

PEWSEY AREA COMMUNITY TRUST

Minutes of the Members' Meeting
held at the Coronation Hall, Alton Barnes
on Wednesday 9th April 2008 at 7.00 pm

1. Welcome

The Chairman, Colin Lampard, welcomed all attendees to this informal meeting and explained that PACT, when appropriate, aimed to hold meetings in one of Pewsey Vale's villages.

He thanked all those who had contributed to the organisation of the evening.

2. Apologies

There is a list of members who sent in apologies.

3. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 3rd April 2007 at the PACT Centre Gallery, which had been circulated beforehand, were signed by the Chairman as a true record.

4. Matters Arising

Christmas Fair

The fair was held in high winds and heavy rain. In view of this, it has been decided that this year the fair will be held on 29th November 2008 in the Bouverie Hall instead of in the street. The Wesley Hall may also be available by that time.

Since the halls are located away from the Heritage Centre, this will not be needed as a covered venue. Mike Asbury will therefore ask the Trustees if the Heritage Centre may remain closed during the fair but will suggest that some exhibits be re-located to the hall(s) for the occasion.

The 2007 fair raised over £700 for charities such as Riding for the Disabled and the British Heart Foundation, both of whom took an active part in the fair.

The Wiggly Bus

This service has become the Connect service under the auspices of Wiltshire County Council and no longer has any community input. Any user can comment to WCC on the service. The timetable has been recently updated and circulated to every house

in the Vale. Attempts are being made to link the bus service to the train times to and from Pewsey Station.

5. PACT Activities Update

The PACT Centre's first birthday was celebrated on Friday 4th April 2008 although the planning began in 2006. With the help of many volunteers, challenges were faced and overcome and the centre grew. It became, not a community centre, but a series of activities as social enterprise working on behalf of the community area to support village needs. Activities on offer include The Gallery, iPwZ Youth Internet Café, ePewsey Internet Café, hot desk, meeting room and training centre.

May 2007 saw the opening of The Gallery, the only community-owned gallery in the county. Artists and craftspeople pay for four weeks of space to exhibit their work. When they sell something, The Gallery earns 15% commission; this very low rate of commission means that the artists can keep their prices down. The Gallery space is booked for months ahead.

After the centre opened in April 2007, the new task facing PACE was to build a market place in a sparsely populated county whilst responding to the needs of customers.

The PACT Centre has been awarded a grant by Kennet DC for the next three years, and a grant from Community Planning Partnership. The challenge for the second year of operation is to find grants to fund overheads.

6. Progress of The PACT Centre

Dawn Miller, Centre Manager, told the meeting that the year's hard work has taken the Centre from opening the doors to being able to deliver level two qualifications to learners, an outstanding achievement in this time frame. 300 learners have completed training programmes during the year.

Initially a lot of short courses were offered but they were rarely filled, so were not viable. After learning this lesson, the centre has introduced Flexible Training. There are six flexi-sessions a week offering courses from beginners' level to advanced level.

During the year, three specially tailored courses were offered to home carers, represented by Kennet Carers. Carers were taught to use an on-line forum where they can send messages to each other, in order to limit the isolation of working in the home.

The Youth Internet Café experienced some problems during the year but measures have been taken to manage the space and the users with the result that younger users now show respect for the service and the adult users accept them. The age groups now work together on occasion, to support each other's needs.

The training room is busy from Monday to Thursday but is available to hire, as a training facility or as a meeting room, on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. It has been used by CoActive and Wiltshire County Council. Events held in the room include a Jewellery Workshop and a Felt Workshop.

Future income depends on the success of the training element of the Centre.

TK, Chairman of PACE – the enterprise part of the business - thanked Dawn for her achievements during some difficult times experienced in starting up a new business, with all its attendant problems. He also thanked part time and volunteer staff and his fellow directors.

TK expressed his pride in the venture and its achievements. Everyone involved in PACE feels an ownership of the enterprise.

MA told the meeting that there was an ongoing concern about how to inform more people about the services available from the PACT Centre. There has been a leaflet drop and this proved worthwhile in attracting users to the centre. The issue of transport to and from the centre might be solved by the TimeBank system whereby learners could request transport in exchange for giving another service.

It was asked if there were plans to use local television as a marketing tool. TK replied that PACT has involved the local internet TV but that it was a good idea to involve other media when advertising.

7. Progress of the King Alfred Trail Project

The northern loop of the trail is almost completed, and will cost £120,000. It has dropped kerbs and diversions to make it easy for wheelchair users. British Waterways have been commissioned to improve the tow path. The interpretation boards have been professionally designed and will include drawings by local school children of the flora and fauna of the area. Way mark signs will also be erected.

Further funds are needed to complete the eastern and western loops. Funding bids to the Arts Council and the Big Lottery Fund failed so the work on the eastern and western loops will have to be completed piece by piece. The Sports Council rejected a bid as there is already an easy access trail; it was thought that this may be in Cornwall.

There is a leaflet available with maps and guide notes.

Work has been carried out in The Scotchel to improve it.

8. Any Other Business

There was a discussion about tourism and the availability of information about PACT. Voluntary Action Kennet provide such information for Kennet.

Discussion also moved to the need to provide accommodation for tourists into the area. The Pewsey Vale is attractive to tourists but the infrastructure is not in place to support the industry. A suggestion was made that camping/caravanning areas be made available, perhaps on the carnival field or other suitable locations. There may be householders willing to take bed and breakfast guests.

PACT sends out information to all Clerks of Parish Councils about Members' Meetings. It was thought that all Parish Councils should send the Clerk or a representative to PACT meetings; they could then report back to their village.

PACT has written to all 22 Parish Councils offering to come to talk to them, but received only three responses.

TK pointed out that volunteering is another marketing tool. DM wants to increase the number of volunteers in the Centre, where there is a variety of jobs they could choose from. An invitation was issued to all attendees, to give an hour or two to the Centre.

Alison Perry suggested that, as villages do not generally understand that PACT is for them, volunteers could attend village fêtes, set up display boards and talk to people to explain what PACT can do for them. Volunteers could also attend coffee mornings, school fêtes etc.

PACT has its own website and has acquired the domain name for the village website which PACT will host for the village. It will include the Heritage Centre.

The Co-op has Pewsey's biggest footfall and so PACT should have a permanent presence there. Volunteers could stand outside the Co-op doorway handing out leaflets.

The PACT Centre takes a half page advertisement in The Messenger. Village newsletters could be used.

The situation with young people using The Centre has improved. The Youth Worker TJ was successful in engaging them and his help has been invaluable. Carl Bowen of the Youth Development Service will try to keep a youth worker in place at the PACT Centre.

DM reported an upsetting occasion when a group of Kennet Carers wanting to attend courses had been warned about encountering intimidating teenagers in The Centre and were therefore uneasy about visiting. DM had asked that no-one be

warned in advance and the next group were quite unconcerned about visiting The Centre.

There is now informal inter-generational co-operation in The Centre, with youngsters giving advice to adults about computer use. DM would like to extend this co-operation by setting up a buddy system between youngsters and older people, for those who wanted to participate.

CL, although disappointed with the turnout at the meeting, promised that the good ideas generated at the meeting would be followed up.

Ali Perry was welcomed as the most recent director to be appointed to the board of PACT.

CL thanked Margaret West from Voluntary Action Kennet for providing the refreshments for the evening, Caroline Brailey, Kennet Community Liaison Officer for her support, Mike Asbury for taking over the PACT reins whilst CL has been unavailable and also thanked Alton Barnes for hosting the meeting.

9. Date of Next Meeting

To be arranged