

# **PEWSEY AREA COMMUNITY TRUST (PACT)**

## **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

### **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**20<sup>th</sup> MAY 2008**

#### **1. INTRODUCTION**

This Annual Report has been prepared by the Chairman and Directors of PACT for presentation to the PACT Annual General Meeting. It incorporates a report on the Pewsey Area Community (Enterprise) Ltd (PACE) - a wholly owned subsidiary of the Pewsey Area Community Trust and a company limited by guarantee – since the Board of this company has correctly declared an exemption from having to hold an Annual General Meeting.

This has been a year of consolidation and development for the Community Trust, and the Directors are very grateful to the Staff of the PACT Centre, both voluntary and paid, for their successful attempts to really put PACT on the Pewsey Vale map.

This report will cover in a general high level form:

- a. PACT overview;
- b. Membership and responsibilities;
- c. Community involvement;
- d. Meetings structure, and,
- e. Projects and project support, including a report on PACE.

Current financial status will be provided in the Treasurers Report.

#### **2. PACT OVERVIEW**

PACT is a Development Trust - one of many that operate in the UK. Development Trusts are organisations that engage in economic, environmental and social regeneration of a defined area or community. They are – as is PACT- independent, self sufficient or aiming for self sufficiency and are not for private profit. They may or may not have an element of public funding. In the case of PACT, Kennet District Council is currently the delegated authority, and PACT is one of four trusts set up within Kennet, the others being Devizes, Marlborough and Tidworth. An annual grant is provided by KDC, with the authority to allocate this grant funding vested in the Pewsey Community Planning Partnership, a committee with wide community representation, including PACT itself.

It can be seen from the objectives of PACT attached as an appendix to this report that the overarching objective of PACT is to be a community-based organisation

working for the sustainable regeneration of the Pewsey Area, through a mixture of economic, environmental, social and cultural initiatives.

In determining the best way to achieve this objective, the Board has during the last year decided to apply for charitable status in order to open up more opportunities for grants to fund present and future initiatives. The necessary accounting changes are going ahead, and the full application has been set in motion. In this action PACT is following in the footsteps of other Trusts which have found this option to be beneficial.

But this does not mean that the PACT directors and members will do everything – PACT is principally a facilitating organisation, providing a level of expertise and local knowledge to allow other organisations within the area to generate community benefits. In particular, PACT is not to be considered as a source of endless grant funding for major and/or minor projects.

### **3. MEMBERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

PACT is a company registered at Companies House, whose members are its users. During the course of the year the PACT Management Committee voted to change their name to become a Board of Directors, again in line with Companies House nomenclature. The Board are all unpaid volunteers - the current Chairman is Colin Lampard, Secretary John Toole and Treasurer Linda Fishlock. No members of the existing Board have served long enough without re-election to be called upon to stand down, and hence there will be no need for a re-election of existing members this year. However, one new member, Mrs Alison Perry, has been co-opted on to the Board, prior to her name being submitted for approval at this AGM.

Members of PACT also provide input to several Community Groups at District and National level.

The Board has met five times since the last AGM, and there have been two open meetings (November and April).

### **4. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

PACT is not a substitute for the Pewsey Parish Council, or indeed any other Parish Councils within its area of coverage. PACT covers Pewsey and about twenty other Parishes in the Area of Benefit, which stretches from Alton in the west to Easton Royal in the east, and as far south as Netheravon.

The Board are still unhappy about the lack of involvement of parishes within the area of benefit, and are at somewhat of a loss as to know what to do about it. There has been a deliberate attempt by the Board to involve other Parishes by holding meetings outside Pewsey itself, but this has not been overly successful, although the last public meeting at Alton did attract some non-Pewsey members. Other Area Trusts report similar problems. The Board would be grateful for increased support from other parishes.

A further aspect of community support is that the Pewsey division of the Kennet Credit Union is provided with a dedicated office in the PACT Centre, suitable for the conducting of private business. The Credit Union retains their own computers and files, which are totally independent of any PACT Centre links.

As the PACT Centre is becoming more well known in Pewsey, more and more people are coming in for general information. A longer term aim of the Directors is for an official Wiltshire Tourist Information Centre to be set up in the PACT Centre.

The current lease on the PACT Centre building is only for three years, and we are already more than a third of the way through. The Board has identified an opportunity of expansion into the development of the village centre site known as Whatleys. This development could result in a significant community gain that would in total include a conserved and improved Pewsey Heritage Centre, a relocated Library and craft workshops and retail outlets. The Board visualises the PACT Centre moving into this area, again offering offices and training rooms, the Art Gallery and an Internet Café with coffee shop facilities. The big advantage to PACT would be that it would have its own premises, and not have to pay anything from sixteen to twenty-five thousand pounds commercial rent.

The community gain negotiations rested with Kennet District Council and advice in 2006 was that eventually the works would happen but not for some three years.

## **5. MEETING STRUCTURE**

The Management Committee proposed that there should be between four and six Management Committee meetings per year, including the AGM to which members and the public are invited. There will also be two additional public meetings (to which all members and the general public would be invited). These would take the form of a general updating of what PACT was involved in, and could be used as consultative meetings if necessary.

## **6. PROJECTS AND PROJECT SUPPORT**

The two major projects which PACT members have been involved in over the past twelve months are the setting up of PACE to run the PACT Centre activities and the Christmas Fayre. PACT also has a significant input into the long-term King Alfred Trail project, both from the management and fund-raising capability.

### **PACE**

The PACT Centre was opened just before the last AGM, and PACE had been set up around the same time to run the revenue-raising work at the Centre. PACE was formed as the subsidiary trading arm of PACT, because, under Charity Commission rules, trading for profit activities are required to be separated from the Charity itself. PACE Directors are required to be approved by the Board of PACT, and all profits from PACE trading are covenanted to PACT. This appears somewhat convoluted, but is a Company Law requirement.

PACT had identified the following activities for the Centre:

a. Training

A wide variety of mainly computer-based training courses are offered to the general public. The Centre has several lecture/meeting rooms complete with training facilities available for hire. Increased use is being made of these facilities, and revenue is increasing.

b. Hot desks

This facility allows fully functional office suits to be rented by the part-day. Computer hook-ups are provided, and refreshments are available. Increased use is being made of these facilities as they are becoming better known and publicised, but more revenue could be earned.

c. Internet Café

This hard used section of the Centre can be extremely busy. Apart from having become a major focus of computer recreation for the younger members of the community, it performs a vital social and communications function for foreign nationals who come to the area for temporary agricultural work. It is also used by adults, including many senior citizens, who either may not have a computer at home, or who need to use another machine. There is also a quiet area, where desks can be hired by the hour, and gaming is not encouraged.

d. Business advice

The Centre is becoming a focus of business expertise, able to call on the services of local people for aspects of business operation, including the setting up of web-sites, design of posters and advertising material and general small printing requirements.

e. Art Gallery

This has been an incredibly successful enterprise, with fresh exhibitions every month in a wide variety of media. In fact it has been so successful that it has been possible to increase the commission rates, thus increasing revenue. Hanging space is booked up twelve months ahead.

f. DVD hire

With the demise of Blockbusters shop in the village it was anticipated that there would be a significant demand for up to date DVDs. However, this has proved not to be the case, and this has been the least successful aspect of the trading programme. The space occupied by this outlet will be used for other purposes.

g. Provision of dedicated office space for the PACT administration.

The PACE manager needs a permanent office, and part of this is used for PACT administration also.

The diversity of the proposal was seen as removing any risk of reliance on a single offer.

Key to the whole operation is the team work that exists between the Centre Manager, Part time staff, volunteers as well as the Directors. Many who visit the centre are impressed by the whole operation and are surprised that it is a community run operation because of the variety of facilities available and the high quality of service from the knowledgeable staff.

The Staffing arrangements since the opening have changed to meet the evolving business and service demands. Additionally the PACE Directors have defined responsible activities in order to gain greater benefits from the skills offered.

The Directors of PACT and PACE are extremely grateful to Kennet District Council, Wiltshire County Council and Swindon and Wiltshire Rural Renaissance Partnership for grants to support the development staffing and running costs of the Centre.

PACT also expects to be considerably involved in the management of the community benefit arising from the development of the Whatley site behind and including the Heritage Centre. There have been a number of smaller enterprises where PACT has provided community assistance, and in a few cases, direct emergency funding. In many of the latter cases this has been enabling funding, indicating community support, and allowing additional grants to be obtained from other sources.

### **King Alfred's Trail**

The prime visitor and tourism asset of the Vale is its countryside. However there are a range of restrictions and barriers that reduce the enjoyment or exclude many people from its use. These barriers range from stiles that are difficult if you have disabilities or are elderly through to muddy or narrow pathways, awkward or impossible if one is in an electric scooter, wheelchair or pushing a pushchair.

The King Alfred Trail Project I builds on the many strengths of the Pewsey Vale countryside but looks to sharing the delight with more visitors and locals by improving the quality of access.

This ambitious project, to develop a network of fully accessible footpaths around Pewsey, is progressing. King Alfred's Trail when complete will encompass a 14 kilometre easy access walk centred on the village of Pewsey. With the bus services and train station in the village as well as parking and shops the village is an ideal centre.

The proposed design of the trail attempts to take account of the needs, not only of those who are able bodied, but also of people with disabilities both physical and mental. Designed in two rough figure of eight circles, with the village of Pewsey at its

centre the Trail will be developed in three discrete stages allowing construction of each stage to take place as and when funding is in place.

The next tranche of grant funding is in place, and work is continuing on the first sections using existing paths and the canal towpath. PACT is working with Wiltshire County Council, KDC and Community First on this task, which will eventually cost about £1.5M.

This year with finance from South West Regional Development Agency, North Wessex Downs Area of outstanding Natural Beauty, Kennet District Council the first part of the Trail (between the village and the canal) has been completed. Finance for this was managed by Kennet District Council and amounted to £120,000.

### **The Christmas Fayre**

The PACT Christmas Fayre, organised for the first Saturday in December, has gone from strength to strength, organised principally by Bob Lewis, Phil Stevens and Roy Wiltshire, with support from a lot of other members of the Community. This year will be the sixth year, and it is rapidly achieving the level of 'tradition'. However, the Fayre in 2007 suffered the worst weather in its short history, resulting in a massive reorganisation a scant twelve hours before it was due to open. However, it did go ahead, and despite the evil weather was well attended. A small profit was made, and this has been donated to Charities.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

PACT is continuing to develop, raise its community profile, and to expand its spheres of influence, support and responsibility. The new PACT Centre is the envy of many local and national bodies, and meets many of the local business, social and educational needs.

But all this has not been achieved without considerable hard work and support from many people and organisations too numerous to mention. It would be invidious of me to pick out particular names, but they know who they are.

(Prepared by the Directors for)  
Colin Lampard  
Chairman  
Pewsey Area Community Trust

20<sup>th</sup> May 2008

**OBJECTIVES OF PACT (Extracted from the Memorandum of Association)**

**1. Objectives of the Company [PACT]**

1.1. The Objectives of the Company are:

- (a) To provide a community-based organisation working for the sustainable regeneration of the Pewsey Area through a mixture of economic environmental social and cultural initiatives
- (b) to foster the development of private and community enterprises in and around the Area of Benefit;
- (c) to carry out community capacity - building work within the Area of Benefit, in partnership with local authorities or other organisations and institutions;
- (d) to preserve, protect, improve and enhance in any way the amenities, public or otherwise, in the Area of Benefit – for the benefit of the population in the Area of Benefit and beyond;
- (e) to foster partnership working within the Area of Benefit and beyond, in order to improve the local economy, local education, health, employment opportunities, and for any other purpose that will benefit of the population in the Area of Benefit;
- (f) to provide or assist in the provision of: information services; careers advice, guidance and counselling; education; and training – to improve the employability of the population in the Area of Benefit and beyond;
- (g) to further any other purpose or purposes, for the benefit of the population in the Area of Benefit;