

# WORKING TOGETHER FOR OUR COMMUNITY

## Presteigne Area Community Development Group (PACDG)



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

**Helen Gooderham – Chair** since 2021 (01544 267073) is also involved with the Dark Skies Project, Transition Presteigne, XR Knighton/Presteigne, Presteigne Plastic Project, Caring For God's Little Acre, and volunteers at the Library.

**Maggie James – Treasurer** (01544 267109 and 07767 753368) and also co-ordinates our Project Teams, and is active in the Tidy Town Team, new Tourist Information Boards, and Presteigne Plenty.

**Annette Gurr – Secretary** (email: [admin@pacdg.org](mailto:admin@pacdg.org)) is also involved with Guerrilla Gardeners and is a volunteer Community Transport Driver

**Margaret Galliers** is also involved with Presteigne WI (Chatterbrook), Presteigne & Area Floral Arts Society and volunteers at the Judge's Lodging.

**Ann Wake** is involved with tourism, Connect and the Little People's Playgroup: she knows lots of useful stuff and people from her long time working for the town.

### **O** UR 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) have turned old curtains, sheets and duvets into re-usable fabric bags in a bid to banish plastic bags from Presteigne.

This scheme, having received more than £570 for community projects in the Presteigne and Norton area, is currently 'on hold'.

**The free Community News e-letter** continues to go from strength to strength with a steadily growing circulation of over 650 (see [www.presteigne.org.uk/calendar](http://www.presteigne.org.uk/calendar) for latest and recent issues). Email [news@pacdg.org](mailto:news@pacdg.org) 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](http://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 and herbs.



*'Shoppers Carpark flowerbed - before and after'*

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

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.

Guerrilla gardening activity continues, there are more spaces in need of some TLC!



**Presteigne Plastics Project...** aims to raise awareness of the problems of plastic use by discouraging the use of unnecessary single-use plastic throughout the town.

The group promotes the reuse of unavoidable plastic including encouraging shoppers to take their own receptacles into the butchers, fish shop, etc. and encourages the recycling of necessary plastic.

They hope to further expand local recycling points, in addition to the new recycling bins for ink cartridges, ink toners, and tablet blister packs at the front of The Old School in Hereford Street.



**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.

They 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 Community apple juicing days are now an increasingly popular regular family event with gallons of tasty juice produced and sold. Produce

sales and donations have, by Spring 2022, raised over £2000.

This happy project team has donated nearly £1,800 to local groups, with major donations going to the Foodbank, Samaritans, Little Peoples Playgroup and Liminal Space, and smaller but just as vital amounts going to projects like the Daffodil Group, Tidy Town and Guerrilla Gardeners.

**The Tidy Town** group carries out three-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.



**Tourist Information Signboards** Having provided a number of new Noticeboards to improve communications across the community, we noticed that the Tourist Information Boards were out of date and tatty – not surprising as they were erected in the last century!

A small working group was formed, with support and assistance from Connect and the Town Council, to redesign and update them with funding provided by the Presteigne & Norton Community Trust.

The project took longer than we expected, partly due to Covid, but in 2022 we finally succeeded in getting two replacement boards in place - one at the top of Station Road opposite the Memorial Hall



and one in the Hereford Street Car Park.

We think they look fabulous! They're designed to be future-proof and can be easily updated over the coming years. We hope they will be a useful – and beautiful – community asset for years to come. We hope to complete the project in the near future by providing a third new board close to the Shoppers Car Park.

**Town Walks** We wanted to check and update an old favourite booklet of five short circular walks in and around Presteigne. We worked in conjunction with Chatterbrook WI to walk the routes, identify any changes and clarify directions.

We're really pleased with the new set of walks, which also include simple maps and are available on the town website <https://www.presteigne.org.uk/local-walks>

## C OMMUNITY REGISTERS ...

So far we have compiled two local PACDG registers to help residents identify and contact local organisations and venues for hire. 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 the Tourist Information Office in the Judge's Lodging.

To be included in the Registers, or to amend your entry, email [contact@pacdg.org](mailto:contact@pacdg.org)

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](http://www.presteigne.org.uk/local-organisations)
2. **LOCAL VENUES FOR HIRE**; see [www.presteigne.org.uk/local-organisations](http://www.presteigne.org.uk/local-organisations)

A third Register of **LOCAL TRADES & SERVICES** is not available on the Town website but will be emailed to you on request - just email the Editor of the Community News on [news@pacdg.org](mailto:news@pacdg.org). If you are a local trader or service provider, or a resident who knows of a local service provider not on the Register, please email the Editor with business name and description, and contact details.

## C OMMUNITY GROUPS FAIR.

We have now held three Fairs in Presteigne Memorial Hall.

The Fair showcases 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.

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



## INKED 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.mensshed.uk>) [mensshedknighton@gmail.com](mailto:mensshedknighton@gmail.com) to make boxes for residents to purchase at a cost £30 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** 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](https://www.gofundme.com/f/qsv9n-presteigne-dark-sky-masterplan?fbclid=IwAR1fa5pVeD-lelqUrGi_hwCpOhnnrCODk81-sA14euk1OURm2A_ZoW-djD4)

You can see a link to a Dark Skies video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6TqShuiTvx0> and a night-time drone footage video on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X5OEe1aitQQ>

**The Wildflower and Verges Group** liaises with both the Town and County Councils to try to preserve and enhance the wildlife around the locality. The aim is to reduce mowing of the verges to assess

and encourage the naturally occurring local wildflowers and grasses and encourage pollinators. Signs and leaflets to help residents and visitors identify the flowers and grasses have also been produced.

**The Presteigne Area Refugee Support Fund** has been set up to provide a source of funding for refugees who are coming to live in the Presteigne area as a result of the war in Ukraine.

**Norton Community Hub** An ambitious and exciting project to convert the former church building in Norton into a vibrant community hub, to put the heart back into Norton. Full details on their [website](http://www.nortonhub.uk) [www.nortonhub.uk](http://www.nortonhub.uk)

## 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, Presteigne Repair and the Refugee Support Group. 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 are 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 in Albert Square (just off the High Street) and a smaller board on the junction of St. David's Street and High Street, both with kind permission of the residents.

- 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 free Community News e-letter goes out by bulk email to around 650 local residents. Paper reading copies are posted 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 the Editor at [news@pacdg.org](mailto:news@pacdg.org).

## 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 receive.

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 [contact@pacdg.org](mailto:contact@pacdg.org)