



**AGM 2005**  
**CHAIR'S REPORT**

It is PLANED's role to encourage and support as much community activity as possible. In the time that I have available this evening it is not possible to do full justice to the nature and volume of work undertaken by local people and our staff. However, I hope that I can give you a flavour of what has happened this last year. I apologise in advance if there are omissions. I should add that we are looking to solve this problem of communicating what is happening. I am particularly keen that we should produce with our partners in the community a report of what has been achieved since PLANED was formed in 2001. We are also looking at the idea of producing a regular bulletin for the ever increasing numbers of individuals and organisations with whom we are involved.

## ***RURAL COMMUNITY ACTION/ SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES***

There has been considerable activity over the past year in our work with communities both through '**Rural Community Action**' (RCA) funded by the Welsh Assembly Government and '**Supporting Communities**' funded by the Welsh Assembly Government, WDA, CCW, Environment Wales and the EU Objective 1.

PLANED is the managing partner of the of the RCA programme, working in partnership with PAVS and the Prince's Trust. We are pleased to report that all three organisations are working hard at the collaborative approach.

Our community activities will soon be increased because of the recent success of two funding bids for Objective 1 and the Welsh Assembly Government Community Facilities and Activities programme. A launch of this project is planned for the New Year, but central to the bids was to securing greater funding for community projects. As part of the new activities, PLANED and key partners will be working closely with NEF (New Economics Foundation) on the design of a Sustainable Development Tool which will assist communities to design sustainable projects.

Activities under the RCA and Supporting Communities' programmes include:

- Over 600 people attended 15 visioning workshops and
- 14 communities developed new action plans.
- 8 new Community Forums have been established,
- Newsletter workshops have been held to support 4 communities.
- 5 Valuing the Environment workshops held
- Feasibility studies for community facilities have been supported for Llandissilio, St Davids, Broad Haven, Dale, Newport and Clunderwen.
- A slightly different study in Crymych is looking at an enhanced usage for the Market Hall for heritage interpretation.
- Village enhancement studies have taken place in Maenclochog, New Moat, Llys y Fran, Mynachlogddu, Llandisillio and Crymych.
- The Maenchlochog area, through PLANED support for the creation of four community forums, an area development group-Cymdaethas Cleddau Ddu, and the employment of a development officer, has accessed around £800,000 funding from the aspect of Objective 1, designed for areas of deprivation.

**Sense of place** - interest in local history and heritage at local level is considerable. We are delighted that more help can now be given to communities through a Heritage Lottery funded project and the first phase of this work is currently underway with Angle, Croesgoch, Dale, Freshwater East, Newport and Wolfscastle. The theme of Bro Beca continues to flourish with

a ballad writing and singing competition held earlier this month under the watchful eye of Professor Hywel Teifi Edwards

**Social enterprise support** – a “Social Enterprise – Making the Difference to Rural Communities and Local Economies” event was organised, at which the director of the Plunkett Foundation gave an excellent presentation about the scope for social enterprises in rural areas. The Wales Development Trusts Association also took part and subsequently, a consultation day with a range of potential social enterprises was arranged. The Welsh Assembly Government’s Social Economy Strategy has since been launched by the Minister, Edwina Hart, at Bloomfield House Community Centre. Our Co-ordinator, Joan Asby is a member of the Welsh Assembly Government’s Social Enterprise Joint Working Group. We have recently appointed a support officer for community enterprises, Kathryn Bradbury,

## **LEADER +**

The second phase of Leader + got off to a slow start following the delay in receiving approval of the funding. A wide range of activity has been initiated:

**Business** – we are supporting:

- The preparation of a Pembrokeshire Data Base and local Business Directories, in consultation with the Pembrokeshire Enterprise Network, Business Eye, PBI, the WDA and local development groups.
- The development of business groups in Neyland, Milford Haven and Crymych,
- the Rural shop networks, the Pembrokeshire Growers Association

**Local Products** – we have helped to promote local products in a variety of ways including

- A research study to gauge the amount of local produce being produced and to identify barriers to expansion. The results, when published, will inform discussions about future activity to further opportunities for local producers
- support for the establishment and marketing of the Pembrokeshire Growers Association, which has 23 plant nurseries and growers
- Organising a “Smells to Smiles” display at the local agricultural shows to inform visitors and local people of the economic value of the countryside.
- Assisting Country Markets [WI] by funding a short term officer to provide training and to develop a business plan

**Festivals and Events** – a wide range of festivals and events received our support in a variety of ways including:

- Festival and event training for 200 people – increasingly official organisations regulating these events give recognition to organisers in receipt of the training
- the production and distribution of 15,000 copies of the Pembrokeshire Festivals and events guide that included 350 events, and a range of events leaflets
- Assisting the development of the Pembrokeshire Waterway experience, involving some 20 communities and providing a focus for future events
- The piloting of the Pembrokeshire Festival Banners in Tenby, Pembroke and Crymych

**Heritage and Niche Tourism** - a study is underway looking at the best ways of linking local interest in history to quality heritage interpretation opportunities, in order to assist the development of niche tourism products. It is hoped it will be an opportunity to give an

economic perspective to the huge amount of enthusiasm and effort being contributed by local people in their communities to heritage and cultural activities. It will also link to the work that is being undertaken by the Military History Working group and will hopefully inform the work to be carried out under one of the LEADER + Transnational projects currently being assessed for funding. The preparation of a community handbook on military history has been one of the key outputs of this work, involving 10 communities so far with plans to cover some 75 or 80 communities in time.

## **TOURISM**

The funding of the tourism department has always been piecemeal and short term. Fortunately some of its activities can be sustained through the Leader + and Communities programmes. Nevertheless we continue to promote a variety of activity including:

- The production of a visitor's guide, which this year has featured the businesses that participated in our "greening Business Activities".
- Collaboration with Pembrokeshire County Council and the National Park in the development of a new seven day trail in the North Pembrokeshire – "*the Preseli Circle*". We are currently working with new and existing accommodation providers on marketing for 2006
- The distribution of 150,000 leaflets via some 500 tourism information points – meeting the demand for such easily accessible information locally is something which needs to be discussed with the key agencies involved in tourism development
- Greenways Holidays which was selected to take part in the prestigious 'Showcase Wales event in Cardiff, which involved some 400 tourism operators from all over the world. As part of the event we were asked to organise the 'Walking and Exploring the Pembrokeshire Coast' familiarisation trip for tourism operators.
- Over 40 tourism businesses took part in our "Sense of Place" training programme which included study tours to look at Arts and Crafts, Industrial and Maritime History, and Food and Drink.
- 26 local businesses are involved in the Twigs [Tourism Wales and Ireland, Green and Sustainable] project and an Experience Pembrokeshire website is currently being designed as part of the project.

## **AGRICULTURE**

We were not successful in our bid for funds for a sustainable agriculture project. Despite this setback we plan to address agricultural issues as best we can through Leader + and the establishment of a Pembrokeshire Sustainable Agriculture Network. We have also continued to

- host a "Farming Connect" facilitator; and
- provide the secretariat for the Pembrokeshire Bio-energy group

## **WORKING WITH PARTNERS OUTSIDE PEMBROKESHIRE**

We have continued to make a significant contribution to the development of policy and practice in the field of community development nationally and internationally.

For example we

- Played an important part in the TWIGS] Interreg project, which focussed on the development and marketing of rural tourism projects. Some 60 tourism businesses from Pembrokeshire and Ireland have been involved. The final phase is the development of a joint marketing plan.

- Contributed to the Carnegie Trust's inquiry into rural community development policy in UK
- Have undertaken the role of lead partner in a LEADER + Action 2 Festivals and events project with 3 Welsh Leader groups, this has included sharing our training model for festivals and events amongst the other Leader Groups.
- Were invited by Groundwork Wales to produce a 'sustainable tourism training manual' for 'Communities First' areas and are now devising a 'training the trainers' seminar
- Under Leader + we have led on trans-national projects aiming to develop and identify good practice in engaging the local business community in creating a culture of entrepreneurship and to encourage communities in the development and celebration of local distinctiveness and pride of place
- Participated in a British Council Sponsored Grundtvig project with Slovakia and Poland, which aimed to look at how more women could be encouraged to become local community leaders. .

## ***RUNNING THE ORGANISATION***

The smooth running of the organisation is a crucial task both for the Board and the Staff. Following the successful review of our governance by the Charity Commissioners last year, we have focussed this year on

**Human Resources** – we have secured the services of Mike Walford of Llewellyn Davies to provide HR support for us. The first task has been to produce a staff handbook. This process is nearing completion, with staff commenting on its content.

**Integrated working internally** – we have sought closer working between Communities and Leader + staff and are developing a template for projects that meet the funding and development priorities of Communities, Tourism and Leader +, thus enabling even closer working.

**Forward Planning** – because of the short term nature of funding it is very difficult to ensure effective project development, planning and management, as well as human resource development, monitoring and evaluation. Since Buddig Meredith's departure this situation has not been resolved. The Board has agreed to the appointment of a strategic Support Officer as and when funding can be secured.

**Staff changes** - sadly, as well as Buddig Meredith finally leaving because of her husband's deteriorating health, Sarah Worby finally left us after six years because of her husband's promotion. Sarah was instrumental in developing much of PLANED's tourism work and was very knowledgeable about all PLANED's work. Catrin Bradley [nee Evans] who had been with PLANED for three years has moved to Carmarthenshire as Festival and Events officer. All three will be greatly missed.

**The Board and Sub Boards** – the two sub-boards covering the development of the culture of entrepreneurship and sustainable development and biodiversity respectively have not performed in the way originally envisaged. Accordingly we will be reviewing their remit and composition with a view to achieving greater participation of board members and partner organisations.

## **FUTURE CHALLENGES**

The coming year or so will pose a number of challenges for us as we try to maintain and increase the momentum of our work. In particular we will need to review our own Strategy. That will be taking place at a time of considerable uncertainty for rural Wales, not least:

- The future of EU funding – what will be available after Objective 1?
- The direction of the Wales Rural Development Plan – what direction wills it take?
- The Wales Spatial Plan, insofar as it addresses rural issues – how can we contribute to and benefit from the process?
- The future of the Leader programme – will it be rolled out across Wales? If so in what form?
- Locally in Pembrokeshire how will the Community Strategy be developed and how can we contribute?
- How will the National Park respond to the WAG's direction to engage with its communities? Can PLANED help?

It will require a significant input from all the communities and organisations that constitute PLANED as an organisation – the Board and its executive and sub-boards will need to work together to ensure that the significant benefits that PLANED's way of working can bring to the local communities continue to flow and to develop. An important part of the process will be to explore how we can achieve a greater measure of security for the flow of income.

To conclude on an upbeat note - in a recent speech at the annual meeting of the three National Parks in Wales, Carwyn Jones, the Countryside and Rural Affairs Minister spoke of PLANED in glowing terms – as an organisation that is seen to be showing the way in the field of community activity, not only in Wales but in Europe. Such recognition is very welcome, but we must ensure that such recognition is gained from our own community here in Pembrokeshire.

Finally a big thank you to the Board and the executive for their support during the year – next year will be a busy and challenging one for us all; and to Joan and her team for all their hard work during the year.

**Edward Holdaway**

**Chair**

**November 2005**