

COMMUNITY ACTION

with

Presteigne Area Community Development Group PACDG

T HIS IS WHO WE ARE ... THE PACDG STEERING COMMITTEE.

Maggie Taylor-Sanders – Chair since 2015 (01547 560813 and 07718 738742) is directly involved with Climate Emergency projects, the Tidy Town Team, Presteigne Plenty, Space Walk and organises the Sharppp Chat monthly discussion groups.

Terry Wells – Secretary since 2015 (01544 260258 and 07766 097600) edits the Community News, part of the Tidy Town team, looks after the noticeboards around the town, runs Presteigne Freegle online re-use group and helps with Repair Presteigne.

Maggie James – Treasurer (01544 267109 and 07767753368) co-ordinates our Project Teams, volunteers at the Judge's Lodging and involved with the WI, Tidy Town Team and Presteigne Plenty.

Margaret Galliers is involved with Presteigne Dementia Friends, WI and volunteers at the Library and the Judge's Lodging.

Helen Gooderham is involved with the Dark Skies Project, Transition Presteigne, XR Knighton/Presteigne, Plastic-Free Presteigne, Caring For God's Little Acre, and volunteers at the Library.

Annette Gurr is involved with Guerrilla Gardeners, Plastic-Free Presteigne, and Refill Wales (a scheme to let visitors know where they can get water bottle top-ups in town).

Gerry McDonnell organises the volunteers and looks after the Bring Site, is involved with the Tidy Town Team, new Town Walks leaflets & maps, and replacement Tourist Information Boards.

John Refausse is Chair of Norton Community Trust, which is taking forward the exciting project to adapt the former St Andrew's church building into a Community Hub. He is involved with the Town Walks and Job Club projects.

Eva Doggrell is co-opted from Connect, the business network in town, and was heavily involved in organising the annual Food & Flower Festival and Christmas Fair. She is also involved with the new Tourist Information boards and Town Walks.

Ann Wake is involved with tourism, Connect and the Little People's Playgroup, knows lots of useful stuff.

Cllr Chris Ruby is the liaison representative on the Steering Committee from Presteigne & Norton Town Council.

T HIS IS WHAT WE'RE PLANNING TO SUPPORT NEXT ...

Community Action Plan (CAP) Review

We revisit the CAP at regular intervals; when it was created, it was stressed that it is a 'live' document to be developed and pruned as the need and opportunities arise. (See the latest version at the end of this document)

Launch of more town projects

PACDG will be consulting about the next round of projects to be launched by many different groups in the town. They will include:

- **Green Community Action Plan** – the CAP has a large proportion of Green initiatives; these have been separated out into a separate plan to offer opportunities for development of things that the town has already said it would like to see. (See the latest version at the end of this document). This is also in support of the Town Council group working on the Climate Emergency.
- **Plastic-Free Presteigne** – to encourage both individuals and businesses to use less and less plastic, to reduce considerably the provision of single-use plastic and to encourage businesses to provide alternatives to ubiquitous plastic for packaging and taking goods away from the shop.
- **Tourist Information Boards** – replacing the existing outdated boards including an updated Town map, information and images, including a QR code linking direct to the Town website [*in work - watch this space for a future link*].
- **Town Walks** – researching and developing short circular walks in and around Presteigne in conjunction with Chatterbrook WI. Simple walking maps will be developed using software and the skills of two PAC members [*in work - watch this space for a future link*].
- **Refill Presteigne** – registering Presteigne with Refill Wales for inclusion on the Refill App and signing up local pubs, cafés and shops to make tap drinking water readily available to residents and visitors to the town.

OUR ONGOING WORK ...

Our project teams have been working on various activities to improve the environment and support for residents, but also to provide extra interest for visitors. In alphabetical order:

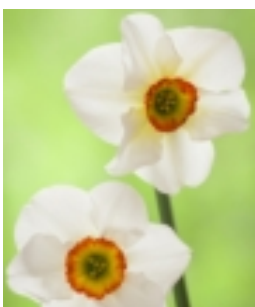


The Bags for Life group (in association with The Salty Dog) turns old curtains, sheets and duvets into re-usable fabric bags in a bid to banish plastic bags from Presteigne. They are made by a team of willing helpers either at home or in the workshop we've set up above The Salty Dog.

The bags are currently available at the tills of The Salty Dog, and at various community events during the year, and are free (donations accepted!), with all profits going to help community projects in the Presteigne and Norton area.

As of February 2020, this project team has raised £574.99.

The Community News e-letter continues to go from strength to strength with a steadily growing circulation (see www.presteigne.org.uk/calendar for latest and recent issues). Email pacdg@icloud.com to be included on the mailing list, and receive the news straight to your inbox, twice a month. You can also see paper copies in the library and on the various community noticeboards in Presteigne and Norton and outlying villages.



The Daffodils Group have planted up boxes in front of the Judge's Lodging and the Memorial Hall with heritage bulbs from Presteigne's past, with notices explaining to passers-by what they are. Local historian Catherine Beale, in collaboration with Chatterbrook W.I., tells the story of Presteigne's historic connection with daffodils (see www.presteigne.org.uk/some-history-presteigne-and-norton). You may also have noticed many more daffodils in the verges each Spring - these have been planted over the last three years by the group from 100s of bulbs either donated by well-wishers or paid for by the Town Council and PACDG projects. More will be planted each year. More recently we've been planting cowslips and primroses on the slope by Eddie's Meadow. This year we'll be planting more of everything, including snowdrops. (*Inset is 'Felindre', a daffodil developed here*)

The Guerrilla Gardeners (GGs) have received donations of spare plants and have been planting up the un-loved green, and not so green, spaces around the town with flowers, various herbs and even

some tomato plants were planted in the shoppers' car park beds which people were able to help themselves to. Guerrilla gardening activity continues, there are more spaces in need of some TLC!

The GGs also tidy up neglected public spaces especially behind the bus-stop and recycling bins.

'Shoppers Carpark flowerbed - before and after'



In February 2020 the GGs received a grant from the Welsh Government and PAVO via the energy saving charity Lightfoot to buy more tools and a wonderful sign telling passers-by who they are and what they're doing. This is stored at the BRING site by kind permission of CONNECT.

Plastic-Free Presteigne ... Aims to raise awareness of the problems of plastic use by discouraging the use of unnecessary single-use plastic throughout the town.

They also promote the reuse of unavoidable plastic including encouraging shoppers to take their own receptacles into the butchers, fish shop, etc. And they encourage where necessary the recycling of plastic and hope to expand local recycling points, including for foil pet food packets, plastic toothbrushes, re-use/recycle jiffy postal bags.

They hope to begin work with local farmers to reduce and recycle farm plastic and local pubs to provide recyclable 'glasses' at music festivals and the carnival.

It is hoped that in the near future the town will have a shop that stocks loose, dry food, and household products that do less harm to the natural world.



The Presteigne Plenty group takes excess, locally grown or foraged fruit and veg and turns it into tasty produce or useful items that are then sold at local fairs for the benefit of community projects in the Presteigne and Norton area.

We work with anything, from windfall apples, wild garlic, gluts of gooseberries and blackcurrants and even piles of wood (to make bundles of kindling).

The Presteigne Plenty stall is always a big hit at the Christmas Fair, where they sold 100 jars of jams, jellies, chutneys, and mincemeat, and raised £334.16, which brings their income so far to £1596.22.

This happy project team has donated over £1000 of the total raised to local foodbanks and Hereford Samaritans, and various other of our project teams including: Daffodil Group, Tidy Town, Guerrilla Gardeners.

The Tidy Town group carries out 3-monthly, wide-ranging clean-ups across town and smaller monthly litter-picks around the town centre.

Some litter-picking equipment has been purchased using money raised by other project teams. For larger litter-picks, additional equipment is borrowed from Keep Wales Tidy and the Knighton community group.

The group also currently carries out regular pavement and gutter cleaning, on behalf of the Town Council, with a small grant from them, to complement the litter picks.



COMMUNITY REGISTERS ...

So far we have compiled two local PACDG registers to help residents identify and contact local organisations and venues. Both are for the local area around Presteigne & Norton (only) and include contact names and addresses. They are available on the Town website and hard copies are available at the Library and Tourist Information Office in the Judge's Lodging.

1. **LOCAL CLUBS AND ORGANISATIONS** for leisure and support. Amazingly the town can boast 140+ in the list, which is divided into 10 categories; see www.presteigne.org.uk/local-organisations
2. A list of **LOCAL VENUES FOR HIRE** has also been prepared by PACDG and uploaded onto the town website, again with paper copies available at the library and TIC; see www.presteigne.org.uk/local-organisations

COMMUNITY GROUPS FAIR.

We have now held three Fairs in Presteigne Memorial Hall showcasing local groups, clubs and organisations, allowing them to promote awareness of their organisations and to recruit volunteers and members, and raise funds by means of sales, competitions and donations.

Each Fair is 'themed' - the most recent in 2019 to concentrate attention on the Climate Emergency.

We plan to run a Community Group Fair every 2nd year, circumstances permitting.



LINKED PROJECTS AND EVENTS ...

PACDG also supports, assists and helps fund (where needed) other Community groups such as:



Presteigne Repair & Skill Share which lays on monthly workshops where residents can take along household items and clothing that need repairing and are too good to throw away.

At the same time that the items are repaired those who bring in the pieces are taught how to do it themselves.

The Swift Group project celebrates Presteigne's long-standing connection with the endangered swifts who seem to have loved returning year after year to nest in and around our town – the project aims to make sure we don't lose them. The project has commissioned the Knighton Men's Shed Group (<https://www.dewis.wales/ResourceDirectory/ViewResource.aspx?id=8164>) to make boxes for residents to purchase at a cost of £25 to put up for future arrivals.

The group organised a local swift expert to give a talk at the Assembly Rooms about Swift Conservation and a couple of evening walks to spot these spectacular birds in town.



We're hoping that when the swifts will be feeding young, we can identify where they are nesting and add more boxes for the community-loving swiftlets to adopt Presteigne as their future 'hometown'.

Since the start of this project Knighton Men's Shed have sold 70+ boxes which have been put up all over the area.

Dementia Friendly Presteigne which continues to be very active making old and young alike aware of the special needs people with dementia have, by holding presentations and workshops in our schools, businesses and with other groups. They have organised drop-in open days at the Youth Centre for anyone who wants to know more, or to tap into the support they can offer.

Presteigne Dark Skies (Transition Presteigne/Marches Astronomy Group). This is a big project in the making to enable Presteigne to become the first Dark Skies Town in England and Wales. They have a Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/pages/category/Community/Presteigne-Dark-Skies-389030551943244/> and a Go Fund Me crowdfunding opportunity to support the Presteigne Dark Skies project at https://www.gofundme.com/f/qsv9n-presteigne-dark-sky-masterplan?fbclid=IwAR1fa5pVeD-lelqUrGi_hwCpOhnnrCODk81-sA14euk1OURm2A_ZoW-djD4

The Wildflower and Verges Group is working with the Town and County Councils to try to preserve and enhance the wildlife around the locality. They aim to reduce mowing of the verges so that they can assess and encourage the naturally occurring local wildflowers. The project is also providing signs and leaflets to help residents and visitors identify the flowers and grasses.

MISCELLANEOUS

Insurance and Banking Services

As an established and formally constituted community organisation, we provide insurance cover and a 'banking' provision for PACDG project teams, and for associated groups such as Dementia Friends and Presteigne Repair. It's a great advantage for small groups who would struggle to administer things like this individually.

Funding

We are working on bringing in funds from donations, sales of goods (Bags for Life and Presteigne Plenty) and grant funding for specific projects. We're grateful to the Town Council which grants PACDG a small annual precept, essentially to cover the cost of insurance and other essential administrative costs, so that all the money we raise can go to good causes in the town.

Hustings - for both local and national elections

We organised two very successful hustings for 2016's TC and PCC election, and the General Election, and will repeat this for future elections when needed.

OLD NEWS

THIS IS HOW WE GOT HERE ...

Back in 2015 Powys County Council employed consultants to help 4 pilot towns (Presteigne, Newtown, Builth Wells and Ystradgynlais) develop Community Action Plans (CAP) so that when funding came available for specific projects these towns would be able to back up their applications with evidence that this is what their towns not only wanted but needed.

A detailed questionnaire was developed and posted through every door in Presteigne and Norton, and from those replies the Community Action Plan took shape. Some of those involved with the initial work then stayed on to do their best to facilitate the realisation of that CAP by forming a Steering Committee and the Presteigne Area Community Development Group PACDG.

The latest version of the Plan is appended after this section - see below the progress we've made. As part of the remit of PACDG we applied for and got a grant of over £2000 from the National Lottery for 'Presteigne Area Community Involvement: Phase 1' (note that it's Phase 1 ... there will be more!!).

We asked for money to cover these 5 projects:

1. Community communications: three notice boards and Community News
2. Community Groups Fair 2016 and 2017

3. Training in how to encourage community involvement
4. Public consultation, Assets and Services Consultation.
5. Celebrating our first year

1. COMMUNITY COMMUNICATIONS

Notice Boards

- We installed a small Community Noticeboard on the wall of Dilwyn's Solicitor in the High Street, with kind permission of the building's new owners, and a smaller board on the junction of St. David's Street and High Street.
- We also commissioned a double, glass-fronted notice board for PACDG Community News and TC Agendas and Minutes, installed inside the archway at the entrance to the Library.
- We arranged a large community board in the Memorial Hall car park, generously donated and installed by McColville's including the removal of the fence and improvements to the entrance to the carpark.
- PACDG paid for the board header and have continued with its maintenance.



Community News

The Community News, compiled by our secretary, goes out by bulk email to around 500 local residents. Paper reading copies go to the Library and The Circle, and on noticeboards in Presteigne and Norton.

We have ensured that the data we hold is fully compliant with the new GDPR requirements. To receive the Community News, email pacdg@icloud.com.

2. COMMUNITY GROUPS FAIR: 'Ticked all the boxes'

Press Release extract about the 2016 Fair: 60 groups as diverse as Transition Presteigne, Men's Shed, Young Farmers, Tai-Chi, Busy-Bee Quilters, Mid-Border Arts packed into the Memorial Hall until was full to bursting. Yet still they managed to squeeze in a selection of musicians who added a tuneful note to the buzz.

Visitors and those representing the various groups were impressed with the day: 'Quite staggering to realise just how much does go on'. 'I think everyone had fun and Presteigne is the stronger for it!' 'It ticked all the boxes, bringing everyone together for a very informative and enjoyable day.'

A second Fair was held in October 2017 also in the Memorial Hall which, in addition to showcasing local groups and clubs, included demonstrations and performances by local clubs, groups and musicians under a Presteigne's Got Talent banner.

A third Fair was held in September/October 2019. This year it had a theme of the Climate Emergency and several groups provided some wonderful themed stalls. Perhaps appropriately it was held on a day of unseasonable rain so many local roads were flooded –



a harbinger of the winter to come, and an indicator of the Climate Emergency being with us already?

We plan to re-run the Fair every 2nd year.

3. TRAINING WORKSHOPS and other courses/conferences by PAVO and others

An enjoyable 'Skills for Participation' Workshop was put on in 2017 by PAVO for local people active in the community; all of whom were keen to find out about what helps and what hinders people participating in community work, and the benefits that can be gained from it for the individual and the community. There was representation from Whitton Community Hall, Knighton Men's Shed, Young Farmers, Presteigne Carnival, and PACDG. Paid for by the 'Awards for All Community Involvement: Phase 1' grant applied for by PACDG.

We continue to liaise with local organisations about PAVO courses, and other conferences and workshops of potential benefit, with financial support where needed.

4. PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS

PACDG worked closely with the Town Council designing and delivering the town-wide 2017 Assets and Services Consultation seeking residents' support for the Council's negotiations with Powys County Council over assets and services in the town, some of which were, and still are, under threat. An overwhelming display of support for this was received.

There have been mixed results from the Town Council's negotiations with PCC:

- the additional cemetery land was acquired by the TC but a change of mind from PCC resulted in them purchasing the land from the TC and continuing to run the cemetery
- the future of the Library has been secured – in the short term – with the assistance of volunteers and a reduction in working hours for the remaining professional librarian
- the Old School remains under the ownership of PCC with the Youth Centre taking on a new lease for the building
- the Drill Hall has been sold on the open market by PCC following their refusal to include it as an Asset Transfer to our Town Council. This building is now unfortunately lost to the Community but is being used by a local artist.

Questions?

Email pacdg@icloud.com