary:**

Freystrop has a wide range of enterprises and businesses. Several farms not only offer conventional products but have diversified into providing holiday accommodation etc, Well known local businesses include The Travellers Rest pub; Jeff James & Son Plant Hire; Locke Brothers farm contractors; Glyn Thomas the undertaker; Gerald Thomas Heating Engineer; Dai Garland Bikes; Pine Directory; three taxi firms; the Slate Centre and Mayfield Golf Range, Café and Farm Shop. Other local entrepreneurs include a weaver, a beauty therapist; hairdresser; jewellery maker; dressmaker and a disco business. This is an unusually large number of businesses for a relatively small area and many employ local people.

One absence that local people regret is a shop and post office. Years ago there were several small shops in the village. The Freystrop history book records the memories of those who found them not only convenient for shopping but as a meeting place to exchange news and plan and promote local events. This was especially important for older retired people and those who lived alone.

The idea of establishing a community run shop was discussed during the workshop sessions. However, subsequently a Farm Shop is now proposed at the local driving range.

Interest has been expressed in a Craft and Produce Fair or Flower Festival. Combining the two over the course of an early summer weekend, using the

Village Hall and places of worship, would ensure best value for all the effort such an event entails.

A local newsletter is a great help for this type of enterprise as it keeps everyone informed and encourages participation.

Locals and visitors would linger longer and spend their money at both events. At the same time, residents who do not normally go to church might visit the beautiful St Justinian's and Bethel Middle Hill buildings, not only enjoying the flowers but learning more about regular church and chapel activities. As older residents feel that interest in spiritual matters is waning, this might help to raise interest and involve more people.

Organising such an event would draw the community together, involving everyone from the Village Hall Committee and WI, through to local businesses and farmers, food producers, church and chapel congregations and crafts people. A variety of skills would be needed – from flower arranging and food preparation to events organisation.

If refreshments were provided, then so much the better – visitors love home made sandwiches and cakes. This type of catering was once a basic of any community event such as the popular whist drives that used to take place in Freystrop, but these days 'home made' gives any product a special status as time, local ingredients and effort have been put into their production.. Maybe some entertainment might be offered too – there are many talented local people who might be willing to contribute their time.

Visitors on the Saints and Stones tour and to the National Trust site at Little Milford could be encouraged to lengthen their stay. They might go on to boost the local economy further by lunching in a local pub or buying products from a local business.

Such an event would involve a wider group of local people in community activities. It would be a showcase for local producers, have a social element and raise revenue for the Hall and other local causes through rental and refreshments.

Another potential enterprise would be a childcare service. Questionnaire replies indicated that a need for organised childcare facilities. *See Housing & Services.*

### **Proposals:**

- Work with local businesses to encourage sponsorship for elements of the Festival.
- Publish the first Freystrop Newsletter as a means of publicising the event and giving the first edition a really exciting front page. Also promote the event through local radio and every medium possible.

## Transport, Traffic & Highways

### **Commentary:**

Road safety issues were raised by a large number of workshop participants, particularly the increase and speed of traffic. Safety of children is a real concern.

**Questionnaire replies related to exercise opportunities suggested that the busy road and lack of pavements are a barrier to walking for exercise, so traffic has a double health impact – pollution and barrier to exercise.**

There is a 30 mile an hour limit on the main road through the village, with 50mph zones from Troopers Inn in the South to the Slate Centre in the north, it is felt that this should be extended north of the culvert bridge. Also, enforcement measures need to be implemented to curb speeding vehicles and it is claimed that traffic calming and police speed checks are needed.

**Questionnaire findings suggest that most local journeys are made by car although some people would use the bus or bike if they were more convenient, as they consider them to be more environmentally sound and cycling has health benefits. However, walking uphill to the bus stop and carrying a laptop computer, were among deterrents mentioned. Reasons for journeys were work, shopping and access to health services.**

A pavement running the whole length of the village was also suggested, with the proviso that it should not spoil the rural nature of the community. This would enable pedestrian access to the Chapel and Church, for visiting friends and businesses. The current stretches of pavement are in poor condition.

It was also mentioned that traffic by the Play Area is very dangerous, as it is the only passing place for cars. Therefore a safety footpath is needed along the village and Play area.

This would be extended between the communities - access would be possible between Freystrop Cross and the Travellers Rest, for instance. This route is currently dangerous and lethal in the dark. The pavement would cut car journeys and therefore pollution. It would provide exercise and a chance to meet and chat to friends and neighbours.

It would also link in with the Walking proposal, helping to form a circular route which would make it more attractive to visiting walkers and might encourage a combination use of public transport and walking. Walkers could get off the bus, enjoy a local route, maybe spend time and money in the village and then catch a bus on to the next village or to return home.

This could also be part of an overall integrated transport strategy that would encourage cycling on the cycle trail. There is local interest in establishing a cycle trail to Haverfordwest, similar to the one from Tiers Cross. Alternative

transport such as cycling is to be encouraged, so that locals and visitors might use cars less and have minimum impact on the environment. A cycle trail could be a great advantage and it might be feasible to combine it with a pavement so long as user rights are clear.



Public transport is reasonable but more buses are needed in the evenings. The bus shelter is of the old style and is situated on a road junction, which causes a safety hazard. The nearest rail station is at Johnston, 2 miles away.

A need for improved street lighting was also stressed during the community workshops.

### Proposals:

- Liaise with Pembrokeshire County Council to organise Traffic Survey. Gauge traffic speed and flow to provide information for traffic calming request.
- Work with Community Council to campaign for a pavement – maybe combined with a cycle trail.
- Use findings as a basis for suggestions – pavements, pedestrian crossing etc.
- Undertake bus user's survey to gauge support for extending evening bus service.
- Improve street lighting

## Housing & Services

### Commentary:

**Questionnaire replies suggest that the population is fairly stable, with many people living in the community from birth. There is some evidence of more people moving to the area over the past few years, encouraged by a perception that it offers a better quality of life.**

Local people are keen to retain the character of their village and surroundings and do not want more large scale housing development. They feel that the community is near capacity and that the infrastructure is already unable to cope with extra drainage etc. However, they recognise that affordable housing (and employment) is needed if young people are to stand any chance of working and living in the area where they were born and brought up.

The Housing Association development of 19 houses is under construction which increases the pressure on services.

Inadequacies in sewage disposal system in the village have led an embargo on the further developments with the Community.

Freystrop has a few local services, including a mobile library, a paper and a milk round.

**Questionnaire replies suggested that people would use reasonably price organised childcare facilities if they were available locally.**

The decrease of medical care in the community was a concern for some people as was the lack of a community policeman. On the whole people recognised that they lived in a small, essentially rural community but believe that they deserve good quality services for which they pay their taxes.

There is also concern to retain the special qualities of the community, where cows still wander along the road and locals are proud to be called a Freystrop, a member of the only community of that name in the whole world. The local vision is of 'a vibrant community, attractive to live in and not wholly dependent on the services of Haverfordwest.'

### **Proposals:**

- Meet with the Rural Housing Enabler to undertake a local needs survey to assess demand for homes for first time buyers.
- **Undertake local childcare needs survey and if appropriate, contact County Council for advice and guidance on establishing local childcare facilities.**
- Join PLANED's Area Enterprise Group which looks at the economic aspect of rural community life and measures that can be taken to build capacity.

## **Implementation/Activity Groups**

In order that the Action Plan can be progressed effectively it is proposed to work through a Community Forum – an umbrella body with representatives from the Community Council, all local organisations and the County Council. This could be the existing community association with a renewed mission. Working Groups would progress the proposals – reporting back to the whole Community Forum – and in consultation with the relevant providers, for example the Highway Authority.

The Working Groups could be centred on:

- Community - facilities, activities and communications.
- Environment - including rights of way, energy & waste
- Heritage and History.
- Business & Enterprise

- Transport, Traffic & Highways
- Housing & Services.

It is important that the Groups would:

- Work within the agreed Action Plan and report to the main Forum –
- Work with existing groups and organisations, including the Community Council and other local authorities.
- Meet on a regular basis – at least four times a year.
- Keep the broader community informed of progress.

Support, advice and funding would be offered by PLANED and partner organisations to help progress the Action Plan proposals. In certain instances, local proposals might feed into wider area strategies which would be supported by Area Enterprise Groups.