

# ST. DAVIDS



# ACTION PLAN

# ST DAVIDS ACTION PLAN

Prepared by

**ST DAVIDS COMMUNITY**

In Conjunction With

PEMBROKESHIRE LOCAL ACTION NETWORK FOR  
ENTERPRISE AND DEVELOPMENT  
(PLANED)

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This Action plan was agreed at the public meeting held on the 4<sup>th</sup> March 2004, following the circulation of the Draft Action Plan to households in the St Davids community

Front Cover Picture by Rod Williams

## **WAY FORWARD**

This Action Plan aims to encourage both local residents, potential partners and funders to realise the benefits that the proposals can bring to the community and assist in achieving them.

## **BACKGROUND TO THE ACTION PLAN**

The St David's community undertook a Community Appraisal with the Countryside Council for Wales in March 1988, this took the form of a questionnaire delivered to every household.

Many of the trends identified in the appraisal still appear to be true today for example the inward movement of older people to St David's, the outward movement of young people from the area to look for work and affordable housing were identified as areas of concern. As were the need for more employment particularly permanent jobs as opposed to seasonal ones with growth in agriculture, craft and tourism being the most desirable.

Back in 1988 the question of second/holiday homes was of concern to the community. The most popular form of new development identified was of low cost housing. It was felt that more adult education and training were needed, as was an increase in community, youth and sports facilities. Overall the survey found that 73.9% of the community were very happy living in St Davids.

In March 1995 The Veryards Report was published which drew together the four elements of local peoples needs, environment, tourism, traffic and employment. Consultation was carried out with local residents, organisations, businesses and visitors.

Early in 2003 St. David's City Council invited PLANED (Pembrokeshire Local Action Network for Enterprise and Development) to work with the community to develop an action plan. Two Community Visioning Exercises were held between March and May 2003. These were followed by Action Planning meetings with the aim of producing this Action Plan for circulation to the community.

An "Ideas Wall" activity took place at Ysgol Bro Dewi and Ysgol Dewi Sant at the end of the summer term 2003 which allowed the young people of St Davids and the surrounding area to contribute their ideas for the future of the City. This information was incorporated into the Draft Action Plan and has been included in appendix 1.

## HISTORY OF THE COMMUNITY

The city of St Davids is situated at the western tip of Wales, about a mile from the sea in nearly every direction. Washed to the north by St George's Channel and to the south by St Bride's Bay, and fringed by islands and rocks, it lies under the shadow of Carn Llidi and Pen Beri, and within reach of the beaches and bays of such as Caerfai and Whitesands. The coast is also indented by the small harbours of Porthclais and St Justinians, where the Lifeboat station is located near the ruined mediaeval Chapel and Holy Well; and where passage is made to Ramsey, the large island lying off shore, now a major wildlife sanctuary.

St Davids is a community of less than 2000 people, making it the smallest city in the UK and is grouped around the historic Cross Square. Homes and hotels, pub, chapels, post office and shops, the cathedral and close, two schools, doctors' and dentist's surgeries, an outdoor pursuits' centre, an oceanarium, a swimming pool, farms and a factory, all go to make up this fascinating and varied community: a community with a long history extending for a millennium and more.

Over the centuries, the sea has always been a major factor in the history and development of St Davids. Prehistoric fishermen and farmers, mediaeval pilgrims and churchmen, modern visitors and tourists have been drawn here. The combination of rugged landscape and wild seascape which attracts so many to the St Davids peninsula today was the same for Celtic saints and Norman bishops.

The history of St Davids really begins in the sixth century, with the decision of Dewi, to establish a monastic settlement in the Alun valley. Tradition states he was born on the cliffs on the site of the ruined St Non's chapel. The present Welsh name of St Davids, *Tyddewi*, "David's House" does not seem to appear before the sixteenth century. David's extremely ascetic way of life attracted thousands over his lifetime and after his death, thus laying the foundations for the popularity to St Davids over the centuries. The Vikings murdered bishops and clergy and destroyed the site several times but by the time that William the Conqueror came in 1081, the city and the cathedral had revived enough to give sanctuary to Rhys ap Tewdwr king of Deheubarth (South Wales), and to welcome Gruffydd ap Cynan, King of Gwynedd (North Wales) in the same year.

The Normans brought about great changes to both the cathedral and the city, building a new cathedral in 1131, replacing it with the core of the

present building in 1181; soliciting a Papal privilege in the 1120's which stated that two pilgrimages to St Davids were equal to one to Rome. At the same time the economic base of the St Davids peninsula, which sustained cathedral, city and their environs, was that long lasting combination of fishing and farming. The fourteenth century Episcopal rental known as the Black Book of St Davids bears this out and the holdings named after long departed churchmen and their tenants are still distinguishable on the map of this landscape.

The arrival of bishop Barlow in 1536, led to the slighting of the shrine, the removal of the bishop to Abergwili outside Carmarthen, an unsuccessful attempt to move the Cathedral to Carmarthen, and, following the ending of pilgrimage the consequent economic decline of St Davids. The cathedral fell into progressive decline; by the middle of the nineteenth century ruins in advanced decay surrounded it. The measures taken from 1863 - the ongoing cloister restoration scheme - have ensured the survival of the building.

The nineteenth century saw the building of much of the townscape of the modern city including the fine nonconformist chapels. The twentieth century saw the building of St Non's Chapel and Retreat near the St Non's well and ruined mediaeval chapel and the creation of St Michael's by the Roman Catholic Church. The middle and end of the century saw the building of several housing estates such as Heol Dewi, Ffynnon Wen, Brynteg, Bryn Road, Caerfai Road, Maes Dyfed, Maes yr Hedydd and Maes y Dre.

And finally, in the last decade of the twentieth century, not only did HM the Queen restore its city status to St Davids, but also to add to the myriad voluntary societies and associations in the community, the history, folklore and traditions of the city and the surrounding peninsula were recognised through the foundation of a flourishing historical society.

In August 2002 the National Eisteddfod was held on the outskirts of the parish on what had been the former St Davids airfield, itself the last in a succession of defence sites in the area stretching back to the Iron Age ramparted enclosure on St Davids Head and the Neolithic enclosure on Clegyr Boia.

## **1. Community and Youth** **Commentary**

It is felt within St David's that there is a need to create a greater sense of community, to encourage people to be more actively involved within the

community. The need for more interest groups and activities is identified within the City such as a theatre group, folk club, film club, painting classes, welsh classes, computer training and an increase in live music.

The community is currently covered by the Community Education Centre in Fishguard and some day and evening classes take place locally although the selection is restricted and for the most part people have to travel to Fishguard or Haverfordwest for training and recreational courses.

The City Hall is the main venue and considered by the community as its main resource for community activity in St Davids It is used by many of the 70 or so organisations and clubs represented within the area. Redevelopment of the hall has begun with the installation of under floor heating, a new sports floor, double glazing and improvements to the décor but there is still work to be done, with phase two planned to make it more accessible for a variety of community activities. At present the Library is situated in a room at the front of the Hall, as is the community shop - Siop y Bobol that is well supported, the money raised is distributed to projects within the community as well as saving towards a community minibus.

There are numerous other meeting places within the community used by a variety of groups for many different activities. The Red Cross Centre, Scout Hut, Curtis House, three Chapel Vestries, St Mary's Hall, two School Halls, the Old School Canteen, the Rugby Club and the Tower Room at the Tourist Information Centre. These halls have mixed provision for disabled access, heating and other amenities.

The development of a youth forum is suggested as a way to help young people identify and overcome the issues facing them. The youth club is presently located in a room at the rear of the City Hall that is not ideal, as anyone else using the Hall has to pass through the room to access the toilets. The old school canteen on Quickwell Hill is owned by the Diocese of the Anglican Church is identified as a potential venue for youth, toddler and playgroups.

At present the provision for childcare within the community is sparse and there are no after school clubs available, which is increasingly a problem for parents wishing to return to employment. Support for the present Welsh language parent and toddlers group was highlighted, as was the need to address the issue of a Welsh medium nursery.

The group identified the need for an improved day centre for older and disabled people. At present there is provision for sheltered

accommodation for the elderly at Yr Hafan. There is currently limited access for less able people to visit the cathedral.

Ysgol Dewi Sant is seen as extremely important to the community of St Davids. The provision of a secondary school is seen as vital to ensuring a rich community life and retaining the young within the community. The community educational, sports and recreational facilities at Ysgol Dewi Sant are essential as the nearest alternative provision is in Haverfordwest or Fishguard.

A community newsletter is proposed to improve communication, which it is hoped will be funded by advertising but will need a coordinator and volunteers. The newsletter will be helpful for information sharing and updates on news and events.

It is felt that there needs to be a central point where anyone in the community can go to find out what is going on. It has been suggested that the main notice board outside the City Hall would be the best spot.

### **Proposals**

- **Set up a community forum in order that the community has a voice that can be heard and an opportunity to draw issues together for discussion.**
- **Investigate the development of a Community Newsletter -** This would be aided by the setting up of a community communication initiative to search for funding sources and partnerships.
- **Carry out an audit of Community Buildings within the City.**
- **Continue the further development of the City Hall -** to create a day centre and exhibition area, make improvements to the library, office space and the community shop and upgrade the toilets.
- **Explore the development of a youth forum -** contact The Prince's Trust who would be able to provide a session worker to help identify issues concerning young people and to help them organise activities and events.
- **Carry out a childcare needs survey to include present and future needs.**
- **Create a 'vision for care' plan for the community in respect of residential, nursing and convalescent care**
- **The Community to be encouraged to report incidents to the Police so that they are aware that there are problems within the City.**
- **Explore the possibility of appointing a project officer -** to be responsible for getting the Action Plan implemented, to

coordinate fund raising and partnership funding and youth and community issues. The Welsh Development Agency (WDA) could be approached to help fund this through their Tool Kit.

- **Explore the possibilities for setting up new training opportunities and new interest groups** -the requirement for these could be found out through the community newsletter.
- **The development and promotion of more community activities** - such as art, music and drama festivals as well as more variety e.g.: a rock festival, blues festival.
- **Make better use of the Community Website-** and link it to the Community Newsletter with a committee to oversee both.
- **The Community strongly supports the development of Ysgol Dewi Sant as a school and community education resource.**
- **Explore the development of a Welsh Language Nursery.**
- **Investigate the opportunity to reintroduce the Twinning Committee and develop more active links with the 3 twin towns** - Naas in Ireland, Orleat in France and Matsieng in Lesotho.
- **Continue to support the Cathedral Festival and Carnival.**
- **Explore the opportunities for enhancing the celebration of St Davids Day** - it is felt that there is an opportunity to make more of the day particularly in the City that bears his name.

## **2. Heritage and Culture**

### **Commentary**

St David's has a rich and varied history which local people believe to be an important tourism resource. The history society are keen and actively involved in researching local heritage but it is felt that it is important for more people within the community to get involved in this process and that both of the schools could have some input.

There used to be a museum within the Memorial Hall and with the wealth of local history and related material it is felt that a permanent display showing the heritage of the area could be pursued.

There are a large number of artists and crafts people living and working in St David's and there is much support for a gallery to display their work.

The New Landscape Gallery Project for St Davids was first considered when the Sutherland Gallery at Picton Castle closed in 1995. The new home for the Graham Sutherland Collection is now moving towards being a reality. Sutherlands paintings, drawings and prints will be part of



a gallery which looks at nature, land, sea and sky scapes. It is planned to have changing displays with a theme that will include natural forms, geology, botany, landscape formation and conservation

### **Proposals**

- **Develop ideas to improve interest and provision for arts and culture.**
- **Support the development of the Landscape Gallery** – the Gallery is being developed with input from PCNPA and the National Museum and Galleries of Wales.
- **Explore the development of heritage walking trails with accommodation provided as part of a package** – these walks could be developed as part of a North Pembrokeshire Trail.
- **Investigate the use of the City Hall for art/craft workshops.**
- **Explore the development of a Heritage Centre**
- **Explore the possibility for the interpretation of heritage sites ie: The Treginnis Copper Mine** - the Treginnis site is on the coast path and could become an attraction for locals and visitors to the area. These sites could become part of an interpretation walk with leaflets and panels.
- **Encourage local history research and produce local leaflets and interpretation panels** - the area is so rich in heritage that there should be support for extensive research and recording of findings, both the primary and secondary schools should be involved in this process.
- **Develop Art events, workshops and courses and a local Art Festival,** - these events could incorporate dance, music, fine arts and theatre and promotion of the welsh language/culture.
- **Make better use of the St David's web site** - to promote local artists and craft people as well as the historical attractions of the area.

## **3. Sport, Leisure and Recreation**

### **Commentary**

St Davids has a strong tradition of sport within the community with golf, rugby, soccer, cricket, badminton, kick boxing, youth rugby and surf life saving all represented. However some of the facilities need upgrading and there is no suitable venue within the community for training and participation in wet weather and during the winter. The Cricket and Golf

clubs are both active within the community and have plans to provide additional facilities. They are also keen to encourage community participation especially from young people.

At present St Davids has a swimming pool which is seen as an asset to the community and is used by the local schools, visitors to the area the community itself and people from the surrounding area. It is seen as essential for the promotion of health and fitness and is a valuable education resource in a community that is surrounded by the sea it also provides a venue for outdoor pursuit training and a much needed wet weather facility for visitors to the area.

It is felt by the community that the swimming pool could be upgraded to include a gymnasium and leisure facilities for the school, community and visitors to use. This would provide an opportunity for the promotion of health and fitness within the area and would provide a service locally which otherwise would involve travelling to Haverfordwest or Fishguard.

The young people of St Davids and the surrounding area have been pursuing the possibilities for the development of a Skate Park within the city. At present skating takes place on the car park and around the city and issues of safety and nuisance have been raised.

#### **Proposals**

- **Press for the potential for the development of a combined leisure centre on the school site** - to incorporate the existing gymnasium, sports hall and swimming pool with additional facilities. Work closely with Pembrokeshire County Council and Ysgol Dewi Sant.
- **Support the development of a Skate park** - the setting up of a youth forum could assist this.
- **Carry out a sport and leisure survey of facilities within the community**-identify the current plans for the development of facilities ie: at the Cricket Club and Golf Club.

#### **4. Environment and Enhancement** **Commentary**

The community consider their environment to be very precious and a valuable resource for local people and visitors to the area. A number of community-based initiatives were identified to improve waste management including education and promotion of the opportunities available, supporting people without transport and liaison with Pembrokeshire County Council (PCC).

A core group of local residents and businesses have established a community energy group with the aim of St David's being the UK's first 'sustainable city' and eventually making the city carbon neutral in its energy requirements. Some of these principles have been incorporated into plans for the new development at Whitesands Bay. An Eco Trail is being developed with interpretation boards and maps which will highlight and explain the use of renewable energy and alternative technology within the community.

Cross Square is situated in the heart of St Davids and is used as an easily identified meeting point for locals and visitors alike. It is felt that more could be done to enhance this area of the city, which is of great amenity and heritage value.

### **Proposals**

- **Set up an Environment Group to deal with recycling and other issues.**
- **Keep St David's Tidy** - an initiative both in schools and homes to educate about anti-littering
- **Revive entry into the Best Kept City Competition.**
- **Enhancement of Cross Square** – the general appearance of the square needs to be improved including relaying the slabs tidying up the Listed fountain, improving signage etc
- **Support the Eco Group and green energy.**
- **Explore the possibility of providing allotments within the community.**
- **Support St Davids becoming a Fair Trade City.**
- **Explore the development of the non coastal rights of way in the area**
- **Look at the lighting scheme around the City to safeguard against light pollution and to ensure energy savings.**
- **Explore the possibilities for providing better recycling facilities and rubbish disposal** - including plastic recycling, garden refuse and furniture reuse.
- **Liaise with the PCC to explore kerbside collection of recyclable waste.**
- **Explore the opportunities for community composting.**
- **Organise an open day/exhibition to educate the community about options for waste management** - invite professionals within the field, PCC and other interested groups to contribute.
- **Explore the possibility of supplying cheap compost bins for garden rubbish or a kerbside garden rubbish collection** - approach PCC to find out if and when this can be done.
- **Establish a weather reporting base**

## **5. Tourism, Economy and Employment**

### **Commentary**

The community believes that the local economy is tourism driven with the natural environment and heritage being its greatest asset. However it is felt that there is a need to diversify the economy and to enhance the role of farming and attract more sustainable businesses to the area. There is a need to develop the type of employment which is attractive to young people if they are to be encouraged to remain in the area.

The importance of St Davids Assemblies as a local employer is noted along with the need to attract new businesses that are less dependant upon manufacturing. It is felt that people who have holiday homes within the city but run businesses elsewhere such as accountants, lawyers etc could be encouraged to relocate if there was suitable small business premises available, therefore providing local employment.

The creation of a Chamber of Trade and Tourism is vital to coordinate and develop business interest

It is felt that more attractions for visitors need to be developed and existing provision could be enhanced. Suggestions include a gallery, heritage centre, visitor access to the Treginnis mines, music events, festivals and a marathon or tri-athlon event.

The boat trips out of St Justinians are major tourist attractions and bring visitors to the area from far and wide. The lack of parking at St Justinians however is a major problem that it is felt could jeopardise the success of these businesses. It is felt that this issue needs to be resolved.

A need has been identified for better sign posting and information maps at the car parks and bus drop off points so that visitors can find their way around the city more easily and make better use of all that St Davids has to offer.

There is a need to develop an events calendar to avoid too much going on at the same time. Arranging activities that can carry on into the low season and the introduction of lower winter prices could extend the tourist season. It has been suggested that the establishment of a café/hotel/restaurant rota would mean there is always somewhere to eat or stay within the city.

There is a feeling that heritage, Celtic, and religious tourism could be further developed. The 'green appeal' of St Davids with its walks, boat

trips and provision of outdoor pursuits could be developed more and marketed with the possible introduction of Eco City Status which could help boost its appeal to a wider variety of visitors.

### **Proposals**

- **Investigate the opportunities for providing more sports and wet weather activities**
- **Develop a festivals and events calendar**
- **Look into ways of extending the tourist season and ensuring accommodation and food is available all year round.**
- **Explore the interpretation of heritage/tourist attractions - such as the Treginnis Copper Mines and the quarries at Porthgain.**
- **Develop more year round Eco tourism and encourage accommodation providers to reduce prices out of season.**
- **Encourage the establishment of a Chamber of Trade and Tourism.**
- **Explore the opportunities for the development a small business park and support start up businesses** - this would attract IT, local processing and other small businesses to the area. This could be located near the factory on Glasfryn Lane or make use of vacant premises around the community.
- **Encourage the purchase of locally produced products and food.**
- **Undertake a study of the existing and potential employment for young people in the area.**
- **Press for parking and the provision of toilets at St Justinians-** these facilities are desperately needed for visitors taking boat trips.
- **Provide help and advice for people wishing to set up small businesses within the community.**

## **6. Housing Commentary**

Due to relatively low wages in the area and the demand for holiday homes, many local people find it difficult to buy houses. A general need has been expressed to develop affordable housing to rent or buy, if young people and their families are to be encouraged to stay in the area. It is felt that there is a need to restrict the number of holiday homes within the area as this has an effect on community spirit and that some balance between second homes and homes for locals needs to be sought.

## Proposals

- **Explore the development of a more active housing association/cooperative and support self-build** - this will involve some consultation with the Welsh European Funding Office (WEFO), PCNPA and Wales Cooperative Centre along with the production of a feasibility study. The study should look into the availability of land for development specifically for low cost housing for local people.
- **Investigate the mechanism for local funding of self build.**
- **Investigate the opportunities for making land available for building housing for locals only** - being within the National Park development land is restricted, an investigation of the possible sites for development needs to be carried out.
- **Support the restriction of second homes within the community.**
- **Ensure the full level of Council Tax is applied to all second homes.**
- **Support the development of housing constructed utilising sustainable technology.**
- **Explore the possibilities of providing affordable housing for first time buyers** - work alongside PCC and the Pembrokeshire Housing Association to identify and develop opportunities.

## 7. Transport & Highways

### **Commentary**

The community agree that traffic is an issue in the centre of the city throughout the year and particularly during the busy tourist season when the increased through traffic leads to congestion, parking problems and hazards to pedestrians. Older people and children in particular seem to have problems with crossing the main roads around the square due to the constant nature of the traffic.

It is felt that more use could be made of Glasfryn Road to ease traffic congestion by allowing through traffic to by pass the city centre but that this should be done in such a way that allows the country lane feel to remain.

Parking is a major problem in St David's throughout the year and particularly when major events are on. There is a large car park situated adjacent to the PCNP Tourist Information Centre and a park and ride scheme is in operation, however many large buses still pass through the centre of the City to drop off visitors and often park inappropriately whilst waiting to pick up. The fact that it costs more to park at the car park than

in the city itself puts pressure upon the spaces available. Local residents often find it difficult to park and it is felt that there needs to be more designated parking spaces for local residents within the city.

Some concern has been expressed about the amount of new lighting which has gone up around the City and in particular around the car parks. It is felt that St Davids attracts people because of its beauty but also because of its country feel and that the street lighting and lack of continuity around the city detracts from this.

### **Proposals**

- **Carry out a review of parking including the loading of parking charges, yellow lines and the control of coach pick up and drop off** - work with PCNP Authority and PCC
- **Conduct a resident parking survey**- To assess the problems local residents encounter during the busy tourist period.
- **Explore the pedestrianisation of parts of the city including the identification of potential sites for residential parking.**
- **Carry out a study to review street lighting around the city.**
- **Discuss with PCC to increase the Traffic Warden provision** - to patrol the streets and enforce current parking restriction.
- **Publicise the provision of transport that allows accessibility to the valley for all visitors to the cathedral.**
- **Encourage Park and Ride** - all coaches to use the PNCP car park and make use of the park and ride scheme. Car users to be encouraged to use the scheme instead of driving into the city.
- **Support the use of Glasfryn Road to help reduce through traffic** - to be widened as a possible by-pass but in a modest way to keep the country lane feel.
- **Strongly support the bid for a Community Mini-bus (LPG fuelled)** - this would provide a service for the community in the form of group hire and Dial a Ride, whilst also helping to reduce carbon and other emissions.
- **Support the Pembrokeshire Coastal Bus Services** - these provide locals and tourists with the opportunity to leave their car at home.
- **Encourage the development of a 'walking bus' for children/young people going to school.**