

Newport



Action Plan

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COUNTRYSIDE COUNCIL FOR WALES

ACTION PLAN

Prepared by

THE NEWPORT COMMUNITY

In conjunction with

**PEMBROKESHIRE LOCAL ENTERPRISE NETWORK FOR
ENTERPRISE AND DEVELOPMENT**



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Appendices

Apx 1. The Good Old Days and the Bad Old Days / Current Picture and Audit / Strengths, Weaknesses, Threats and Opportunities. The results of the initial visioning meeting of 22nd September 2003.

Apx 2. Skills, Resources and Training Needs Audit – the results of the second visioning exercise held on 17th November 2003.

This Action Plan was agreed at a public meeting held on 6th May 2004, following circulation of the Draft Action Plan to households in the community of Newport.

INTRODUCTION AND WAY FORWARD

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

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

BACKGROUND TO THE ACTION PLAN

In the summer of 2003 Newport Town Council and PLANED discussed proposals to prepare a Newport Action Plan. It was explained that PLANED works with a Community to develop its Action Plan, and normally a Community Forum of Community Councillors, residents, voluntary groups and associations would then be formed to help take the Plan forward. The intention was to involve all ages and representatives from the various sections of the community in the preparation, adoption and implementation of the Newport Action Plan.

Two Community Visioning exercises were held in Newport in September and November 2003. The results of these exercises have formed the basis for this first draft of the Action Plan.

In preparing the Action Plan PLANED were made aware of previous assessments of Newport: Newport Area Appraisal (1989); Welsh Development Agency Rural Recovery Programme Newport Plan (1991); The Newport Environmental Study (1995) undertaken by the Civic Trust; Analysis of the Economic & Employment Prospects for the Newport Area by Carningli Rural Initiative (1997); Newport Community Appraisal of Sports, Leisure and Community Activities on behalf of Menter Preseli (1998); and the Conservation Area Statement for Newport and Parrog by the PCNP in June 2002.

NEWPORT - A SPECIAL PLACE

Newport's original settlement at the mouth of the River Nevern developed into a small port and was known as Trefdraeth (Town on the shore), and this remains the Welsh name for Newport. It is one of the oldest towns in West Wales, with one of the most beautiful locations. It is located on the estuary of the Afon Nyfer, and it is also dominated by the peak of Carningli which has a long tradition of being a sacred place. Nearby Traeth Mawr is one of the finest beaches in Pembrokeshire. It is this combination of estuarine, coastal and upland scenery which makes Newport so special, and explains why those who live in Newport, or who have holiday homes here, are so protective of its way of life and its physical assets.

Because the town was founded shortly after the Norman Conquest it has many medieval features, including castle, church, street pattern and burgage plots. The Normans built the castle half a mile above the original settlement, building a garrison town below the castle. The town was a centre of military control and the "capital" of the hundred of Cemais, and it was for a time a centre of foreign influence in the midst of the Welshry. Parrog is the old sea port, once a separate community and now tied into the main town. Shipbuilding, lime burning and coastal trading were once important, but now the slipways and buildings are largely given over to water-based leisure activities.

The population has oscillated over the centuries, but it has seldom grown above 2,000. Socially it is a complex place, with "feudal" traditions maintained with vigour alongside a healthy disrespect for authority! There are concerns about the out-migration of young people, the shortage of affordable homes, the over-dependence upon tourism, and the problems of providing good facilities for young and old. There is a fine "quality of life" in Newport, but by common consent it could be a good deal better, especially for those who count themselves as permanent residents.

The town and the local setting fall within area of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park. Over recent years Newport has developed a reputation as an ecologically aware area, particularly with the development of the ECO Centre and the associated research on energy conservation and the use of renewable energy resources. The older parts of the town and their immediate settings have been designated as Conservation Areas.

STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, THREATS & OPPORTUNITIES

The following are the principal aspects raised by the community in the Visioning Exercises. They have been grouped into broad themes, a process which allows a more constructive analysis and preparation of an Action Plan with appropriate objectives and detailed recommendations.

Strengths

1. Community

Newport has a tradition of strong family links and a community orientated spirit. It has diverse strengths and talents and with a creativity that is keen to promote a range of business, social and recreational activities. The distinctive cultural heritage reflects both the Welsh and English language in north Pembrokeshire and more specifically the historic origins of the town.

The perception is of an active and welcoming community.

There are a number of community buildings i.e. the Memorial Hall, Ysgol Bro Inqli, St Johns H.Q. and the Community Resource Centre at the West Wales ECO Centre and the privately owned Boat Club, also the chapels and St Mary's Church, which provide venues for various religious, cultural and recreational activities.

2. Activities and Events

Cultural, recreational and sports activities, festivals and regattas are enjoyed and there is a variety of organised interest groups. The Newport Collective manages a shop window for the sale of local crafts. The skateboard park and rugby pitch are adjacent to the school, the informal recreation area at Parc y Plant, the tennis courts and the nearby golf course are local assets complementing the natural attractions of the coast and hills for outdoor recreation.

3. Environment & Heritage

The exceptional, almost magical, quality of the natural environment and the peacefulness of the area are highly valued. There is a substantial archaeological resource in the area. Newport lies within the Pembrokeshire Coast National

Park. Two parts of the town has been designated as Conservation Areas to reflect the attraction of the built environment and its setting.

There is a considerable interest in environmental awareness and sustainability – the ‘green’ agenda.

Efforts have been made to improve the safety of pedestrians within the town. Newport is regarded as relatively crime free and an attractive area in which to bring up children.

The coast, estuary and beach and the Preseli Hills provide a variety of opportunities for outdoor recreational activities.

4. Skills and Services

The local skills and services base is seen as an important resource which will enable Newport to develop new opportunities.

5. Business, Employment and Local Services

At present there is a variety of retailing (including mobile shops), a light industrial park, other businesses and local service provision which enables Newport to be largely self-sufficient. The ECO Centre is seen as of particular value in this area. Ysgol Bro Ingli, which caters for the educational needs of junior school pupils, has recently opened a nursery class. There is a public library, health centre, a dentist and a pharmacy in the town.

6. **Tourism** is generally seen as an asset which ‘keeps the community active, vital and solvent’ (although it is also recognised that the periods of peak visits place a strain on the town, particularly in terms of numbers of vehicles along the A487). There is a National Park Tourist Information Centre which provides a Bed & Breakfast booking service.

7. Transport

A regular bus service operates along the A487. The recent decision to operate the Poppit Rocket bus service throughout the year (with seasonal changes in frequency) reflects the use of the service by the resident community and the prospects for all year tourism.

Weaknesses

1. Rising house prices, particularly for first time home buyers combined with the shortage of land for affordable developments. The location of Newport in the National Park further restricts the likelihood of new development – as formalised in the JUDP. The Town Council is appealing against the current allocation.
2. Perceived disproportionate number of holiday homes and second homes particularly as residents find it very difficult to purchase or build homes in the area.
3. An ageing population. An estimated 30 – 40 % of residents are retired and a perception that fewer second home / retired wish to be involved in community activities.
4. The contrasts have increased between the winter economy and empty ‘second’ homes and the summer economy with staying and day visitors. The seasonal nature of tourism results in high levels of activity at peak times and closed premises during the winter months.
5. Reduction in the variety of local shops and services, for example fewer telephone boxes.
6. The impact of traffic movement through the town centre during the summer and other holiday periods which is a reflection of the volume of vehicles on the A487, the number of turning movements, the width constriction immediately to the east of the square.
7. On-street parking is limited.
8. Reductions in the quality of the environment, including the presence of overhead electricity and telephone cabling, a perception that the beach was cleaner some years ago, that light pollution is growing and that there are some irresponsible dog owners.
9. The existing community buildings do not meet all the needs to provide Newport with the range of facilities requested by different sections of the community.

10. There is a need to integrate more closely the activities of the Town Council with the aspirations of the community and to increase the understanding between the PCNPA and the community.
11. Declining congregations at the Chapels and Church, especially of young people and a shortage of volunteers to manage the Memorial Hall. Guides and Brownies have closed because of the lack of adult leaders. There are insufficient players to form a rugby team and the pitch is not of match standard.
12. Whilst high expectations were generated by attempts since 1989 to develop and implement a community action plan these have not wholly been met.

Threats

1. Newport will become even less attractive for school leavers and young local families if house prices rise, further exacerbating the demographic imbalance, as would a reduced availability of employment opportunities, shopping, recreation, entertainment and support services.
2. Rising traffic volumes and the dependence on private vehicles will reduce the environmental quality of the town.
3. Seasonal contrasts in economic activity could increase.
4. There will be insufficient resources to create an obvious centre for community activities and that a failure to focus resources and energies may lead to a reduction in community activities.
5. A combination of declining numbers playing football or rugby and reducing quality of the existing recreational areas at Parc y Plant and the rugby ground.
6. Declining numbers of volunteers to organise and support activities and to manage the associated buildings.
7. There may be a deterioration in navigation in the estuary due to siltation.

Opportunities

It is the opportunities aspect of the Visioning Exercises which has led more than any other to the Proposals Section of the Action Plan. The following points are, therefore, broad conclusions from the Exercise.

1. General

To utilise the existing skills, experience and talents already present in the community both in respect of developing business activities and in extending the cultural and recreational life of the town.

2. Green Issues

To further expand the reputation of Newport for research and the application of sustainable development techniques.

3. Communications

To further develop and apply IT skills, including the introduction of broadband technology, which is seen as an opportunity to encourage local people of all ages to access information on a global basis.

4. Culture, Arts and Crafts

To draw on the existing strengths in this area to create or recreate art, drama, choral and musical groups and their display or performance in buildings (which may need upgrading to meet their requirements).

5. Environment & Heritage

To enhance the quality of the natural and built environment but in such a manner that fits with the existing character which is a tidy rural scene rather than a 'manicured' setting. It is important that appropriate building materials and techniques are used when restoring or converting property and for new build. Similarly any traffic management schemes, other utilities works and the provision of paths, benches etc should be undertaken in a suitable manner.

ACTION PLAN PROPOSALS

1. Community

A. Community Development by encouraging pride in Newport and in 'good neighbour' practice by -

1. developing the existing community spirit, particularly
 - a) improving working relationships between the Town Council and community groups.
 - b) developing more positive links with other public bodies which affect the form and nature of Newport (for example PCC, PCNPA).
 - c) being aware of the needs of older or less mobile residents; for example, operate a 'visit a neighbour' scheme

2. Promoting and expanding a community events programme which could include the mounting of exhibitions and the promotion of arts and crafts festivals / carnivals / regattas, the autumnal fireworks etc.
 - a) Form an Events Group to develop and publicise business and community events and occasions in and around Newport.
 - b) preparation and circulation of a Newport newsletter and posting of monthly bulletins covering proposed events, current issues, operating times of buses, car share schemes etc.
 - c) developing IT, particularly Broadband, and the creation and management of a Newport Web site.
 - d) Investigate reinstating the town cryer.

3. Strengthening the Youth Council, a forum for young people (expanding the Mayor's Youth Scheme) to
 - a) develop and publicise a programme of activities and
 - b) decide which facilities should be improved or created to meet their changing needs.
 - c) Improve liaison with other organisations, for example Princes Trust etc.Links between the Youth Council / youth club and users of existing clubs, facilities and activities should lead to a greater continuity in membership and

activities of the numerous organisations already present in the town.

4. Promote and increase interest in the Senior Citizens Lunch Club and associated events.

B. Community Facilities

1. Upgrade the facilities already provided in the Memorial Hall and Ysgol Bro Ingli, ensuring that adequate provision is made for young people. For example
 - a) Upgrade as required facilities to prepare and sell produce for local events.
 - b) Install projection equipment to show films.
 - c) Upgrade acoustics, lighting etc to allow performances of drama, concerts etc, including discos.
 - d) Create opportunities for the display of painting and other exhibitions.
 - e) gain a licence for the consumption of alcohol at the Memorial Hall and pursue plans for a car park for the hall.
 - f) Investigate development of Parrog Yard Depot as a community facility.
2. Develop a multi-purpose centre to complement existing facilities for use by the clubs and associations to include
 - a) sports activities
 - b) business meetings
 - c) land for car parking and recreational use
 - d) attract commercial activities to help generate income
3. Make best use of the Parc y Plant and the sports field to form the nuclei of recreation activity – possibly concentrating on multi use of the sports field.
4. Provide more benches in community garden areas.
5. Open a cyber café to provide IT opportunities and a daytime / evening place especially for young people and for the café to be open on an all year basis. The café could also form the role of a first call drop in centre.

C. Community Services

1. Encourage liaison with Dyfed Powys Police and maintain the neighbour friendly / low crime risk culture.
2. Encourage the strengthening of existing medical facilities and services, including a NHS dentist.
3. Broaden the range of health / lifestyle opportunities already available in Newport – for example spa / jacuzzi, aromatherapy, alternative treatments, gymnasium / fitness suite/ swimming pool.

2. Environment & Heritage

1. Promote access to the countryside of Newport for people of all abilities for open air recreation, through maintenance and enhancement of the Public Rights of Way network, and the provision of information, working with the Newport Paths Group. A paths system that encourages use by all sections of the community is a practical aspect of the healthy living agenda, and encourages people's understanding and enjoyment of the environment.

Support the development of the cycle network around Newport.

Produce appropriate leaflets and interpretative materials.

Develop an Eco-trail.

2. The Medieval Pottery Kiln at the Memorial Hall should be consolidated, interpreted and made accessible for public view.
3. Develop a heritage trail around Newport to reflect the archaeology, ecclesiastical, social and maritime history of the area. The trail could be augmented by the development of freestanding sculptures or of a sculpture park as part of an existing attraction.
4. Identify suitable premises and resources to develop and manage a town museum scheme.
5. Mass planting of daffodils at gateways to Newport.

6. Installation of litter and recycling bins and 'dog waste' bags along the more popular routes (especially at the Parrog) with associated emptying regime.
7. Promote to the County Council increased frequency of summer time refuse collection, including emptying the skips and the provision of large litter bins on Mountain West.
8. Seek to employ a street sweeper at peak times.
9. Explore the installation of bird hides along the south side of the estuary. (Possible partners South and West Wales Wildlife Trust and PCNPA).
10. Establish annual environmental forum for the area, in consultation with Nevern Community Council, to discuss reports from nature conservation, water quality and environmental agencies.
11. Seek to improve beach management, for example reducing the impact of cars on the beaches and control the presence of dogs during peak periods because of the impact on tourism in Newport.
12. Request PCC to enforce their by-law that controls jet-skis and large motorboats to be regulated and speed limits enforced.
13. Investigate the sensitive enhancement of the town to include placing underground electricity cables in the Conservation area, improved pavements – Long Street to the School / Doctor's Surgery / Post Office and the Parrog Road junction including the provision of drop kerbs where appropriate.
14. Request CADW and the National Park Authority to care for Hencastell Longbarrow.
15. Repair Parrog and Cwm shelters.

3. Develop Sources of Renewable Energy / Recycling

1. Support the management of woodland to provide pelleted fuel and coppicing woodland to produce biofuel for local use.
2. Increase the recycling facilities at Newport to include garden waste and plastics, and more frequent collection of the skips for paper, tins and glass.
3. Encourage close relationship between the Eco Centre and the town to include awareness raising open days.
4. In conjunction with the ECO Centre, examine possibilities for energy generation through wind, solar, biological and hydro driven sources and its subsequent use by the community.
5. Encourage a 'lead authority' to promote recycling initiatives in Pembrokeshire.

4. Culture, Arts & Crafts

1. Form / reform groups for drama, dance (including salsa), choral or other music occasions and upgrade existing facilities for their performance.
2. Support the development of a craft centre with display and storage opportunities with appropriate electricity supply etc to operate lighting, light machinery (eg lathes), kilns etc for artists in residence. The centre could be run as a co-operative / business centre.
3. In liaison with education and accommodation providers, develop opportunities for Welsh learners and those with an interest in the Celtic culture to have theme events / holidays at Newport.

5. Economy – Business, Employment & Training

1. Seek immediate involvement in the Fishguard and North Pembrokeshire Regeneration Plan.
2. Encourage Pembrokeshire College to develop an outreach base at Newport as a north Pembrokeshire centre for higher and skills based education.

3. Encourage the ECO Centre to expand its building and environmental sustainability agenda.
4. Build on Newport's reputation as an Eco Centre.
5. Support farm development / diversification / intensification through a local training programme – to include coppicing / hedging courses and identification of opportunities for organic farming and for countryside management skills.
6. Encourage hedgelaying of Pembrokeshire banks.
7. Request the Welsh Development Agency / PCC or private sector to construct / convert existing property on the industrial site for starter units for the development of small enterprises particularly for adding value to local products - a principal aim of which would be to provide local employment prospects for local post school / college residents.
8. Campaign for broadband technology, develop associated IT training with Simtra and create a Newport Web site – identify a lead operator.
9. Organise an occasional 'street market' in Market Street to sell local produce, products and services. Theme fairs to take place during the year.
10. Encourage
 - a) shops and other businesses to locally source goods and materials
 - b) residents to purchase locally, thus stemming the leak of locally generated expenditure from the Newport economy.
 - c) local spend at local shops to maintain the existing range of services
 - d) development of additional opportunities; for example fish and chips, 'nearly new' clothes.

6. Tourism; strengthen and diversify the existing tourist based aspects of the economy through

1. Broadening the attraction of Newport for the shoulder / off-peak visitor with the development of natural history / themed walks / fishing trips etc thereby encouraging businesses and services to remain open throughout the year. Opportunities also arise to benefit from the increasing interest in Celtic cultures and that of the Welsh language.
2. Encourage businesses to accept the Euro.
3. Developing eco tourism and trail in combination with the ECO Centre, PCNPA, Youth Hostels Association (YHA) and BTCV (British Trust for Conservation Volunteers).
4. Develop links with nearby tourist attractions, for example Castell Henllys, to increase interest and spend throughout the year.
5. Support 'tourism Newport' with links to accommodation / food providers, developing quiet tourism based on walking, cycling, birdwatching, canoeing etc. Encourage more accommodation providers, guest houses etc.
6. Encourage PCNPA authority to review the role of its Information Centre to meet the needs of the Newport economy.
7. Relocate and update the map at Long Street Car Park to the toilet block.
8. Contact with Stena Ferries to promote Newport as a potential taste of Pembrokeshire.
9. Develop the existing twinning links with Brittany and Anapolis, USA, and other related possibilities, for example Eire via Stena Ferries.
10. Investigate re-establishing the Estuary Ferry.

7. Housing

1. To develop affordable and sustainable housing for purchase or for rent to meet local needs by
 - Identifying sites, particularly small sites, for the construction of new affordable housing is of paramount importance.
 - Identifying existing buildings for adaptation or conversion for residential use.

- Forming a Newport Housing (Community Land) Trust to undertake land purchase, construct and manage new / existing housing to ensure 'local' occupation.
- Involving the expertise of the ECO Centre to use and develop local skills to construct, restore and maintain property – and subsequently to operate as part of a north Pembrokeshire housing repair / development team.
- Promoting the construction of eco friendly / low impact houses – possibly through To Gwyrdd / (Green Roofs).
- Liaising with the PCNPA as Planning Authority to meet local housing needs in a sustainable manner, possibly using the 'exceptions' policy, and where appropriate using innovatory design and the use of materials. Such approaches should reduce building and building maintenance costs.
- Liaising with the PCNPA, Pembrokeshire College and Ceredigion College to develop building restoration and new eco-friendly technology skills.
- Encourage Tai Cantref to identify and purchase new sites for development of affordable housing.

2. Encourage greater all year occupancy of 'second' homes by

- involving second / holiday home owners in progressing the objective of either providing short term rented accommodation for local needs or increasing the opportunities for visitor rentals thereby providing increased income for local businesses throughout the year.
- requesting the County Council to 'rebatе' all or part of the second home Council Tax to Newport Town Council to facilitate a Newport Development Fund.

3. Link the development of new housing with the construction of new employment opportunities either as separate buildings or to incorporate such needs in the initial design of individual residential accommodation. Working from home / studio scale employment is likely to feature prominently in the Newport economy.

8. Traffic, Transport & Parking

1. Install traffic calming / safety measures on the approaches to and within the town, including
 - Speed restriction measures along the A487 (T).
 - traffic lights on the A487 to manage east / west flow during the summer.
 - 10 mph speed limit from Marsh Path to Morawelan and the Boat Club.
 - 'no parking' restrictions either side of the road to the school.
2. Improve public / community transport by
 - increasing the frequency of and/or extend the existing service times for both local buses and for express routes, especially during the evening.
 - Operating buses which can carry bikes.
 - Operating a community bus service based on Newport.
 - Negotiating a child fare reduction scheme that will encourage greater use of local transport.
 - Operating a car share scheme.
 - Liaise with rail operators and the North Pembrokeshire Transport Forum for improved services from Fishguard.
3. Improve parking arrangements by
 - a). Increasing the number of car parking spaces, may be looked at as part of an enhancement scheme.
 - b). Operating a residents parking scheme during the summer peak
 - c). Employing a Traffic Warden at peak times to regulate on-street parking and reduce associated traffic hold ups.
4. Install bike racks (for example where the Christmas tree is fixed).

IMPLEMENTATION AND WORKING 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 groups would, in consultation with lead providers, for example the Highway Authority or Pembrokeshire College, concentrate on preparing more detailed action programmes giving priority and focus to those proposals which are capable of early implementation.

The Groups could be centred on

- Community
- Events and Activities
- Environment & Heritage
- Culture, Arts and Crafts
- Business Development
- Housing

It is important that the groups would

- work within the agreed Action Plan and the Community Forum
- work with existing groups and organisations
- meet on a regular basis and
- keep Newport Town Council and the broader community informed of progress.