

CIVIC DIALOGUE Gathering : April 9-12.2015, Wales, UK

in co-operation with PLANED, Pembrokeshire

We are happily looking forward to our upcoming meeting on CIVIC DIALOGUE. From 9th to 12th we will meet in the region of Pembrokeshire in the South-West of Wales on the invitation of our regional partner PLANED.

Being a rather small group our aim was to design a programme structure that allows everybody who wants to present his/ her experience. We will experience the region together and have the opportunity to exchange with local people. We will open the floor by looking on the European policies and concrete experiences.

We will work in a "market place" of initiatives to learn from each other in a lively way and to grasp an idea what the European dimension of Civic Dialogue means in practice. We will enter the "world cafe" and develop strategies for next steps.

Gathering Information

International Sustainable Buffet:

All participants are invited to contribute a speciality from their region for our international sustainable buffet that will be offered on Friday evening.

Market of initiatives:

During our "market of initiatives" we offer you the opportunity to share your project/experience with other participants in a "market place" (with tables to put posters, leaflet etc.) and also to make a brief presentation of your initiative.

We ask all participants who want to present their activities during the market place to send a short summary of their presentation. We will distribute this summary among all participants.

Venue

Accommodation: Hotel Nant-y-Ffin
(www.nantyffin.co.uk): a local, family-run hotel

Friday, 10.4.2015:

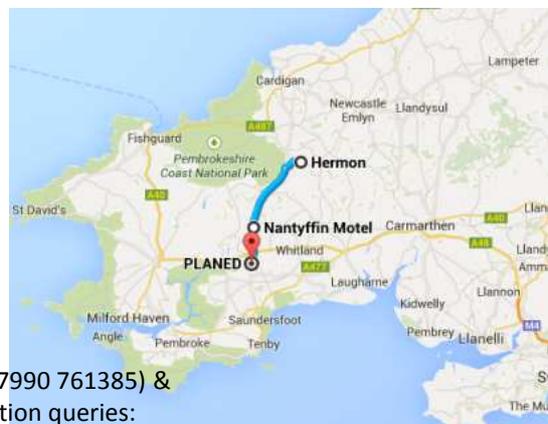
Hermon Community Resource Centre

Saturday, Sunday, 11.-12.4.2015:

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Draft programme

Arrival: Thursday / Welcome & introduction to the programme

- Welcome by our hosts and Forum Synergies
- Activities by PLANED

Day 1: Friday/ Discovering Pembrokeshire and PLANED activities

1) Morning: Field trips

- visit of 2 - 3 field experiences including discussion with local people

2) Afternoon: Working groups

- main issues / questions / ideas raised during the field trips

3) Early evening: Plenary - feedback on visits

- Short feedback on the visits by each group
- debate and exchange
- Introduction to the "market place": speakers briefly present the topic they will present

Dinner & international buffet

Day 2: Saturday/ From European policies to real activities

09:00 - 10:00 Introduction - Policies: 9:00 - 10:00 (Plenary)

Which European policies are promoting Civic Dialogue? E.g. Aarhus convention, Water framework Directive, Natura 2000. Short overview

Marina Guedon (Forum Synergies)

10 experiences of Civic Dialogue

Philippe Barret (Forum Synergies)

10:00 - 12:30 "State of the Art" Civic Dialogue in different countries: Market of initiatives

Presentation and exchange of initiatives and participants in a "market place":

1st round: Scottish Rural Parliament / Rural Development Agency in Serbia

2nd round: Village Movement in Estonia / Civic Dialogue in France

Short break

3rd round: Design social mobilisation / LEADER experience / NATURA 2000

4th round: Animation of rural communities / Food production / Environmental aspects on business

12:30 - 14:00 Lunch

14:00 - 16:00 "World Cafe"

Share what we have learnt during the workshop and what we propose for the follow up:

table 1: good practices to deepen

table 2: challenges and issues to explore

table 3: next steps for Forum Synergies and the participants after Wales
3 rounds and plenary

Short break

16:30 - 18:00 Training Session moderated by PLANED

"How we encourage and support civic democracy through participation and engagement"

Dinner & official closure

Day 3: Sunday / Departure

Field trips - background information



Hermon

INTRODUCTION & WAY FORWARD

The intention of the Action Plan for the communities of Glogue, Hermon and Llanfyrnach is to describe issues and ideas identified by residents, which if addressed over the next few years, would sustainably improve their quality of life, economically, environmentally, socially and culturally.

Inviting and involving all ages and representatives from the whole of the community in the preparation, adoption and implementation of the Action Plan, stresses the benefits of an integrated approach that can be achieved through working together, e.g. through community social enterprises. The aim is to attract public and private sector support and funding alongside community investment of time, effort, and resource, to implement the initiatives described in the Plan.

BACKGROUND TO THE ACTION PLAN

In August 2000, a Community Appraisal Report for Glogue, Hermon & Llanfyrnach was compiled on behalf of a partnership comprising the Hermon and District Welfare Association and Menter Preseli by Dr. Lyneth M. Davies.

In the spring of 2004 representatives of the communities of Glogue, Hermon, Llanfyrnach, of the Crymych Community Council and of PLANED discussed proposals to prepare an Action Plan for the three villages which lie within the Crymych Community Council area. It was agreed that a single plan was more likely to reflect the existing conditions and aspirations of the three villages than separate appraisals and proposals.

Two Visioning exercises were held in April and May 2004 and the results of these exercises formed the basis for the first Action Plan that was adopted at a public meeting held on 15th September 2004 following the circulation of the Draft Action Plan to households in the communities of Glogue, Hermon and Llanfyrnach.

A community forum, "Cymdeithas Cwm Arian" was established in order to coordinate and take forward the proposals contained in the Action Plan.

Following an approach from Cymdeithas Cwm Arian in early 2010 it was agreed to update the original Glogue, Hermon and Llanfyrnach Action Plan as part of PLANED's *Towards One Planet Living* project. This was done by holding a community workshop on June 10th 2010 where local people reviewed and updated the original Action Plan by adding proposals, ideas and comments which could contribute to the

long term sustainability of the community.

GLOGUE, HERMON & LLANFYRNACH – A SPECIAL PLACE

The community meeting of June 2010 revealed that the community is forward thinking with strong sustainability awareness, keen to maintain strong local services, resources and facilities, to better use technology; recognise the value of locally sourced food and try to secure better rail and transport links. There were concerns about food wastage, packaging and the attitudes existing in a “throw away” society. There was a recognised need to keep banks, a post office, a surgery and shops and a realisation that the decline of such facilities resulted in people going into towns to do their weekly shop adding to the spiral of decline of local services and facilities.

As well as concerns about the decline in local shops and services there were also concerns about the bigger picture and global issues such as worries about the environment, Carbon emissions, nuclear and waste issues and importing food when vegetables are thrown away for no good reason are of concern to the community. There was a wish for local, organic and Fairly Traded food, and a community owned recycling centre.

Apathy and a “don’t care attitude” was thought to be present in a generally throwaway society and there was concern about waste, packaging, food miles, increased traffic and vanishing varieties of fruit and vegetables.

At the workshop a picture emerged of a vibrant, active community that valued its culture, heritage, natural surroundings and quality of life. Living in what was felt to be a close knit community provided the opportunity for children to have a childhood in a safe environment and the relaxed pace of life gave rise to a friendly community spirit. The Welsh language is seen as important and is used throughout the Community which is proud of its Welsh heritage and history. The natural environment with its green landscapes and accessibility to the Preseli Mountains and the Pembrokeshire Coast was greatly valued and linked in closely with an appreciation of a unique cultural heritage which featured the railway, quarries, mines, agriculture, church, pre-historic stones.

The active nature of the community is demonstrated by its many varied events such as the horticultural show, Celtic Blue Rock Festival, clubs and societies such as the YFC and CylchMeithrin (playgroup) amongst others.

There exists a positive, forward thinking outlook and ‘have a go’ attitude that demonstrates aspirations and acceptance of the challenge of strong local development in all areas of community life. This outlook and attitude is embodied in the ethos and workings of the community forum Cymdeithas Cwm Arian.

PROPOSALS OF THE 2005 ACTION PLAN AND PROJECTS COMPLETED SINCE

Cwm Arian – 5 year plans

It does seem a lifetime ago when in 2005 we were sitting in the old canteen at Hermon School discussing the next 5 year Action Plan and how we wished to develop new community initiatives in the area of Cwm Arian (Hermon, Glogue and Llanfyrnach)

Over 5 years later we can look back at many fantastic and socially important achievements. The main discussion point for 2005 was the purchasing of Hermon CP School from the local authority to ensure that we retained a meeting place for the community. The primary school closed its doors in the summer of 2006 and by 2007 we had a rental agreement and purchasing option. Following considerable enthusiasm, fundraising and a cooperative share offer we managed to purchase the site in early 2008. The share offer raised £50,000 and with the village hall fundraising that had taken place over many decades we clinched the deal. A Welsh Government grant known as CFAP allowed us to ensure the site was usable and that there was no need to borrow monies to complete the purchase. The site now is moving into a further development phase and a £380,000 additional expansion is being completed that will give a 150 seater hall and stage as well as additional offices and meeting spaces. The site will be promoted as a rural resource centre to attract conferences and training opportunities for community groups in West Wales. The site will also allow additional local groups to use the modern facilities and

offer additional local services.

Back in 2005 renewable energy and recycling featured heavily and with support from PLANED and the Pembrokeshire National Park we were able to clinch £8,000 of feasibility funding to have a professional report on what renewable energy was possible in Cwm Arian. The report high-lighted the most feasible development would be community owned wind turbines. The Cwm Arian Renewable Energy group was formed in 2006 and discussions commenced with the planning department in the local authority. We were able to gain additional funding from the Wales Cooperative Centre to fund a comprehensive business plan and look at grant applications. An application submitted in 2009 resulted in Cwm Arian Renewable Energy being awarded a £400,000 grant by the Department of Energy and Climate Change in London. The funding was there to support the installation of 2 community owned wind turbines and short term funding of staff to support the development. The change in Government in 2010 complicated the release of the funding and currently a met mast wind speed data collection system is being erected. The data captured will allow us to apply for finance and look at additional funding for a scheme that will be in excess of £1.8m. The energy produced will be sold to the national grid and the revenues generated used to fund community and voluntary development in the Cwm Arian and neighbouring communities. There will be a focus on reducing carbon and supporting local people to reduce the use of carbon based fuel.

It is good to note the support from PLANED to the construction of the community stores “Storws” on the edge of the playing field. The Hermon Events Committee coordinated the development of the large stores building that now houses the community marquee and playing field equipment. The site is also used by many of the local groups for storage and building craft items such as the Young Farmers Club county competition.

The Celtic Blue Rock Festival was identified in 2005 as an event that could be supported and developed. It has become a well-known community music event and has seen a fast growth to over 8000 people attending the 2 day event. The issues of licensing and policing have been complex and the committee are hoping to see the event now developed into a social enterprise to work with national event bodies to support community based music events across Wales, The university of Cardiff wish to see a student foundation degree in music events management working in partnership with the Celtic Blue Rock Social Enterprise. During the season when the rain kept away (which was not often) we did see many local retailers and garages note how they saw trade levels increasing on the back of the visitors attending the festival. It is important that we look at ways of drawing in more economic activities to boost local businesses and create jobs.

There are many other exiting projects at the development stage within Cwm Arian and the key now is to see increased revenue streams allowing a sustainable growth of the community activities. We also wish to ensure that all citizens and community groups have an opportunity to feed in and contribute to the direction and be part of community and social development in Cwm Arian. The community voice and support are the foundation blocks for developing the new initiatives and during the next 5 years of development we will seek ways of ensuring our voices are heard not only within Cwm Arian but also regionally and nationally.

Cris Tomos – Volunteer and Chair of Cwm Arian

Pembrokeshire Sustainable Agriculture Network

The network was launched in 2006 in consultation with stakeholders and the agricultural community.

The aim of the network is to bring farming/environmental organisations and farmers in Pembrokeshire together to identify, discuss and take forward new ideas and opportunities linked to sustainable agriculture e.g. climate change, renewable energy, novel crops and positive land management.

The Network is innovative in that the project is working cross-sectorally, generating greater awareness and understanding of sustainability in the farming industry. By working together events are planned in

partnership thus avoiding duplication allowing information to be shared to all sectors and practioners. The project seeks to bring about an attitudinal change on the part of the farmers, assisting them to identify opportunities and recognise the benefits of sustainable practices around key areas such as positive land management, renewable energy, recycling in relation to their businesses, prior to making business decisions and by identifying and developing new opportunities thus helping to sustain incomes and jobs in the rural economy. The Network enables and encourages local collaboration, delivering local empowerment and innovation by exchanging best practice. There is a need for such networking to facilitate collaborative and more effective working with the agricultural sector, to contribute to and be consulted on proposals and plans.

With over 1350 farmers on the members' mailing list and around 500 regularly active at seminars the network provides a valuable service.