

NEVERN



Action Plan

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NEVERN ACTION PLAN

Prepared by

THE COMMUNITY OF NEVERN

In conjunction with

PLANED

Pembrokeshire Local Action Network for
Enterprise and Development

This Action Plan was agreed at a Public Meeting held in November 2003 following circulation of the draft plan to all households in the community.



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Introduction & Way Forward

The intention of this Action Plan for Nevern is to describe issues and ideas identified by residents which, addressed over the next few years, would improve the quality of life in the community.

The various contributors to the Action Plan realise that progress can best be achieved through discussion and partnership as many of the proposals involve different land or property ownerships, separate interests and different sources of funding. Although some of the proposals are relatively small scale, they are likely to be of substantial benefit to significant groups within the resident population. In other instances the changes suggested are of a larger scale and may have major impact on a wider range of interests.

The legendary bleeding yew tree.



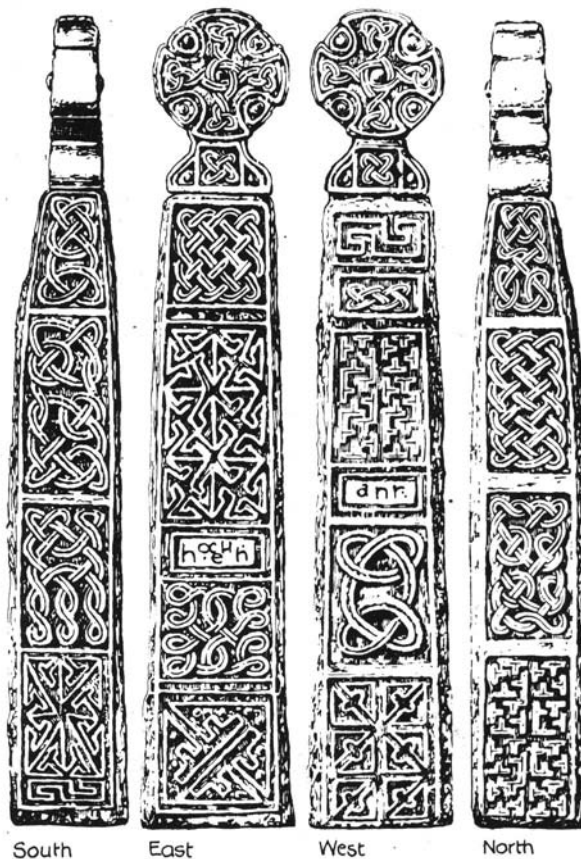
Background to the Action Plan

In May 2003, members of Nevern Community Council and residents of the area met PLANED (Pembrokeshire Local Action Network for Enterprise and Development) to start compiling a Community Action Plan.

Two Community Visioning exercises were held in Nevern in June to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and skills within the community. This was followed by Action Planning meetings, with the aim of producing this Draft Action Plan for circulation to the community.

An "Ideas Wall" exercise took place at Nevern show on 6th August 2003 which provided additional information – this has been incorporated into the Action Plan.

Y Groes Geltaidd Nanhyfer The Nevern Celtic Cross



History of the Community

Situated just off the main A487 between Fishguard and Cardigan, Nevern has ancient origins dating back to at least the fifth century AD. It is best known for its impressive Church as well as its location along the pilgrimage route to St. David's (three pilgrimages to St. David's were once considered the equivalent of one journey to Rome). The famous megalithic monument, Pentre Ifan, lies a few miles from the village.

Local businesses include the Trewern Arms pub, a garage, farms and a goose farm, a market garden, nursery, tea room and a café. A bridlepath runs along the river Nevern to the nearby village of Felindre, beyond which lies the Castell Henllys Bronze Age Fort tourist attraction.

The river Nevern provides excellent fishing, and is home to wildlife such as otters and heron.

The Church

The parish Church of St. Brynach traces its origins back to the Celtic Christians and contains 6th century engraved stones (one is carved with Latin and Ogham writing); the churchyard is the site of an enormous Celtic cross and a legendary bleeding yew tree. Nearby, the pathway to St. David's is marked by a fine cross cut into a rock - at its base is a stone with impressions said to be worn down by the knees of the pious.

The Celtic Cross is by no means the only ancient monument at Nevern. While the cross is believed to date from the tenth century, another stone, estimated to be five centuries older, stands next to the church porch. This stone carries an inscription carved on it using two different character sets. In Latin, it says, "Vitaliani Emereto", and in Ogham it says, "Vitaliani". 'Emereto' is a roman honorific title, and this stone is presumably a monument to a local roman (or would-be roman) dignitary.

The fifth-century date ascribed to this monument makes it possibly contemporary with Saint David, who is said to have passed this way en route to the Synod at Llanddewi-Brefi. A legend has it that he left the Celtic cross behind him, but clearly that part of the story is fanciful. However that may be, St. Brynach is said to have founded the church here in about 570, and he definitely was a contemporary of St. David.

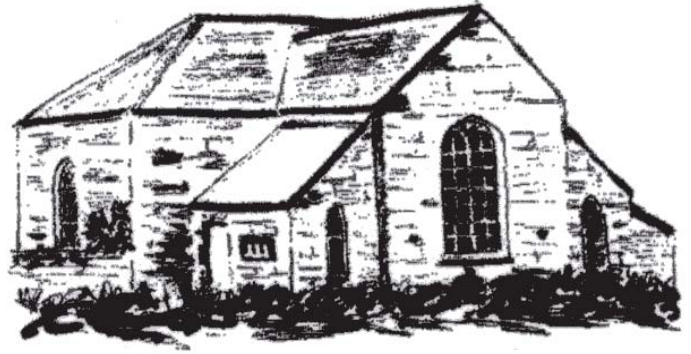
The Castle

On the hill above Nevern are the remains of a fine motte and bailey castle, originally a native Welsh stronghold supposed to have been the headquarters of figures such as Meurig, who features in the legends of King Arthur, and Cuhelyn. The castle was seized in the early 12th century by the Norman Robert Fitzmartin, lord of Cemmaes, who strengthened the castle and created a double-motted structure. Although ruined and overgrown, Nevern Castle still towers well above the surrounding countryside, defended on its southeastern side by a steep gorge carved by the narrow River Gamman. Initially camouflaged by bracken and trees, the site gives the visitor the impression of insignificance. However, once entering the grounds of Nevern Castle, its enormity becomes immediately apparent. The large bailey is triangular and was defended by a set of double earthen ramparts (perhaps the remains of an earlier Iron Age hillfort). A broad area, the bailey easily would have held the garrison, livestock and several timber structures.

Today, Nevern Castle is a quiet, peaceful site, and remains a fine example of a primitive stronghold, one of many fortifications employed by William the Conqueror to subjugate his new kingdom after the Norman Invasion.

The Village

The Village Hall has recently celebrated its 20th anniversary, having previously served the community as a school. It is seen as a key meeting place, has a strong and active committee and hosts many different activities and events.



The Village Hall.

1. Community Facilities and Activities

Commentary

There is a strong sense of community in Nevern - the community has a history of organising local events, the most prominent being the annual agricultural show. Community pride was identified as a strength in the first visioning workshop, as was “working together for the general good of each other and the village.”

Important buildings include the Church, Village Hall, Church Hall and the Trewern Arms Hotel. The Church Hall has just had a toilet for disabled users installed.

Local groups which use the various buildings include the Community Council, Village Hall Committee, Nevern Show Committee, Anglers Association, Parochial Church Council, Quilting Group, Newport Surf and Lifesaving Group, religious groups, an art group, circle dancers and seasonal events.

There is potential for more activities to take place in the various facilities. Ideas for a number of classes, including art and computer classes and Welsh lessons were identified in the Skills and Training audit. A host of skills exist locally ranging from practical talents such as gardening and cooking to word processing, public speaking and meeting facilitation. Traditional skills including farming, fishing and countryside knowledge, are also strong in this very rural community.

Facilities and community care for senior citizens are seen as desirable - “everybody in the village knows everybody and helps when help is needed.”

Proposals:

- Carry out improvements to Village Hall exterior – (estimates of costs to be made)
- Carry out improvements to Church Hall exterior (estimates of costs to be made)
- Encourage awareness needs of senior citizens eg shopping help etc
- Identify additional parking spaces in village and check land availability.
- Identify new activities and classes to be held in Community Hall.
- Purchase exhibition boards to be held at village hall for exhibitions.
- Request PCC to upgrade toilets.

2. Communication & Events

Commentary

In addition to the annual Show, regular events take place which include fund raisers such as the popular duck race and whist drives. There are also an annual art exhibition,

ploughing match, children's' party and firework display. A Sunday School takes place and there are church activities, including a prayer group.

Improving communications locally and the promotion of Nevern to tourists were identified as desirable. Resources available in the community include computers and associated facilities such as scanners and printers. These could be useful for producing a community newsletter.

At present, information is communicated by community notice boards, church notices, posters in the pub, newspapers and the "local grapevine." Formalising this system through a village newsletter or "diary" and publishing items of interest from the various groups and clubs was seen as having great potential.

Suggested information for inclusion includes Church service times; mobile Library times, times of local mobile shops eg fishman etc. It could also advertise forthcoming meetings and events. There could also be some form of business listing or directory. These might subsequently advertise in the publication and help to make it self-sustaining.

A web site could also be developed which could include a copy of the newsletter. Broadband and its advantages has been discussed and some villagers are keen to find out more – both for community and business use. The aim would be to tap into national support and funding. The main challenge is distance from exchange.

Proposals:

- Call a meeting to look at starting a community newsletter/diary/web site
- Design and find site in the village for an area map and information board
- Identify more people locally willing to assist in organising local activities.

3. Heritage & Culture

Commentary

There is a strong sense of pride in local heritage features such as listed buildings, the Church and Castle. The "bleeding" yew in the Churchyard, the Celtic Cross, the bridge and the Pilgrims Cross are well known local features whilst others, such as the sundial, are less obvious.

Strong traditions are associated with the river, known for the quality of its salmon. The Church and Churchyard are well looked after by parishioners and prove to be a popular tourist attraction. The Community would like to hear the Church bells.

It is felt that there should be better signing to and in the village and local interpretation of the features. Information about these features should be available on an illustrated community map/notice board and in a leaflet (see proposal in Communication and Events section above). Publicise the fact that there is an existing 'History of Nevern' book and a leaflet about the church. The board should be designed in consultation with local people and in liaison with the National Park Authority. Local craftsman should be invited to tender for the work.

Nevern castle, owned by the Community Council, is one of the rarest designs of a Motte and Bailey in existence. Local people feel that it is under used and under promoted and that there could be opportunities for events and festivals associated with the site eg: "open air Shakespeare" etc.

Proposals

- Form a group to compile local history leaflet featuring all these historic sites in one publication – *be aware* of existing publications.
- Produce interpretation boards using the information.
- Better signing - tie in with a village scheme.
- Follow up on information already gathered for Church bell restoration.
- Castle - organise meeting of interested parties regarding its future potential.
- Look at potential for local heritage exhibition.

4. Environment, Village Enhancement & Energy

Commentary

It is generally agreed that Nevern parish enjoys a spectacular setting - in a wooded valley with a picturesque river running through it, surrounded by the Preseli hills on one side and the coast on the other.

There is a network of local footpaths and bridleways - some more used than others. The route between Nevern and Newport which passes the Pilgrim's Cross, the Church and Castle, is particularly well used. Better signing is needed to all paths and bridleways. Any path surveys or clearance should be done in liaison with farmers and landowners.

It is felt that some trees and hedges need cutting back in the village to improve visibility and views. This would have to be carried out with specialist advice. Repair of the stone wall opposite the Village Hall is the responsibility of the landowner and could be a bigger job than first appears. Though a gesture of goodwill by the community would no doubt be appreciated it is felt that funding could be better put to more urgent use. It may become necessary to look at strengthening the wall of the bridge itself. There is concern about the height of the wall opposite the Trewern Arms since it was rebuilt.

A village enhancement scheme may help to identify a number of issues raised eg: signing, a site for notice/map board, seats, car parking, environmental improvements, respecting that the village is excellent as it is.

Llwyngoras Nature Reserve is known to environmental specialists but some interpretation and maybe an article in the newsletter might make it better known to everyone. Ty Canol woodland is a national nature reserve and there is other valuable woodland in the area.

Traeth Mawr beach is regarded locally as a good surfing beach and there is an active Surf and Lifesaving Club. There is general interest in coastal conservation issues and work is going on to attain Blue Flag status.

Poop scoops and bins are thought to be appropriate for the beach but at present there is no problem with dog fouling in the village. Any item that detracts from the natural, unspoiled appearance of Nevern is not welcomed.

Windmills and turbines for power generation would be under the control of the National Park. Uninhabited parts of the windswept coastline would present ideal conditions but in this highly sensitive area extensive consultation would be needed.

Proposals

- Village enhancement study - signing, notice board - bridge height, keep clear and general enhancement.
- Map of local public rights of way – routes would have to be clear and usable if they were to be publicised. Any surveys etc should be carried out in liaison with farmers
- Work towards closer relationship with Pembrokeshire Coast National Park.
- Preserve existing woodland and investigate potential for more.
- Llwyngoras nature reserve, possibly others in the area - funding to improve tracks and shelters would be beneficial.
- Although booklets and leaflets are available from Newport TIC, there is a desire to provide more local information to assist visitors in Nevern.

5. Local Economy

Commentary

Nevern's economy is firmly based around agriculture and more recently tourism. Businesses within the village include an Inn and a Garage.

The village is surrounded by farmland and farming makes a crucial indirect contribution through maintaining the countryside. There is a need to identify actions that would bring new levels of confidence, drive and ability, resulting in a forward-looking and sensitive approach to the environment and customer needs. (See Appendix 1)

Most villagers work, either in the Inn, on the surrounding farms or in tourism. Some are retired and enjoy the peace and quiet of the locality. The wages are generally low with the result that many younger members of the community leave to attend college or university and then work away. However, many do come back as the pull of the community is strong.

The people are gentle as is the village, the community wish their village to remain as it is – unspoilt and un-commercialised. This is the strength that Nevern has, people love it just the way it is. The community is fiercely proud of Nevern and any proposals for change in the village have to be looked at very carefully to ensure they are genuinely for the good of the community both in the present and future. The community has done this extremely successfully over many hundreds of years and change for the sake of change is met with resistance.

Local businesses include agricultural and building contractors, *farms* and a goose farm, several tourism businesses, holiday cottages, a trekking centre, retail outlets, tree nursery, garage, builders, gardening and other services. Also, a café, pub and hotel and some e-business services.

The topic of Broadband has been discussed in some detail. Broadband is simply very fast internet access and makes using the Internet a lot easier and a lot less frustrating. It can be used for working from home, shopping and studying online, playing games, films or music, “e-commerce”, chatting in real time, “e-government” and running websites.

The advantages for Nevern could be:

- New business opportunities
- Education opportunities
- Social
- Government - eg: farm paperwork.

There are two options for receiving Broadband.

1. Upgrading the telephone exchange - if enough people in the (01239) exchange area tell BT they want Broadband, the local exchange could be upgraded.
2. Satellite and wireless - a satellite connection is an expensive way to get Broadband, but will work anywhere. If one central computer in the area is connected to the internet, other computers can share that link with a "wireless" radio connection.

Proposals:

- List all local businesses in newsletter or "extra" supplement/services directory
- Research potential for Broadband eg potential for Welsh Assembly funding
- Training to be provided locally eg computer classes
- Take forward an area initiative to look at the potential for retaining young people and investigate how to maximise opportunities for them generally, including employment.
- Support tourism opportunities that do not compromise the spirit and tranquillity of the community and its area.

6. Highways and Transport

Commentary

Lack of public transport is seen as a barrier for old and young people as it inhibits socialising and learning. This is another reason for more classes etc to be provided locally.

Existing bus services need to be better advertised (newsletter) and a bus shelter is needed at Temple Bar. It would be excellent if the Poppit Rocket could travel via Nevern.

Road safety is a concern, particularly the speed of traffic through the village and the busy junction onto the main road. Cycle routes are currently being proposed within the area.

Proposals

- Investigate potential for increased public/community transport.
- Advertise bus times.
- Investigate bus shelter provision at Temple Bar.
- Traffic speed survey needed and markings at junction.
- Identify transport opportunities for older people, including Country Cars.
- Investigate Poppit Rocket detouring via Nevern.
- Ensure agencies investigating cycle routes liaise with community.

7. Housing

Commentary

There is general concern about the rising number of holiday homes and the lack of affordable housing for local people, especially youngsters.

It is proposed that an *area wide* bid should be submitted to the Sustainable Development Fund (administered by Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority) to run an architectural competition for:

Affordable }
Sustainable } Housing
Local Style }

The competition would present an opportunity to local architects to use their experience to meet this very specific challenge. It would also be essential to establish a true picture of community demand for this type of housing.

Look at best practice to address affordable, local needs housing that minimises environmental impact and is designed to be sympathetic to the surrounding landscape, community and culture.

Proposals

- Local communities to investigate the potential for an SDF (Sustainable Development Fund) application, looking at best practice models and with assistance from PLANED and other appropriate agencies.

FARM NEVERN INITIATIVE

Recent upheavals in the agriculture industry in Wales, as in many other European regions, have had a devastating knock-on effect on Nevern's family farm incomes, morale and local economy.

Eglwyswrw YFC is active in the area with 50 members aged between 10 and 26 years, drawn from a radius of about 20 miles of Eglwyswrw, where they meet every Thursday.

It is proposed that a Farm Nevern initiative should be established which would:

- recognise the roles of existing providers
- foster greater co-operation
- encourage best practice and the gaining of business and IT skills enabling farmers to manage their businesses more effectively.

It would also consider whether better signposting to the range of consultancy and advisory services that are now available is needed – and how these services might be improved for what is a micro-region of small farms.

Developing Attitudes:

- Facilitate the development of farmer discussion groups, engaging in benchmarking, business appraisal, planning for the future, investigating areas of collaboration and new sources of income.
- Support the Eglwyswrw Young Farmers Club with the aim of helping farming children within secondary education with career choices and development.
- Facilitate farm employers to build better businesses through "Investors in People". This would give a comparative advantage when recruiting staff, an understanding of legal obligations, of treating people fairly and building a team spirit.
- Harnessing the economic potential of young people, farmers' sons and daughters – the future farmers of Wales.

Helping the Farmer to Help Himself:

- Jointly organise events with providers to highlight the potential of new environmental measures, tourism and leisure pursuits.
- Involve farmers and landowners in renewable energy projects.
- Promote local processing and adding value.
- Organise seminars to ensure farmers are kept up to date with the Welsh Agri-Food Strategy, CAP reforms, animal welfare, inheritance and succession matters, dealing with bureaucracy (ARAD, National Park and CCW), ICT and "e commerce" developments.
- Develop links with key players in Welsh agriculture e.g. Farming Connect, WDA, IGER, Gelli Aur, Pembs Tech College and PBI.

Training: Co-ordination and Provision

Cultivate links with training providers to ensure efficient and effective provision for family farm enquiries/needs (Haverfordwest is often too far away). Courses to be tutor-based,

located on farms or other venues deemed suitable. Likewise strengthen links with the Pembrokeshire Machinery Ring.

The Farm Nevern action plan would offer farming families:

- Improved understanding
- Improved skills
- Improved mindset and motivation

This would assist them to –

- Develop enterprises
- Supplement incomes
- Safeguard jobs
- Create new jobs

Farm Nevern would initiate this development programme by establishing one or more discussion groups and to create a database or rural brokerage to recruit or deal with job requirements of rural employers. Funding for the payment of a part-time trained facilitator would be sought.

Farm Nevern could only bring about benefit and improve competitiveness by convincing its farmers to participate. The challenge is to help the farmers of Nevern to move in a new direction which reconciles more effectively what people want from farming and what can be paid for by consumers and government.