

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF SUSTAINABLE PENWITH HELD ON MONDAY 19<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2004.

Present: Karen Clowes  
Michele Cowmeadow  
Roger Harnett  
Manda Brookman  
Raven le Fay  
Lesley Bradley  
Ann Dennis  
Peter M le Mare  
Barnaby Flynn  
John Thomas  
Mark Crossley  
Frances Truscott  
Grant Somers  
Mark Russell  
Crystal Wakefield  
Matt Trevaskis

1. Welcome by Chair. Crystal welcomed everyone to the meeting and brief introductions were given.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from:

Ralph Openshaw  
Justin Osolunde  
John Brailey  
Lynn Gulliford  
Patsy Stevens  
Mike Orman  
Ruth Browning  
Julia Bradley

3. Minutes of previous meeting

The minutes of the last meeting were accepted as a true record. It was agreed that the constitution will now be adopted as it stands. As from today our member registration will be adopted to enable people to vote at meetings. Karen has already received a few membership forms, and it was agreed that blank forms will be available at all meetings in future. Karen to action.

4. Roger Harnett – Head of Planning – Penwith District Council

Crystal welcomed Roger Harnett to the meeting. Roger explained that Planning at Penwith consists of three services; forward planning, development planning and building control.

Forward planning is the policy making part of the service, forward planning is underpinned by sustainability and looks at areas such as brownfield sites, parking, transport, as well as specific policies such as renewable energy. Forward Planning are also responsible for the Local Plan, which is built on the principle of sustainability.

Development planning considers planning applications with relation to the Council's policies. There are something the Council cannot do for example they cannot insist on locally sourced materials due to the EU Regulations, nor can they prescribe that a redevelopment site must re-use material on site. Whilst the Council can recommend such practice it cannot demand it because planning is so tightly constrained by regulations.

Building Control deals with how well a building performs, wheelchair access, etc. Government are starting to catch up on standards, and whilst the Council cannot insist on going above these standards it does encourage such practice and advises developers on grants available to allow them to exceed minimum requirements.

Supplementary planning guidance encourages developers to go down the sustainable route. The Council could work with Sustainable Penwith and take advantage of their expertise to help promote best practice, by working together in this way we could also share resources. Frances stated that the group could recommend what we would like to supplementary planning guidance to include.

Crystal asked how community groups can dovetail with policies, e.g. The Community Plan. Roger replied that the Planning Compulsory Purchase Bill is undergoing a radical overhaul, this will help pull together how the planning procedure will in future be linked into the Community Plan. It also requires the Council as a whole to formulate a statement of community consultation. However, it is very early days and because planning is very tightly regulated it will not be an easy task. Roger said that he would welcome any suggestions on how the Council can do this.

Crystal asked whether there is a Forum at the moment where groups like Sustainable Penwith can work with the Council. Roger replied that as yet there is no such forum, but that whilst forums are useful for community consultation the Council needs to look a lot more broadly than that.

Frances asked whether Roger was inviting Sustainable Penwith to work with the Council on community engagement. She felt that whilst we can work with the Council regarding promotion of sustainable building, etc., that community engagement has a much wider remit.

Peter stated that effective consultation means taking notice of what is being said. We need to be a real public forum and should be able to have a direct say, and that it should not just be Councillors who make the decisions. Roger agreed that Councillors need to adjust to consultation, it is starting to happen. He stated that the Council have been ok with listening, but feedback to the public has so far been poor, the statement of community engagement will address this.

Peter said that Councillors need to be reminded that Penwith Council has adopted LA21.

Manda agreed that Councillors are moving towards a more consultative attitude. She feels that because tourism in Penwith accounts for over 40% of our GDP, it has to have a community benefit, what is required is a local community planning forum.

Roger said that the Council have, where they can, made progress in this field for example Penhaliman Court in St Ives. The Council owns the land so were able to put conditions on the development; residents were consulted on design and fittings and we were able to specify locally sourced materials.

Michelle asked whether the Council could publicise the land available the local communities could use, rather than waiting for a community group to approach the Council as had to happen when she was looking for a community woodland. Roger replied that Penwith has a large land bank and that one of the Council's most important aims is the provision of affordable housing for housing

associations. Land that is not suitable for housing could, and has in the past, been offered to community groups for establishment of orchards, gardens, etc., and this is something members tend to be keen to approve. Karen will ask Rod Porter for his views on publicising available land. She also stated that the liveability funding will include an audit of Council land. Karen said that the Bowjey Woodland in Newlyn is an ideal piece of Council land for a community group to adopt and that she would like to encourage Newlyn residents to take up the challenge.

John said that if the Council really wanted to engage the public, that they should back an award winning idea such as a truly sustainable eco-homes project. Roger replied that eco-housing is still a very sensitive subject with some members at present.

Crystal brought up the subject of Renewable Energy. She said that trying to get any planning for renewable energy projects was extremely difficult and that grant funding does not cover such schemes as everything seems to be tied up in economic development. Roger replied that the Council have been working very closely with the Cornwall Sustainable Energy Project which is helping to promote and educate the need for renewable energy and that Penwith Council has been heavily involved in the consultation process for CSEP's Renewable Energy Strategy. He said that at present most members still regard wind turbines as a very sensitive issue. The Council have been very involved in discussions on the possibility of establishing a wave energy pilot off the Penwith/Kerrier coast. Crystal replied that for community projects the only way ahead at present is windmills and that even though biomass is being promoted there are still issues as regards the supply chain for such plants. Roger replied that there is little as contentious as a windmill, there are two schools of thought, but the majority of councillors at the moment tend to be against wind energy.

Crystal told the group that the Cornwall Sustainable Energy Partnership is holding a final consultation event on 20<sup>th</sup> April for its Renewable Energy Strategy. The Strategy is to be launched on 21<sup>st</sup> July and is expected to be a high profile event. The draft Strategy can be viewed on the CSEP website [www.csep.co.uk](http://www.csep.co.uk).

John stated that if we do not have 10% of our energy coming from renewables in 2010 we will be fined. Wind energy is all very well but there many other alternatives for example biogas, biodiesel, and solar energy. Peter said that solar panels are not particularly sustainable due to the environmental impacts of the extraction of raw materials and the manufacturing process. Whilst they are alright for things such as recharging batteries, etc., they are not the ideal choice for larger energy projects. Karen clarified that the 10% of energy from renewable sources is at a county level, not district.

It was noted that there is a very prominent anti-wind farm minority who are very good at getting their voices heard in the media. It was agreed that we should write our own letters to local and county papers giving the other point of view, to try and counteract the bad publicity and scaremongering that tends to be occurring.

The group thanked Roger for coming to the meeting and chatting so openly to them.

#### 4.Election of New Treasurer

Raven and Frances agreed to work together in the role as Treasurer for an interim period of 6 months, but a permanent volunteer for Treasurer needs to be found. The Group gave Raven and Frances their heartfelt thanks. Matt agreed to write to Community Chest to enquire about some initial funding for the group, to enable us to work on projects, etc.

## 5.CoAST Consultation Paper

Manda told the group that CoAST's tourism/business strategy/plan is at the consultation stage and is available for viewing via a link on CoAST's website. The Strategy is based on the VICE model (Visitors, Industry, Community and Environment) as is the Sustainable Tourism Strategy for Penwith which is being developed by David Rothwell at PDC. Manda asked the Group to look at the document and would like Sustainable Penwith to give its written response, CoAST will add them into the Strategy, which will show that Sustainable Penwith have signed up to it.

Karen told the Group that David Rothwell would like for a representative from Sustainable Penwith to sit on the Sustainable Tourism Forum he is hoping to set up.

## 6.Penzance Area Regeneration

Market Jew Street proposals were discussed. Anne stated that the traffic should be one way downhill not uphill, only a downhill direction will help reduce traffic pollution problems in Market Jew Street. Anne is very concerned that the residential streets around Market Jew Street are going to turn into rat runs, causing even more pollution and congestion. She feels that County have not properly considered the implications and that their view that vehicles will go out of town on the A30 via St Clare Street is wrong.

It was agreed that a letter be sent to Peter Moor which will state that we accept that one-way of Market Jew Street is preferable to two-way traffic, we think traffic should flow downhill, and also we would expect the Council to think of one-way traffic as an intermediate step before total pedestrianisation. We would also like Park and Ride for Penzance and residents parking to be addressed.

Karen told the group that whilst total pedestrianisation would be the ideal, County have ruled it out for the moment. She said that Penwith District Council are going to be looking at parking provision in Hayle, Penzance and St Ives (including on-road, residential, and the way forward for park and ride). It is expected that this study will be completed by December this year. The study will be used by CCC in the rewrite of the Local Transport Plan. Penwith DC will use the study to formulate a Parking Policy for Penwith which will complement the Local Plan. She also stated that Regeneration proposals for Penzance hinge on provision of park and ride facilities a fact that Penwith DC do recognise.

Everybody was asked to try and attend the public consultation being held by CCC in St Johns Hall on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> April 12.30 til 8pm. Leslie agreed that she would collate our recommendations and draft a letter to Peter Moore giving the Group's response.

## 7.Green Fair

Matt told the group that the Green Fair was well attended, and our stall got a lot of attention. Energy saving lightbulbs were given away to the public and this probably helped to draw people to our stall.

## 8.Any Other Business

### Library Display

Matt advised that the library display is now in St Ives. He would like us to consider what new topics we would like the displays to cover next. We covered three topics on our current display and

he feels that this is too much. He thinks two topics will be plenty, one topic he would like to cover is the Disability Discrimination Act. Suggestions for topics to Matt please.

### Sustainable Communities Bill

Karen advised that the New Economics Foundation had been in contact with her. They want to put on a public meeting during June to raise public awareness and gain support for the Sustainable Communities Bill. It will probably take at least three years for it to be taken to Parliament and become law. She has a meeting with other Sustainability Officers, The New Economic Foundation and Tim German of CSEP, date not yet finalised to arrange the public meetings. This Group could help spread the word and help promote the Bill.

### Meeting with Arthur Roberts, Head of Operational Services, Penwith DC

Matt told the Group about his recent meeting with Karen, Pete Verran and Arthur Roberts at Penwith District Council regarding the Disability Discrimination Act. The meeting was to flag up the act and to find out what Penwith are doing to prepare for the Act. Matt said that Arthur appreciated our drawing his attention to this matter. He and Pete explained to Matt how they are now looking at their buildings, gardens, public toilets, etc., and adapting them as far as they reasonably can to comply with the act.

### Logo designs

Matt passed around a form to all, the challenge being to design a logo for the Group. All designs for logos will be considered at next month's meeting.

### Simultaneous Policy

A flyer about the Simultaneous Policy was passed around. This is a grassroots strategy to allow citizens to drive politicians and governments to deliver sustainable values and to listen to what the people want rather than just listening to corporations, trade unions, wealthy lobbies and superpowers. For more information visit the website on [www.simpol.org](http://www.simpol.org)

### Home Health Project

Crystal told the group that the home health project is rolling out in Newlyn and Heamoor. The aim of the project is to promote energy efficiency in homes.

### Priorities for the Group

It was suggested that we all produce a wish list to generate new ideas for the Group. Frances felt that we have a lot on our plate already and that we perhaps do not need to take on any more. However she feels it would be useful if we all submit to the groups our skills and specialities so that we can make the best use of the group membership.

### Date of next meeting.

The next meeting will be held at 7pm on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> May at Penwith District Council Offices, Committee Room 2.

