



## **Annual Report for 2021 – 2022 for**

### **Parish Councils in the Pewsey Community Area**

#### **Pewsey Vale Tourism Partnership**

This has been an extremely busy and successful year for the Pewsey Vale Tourism Partnership.

Project delivery included Itineraries and Walkers are Welcome. Through these projects we delivered a new long-distance walking and cycling route – the Pewsey Vale Circular Way (72 miles cycling/riding or 77 miles walking). This was an enormous project involving local residents Gerard Dinnage (Burbage) and Ron Forbes (Ham) who created the walking route and Trevor Neal (West Grafton) who created the cycling / riding route, as well as many volunteers who tested it out for us. Jonathan Martin, a mountain bike enthusiast, has created a series of videos on YouTube covering the whole of the cycling route. Work involved mapping, installing waymarkers, testing, setting up the website and publicity material. The route was launched at an event on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2022 and has had lots of publicity and interest, including 3 pages in the May edition of Wiltshire Life and in Round About in April.

The Pewsey Vale Circular Way is just one of three itineraries created for people to plan walking holidays to the area. The other two itineraries are the Kennet & Avon Canal (Hungerford to Martinslade) and the Mid Wilts Way (Eastern half, Ham to Martinslade). All this information is available on the website – [www.visitpewseyvale.co.uk](http://www.visitpewseyvale.co.uk) – for people to download.

We have also provided lots of one-day itineraries and things to do.

In August 2021, we achieved Walkers are Welcome accreditation for the whole of the Pewsey Community Area. This accreditation recognises the diversity and quality of walking. Normally it is for a specific town or parish, so have it across this area is probably a first. We set up a Steering Group and were ably guided by a mentor – Jackie Browne from Whitchurch. We had to demonstrate a local commitment to the accreditation and to the on-going maintenance of the rights of way network and managed to get more than 600 signatures of support as well.

We have also revamped our walking leaflets to include the accreditation and done a reprint of them.

In the summer of 2021, we installed a screen in the Crop Circle Exhibition & Information Centre in Honeystreet. This screen runs some of our walking and publicity videos on a loop so that people who visit find out more about the area.

We have to thank the Pewsey Area Board, the Coop Community Fund and Tesco Bags of Help for making the projects possible.



In addition to these projects, the Tourism Partnership has been running the 'business as usual' activities such as maintaining the website and its content, publishing articles, producing monthly business newsletters, producing monthly public newsletters, getting new members on board and social media and advertising. It was great to be able to deliver leaflets to our partners – something that hasn't happened for the last 2 years! This enables our partners to have local information on things to do for their guests and customers.

We have been working closely with Marlborough Tourism Officer, Belinda Richardson, to ensure that we support one another with leafleting and publicity, as well as links between the websites.

Susie Brew is on the North Wessex Downs AONB Council of Partners, representing tourism, and continues to get involved in their initiatives. In addition, Susie is a Trustee of the North Wessex Downs Landscape Trust. The Pewsey Vale Tourism Partnership will be organising 2 walks for the North Wessex Downs' Walking Festival in June.

Our commitment to Walkers are Welcome means that we have to demonstrate that the rights of way in our area are being maintained. Bedwyn Footpaths Group (led by Judy Haynes) is the template that other groups should follow – they do an excellent job of maintenance and improvement, liaising with local landowners as well as organising regular walks.

There are other footpath groups – at Wootton Rivers and Easton Royal for example – but we are now looking to set up groups in parishes where they don't exist. The first parish is Pewsey, where Judy Kunkler is doing an excellent job in getting the routes audited. Grant funding is available for improvements (with certain caveats) as well as equipment.

We have also signed up GWR as a partner to the Partnership. This is excellent for us as we now have a direct contact at GWR and they will use their channels to advertise the Vale of Pewsey and its events. We attended the GWR Partner conference in Reading. Katie Grimes from GWR attended the Pewsey Vale Circular Way Launch event at The Royal Oak in Pewsey to update attendees on the opportunities this partnership brings.

We have been actively engaged with Forestry England. Initially it was to do with charging for group walks in Savernake Forest. Clearly, this would impact small businesses, such as WALX Wessex, and community walking groups such as Bedwyn Footpaths Group. We eventually got confirmation that for subscription type walks and for community walks, the expensive annual licence was not required.

Recently there has been uproar over the Forestry England plans to stop vehicular access to Savernake Forest and to extend parking and facilities at Postern Hill. Both the PVTP and PCAP have made submissions against the proposal.



## **Pewsey Community Area Partnership**

PCAP has continued to support small, local community groups with provision of insurance and also banking facilities, which in turn enables these small groups to apply for grant funding for their projects. Greener Great Bedwyn group has now joined PCAP under this scheme, in addition to Bedwyn Footpaths Group and Shalbourne Link. If you know of any voluntary groups who may benefit from this type of assistance, then just email Susie Brew at [pcap@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:pcap@hotmail.co.uk).

We have once again had issues from Parish Councils regarding the state of the canal towpath and are currently speaking with the CRT to prioritise maintenance.

We were able to liaise between parishes and the organisers of an Ultra Marathon event to ensure that any issues were picked up well ahead of the event.

Peter Deck has been keeping in contact with the Malmesbury Neighbourhood Planning team with regard to planning outside of the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

PCAP has continued to represent the parishes at Pewsey Area Board, Community Area Transport Group and Wiltshire Council Cabinet meetings throughout the year to ensure that issues across the community are heard and actioned. The partnership continued to hold quarterly meetings through lockdown either via on-line or in person.

PCAP has worked with Wiltshire Council to secure funding of £1.2m from The DfT Rural Mobility Fund for enhancements to the Pewsey Vale Bus Service. PCAP has subsequently provided support to Wiltshire Council in interviewing a candidate who will manage the project and are working jointly with Wiltshire Council on the way forward. The first part of the bus service improvements are targeted for the end of this year.

**Youth Activities** – Fun days in Pewsey were held in August and were well attended. The Grafton Youth Group have also run activities in the final quarter of 2021.

**Pewsey Vale Health & Wellbeing Group** - PCAP continues to run the Health & Wellbeing Group and to administer the grant process with Wiltshire Council. All the grant funds were allocated in the 2021 – 2022 year.

Dawn Wilson has joined the Kennet & Avon Medical Partnership (KAMP) Patient Participation Group and Dee Nix is now chair of the group. The working relationship is much improved and there has been much improved communication.

The fortnightly Movement to Music Together exercise class (run by Sylvie Clayden and Henrietta Mackinnon) are still running.

The Memory Café reopened in April 2021, had a brief closure as Omicron arrived in December and January and then restarted. A boat trip is planned for June. We would like to thank all the local groups and individuals who continue to support the café with music, interesting talks and activities.



**Pewsey Vale Rail User Group** - Dawn Wilson and Colin Gale chair and run the Pewsey Vale Rail User Group – working closely with Bedwyn Rail User Group, Great Western Railway, TransWilts and the Great West Way. They have also been supporting the Devizes Gateway Station project together with the Bedwyn group.

Support for the installation of lifts at Pewsey Station was achieved across many of the parishes in the area. This was just one project that GWR were looking to do from an Access for All fund – we only had 4 days to get our letters of support in! Submissions were made from PCAP and the PVTP.

**Finally, our sincerest thanks go to all the Parish Councils who have kindly donated towards the running costs of PCAP which enables this work to continue.**