



Notes from Newport Area Environment Group NAEG for Hamish Liddle of Land Use Consultants following his meeting with us to describe the Pembrokeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy Project funded by PCC and PCNPA 26/07/22

Present: Siobhan McGovern NAEG Chairperson; Ros Mc Garry NAEG Vice Chairperson; Sandra Bayes NAEG Secretary (Ros had to leave part way through)

We already knew that

Funds are from the UK Govt. Community Renewal Fund (£90,000)

The Green Infrastructure (GI) Plan is required in connection to two statutory functions:

- Firstly as a key piece of evidence which is referenced in national planning policy to underpin the replacement Local Development Plan (LDP 2). The LDP is statutory plan required under The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004; and
- Secondly, The Environment (Wales) Act 2016, introduced a duty for local authorities to maintain and enhance biodiversity and promote the resilience of ecosystems. The section 6 duty requires the Local Authority to take steps to protect nature in towns, public places and the wider landscape through practical action on the ground, and in the way all public functions are carried out.

SB pointed out that whilst PCC LDP2 is still in preparation, PCNPA LDP2 was adopted in 2020

The funding mechanisms to fund the delivery of future GI projects may include:

- **Local Places for Nature (LPfN)** – LPfN is a Welsh Government capital grant scheme aimed at enabling areas of highest deprivation or those with least access to nature in Wales, such as urban communities, to restore and enhance local nature where they live, work and access public services. The funding is distributed through various routes:
 - **Keep Wales Tidy** <https://keepwalestidy.cymru/our-work/conservation/nature/> where a choice of pre-tailored packages are available to community groups and organisations.
 - **Heritage Fund** <https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/funding/local-places-nature> there are 2 levels of grant available £10-£100k and £100k-£250k.
 - **Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs)** <https://wcva.cymru/local-places-for-nature/>

Communities involved are:

- ☐ Fishguard and Goodwick
- ☐ Haverfordwest
- ☐ Milford Haven

- ☐ Narberth
- ☐ Newport
- ☐ Neyland
- ☐ Pembroke
- ☐ Pembroke Dock
- ☐ Saundersfoot
- ☐ St Davids
- ☐ Tenby

We learnt that

- Green Infrastructure – A technical term – a collection of assets e.g parks, playing fields, private gardens, hedgerows, accessible green space, public open space, green roofs, walls – that support people in daily lives, but also benefit wildlife, contribute to flooding control, mitigate climate change etc (“multi-functionality”)
- Especially effective if inter-connected and designed and managed properly
- The Strategy will be looking at planning networks at a variety of scales, but concentrating on town scale, where priorities for projects would be identified.
- Sandra pointed to several previous studies that had come to nothing for Newport. HL – Last Pembrokeshire Towns Green Infrastructure Action Plan 2018
<https://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk/conservation/green-infrastructure> 2 projects were put forward for Newport – allotments (No mention of prohibitive land values) , and a footpath east from Newport Bridge on the south side.
- Sandra said a PCNPA sponsored environmental study for Newport in the 90s had emphasis on enhancement, with no mention of biodiversity and climate change. There were no outcomes, and plans for areas identified then for planting were still not implemented
- The project is currently at draft stage
- Some workshops had taken place – with County Councillors and staff, Town and Community Councils, some interest groups and community groups.
- Towns have been visited by teams. Hamish was unable to say who had guided them round Newport. NAEG requested to be involved in any follow-up visits
- A digital report showing graphic plans and distribution of projects should be on the PCC website by the end of August, followed by further consultation with stakeholders
- Projects will focus on opportunities for urban tree planting; pollinators; access, but also on flood management where appropriate. There is a team of drainage experts looking at flooding issues.
- Achievability will be taken into account in setting priorities. Projects that can take place on public land will be easiest to execute. Hamish asked for suggestions. Siobhan mentioned Parrog Road, which Hamish thought was already being considered. Ros said the Town Council was suggesting to PCNPA that the grass verges at Town

entrances on the A487 - by Cnwce Estate to the West, and opposite Richards Bros to the East were suitable for planting trees to celebrate PCNPA 70 years

Hamish asked what NAEG does

Sandra said its main activity at the moment is the Newport for Nature project funded by PCNPA SDF, but NAEG had existed since 2006 and been involved in all sorts of work from setting up the first plastic recycling operation in N.Pembs; participation in the Transition Movement; promoting Dark Skies; working with NRW on bathing water quality; Litter picking and beach cleaning; consulting on 3 PCNPA LDPs, taking part in consultations ... See <https://naeg.org.uk/> (NAEG struggles to keep this up to date) See also Newport for Nature Facebook Group/ Trefdraeth Am Natur

Points raised by NAEG members

1. Sandra had been asked by Newport Town Council to mention the importance of including the marine environment. Hamish said this had been raised at the gov. reps' workshop, and assured that this was taken on board
Sandra said Newport has the problem of a CSO from CWM into Newport Bay which spills after fairly light rainfall, where it is understood that infinite spills by DC/WW are allowed under their licence, and where the formerly EU designated bathing water at Treathmawr can be affected.
Ros added that river water quality is problematic due to farm run off
Siobhan briefly described the CLEAN project and Cwm Arian's work
2. Sandra asked whether the project also covered air quality, as Newport has a problem, most probably shared by many of the listed towns, of terrific traffic build-up in the season. Was the study to cover Park and Ride suggestions? Hamish said the need for joined-up thinking in this respect was recognised but the scope of this study probably doesn't stretch. They might look at reconfiguration of car parks to accommodate trees.
3. Sandra said Newport was the first Bee Friendly Community in Wales, and the Town Council is running a project in Brynhyfryd Cemetery. The Town Council is trying to get PCC to make their small garden by their small business units building bee friendly. Other projects supported or promoted by the Town Council are listed in the Annual report 2021 https://newport-pembs.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Annual-Report-21-22-final_30.05.22.pdf
4. Ros said there was a problem of PCNPA allowing Housing Development which imposed conditions protecting the environment but without enforcing these. Newport had lost a large amount of biodiversity and important pathways in this way.
5. Siobhan said residents and landowners, including farmers are talking and trying to work together about management of Carningli SSSI

6. Siobhan pointed out that whilst there are problems planting trees above Newport on private land to prevent flooding, recent farm subsidies could help. (Much of the higher land on Carningli is Common Land)
7. Sandra meant to mention the importance to Newport of its historic streams, partly hand hewn when the Castle was built to server the burgage plots which form the mediaeval town layout. They are much neglected, and have sadly been culverted in parts. The land between the car park and Maesingli Sheltered Housing featured in the 90s Environment study as an eyesore, but currently offers an opportunity within this strategy.
8. Siobhan mentioned the sadness of early mowing by property owners – particularly the PCNPA designated Green Space by the Parrog car park which is Barony land
9. Siobhan hoped that land along the estuary, and between the estuary and the town, could be further protected from development as an outcome of this project.
10. Sandra asked whether schools had been contacted and said Ysgol Bro Ingli had an impressive record of encouraging interest in the environment, and NAEG's Newport for Nature project has worked with them
11. Sandra pointed out the large alternative community in Newport who were obviously interested in environmental issues; the existence of Brithdyr Mawr and Fachongle, original home of John Seymour, and the OPD in Bee View Farm
12. Sandra said that encouraging 2nd home and holiday home owners in Newport (40-50% of homes in Centre) to provide areas to encourage biodiversity is part of the Newport for Nature project, but difficult to achieve.
13. Siobhan mentioned PCC Local Nature Partnership maps as being hugely useful in planning connectivity
14. Other groups that it might be useful to contact:

Cwm Arian

https://carboncopy.eco/about?gclid=Cj0KCQjwof6WBhD4ARIsAOi65ahcsKCcl_IQaO2Jt7uhd0ipMWbTJo3F-8loXo19qv5_LQdBzWS8ZEwaArFkEALw_wcB

Newport Paths Group <https://newport-pembs.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Newport-Paths-Group-bilingual-website-040221.pdf>

Rewilding Carningli Facebook Group

Preseli 360 Facebook Group

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