

# Malwyns Castle Robeston West & Hasguard



# Action Plan

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Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru  
Welsh Assembly Government

# COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

for

## Walwyn's Castle, Robeston West & Hasguard

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 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2008 following the circulation of the Draft Action Plan to all households in the community

## **Background to the Action Plan**

Early in 2008 Walwyn's Castle Community Council discussed with PLANED the possibility of an Action Plan centred on Walwyn's Castle, Robeston West and Hasguard. On 13<sup>th</sup> March 2008 residents of Walwyn's Castle and the surrounding area attended the first of two Visioning Workshops. The second was held on 3<sup>rd</sup> April.

The intention of this Action Plan for the Walwyn's Castle area 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 proposals involve land or property ownerships, different interest groups and various sources of funding. Forming a Community Forum to take on the Action Plan proposals forward is an excellent way of involving people of all ages and interest.

By preparing this community led Action Plan, which stresses the benefits that can be achieved through working together, it is hoped that public and private sector support and funding can be attracted to implement the various initiatives described in the Plan.

## **The Action Plan Area**

The whole area consists of about 88 households, a very scattered community in rural west Pembrokeshire with the main groups of buildings at Walwyn's Castle, Robeston West and Hasguard and other small hamlets.

Walwyn's Castle lies about 4 miles west of Milford Haven and two miles south of Broad Haven and is centred on the village green, the Church of St James the Great and the village hall. The western half of the village lies within National Park as the boundary follows the minor north-south road between Picking Corner and Rosemoor.

Robeston West, although lying about 1.5 miles south-east of Walwyn's Castle takes about four miles by road via Tiers Cross or Rickeston Mill. The group of houses and the Church of St Andrew forming Robeston West lies immediately to the north of the oil refinery and like Walwyn's Castle lies partly within the area of the National Park. There is a small village green and a pond adjacent to the church.

Hasguard consists of a number of small clusters of houses and lies totally within the National Park.

The sense of place is very strong with about 2000 years of history very apparent including the remains of a number of major earthworks and the presence of three old churches.

As a reflection of the very rural nature of the area, the nearest shops, post office and pubs are found in nearby settlements including Tiers Cross, Broad Haven and Johnston. There are, however, deliveries of milk, newspapers and vegetables to

Walwyn's Castle, Robeston West and Hasguard. Residents are concerned over the threat of possible closures of some of the more local shops and post offices. The nearest bus route is the Puffin Coastal Bus which runs through Tiers Cross and operates more frequently in the summer.

## **Visioning Workshops**

The first Workshop, was based on four elements:

- identification of the special qualities of this community,
- an audit of existing community buildings, the activities held and local skills held in the population.
- discussions on the concept of sustainability working from a global perspective to that relating more specifically to the Action Plan area.
- and an examination of current weaknesses, threats, strengths and opportunities in the area.

A second Workshop, '**An Ideal Community - The Vision for 2018**' was held on 3<sup>rd</sup> April and focussed on how residents would like their ideal community to look in approximately 10 years time. The following are the main elements of those visions:

- Whilst liking the area as it is, participants nevertheless felt that an increase in the population was required to provide a stronger base to retain existing facilities and attract new ones. The increased population would arise from all existing properties being occupied and allowing some more houses to be built.
- More networking and 'ownership' within the existing community and welcoming new residents.
- New recreational / sports facilities / activities.
- A local shop and post office
- A youth club and involving young people in decision making and fund raising.
- Strengthening the role of the Church.
- More interaction by the residents of Walwyn's Castle with adjacent communities including Tiers Cross and Robeston West.
- More available buses with integrated connections to other places.
- More services delivered locally, including the travelling library.

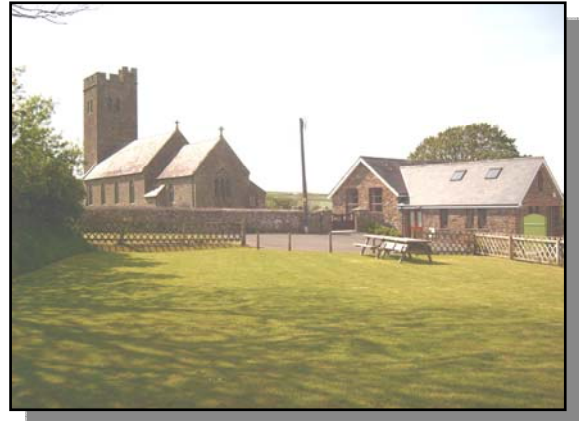
## **The Action Plan**

### **Community Facilities, Activities & Communications**

#### **Commentary**

The community of Walwyn's Castle is seen as welcoming with traditional values very much in evidence. Many residents value the village for its variety and abundance of wildlife, heritage and agricultural background. Help comes without asking and people care for each other and for the area.

The central village hall and the associated activities are seen as the focus for the community and the means for making it stronger. Among the activities held at the hall are the Ladies Guild, the History Group, adult learning opportunities (including computer classes and Welsh classes), The different events include social evenings and those centred on the St Davids Day Supper, a Summer Pig Roast, Harvest Supper, Fireworks evening, whist drives and children's Christmas party. The range of events is well supported as there is a tradition of self help within the community which extends into participation in such occasions.



The hall, which is managed by a Committee, is often let out for private functions which are an important means of raising income. A further source of income is the rent obtained from the attached cottage.

The rural location and the nearby presence of the sea and coastal villages encourage walking and cycling as recreational activities as well as kayaking and canoeing.

Although the area comprises a number of small settlements and scattered farms there is a desire among residents to strengthen the community spirit and improve the facilities available particularly at Walwyn's Castle, for example to provide a play area for young children, give greater support for the youth and provide a range of entertainment involving music and possibly craft workshops.

One of the priority projects identified at the Visioning Workshops was to organise a community workshop to carve benches and chairs, interpretation boards and village signs. A range of people and local skills would be involved not only in production but in research for information to include on the panels etc. Subsequent projects could encompass a boules and quoits pitch and bandstand which would form the basic facilities, including a shelter, on which to base events for all. Support would be required from the Village Hall Committee to assist with fund raising.

It was suggested that the hall could accommodate ballroom and line dancing and a range of keep fit, tai chi or yoga classes. Adjacent open space (including the car park) would allow the construction of the boules and quoits pitch and a tennis court.

Installation of play equipment for young children within the fenced section of the village green was also proposed.

A newsletter is distributed four or five times a year to every household and there is a village notice board by the St James the Great Church.

At present the quality of the Broadband connection is poor which limits use by local businesses

A lack of spiritual support from the Church the lack of activities aimed specifically at young people are sources of regret.

### **Proposals**

- Form a Walwyn's Castle Community Forum to manage the delivery of the Action Plan.
- Work with the existing Hall Committee to investigate ways of increasing use of the Hall, for example by:
  - running films and a photography club;
  - a (weekly) jazz club;
  - sports nights including badminton;
  - model railway evenings;
  - chess night;
  - creative writing and reading groups;
  - art groups and exhibitions;
  - ballroom dancing / keep fit, Tai Chi and yoga;
  - functions associated with the Church;
  - Play group.
- Give particular emphasis to involving young people in the identification of activities and their funding and management.
- Investigate the support for a Youth Club in the Community.
- Organise a community workshop to carve seating, interpretation boards and village signs and involve the History Group in gathering information for any information panels.
- Based primarily on the existing amenity area and the car park adjacent to St James the Great, prepare an overall plan to include:
  - construction of a tennis court;
  - building a boules and quoits pitch and form a local league;
  - the acquisition of equipment and construction of a young children's play area;
  - additional benches both in this area and at places of interest for example Rosemoor Nature Reserve (including replacing any worn seats).
- Form a Twinning Committee – to investigate the possibilities of 'twining' with another village elsewhere in Wales or with an EU destination.
- Approach BT to raise the quality of Broadband reception in the Action Plan area.

### **Environment, Including Rights of Way, Recycling & Energy**

#### **Commentary**

The local environment is very special to the area with the presence of the Rosemoor nature reserve centred on the lake (now a reservoir) which is privately owned, a second lake to the south, the green and pond at Robeston West, the associated wildlife and the local network of paths.

There is a well situated near the pond at Robeston West, which up until the 1950s was the only source of water available to the residents of the cottages situated nearby. There is great support from the community to restore the pond and well to its 'former glory'.

The variety of wildlife within the area which arises from the variety of habitats, has encouraged residents to show an interest in becoming members of the RSPB and Woodland Trust or National Trust and, more locally, in tending the flower beds on the village green.

Concern has been expressed over the pollution and safety threats associated with the nearby refineries and the processes arising from the import of LNG and the various shipping movements in the Haven.

The possible development of intrusive wind farms is foreseen as likely to reduce the quality of the local environment.

Residents are aware that reducing waste and recycling begins at home and of the important role for the County Council to provide facilities for glass and plastic etc disposal and collection in neighbouring villages if not in Walwyn's Castle. Reducing the need for energy and developing suitable power generation schemes were supported.

### **Proposals**

- Landscape the areas around the church at Walwyns Castle.
- Involve those with artistic skills, especially young people, to decorate the Dale Road bus shelter.
- Discuss with land owners the possibilities of forming a working party to clean and restore the pond and well by Robeston West village church.
- Investigate with land owners the possibilities of installing additional benches for both in amenity area adjacent to the Church Hall and at places of interest for example Rosemoor Nature Reserve (including replacing any worn seats).
- Form a local walking group with the objectives of :
  - increasing opportunities for improved health;
  - maintaining the local Rights of Way network.
- Support recycling schemes and power generation proposals which do not compromise the landscape - especially that of the National Park.
- Investigate the possibility of generating electricity for Walwyn's Castle hall through a sustainable energy scheme e.g. a small wind turbine.
- Investigate the possibilities of Community composting.

### **Heritage & History**

#### **Commentary**

Evidence of early occupation in the Walwyn's Castle area is based on the presence of Iron Age settlements and associated raths and the Gawain and Gwalchmai stories or myths. The Norman Castle and Church testify to Walwyn's Castle being a seat of power within Pembrokeshire. The area contains a number of listed buildings including the Court at Rosepool.

The earthworks of Walwyn's Castle, which lie in the centre of the village, consist of two wards and are probably based on an adaptation of an earlier Iron Age site. There

is another earthwork at Syke ½ mile to the south which defended the valley inland of the tidal Sandyhaven Pill.



The Norman Church of St James the Great at Walwyn's Castle is late C14 / C15 and strikingly placed on a raised churchyard at the centre of this tiny close-knit village. It was re-built between 1869 and 1878.

The Church of St Andrew at Robeston West with its raised churchyard and picturesque setting was constructed in C14 or C15. The Church is known as a 'gem' by visitors to, and residents of the Parish.

Robeston Hall which lay to the north-west of the church was burnt down in 1921 and demolished. The ruined barn, ice-house and part of the walled garden survive.

The Church of St Peter at Hasguard, which contains elements of C13 construction, is again set in a raised churchyard but unfortunately has been derelict for some years and recently made into a safe ruin.

The wealth of archaeological and historical aspects of the area has given rise to a local History Group which meets in the Village Hall.



## Proposals

Support the History Group to:

- Prepare and publish an information leaflet about the area.
- Seek funding for the production of a local history book.
- Design interpretation boards - installation to involve the proposed craft group.
- Encourage the Dyfed Archaeological Trust to undertake a programme of managed excavation and restoration of the Raths the pre-historic hill forts at Walwyn's Castle and Syke (and encourage possible conservation works at Robeston Hall).

## Business & Tourism

### Commentary

The main employers include the refineries, local government and schools, farms, an old peoples home, tourism related activities including accommodation, a carpenter's workshop, a transport yard, kennels and a skip hire business.

There was concern that the former quarry near Walwyn's Castle may re-open and whilst this would provide employment it was felt that the local highway network was inadequate for the number and type of HGVs which would be required.

Opportunities for new jobs in the Action Plan area could arise from farm diversification.

### **Proposals**

- Explore opportunities to open a farm shop.
- In conjunction with Pembrokeshire County Council, encourage nearby employers to operate a 'local people for local jobs' policy.
- Investigate the possibility of a small shop / part-time Post Office, possibly operating from the Church Hall in Walwyn's Castle. An alcohol licence at the Hall may also be considered as there is no 'local'.
- Hold an exhibition of the works of local artists in the Village Hall.

## **Services, Including Housing**

### **Commentary**

In view of the rural setting there are few services provided locally. Visits by the travelling shops could be augmented, for example, by the mobile library. Such services would be of benefit to residents as there is no bus service to and from Walwyn's Castle other than during the summer months.

There are no plans by the housing authorities for additional developments in the Walwyn's Castle area, the benefits of which could increase the possibility of maintaining activities or increasing the services available and therefore the likelihood of keeping St James the Great and the Village Hall viable and open. There is a perception that a number of properties are empty for most of the year or that a number of larger houses are under-occupied. It is suggested that these properties could provide additional accommodation. Affordable homes for local people are seen as a priority.

### **Proposals**

Work with the Community Council to encourage PCC to amend the route of the mobile library to call at Walwyn's Castle, Robeston West and Hasguard:

- To request PCC and the PCNPA when preparing Development Plans, to allocate small sites in Walwyn's Castle for residential development with the priority being affordable homes for local people.
- To discuss with the Rural Housing Enabler opportunities to increase the availability of affordable housing in the area, including raising occupation levels of vacant or underused properties.

## **Transport, Traffic & Highways**

### **Commentary**

There is no bus service to the area. The nearest route is the Puffin Coastal Bus which runs through Tiers Cross and operates more frequently in the summer.

As having access to a car is essential in the Action Plan area, there are particular concerns about rising fuel costs. Reliance on private transport is a particular worry

for the elderly as they become less mobile and for young people which rely on others for transport.

The development of a local volunteer personal transport scheme, which would allow access to the shops, friends and family, library and Doctor's surgery, was seen as a priority project particularly as the local population is ageing and there are likely to be sympathetic drivers in the neighbourhood.

It was also noted by residents that the volume and speed of traffic, especially from Tiers Cross to the lower end of Old Hakin Road, is very hazardous. The roads in this part of Pembrokeshire are often single track with limited passing opportunities and are not well maintained.

The residents were unhappy that there is no bus shelter for the children using the school bus and there are no pavements making it hazardous for residents to walk around the village.

### **Proposals**

- Work with the Community Council and the County Council to support the introduction of a bus service to the area.
- Discuss with the Community Council and PACTO (a Community Transport organisation in Pembrokeshire), the opportunity for a local volunteer personal transport scheme to address the transport needs of local non-drivers through either
  - a local network of potential drivers and passengers or;
  - operating a suitable vehicle for residents to share transport. The availability of an access friendly vehicle run on bio-diesel would be particularly welcome;
  - A small grants scheme may be available if the project involved neighbouring communities.
- Investigate with the Community Council and the Royal Mail the opportunity to share a 'mail bus' serving the area.
- Work with the Community Council to persuade the Highway Authority to selectively widen some rural roads to provide additional passing places and pavements.
- Work with the Community Council to persuade the Highway Authority to provide a bus shelter for the school children.

### **Implementation / Activity Groups**

In order that the Action Plan can be progressed effectively it is proposed to form special interest Working Groups within the proposed Community Forum. The Group would, in consultation with the relevant providers, for example the Highway Authority, concentrate on preparing more detailed action programmes giving priority and focus to those proposals which are capable of early implementation.

Reflecting the limited size of the community, the local geography and existing societies, the Groups could be centred on:

- Community activities, services and communications.

- Environment (including rights of way) waste and recycling, housing, employment (including tourism), transport and traffic.
- Heritage.

It is important that the Groups:

- Work within the agreed Action Plan and the proposed Community Forum,
- Work with existing groups and organisations,
- Meet on a regular basis,
- Keep the broader community informed of progress.