

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF DELIVERY AND DISCOVERY

SUBJECT: NEWPORT TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE

Purpose of Report

For Members to decide the future of the Newport Tourist Information Centre (TIC) and associated visitor and community services.

Introduction

This report pulls together a range of potential options for the future delivery of tourism services linked to Newport TIC. The report is based on extensive local consultation and is informed by the plans received by both Newport Town Council, working in conjunction with the Newport Library Working Group, and the Newport Visitor Centre Action Group.

Officers are seeking a strategic steer from Members of the Authority at this stage in the process so that a more detailed proposal can be brought back to the next National Park Authority (NPA) meeting on Wednesday 27th November for a final decision.

Background

The way that the Authority delivers its visitor related services has been changing over a number of years. The Authority previously managed the entire network of visitor centres across Pembrokeshire (both inside and outside of the National Park) but our approach was consolidated over a number of years to managing visitor facilities solely within the National Park.

At the meeting of the National Park Authority (NPA) held in Dale on the 28th September 2016, Members agreed that our approach should be consolidated even further to reflect the changing nature of the visitor economy by moving away from a traditional 'visitor centre' model of service delivery and by investing in a package of new initiatives in partnership with the tourism trade and local community organisations.

It was agreed that the focus of the Authority's new approach would be led by the need to:

1. Respond to growing trends in how visitors and residents access information – particularly the boom in people accessing information via smart devices both before and during their visits to Pembrokeshire in order to make informed holiday choices.
2. Re-focus PCNPA's visitor services around our unique role as interpreters of the National Park – to move away from providing basic visitor information and to re-focus our efforts around adding maximum value to the visitor experience.

3. Reduce our portfolio of properties and to move to a more 'people-focussed' (and potentially less expensive) service that is more equitably delivered across the National Park by working more closely with local communities and the tourism trade.

It was acknowledged at the NPA meeting in Dale that the above strategy is best achieved by consolidating PCNPA's existing portfolio of premises and this led to the subsequent closure of the Tenby National Park Visitor Centre in December 2016 following a period of local consultation.

However, at the NPA meeting held on the 30th November 2016 Members of the Authority felt that any formal decision on changes to visitor services in Newport should be deferred until a future NPA meeting. The view of Members was that more time was needed to explore long-term sustainable models for delivering visitor services in Newport in partnership with public, private and voluntary sector bodies in the locality.

The Community Response

Members need to be clear that, from a community perspective, the ideal scenario is that no changes are made to the present services provided by PCNPA via the TIC building in Newport. It is clear from the public consultation exercises, the online campaign by Newport Visitor Centre Action Group, the large volume of ongoing correspondence and the regular meetings with local stakeholders that Newport TIC is hugely valued by residents, businesses and visitors alike.

However, Members were unanimous in their decision, taken at the NPA meeting in Dale on the 28th September 2016, that the more generalised provision of tourist information currently in operation at Newport TIC could be delivered in different ways without the need for the Authority taking a direct lead role and that PCNPA should invest in a package of new initiatives aimed at supporting the growth of the wider visitor economy in Pembrokeshire.

As a result, officers of the Authority have worked closely with a range of partners in Newport over the last 12 months to help guide options for the future delivery of tourism services locally. This work has led to the submissions of two formal community led options as follows:

1. An expression of interest by the Newport Visitor Centre Action Group to work with PCNPA and the Newport Library Working Group to share space within the existing TIC building and to provide volunteer support to PCNPA to help reduce running costs.
2. An expression of interest by Newport Town Council to lease the TIC building at a peppercorn rent and to work with PCNPA and the Newport Library Working Group, as joint tenants of the building, to deliver a range of visitor and community services 'under one roof'.

More comprehensive details of each submission can be found in the appendices section of this report.

Option 1 – Newport Visitor Centre Action Group (Appendix 1)

This option proposes that the Newport TIC building and the associated visitor services continue to be operated by PCNPA but with substantial volunteer support provided by Newport Visitor Centre Action Group to help reduce running costs.

It proposes that the Newport Library Working Group move from their existing leased premises on Bridge Street in Newport and move to the Newport TIC building under a new lease with PCNPA which, again, would help to reduce running costs.

The benefits of this approach are set out in Appendix 1. However, this option does not aid PCNPA in meeting its stated aim of moving away from a traditional TIC style of providing visitor services and would mean that the Authority enters into a long-term lease arrangement which may restrict future options with regards to the TIC building.

It should also be noted that the provision of library services in Newport is ultimately the responsibility of Pembrokeshire County Council (PCC) so any potential changes to the library service would need to be discussed and approved by PCC.

Option 2 – Newport Town Council

This option proposes that PCNPA lease the TIC building to Newport Town Council for a period of three years on a peppercorn rent with an option for the Town Council to purchase the freehold at any point during the three year lease period.

The Town Council will then lease space in the TIC to the Newport Library Working Group who will vacate their current premises on Bridge Street and move to PCNPA's building in Long Street.

In addition, the Newport Library Working Group will provide key aspect of the visitor information service in partnership with PCNPA either by adapting their existing service level agreement (SLA) with PCC or by entering into a specific arrangement with PCNPA.

It is anticipated that the Newport Library Working Group will receive financial support as well as training and guidance from PCNPA staff in order to deliver information services to visitors. In addition, it is proposed that an element of core staffing support is provided by PCNPA at the TIC site throughout the year.

The benefits of this approach are set out in Appendix 2. However, as with Option 1 above, the approach suggested by Newport Town Council does not aid PCNPA in meeting its stated aim of moving away from a traditional TIC style of providing visitor services and would mean that the Authority enters into a short-term lease arrangement which may restrict future options with regards to the TIC building.

Brief Appraisal of Options 1 and 2

Whilst both options detailed above have their merits there is concern that neither option fully supports the stated aim of Members to fundamentally *“change the way information services are delivered in order to invest in a package of new initiatives aimed at supporting the growth of the wider visitor economy in Pembrokeshire.”* (NPA, Sept 2016, Dale)

Crucially, under both scenarios there is no desire by any of the local community groups involved to directly deliver the primary elements of the visitor services presently delivered by PCNPA in Newport. As a result, under both scenarios, PCNPA will remain the key provider of visitor services as well as the body responsible for retail operations on-site (which helps to subsidise the TIC's running costs).

In short, whilst both options help in reducing running costs and in joining up a number of community based services 'under one roof', they do not aid PCNPA in its stated aim of moving away from a 'traditional' TIC-style of delivering visitor services. In addition, any "partial" exit strategy (e.g. sharing the TIC premises with the PCC library and/or leasing the premises to the community) will not generate a capital receipt and will lock PCNPA into managing a building and a type of service provision which cannot be justified as a priority in the current climate.

Option 3 – PCNPA Proposal

For the reasons stated above, officers of the Authority are recommending a potential 'third way' forward that we believe will help the Authority meet its objectives of consolidating visitor provision around its three main attractions (Oriel y Parc, Castell Henllys and Carew Castle) whilst investing in a package of new initiatives that will deliver a more equitable range of visitor services across the National Park (see Appendix 4).

The PCNPA proposal is that the Authority works in partnership with Pembrokeshire County Council (PCC), Newport Town Council (NTC) and the Newport Library Working Group (NLWG) to deliver a joint library and tourism service at the existing library premises in Bridge Street in Newport (effectively just up the road from PCNPA's existing TIC building – see Appendix 3).

This will allow the Authority to re-focus its visitor services across North Pembrokeshire in-line with the package of initiatives previously discussed at the NPA meeting in Dale on the 28th Sept 2016 whilst still retaining a TIC style provision, operating under reduced opening hours, at the library premises on Bridge Street in Newport.

By relocating elements of PCNPA's visitor services to Newport Library the Authority should consider investing a small capital sum in the Bridge Street facility to help improve the visitor offer through improved on-site interpretation and by creating a bespoke section of the library for visitor information.

In addition, it is proposed that an annual sum is paid to PCC and/or the NLWG, through a new service level agreement (SLA) with PCNPA, to expand the services on offer at Newport Library to include the provision of visitor information through training and guidance provided by PCNPA staff.

It is also suggested that an element of core PCNPA staffing is provided at Newport Library, particularly during the summer months, to support the existing volunteers on-site and to ensure a degree of consistency in the quality of the visitor services provided by PCNPA via a move to the library premises on Bridge Street.

Under this scenario the Authority will then need to decide how it wishes to dispose of the existing TIC premises on Long Street. If Option 3 is agreed by Members then a

detailed paper exploring options for the potential disposal of the property will be considered at a future NPA meeting for final agreement.

The capital receipt from the potential disposal of Newport TIC will be re-invested in a package of new visitor service initiatives (building on the recent initiatives developed in and around Tenby) across a wider geographical area of North Pembrokeshire working in partnership with local communities and the tourism trade.

Brief Appraisal of Option 3

Potential Benefits

- Moving PCNPA visitor services to the Bridge Street facility will create a single point of contact for a range of services in Newport.
- By co-locating services in one building both PCC and PCNPA will reduce their overall running costs, in turn, helping to sustain these important local services.
- The additional resources provided by PCNPA to Newport library will also help reduce the costs for the Newport Library Working Group thus supporting their long-term financial viability.
- A joint library and tourism service will have reciprocal benefits with shared information, skills and resources all under one roof – the library already attracts a significant number of visitors particularly during the summer months.
- Adapting the library facilities to incorporate visitor information will only require modest set-up/capital costs estimated at approximately £5,000.
- PCC library staff are already skilled and experienced in visitor information provision which will help in providing a seamless service for customers whether local to Newport or from further afield.
- Increased footfall to the library will benefit the services' performance against national targets which is important in helping to retain a library service locally.
- The disposal of the PCNPA building in Long Street will support the Authority's investment in new ways of delivering visitor services.
- Pursuing this option will allow the National Park to deliver a more equitable service for visitors to North Pembrokeshire by investing in a package of new initiatives as detailed in Appendix 4.

Drawbacks

- The decision is in conflict with the views of the local community as expressed through local consultation events and the significant petition previously submitted to PCNPA by the Newport Visitor Centre Action Group.
- Moving visitor services to the library facility in Bridge Street will result in a reduction in service (the library is presently open for just 15-16 hours per week – this could potentially be increased through support from PCNPA).
- Visitors wishing to access a TIC facility when the library is closed would need to travel to Castell Henllys (5 miles), Fishguard (7 miles) or Cardigan (12 miles) for the nearest similar service.
- PCNPA staff could continue to use the hot-desk facilities at Newport TIC until the building is sold and then alternative arrangements would need to be made (hot-desk facilities are available at Castell Henllys and/or Cilrhedyn).
- The TIC would move to a location which is less convenient in relation to the main car park in Newport but still relatively central to the town (see Appendix 3).

Wales-wide Comparisons

According to recent research undertaken by the BBC's 'Week In Week Out' programme¹ Wales has seen the closure of 14 tourist information centres (TICs) in the past five years alone. Examples include Powys County Council which reduced its portfolio of TIC's from fourteen to just one in 2009 and the Vale of Glamorgan Council which closed its entire network of TIC's in 2013.

Whilst much of this is attributed in the media to the tough financial climate facing local authorities in Wales it is also a reaction to dramatic changes in the way that visitors are accessing information to make their holiday choices.

The following table, lifted from the latest visitor survey data produced by Visit Wales², highlights the changing trends with general search engines such as Google proving the most popular source of information both before and during visits to Wales. Around a fifth of staying visitors used the Visit Wales website before their holiday (19%) although use of the website dropped to 11% during the trip.

Table 19: Online sources of information used before / during trip	Before visit %	During visit %
% all UK staying visitors using online sources	71	35
Specific sources used by those accessing online information		
Search engines (e.g. Google)	48	55
Visit Wales / National Tourist Board website	19	11
Tourism business websites (e.g. accommodation)	14	9
Review websites (e.g. TripAdvisor)	12	9
Accommodation booking website (e.g. laterooms)	10	1
Email	9	7
Social media	8	12
Apps	7	13
Specific attraction websites	5	7
Regional or Local Authority websites	1	3
Navigation sites (e.g. Google Maps)	3	10
Others	11	9
Don't know / can't remember	11	14

Bases = all UK staying visitors: Stage 2 2016 (1,641). All visitors using online sources before visit (1,166); during visit (572). NB percentages may not add to up to 100% as more than one response possible.

Interestingly, the most popular offline source of information for visitors before coming to Wales was word of mouth (29%); this dropped to just 14% during trips. The use of leaflets rose sharply during trips (56%) compared to just 26% using leaflets before a visit). Use of brochures produced by Visit Wales and local authorities was limited (pre-trip = 10% and 11% respectively), although use of local authority brochures increased slightly during trips (to 14%). See the table below for further information.

¹ BBC 'Week In Week Out' – Wish You Were Here? – first broadcast on the 11th July 2017

² Welsh Government, Wales Visitor Survey 2016: UK Staying Visitors – March 2017

Table 20: Offline sources of information used before / during trip	Before visit %	During visit %
% all UK staying visitors using offline sources	27	38

Specific sources used by those accessing offline information		
Spoke to friends / relatives / colleagues	29	14
Leaflets	26	56
Guidebook	15	9
Brochure from Local Authority / local Tourist Board	11	14
Brochure from Visit Wales / National Tourist Board	10	8
Maps	7	4
Local knowledge / previous visits	5	1
Newspaper or magazine	4	3
Tourist Information Centre (phone or email)	3	18
Spoke to an accommodation provider	3	11
Camping / caravanning books and magazines	2	1
National Trust books	2	1
Others	5	3
Don't know / can't remember	7	2

Bases = all UK staying visitors: Stage 2 2016 (1,641). All visitors using offline sources before visit (454); during visit (641). NB percentages may not add to up to 100% as more than one response possible.

An interesting example of how one local authority has changed its visitor services to reflect visitor trends is Bridgend County Borough Council which took the decision in July 2013 to change the way it delivered visitor services including the closure of its high profile TIC facility in Porthcawl. The authority closed the TIC and invested in the package of support detailed below:

- A series of Strategic Tourism Information Points (STIPs) (Initially Grand Pavilion, McArthur Glen, Trecco Bay and Bryngarw House with an option to add further);
- A series of Tourism Information Points (TIPs) (current options include train stations, Bridgend bus station, key accommodation providers, local pubs and cafes and others). These will be smaller in scale than STIPs and carry less stock.
- Key local tourism literature will be stocked in STIPs and TIPs by the Tourism team but the points will not be staffed;
- A mobile Tourism Information Point visiting key events and locations at busy times. When in use this will be staffed by members of the Tourism Team;
- A Tourism Information telephone line operated Monday-Friday office hours;
- A training programme for key front of house BCBC staff and staff at major attractions in customer service skills and sense of place awareness;
- The 'Bridgend Bites' website – www.bridgendbites.com and the 'Dare-to-Discover' mobile app.

The above changes have now been in operation for a few years and the visitor economy in Bridgend has continued to grow steadily year on year³ and this is the same trend across Wales. Despite the closure of TIC facilities the tourism economy has continued to grow with the overall volume of visits to Wales increasing by 15% in

³ STEAM Data – Bridgend County Council

2016⁴ when compared to 2015 according to the Welsh Government (visitor figures for 2017 are not yet available).

Financial considerations

Option 1

This option would assist the Authority to some degree in reducing its operating costs through a lease with the Newport Library Working Group (NLWG) and the support of local volunteers. The retail operation would also remain with PCNPA which would help to keep running costs as low as possible for the Authority.

Option 2

There is only a limited revenue advantage to the Authority in pursuing this approach. The authority would still be responsible for staff salaries and a degree of any income from a potential lease with NLWG would be returned to either Newport Town Council or NLWG in return for delivering aspects of PCNPA's visitor services. It is also unclear as to who benefits from the profit made on the retail sales under this proposal.

Under this option Newport Town Council would like to have an option to purchase the Long Street premises but there is no clear indication as to how the purchase price will be agreed or funded. Financial regulations stipulate that PCNPA should aim to achieve market value for any premises that the Authority relinquishes unless we have special dispensation from the Welsh Government.

There is a real risk that the Authority may end up relinquishing control over the building with a sitting tenant, tied into a lease which the Authority may struggle to relinquish for either legal and/or political reasons without generating significant revenue savings. This, in turn, could limit the Authority's options with regards to the TIC premises in the future.

Whilst both Option 1 and 2 deliver benefits to the community the financial benefits to the Authority are based on the speculative sale of the premises and uncertain revenue savings.

Option 3

The potential closure of any facility is a difficult decision but there are clear financial and operational benefits in pursuing this option. Co-locating visitor and library services in the Bridge Street facility will generate savings for PCNPA whilst supporting both PCC and the Newport Library Working Group (NLWG) via an ongoing financial contribution from the Authority.

In addition, this is the only option 'on the table' that would unlock the potential sale and/or conversion of the Newport TIC building which could generate a significant capital receipt, in turn, supporting allowing the Authority to invest in new ways of delivering tourism services.

⁴ Welsh Government, Wales Visitor Survey 2016: UK Staying Visitors – March 2017

Risk considerations

The proposed changes, (i.e. Option 3), are geared towards the reallocation of funding to support revised programmes of work as well as a more sustainable and equitable range of visitor services across North Pembrokeshire. Whilst the potential closure of any facility is an emotive issue it is a vital step to ensure that the Authority delivers services to the 4.5 million visitors across the entire National Park.

The desire is, therefore, to create a 'people-led' service, in partnership with local businesses and communities (see Appendix 4), that supports a wider geographical spread, ensuring that we take PCNPA's visitor services 'to the customer' so that even more visitors and residents experience the benefits of accessing the Authority's services closer to their chosen destination. It is hoped that this will deliver improved benefits to a wider audience whilst also reducing costs.

Compliance

The proposed changes to PCNPA's visitor services will enhance the Authority's ability *"to encourage and support the development of sustainable employment and businesses, particularly in tourism and recreation"* and *"to protect and promote the local culture of language, arts and heritage of the area"* as set out in the Authority's 2017/18 Corporate Plan.

Human Rights/Equality issues

An initial equality impact assessment (EIA) screening analysis suggests that a full EIA is not necessary due to the limited impact on individuals and/or groups with protected characteristics.

Biodiversity implications/Sustainability appraisal

The proposed actions in this paper do not conflict with the National Park Management Plan and/or departmental policies for nature conservation, climate change and resource use. It is envisaged that a reduction in building and running costs will, ultimately, allow the Authority to deliver a more cost-effective and sustainable range of visitor services across North Pembrokeshire.

Welsh Language statement

The proposals comply with the requirements of the Compliance Notice served upon the Authority under Section 44 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

Conclusion

Members were unanimous in their decision, taken at the National Park Authority meeting in Dale in September 2016, to move away from a 'traditional' visitor centre model of service delivery by potentially withdrawing from the Authority's visitor centres in both Tenby and Newport in order to invest in a package of new initiatives that will be delivered in partnership with the tourism trade and local community organisations.

This led to the closure of the Authority's visitor centre in Tenby in December 2016 but at the NPA meetings held in Nov 2016 and Feb 2017 Members decided to extend the period of community engagement regarding potential changes to the future provision of visitor services in Newport until October 2017.

This resulted in the submission of two community led options for delivering visitor services in Newport in the future (please see appendices for full details). Whilst both proposals have merit they do not fundamentally address PCNPA's desire to withdraw from providing 'traditional' TIC style services in Newport in order to respond to the changing nature of the wider visitor economy in North Pembrokeshire.

As a result, officers of the Authority are recommending an alternative way forward in Newport (i.e. Option 3) that will help the Authority to modernise its visitor related services whilst securing certain community based services as a direct response to the issues raised through PCNPA's engagement work with the local community and the wider tourism trade.

Recommendation

Members are requested to:

1. Approve Option 3 as detailed in the attached report.
2. Approve closure of the public facing elements of the Newport Tourist Information Centre (TIC) by no later than the 28th February 2018.

Background Documents

- Report to the Operational Review Committee regarding the performance of the Newport TIC facility (Report No. 12/17)
- Report to the National Park Authority to extend the period of community engagement regarding Newport TIC (Report No 02/17)
- Report to the National Park Authority to close Tenby Visitor Centre and to extend the period of community engagement regarding Newport TIC (Report No. 66/16)
- Report to National Park Authority regarding proposed changes to visitor services in Tenby and Newport – 28th September 2016 (Report No. 52/16)
- Various Reports presented to the Provision of Information to Visitors Task and Finish Group – 11th November 2015 – Present
- Report to National Park Authority regarding creation of Task and Finish Group to look at the Future Provision of Information to Visitors - 6 May 2015 (Report No. 24/15)
- Report to Recreation and Tourism Review Committee – Review of Tourism and Destination Management in Pembrokeshire – 28th January 2015 (Report No. 04/15)
- Report to National Park Authority – Overview of Community Consultation Activities – 17th December 2014 (Report No. 71/14)
- Report to Recreation and Tourism Review Committee – Overview of Service Performance from April 2012 – Mar 2013 – 13th November 2013 (Report No. 10/13)
- Report to Recreation and Tourism Review Committee regarding Newport Visitor Centre - 13 March 2013 (Report No. 04/13)

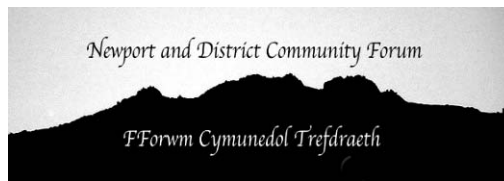
(For further information, please contact James Parkin)

Author: Director of Delivery and Discovery – James Parkin

*Consultees: Chief Executive – Tegryn Jones; Finance Manager – Richard Griffiths;
Estates Officer – Gary Meopham*

APPENDIX 1

APPENDIX 1 – Submission by Newport Visitor Centre Action Group



NEWPORT VISITOR CENTRE ACTION GROUP

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20th August 2017

A National Park Community Supported Visitor and Information Centre

We would like to explain why our preferred option is for the National Park to retain the Visitor Centre Building and to operate the Visitor and Information Service as at present, but with community support, whilst sharing the space with Newport Community Library, according to the agreed layout.

We were elected at a public meeting called in order to “Save Newport Visitor Centre”, and our *raison d’être* is to see a full Visitor and Information Service continue as it is now operated.

The National Park is aiming to reduce costs so as to be able to *re-allocate a proportion of the current expenditure associated with the Authority’s premises in order to support the package of new initiatives ...aimed at delivering a modernised and more equitable service across the National Park*

The Authority has decided that they wish to make changes to the service in Newport, but they have not resolved that they wish to dispose of the Newport Visitor Centre building. Our preferred option fulfils these requirements

The advantages of our preferred option are:

- It represents a change to the Visitor and Information Service in Newport, as required by the Authority, by introducing a new system of volunteer support
- It ensures continuation of a full Visitor and Information Service providing the economic, social and cultural benefits to businesses, residents and visitors as achieved now.

- It will enhance the profile of the National Park in working with a community in fulfilling its statutory purposes and its wellbeing objectives, as set out in its Corporate Plan 2017-18
- By continuing the National Park Visitor Service in Newport, a Tier 3 Centre in the Wales Spatial Plan, the Authority will be supporting this community's strategic role in the North East of the Park.
- It satisfies the Authority's requirements by saving sufficient costs to the Authority, mainly through the use of volunteer time, making possible new methods of delivery of information by the National Park
- The Community Library will be in more suitable, conveniently located and fully accessible premises, also have reduced costs compared to at present, and better security of tenure
- The Library will benefit from cooperation and sharing, with an established and well run service: there will be synergy in the two related services working together, each benefitting from the others' footfall.
- The wishes of 1200 signatories to the "Save Newport Visitor Centre" petition and all those who have signed the Newport Visitor Book seeking its retention, will be fully met.
- The standing of the National Park with residents and visitors will improve
- The National Park will retain a valuable asset

Newport Town Council has told the Authority twice that it ***"echoes the feeling of the town which is that PCNPA continues to run Newport Visitors Centre (the Visitors Centre) as at present"***

However, Newport Town Council still do not have a clear policy as to how they intend to acquire the building and by what means.

It has become clear that although deciding in principle to acquire in January 2017, over the following months there were divergences of opinion in the NTC as to how this acquisition was to be achieved, resulting in procrastination and constant delays...which we fear could continue.

It was not until a Town Council EGM on the 4th of August that NTC decided that their preferred option was to purchase.

However, on the 14th August at the Visitor Centre Working Group meeting, NTC representatives present preferred to lease, using rent from the Library, from the Visitor Centre, and from the Parks - for their use of the office space, to fund their rent to the Parks.

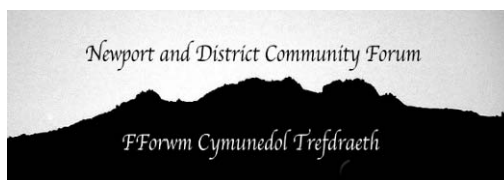
These divergent ideas are without any discussions with the Parks as to what the options for and costs of acquiring the building might be. Resolutions made by the Town Council that there should be such discussions and exploration of methods of funding have not been followed through.

All these matters create a fundamental and obvious conflict with the business plan prepared by NVCAG.

Our preferred proposal removes the necessity for NTC to acquire the building and to spend any more time and limited administration resources on what has proved to be a very time consuming and frustrating exercise...

Sandra Bayes, Secretary to Newport and District Community Forum, Newport Visitor Centre Action Group.

CC James Parkin, Director of Delivery and Discovery



NEWPORT VISITOR CENTRE ACTION GROUP

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Newport Visitor Centre Action Group (NVCAG):

Outline of our Preferred Option for the Future of Newport Visitor and Information Service:

The National Park Authority's wishes are

- to reduce operating costs in order to be able to re-allocate a proportion of current expenditure to new methods of delivery of information, and
- to change the way the Visitor Service is provided in Newport.

Newport Visitor Centre Action Group was formed, by election, at a public meeting which was called to *"Save Newport Visitor and Information Centre"* when it was mandated to *"investigate, challenge, and oppose closure of Newport Visitor Centre"*

Opposition to threatened closure of the Visitor and Information Service in Newport is very strong, and has been demonstrated by

- the response from the floor at what the Authority called *an extremely well attended public meeting* in Newport on 18th October 2016, called to discuss proposals to change the way information services are delivered in Newport
- what the Authority called *"a significant number of responses relating to the proposed changes to visitor services in Newport (including responses from outside Pembrokeshire) ...all of which opposed the closure of Newport."*
- 1200 signatures on a **petition** which continues to raise support

"We who live in, work in, or visit the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, call upon the Authority

- To make every effort to see the Newport Visitor & Information

Centre kept open, and

- *To work with the community to expand the services offered by the Centre to the benefit of people using this area.”*

- The many comments on the on-line petition, all in opposition to changes, examples of which are attached to this document
- The many comments in the Visitor Centre Book, complementing the existing Service and calling for it to be retained
- Recent research, and local anecdotal evidence, has shown that Visitor and Information Centres do provide what is required by today’s visitors, and that access to information by people using smart devices is not as satisfactory as face to face contact.

Our following proposal meets both the requirements of the Park and our stated purpose

THE NVCAG PROPOSAL IS THAT:

- PCNPA continues to own Newport Visitor Centre building and run the Visitor and Information Service with community support.
- The Visitor Centre building is shared with Newport Community Library according to the agreed layout plan (attached)
- The office continues to be used by National Park Rangers and Officers, but it is hoped that the potential of this space will be maximised by being used by those organisations for which the Community Library already hosts space, such as CAB and PAVS Community Connectors, as well as others, thus strengthening the facility as a Community Hub

The Community Library is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, and has its own committee of volunteers (Newport Library Working Group) who work in partnership with Pembrokeshire County Council to deliver the Library Service under a Service Level Agreement.

The Visitor Centre will likewise have its own committee of volunteers (Newport Visitor Centre Action Group, a Section of Newport and District Community Forum, a fully constituted community group), which will work in partnership with PCNPA to support The National Park's Visitor Service in Newport, under a Service Level Agreement with the Authority.

There will also be a joint management committee of users of the building.

BENEFITS TO NEWPORT COMMUNITY LIBRARY

- Newport Community Library will be in a better location with parking close by, and in fully accessible premises.
- It will also have reduced costs compared to at present, and better security of tenure.
- It will benefit from cooperation and sharing, with an established service that is proven to be well-run: there will be synergy in the two related services working together, each benefitting from the others' footfall.
- From the point of view of the public – both residents and visitors, having a single point from which to access information, is both much more convenient and easier to understand. Visiting the Centre for one purpose, may well answer other needs.

BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY AND VISITORS OF THIS PROPOSAL

- As the Authority has already budgeted for Newport Visitor Centre to remain open until March 2018, our proposal will provide a simple and seamless solution to continuing the Visitor Service with minimal disruption.
- It better ensures continuation of a full Visitor and Information Service, providing the economic, social and cultural benefits to businesses, residents and visitors as is being achieved now.
- This avoids the burden and responsibility on the community group of running the service and releases the full community energies available to maximise volunteer support in manning the Service.

- Our volunteers who have local experience and knowledge of the area will be able to best serve those many members of the public who do not want to rely on digital solutions to find their way round.
- Newport's only wet-weather facility will be retained.
- The wishes of 1200 signatories to the "Save Newport Visitor Centre" petition and all those who have signed the Newport Visitor Book, and written to the National Park, seeking its retention, will be fully met.

BENEFITS TO THE NATIONAL PARK OF THIS PROPOSAL

- There will be a reduction in the revenue costs of the Visitor Service in Newport – by a lowering of staffing costs through the introduction of volunteers, as well as through receipt of a contribution towards running costs from Newport Community Library (and potentially other voluntary organisations).
- This will enable the Authority to use these savings to support introduction of the new package of initiatives that it seeks to provide.
- It provides a new, effective and exciting way of delivering Visitor and Information Services in Newport, as required by Members of the National Park Authority, by introducing a co-production model through a partnership with a local voluntary group, which could be replicated elsewhere.
- Volunteers will be able to concentrate on helping to maximise the potential of the building and grounds
- They will be able to restore the garden, which will not only give pleasure to residents and visitors, but enable the Parks to pursue an educational opportunity inter alia by demonstrating the diversity of flora in the National Park to children and others.
- The continuation of Newport Visitor Centre as it is now will maintain the profile of the National Park and ensure that the work of the Authority continues to be promoted in the area.

- It will support the National Park in fulfilling its statutory purposes and its wellbeing objectives, as set out in its Corporate and Resources Plan 2017-18.
- The National Park will have heeded the wishes of residents and visitors and local tourism businesses which can only improve its reputation and standing.
- The National Park will retain a valuable asset.

SUMMARY/CONCLUSION

It has become a real possibility that there might be a positive reception from the National Park Authority to the idea of their continuing to own the building and working with the community to co-produce a “Community Supported Visitor and Information Centre”

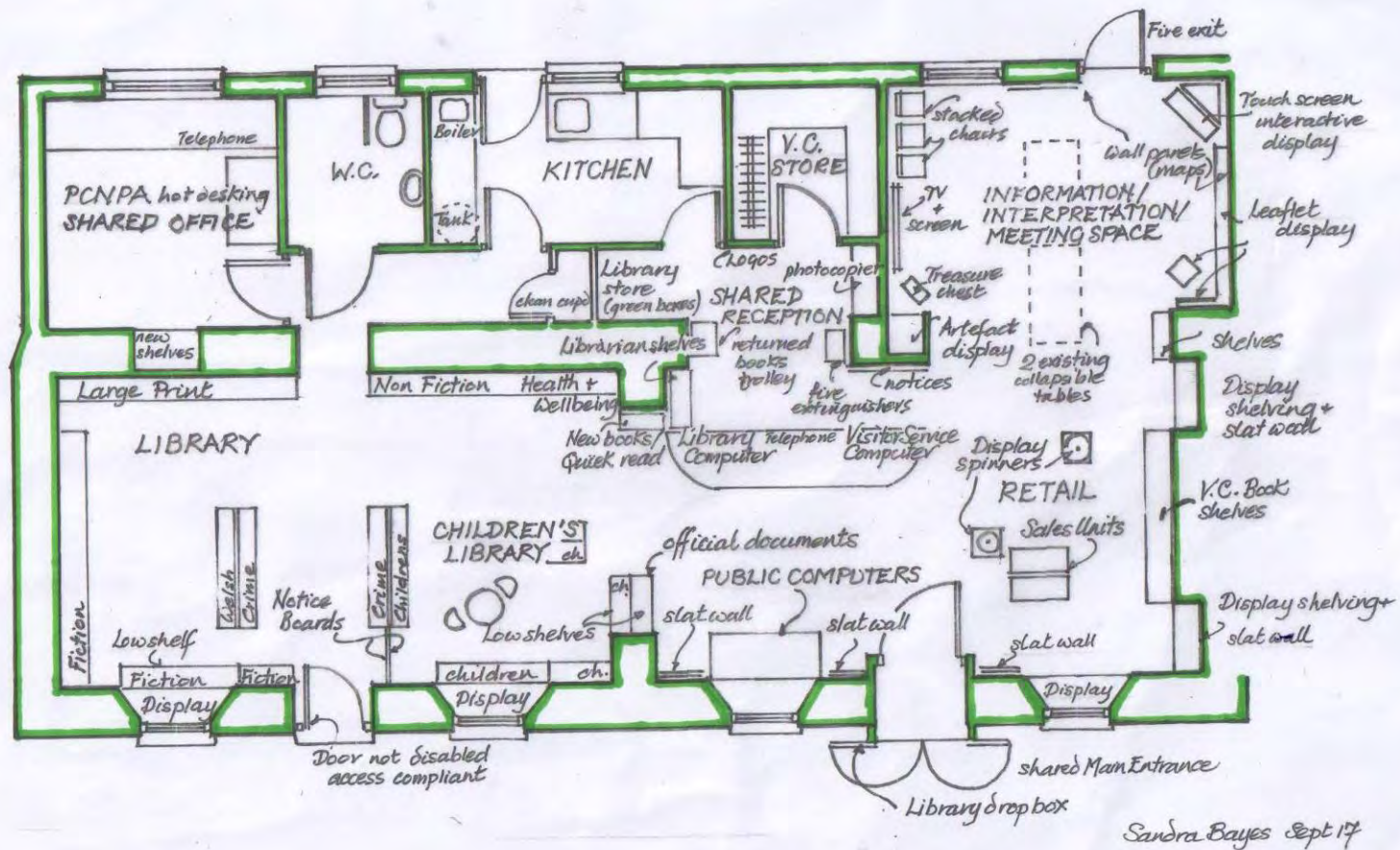
Continuation of the use of the office as an outpost facility and welcoming the Community Library to share the premises will maximise the use of the premises to the benefit of all.

Significant costs will be saved, enabling the National Park to explore new methods of delivery of information

This is a simpler and more satisfactory solution, makes the most of what volunteers can offer, is more advantageous to the National Park, visitors and residents, than others under consideration, and will allow a more seamless transition.

Therefore our preferred option is for the National Park to retain the building and to operate the Visitor and Information Service as at present

NYCAQ: NEWPORT VISITOR CENTRE PROPOSAL FOR FUTURE LAYOUT



RELEVANT POLICIES AND DECISIONS OF THE NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

1. Under the Environment Act 1995, a National Park's duty and purpose is ***"To promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the area by the public"*** and whilst doing this, ***"to foster the social and economic well-being of local communities"***.
2. In meeting their obligations under the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act 2015, the Authority has set out Wellbeing Objectives in its Corporate and Resources Plan 2017-2018, including, ***"To encourage and support the development of sustainable employment and businesses, particularly in tourism and recreation"***; ***"To work alongside communities to make the most of the National Park"*** and ***"To protect and promote the local culture of language, arts and heritage"***.
3. The Authority's *Provision of Information to Visitors* Working Group which met between May 2015 and August 2016 proposed that ***"the Authority would like to put in place partnership arrangements that will ensure that ...Newport ...continue to receive localised visitor information services so that we can re-allocate a proportion of the current expenditure associated with the Authority's premises in order to support the package of new initiatives ...aimed at delivering a modernised and more equitable service across the National Park."***
4. On 28th September 2016, the Authority resolved to ***"consult on a proposal to change the way information services were delivered in ...Newport in order to invest in a package of new initiatives aimed at supporting the growth of the wider visitor economy in Pembrokeshire"***
5. The consultation period has since been extended by the Authority and will now end on 31st August 2017
6. On 1st February 2017 the Authority resolved that ***"the Newport Visitor Centre be kept open for the entirety of the 2017 season (end of October 2017) with no changes to the present levels of service and/or opening hours"***
7. The National Park has budgeted for Newport Visitor Centre to remain open until March 2018. Thus, a transition period is provided, during which time volunteers can gain experience and be trained, and the minor building modifications can be carried out with minimal inconvenience to all.

APPENDIX 2

APPENDIX 2 – Submission by Newport Town Council (in conjunction with the Newport Library Working Group)

CYNGOR TREF TREFDRAETH NEWPORT TOWN COUNCIL

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Ffon/Tel: 01239 821127 Gwefan/Web: www.newport-pembs.co.uk E-bost/E-mail: npclerk@newport-pembs.co.uk

Copy of letter dated 30th August, 2017 from:-

John Griffiths
Newport Town Council
Unit 3 The Old School
Newport
Pembs SA42 0TS

Dear James

Newport Visitor Centre

At a meeting of the Newport Town Council (N.T.C) held on Friday 25th August, NTC decided not to approve the plan prepared by the Newport Visitor Centre Action Group, and submitted to the PCNPA on or about 20th August.

I now enclose the Newport Town Council proposals for future use of the Visitor Centre which includes the Newport Library Group Position Statement and Business Plan.

The NTC and the Library Group have worked closely in the preparation and submission of the proposals.

Briefly the proposals are that:-

1. NTC lease the TIC building for a term of three years, at a nominal rent.
2. The lease contains an option for NTC to purchase the freehold at any time during the term.
3. NTC work with the Library Group to deliver a joint library and tourism service in the existing building.
4. The existing SLA with the Library Group be expanded to include the delivery of tourism services.
5. PCNPA provide the Library Group with a degree of financial support and a degree of core staffing support.
6. The Library Group provide voluntary staffing support throughout the year.
7. NTC deliver other community based services as mentioned in enclosed business plan.

The proposals give the PCNPA the opportunity to work with NTC as the body representing the voters of Newport and also the Library Group an established Charitable Incorporated Organisation. The proposals explain how an innovative partnership will be formed to unify services under one roof which NTC understands is a prime concern of PCNPA.

The draft revenue accounts indicate that the TIC facility can be managed sustainably. The accounts are in draft form as the extent of the PCNPA financial contribution has yet to be agreed.

The capital accounts have been included to indicate the capital position of NTC. They also reveal that NTC has made a provision for this project by including in the precept a sum of £3,000. At present this is itemised in the capital account, but will be made available to support the revenue position, subject to council consideration.

If you or your colleagues require any further information generally, and in particular, relating to the financial projections, please contact Cllr Jano Williams who is Chair of the NTC Visitor Centre Working Group of which the Library Group is a member.

I understand that you have Jano's email address.

Regards
John Griffiths
Vice Chair
Newport Town Council.

CYNGOR TREF TREFDRAETH



NEWPORT TOWN COUNCIL

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NEWPORT TOWN COUNCIL

PROPOSAL FOR FUTURE USE OF NEWPORT VISITOR CENTRE

CONTENTS

Newport Town Council

Proposed Business Plan - draft.
Financial Plan - draft
Suggested building layout.

Newport Library Working Group

Position Statement
Business Plan
Financial Appendix

NEWPORT TOWN COUNCIL PROPOSED BUSINESS PLAN-draft

Introduction

In recent years there has been great pressure on public finances and services, coupled with a drive for greater community involvement. The potential demise of Newport Visitor Centre would be a blow for the local economy and a sad loss for the town in the eyes of local residents. There are however, great gains to be made by thinking of such change as an opportunity.

The Visitor Centre building has great potential and it is our belief that this could be exploited by the local community with a little forethought. The following is a draft plan for amalgamating services, reducing costs to all concerned whilst at the same time providing a one-stop amenity with broad appeal to both the local community and to visitors.

We have listed our aims and objectives and on a separate sheet included what we believe is a workable budget. We believe this plan is desirable, achievable and has real potential, whilst at the same time being flexible, to allow us to achieve our aims and deliver a real benefit to the wider community.

Although not possible to currently include in a budget, it is becoming apparent that there could be significant sums of money available to the locality by the increase in taxation on second homes. Although the destination of these funds has not been determined, it is a possibility that projects, such as this, could benefit significantly in the near future. This would make the deliverability and sustainability of this project, and of our vision, even more achievable.

1. AIMS

1.1 To maintain a visitor centre and relocate the Newport Library into the Visitor Centre.

1.2 When financially feasible to extend the building for community use

2. OBJECTIVES

2.1 To obtain a 3 year lease of the building with the option to purchase.

2.2 To continue to house a visitor service in the building as requested by residents, local businesses and visitors.

2.3 To relocate Newport Community library into the building to share the space with the visitor service.

2.4 To extend the building to the rear, to house the Town Council and provide an additional meeting facility for the community, when financially feasible.

2.5 To develop the garden as a space for further community activities.

3. BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

3.1 The centre is and will be a conveniently located hub of information, learning and source of information and activities for all the community and visitors.

3.2 The centre will be owned by a democratically elected body answerable to the residents of Newport.

3.3 The centre will have security of tenure for the Library and Visitor Service.

3.4 The centre will be a fully accessible building in a convenient location, adjacent to a car park with wheelchair, push chair and mobility scooter access.

3.5 The centre will provide a single point of contact for a range of information and advice such as CAB, PAVS and local AM as well as internet provision, library resources and a local centre for Pembrokeshire County Council and Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority.

3.6 The centre will provide cultural, environmental, aesthetic and social information as well as play activities for locals and visitors.

3.7 Both the Library and Visitor Service would benefit from increased footfall and a development at the rear of the building for a meeting room/museum will add to the attraction and provide greater security of usage.

3.8 The centre will open up the potential for greater community involvement in local government and increase access to Council issues.

3.9 To create an open space to the rear with potential for a wide range of activities.

4. MANAGEMENT AND STAFFING

4.1 Core staffing will be provided by PCC (the library) and PCNPA (the Visitor Service) supported by volunteers recruited and organised by Newport Library Working Group (Newport Library Working Group is the charity working with PCC to provide the library service).

4.2 Initial training for the library has been provided by PCC. Training needs to be provided by PCNPA for the visitor service during the transition period, with a view to having volunteers fully trained to carry the service forward.

4.3 The existing SLA between NLWG and PCC would be extended to include a working relationship with PCNPA.

4.4 PCC and the NLWG have regular meetings and they would have the same with PCNPA.

4.5 The product sourcing and related financing would be the responsibility of the PCNPA.

5. TIMING

The plan is to have this project operational by Spring 2018, but this would obviously be subject to consultations with all parties concerned i.e. Pembrokeshire County Council, Pembrokeshire National Parks Authority and the Library Group.

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NEWPORT VISITOR CENTRE BUILDING LEASED TO TOWN COUNCIL - NPVC and LIBRARY IN OCCUPATION TOWN COUNCIL REVENUE ACCOUNT

The following figures represent the sums associated directly with the occupation of the building.						
	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5	Notes
OUTGOINGS						Occ Val.0
Salaries	0.00	0.00	0.00	9,000.00	9,000.00	(12)
Ni & Pension	0.00	0.00	0.00			(12)
Seasonal Wages		0.00	0.00			(12)
Merchandise	0.00	0.00	0.00	19,080.00	19,366.20	
Card Charge	0.00	0.00	0.00	599.96	608.96	
Translations	0.00	0.00	0.00	13.78	0.92	
Electricity	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,103.46	1,120.01	(2)
Gas	0.00	0.00	0.00	593.60	602.50	(3)
Water	0.00	0.00	0.00	232.14	235.62	(4)
Rates	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Maintenance	0.00	0.00	0.00	731.40	742.37	(5)
Insurance Stock	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Rent Library	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	(10)
Rent to NP	50.00	50.00	50.00	0.00	0.00	(10)
Office supplies	0.00	0.00	0.00	132.50	134.49	(6)
Telephone	0.00	0.00	0.00	318.00	322.77	(7)
Insurance, Building	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,060.00	1,075.90	(7) (8)
Library Support	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
NVC Support	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
TOTAL OUTGOINGS	50.00	50.00	50.00	32,864.84	33,209.74	
INCOME						
Merchandise	0.00	0.00	0.00	31,800.00	32,277.00	
Rent Library	50.00	50.00	50.00	50.00	50.00	Tba
Rent NP	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,000.00	2,000.00	Tba
Bed bookings	0.00	0.00	0.00	79.95	79.95	
NP Contribution to staff	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
NP Contrib'n to Rangers	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Fund Raising	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
TC Support	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Supplementary Income	0.00	0.00	0.00	734.07	745.08	(13)
TOTAL INCOME	50.00	50.00	50.00	34,664.02	35,152.03	
PROFIT/LOSS	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,799.18	1,942.29	

Notes

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Inflation calculated at 1.5% p.a. | 8. By NP or TC? |
| 2. Electricity, Paid by NP | 9. |
| 3. Gas. 560 to allow for greater occupation. Paid by NP | 10. |
| 4. Water. 220 " " " " " " " " | 11. |
| 5. Maintenance. Boiler service, H&S. | 12. Staff costs paid by NP to Yr3 |
| 6. Individually accounted for. | 13. Library contribution to services |
| 7. " " " " | |

CYNGOR TREF TREFDRAETH **NEWPORT TOWN COUNCIL**

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**NEWPORT VISITOR CENTRE
 BUILDING LEASED TO TOWN COUNCIL - NPVC and LIBRARY IN OCCUPATION
 TOWN COUNCIL CAPITAL ACCOUNT**

	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5	Notes
CAPITAL						
Parrog Yard Acc	34,344.64	52,172.80	55,172.80	58,172.80	61,172.80	
Savings						
Market debt	4,828.16	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
Precept allocation	3,000.00	3,000.00	3,000.00	3,000.00	3,000.00	
TOTAL	42,172.80	55,172.80	58,172.80	61,172.80	64,172.80	
INCOME						
Parrog Yard Sale	10,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	(1)
Other Income	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	
TOTAL	52,172.80	55,172.80	58,172.80	61,172.80	64,172.80	

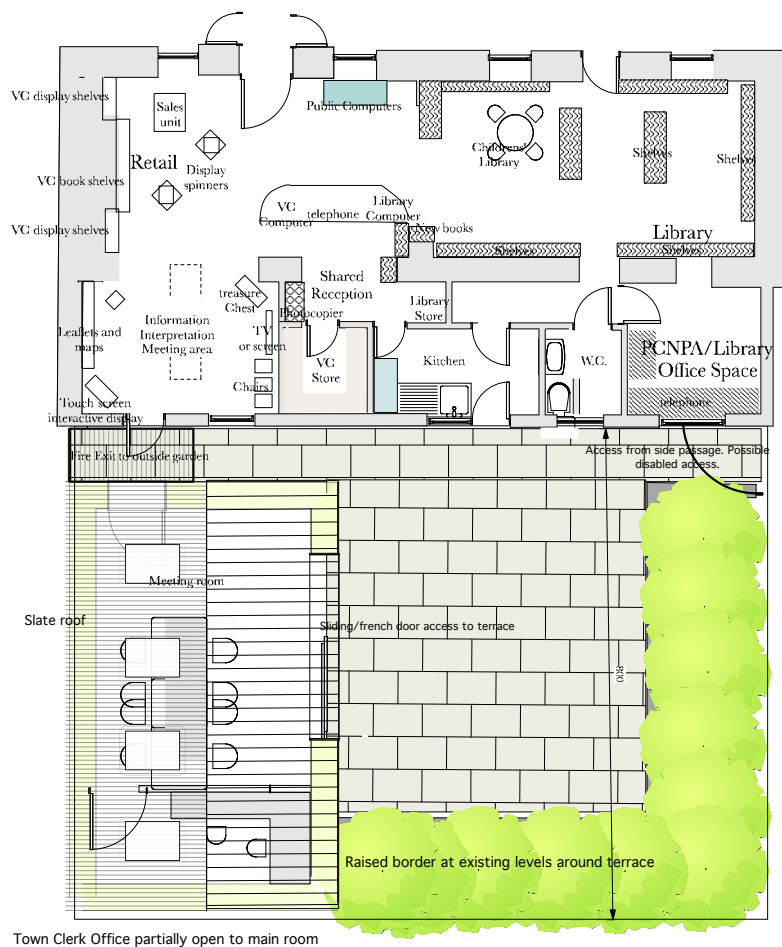
Notes

1. Estimate

**NEWPORT VISITOR CENTRE
BUILDING LEASED TO TOWN COUNCIL - NPVC and LIBRARY IN OCCUPATION
BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

1.	Information regarding the costings have been taken from the following sources. Newport Town Council EoY 2017 accounts. National Park Authority EoY 2017 accounts. Newport Library advised figures. 30/12/16 (Partly estimated)	
2.	An allowance for inflation of 1.5% has been included in the projected sums.	
3.	Salaries and Employers contributions calculated thus. Salary, as provided by the NP Employers NI & Pensions contribution. NI-1,220; Pen. @7.5% 1,280	17,072.00 2,500.00
4.	The cost of electricity has been calculated as thus allowing for cost increase and inflation.. NP-720; Lib-740 (Est);. Total usage calculated as follows. NP & Library (720+740/4) x 1.15	1,041.00
5.	The cost of gas has been calculated as thus allowing for greater occupancy. NP 374 x 1.5	560.00
6.	The cost of water has been calculated thus allowing for greater occupancy wher the NP=146 & Lib =160 (Est). 146 x 1.5	219.00
6a	Library Admin, Professional Services & Misc Expense	320.00
7.	General maintainace includes elements for the servicing of the (a) gas boiler, (b) toiletries, (c) computer maintenance. 300+40+350 Lib (b) =40 x 0.4 + Library Est 140 Minimum NP cost (a),(b)&(c) =300+40+350	156.00 690.00
8.	Telephone cost are thus. NP-1650; Lib-300(Est); These would be the responsibility of each tenant and have been multiplied by 1.015 NP: 1650 x1.015 Lib: 300 x 1.015 Paid for by PCC	1,675.00 0.00
9.	Insurance, estimated. Building Library third party liability 186 x 1.015 Stock Included in Building Ins.	1,000.00 189.00 0.00
10.	Rent. Library, to TC NP, to TC TC to NP. Peppercorn rent	50.00 2,000.00 50.00
11.	TC Support to Library Newport Visitor Centre Support	0.00 3,000.00
12.	NP Support, Staff NP Support, Services	0.00 0.00

SUGGESTED BUILDING LAYOUT



Drawing title: View of centre with proposed internal layout and extension
Scale: Not to scale
Date: August 2017

Newport Library Working Group

Newport Community Library and Newport Visitor Centre Site

Position Statement

Background

Newport Library Working group was formed in November 2015, when Newport Community Forum brought together those interested to help save Newport Library. Following 2 public meetings called by Pembrokeshire County Council Library Service in June and October 2015, 3 options were presented to the community for the future of the library service in Newport. These were:

- a. A community managed partnership model, which had been discussed by PCC and PCNPA previously. This envisaged the library moving to the Visitor Centre, a community charitable group being formed which would provide active volunteers to help run the centre, and PCC and PCNPA working in partnership with the group to produce a lease and SLA;
 - b. A weekly mobile library service, calling for around 3 hours a week;
 - c. A “third” way, for example in the case of St Davids the City Council agreed to pay 50% of paid staff costs and all the property costs.
2. Over the next 9 months, the Group, working with PCC, developed a model which was an amalgam of options a) and c). We agreed to pay the running costs for the current building in Bridge Street (ie rent, buildings and indemnity and liability insurance, and electricity.). PCC agreed to provide 5.5 hours of paid staff time, a reduction from the 11 hours previously provided, to pay for the telephone and computer costs, and continue to provide and manage the stock and support the 2 public computers. The group agreed to provide volunteer hours to make up the remaining opening hours. These arrangements are laid out in a Service Level Agreement.

Management

3. Newport Library Working Group is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation registered with the Charity Commission (number 1167617). The Group currently has 11 members, of whom 7 are Trustees. Having met weekly until the launch of Newport Community Library on 1st July 2016, we now meet once a month to discuss any issues relating to management, volunteers and finance, and to plan fundraising and promotional activities. Every 6 months, we have a review meeting with PCC to discuss any issues arising about the operational management of the library, performance and customer feedback data, and service improvements and / or changes.

Finances

4. Rent, insurances, electricity and other expenses relating to administration and fundraising amount to some £5,500 - £6,000 pa. The group raises this through donations, fundraising, and in the first year, a grant from Newport Town Council. Opportunities for grant aid are severely limited.

Current premises

5. The library is housed on the ground floor of a privately owned semi detached property. While the space is sufficient, the layout is somewhat awkward. There is no provision for making refreshments, something which has been requested in customer feedback.
6. It is on the main road through Newport, which gets extremely busy in holiday periods, and also carries much heavy agricultural and industrial traffic. The pavement at that point is very narrow. Access to the premises for people with disabilities, or parents with buggies or small children, can be difficult and potentially dangerous.
7. The toilet facilities are inadequate and not available to the public.

Advantages of moving to the Visitor Centre

8. The Visitor Centre is in a better location, being away from the main road and opposite the town car park. It is closer to the primary school, with whom we have developed a programme of regular visits by their pupils, to the Surgery with which we collaborate through the Patient Participation Group, and to Tabernacle Chapel Vestry which provides a space for larger group meetings and activities which we cannot accommodate in the Library.
9. The Visitor Centre is fully accessible, and has both a toilet equipped for people with disabilities and a well equipped kitchen. There is also access to a garden behind, which has potential for further development for the community.
10. There are advantages in a combined footfall: awareness of the Community Library will be raised amongst both residents and visitors.
11. Although the proposal for the library sharing with the Visitor Centre results in a reduction in floor space, we believe the layout is more convenient and meets the criteria regarding safeguarding.
12. The running costs of the Visitor Centre, which currently is open many more hours pa than the library, appear low, according to the accounts of the PCNPA, suggesting that for the library's share would be less than we currently pay.
13. The availability of a kitchen offers opportunities for fundraising through providing light refreshments for visitors.

14. PCC staff are supportive of the proposal, and will provide help in kind if a move takes place. The group would meet any monetary expenses arising.

Concerns

15. One of our concerns for the future is to reduce our overall expenditure by a significant amount. Fundraising will probably become harder as time goes by, and some donors may not renew their donations. We received 2 generous donations in our first year, which we cannot expect to happen every year. As our main expenditure is rent and buildings insurance, we would look for a substantial reduction in these items. If we can reduce our expenditure, more of our efforts can go into protecting and delivering all the objectives in our Business Plan, instead of constant fundraising.

Conclusion

16. The group, and Pembrokeshire County Council, would welcome a move to the Visitor Centre. However, we need to be assured that this would be a long term arrangement, and that our annual expenditure is significantly less than at present.

Newport Library Working Group Business Plan

Updated August 2017

1) Organisation Details

Name:	Newport Library Working Group
Address	Newport Community Library, Bank House, Bridge Street, Newport, Pembrokeshire SA42 0TB
Telephone number	01239 821169
E-mail	newportpemblibrary@gmail.com
Legal Status	Charitable Incorporated Organisation, registration number 1167617.

2) Group Vision and Purpose

The Group's purpose is to maintain a library service in premises in Newport and to widen its appeal and usefulness to the local community

3) Group Values

The Group aims to be inclusive and open to all sections of the community

4) Group Activities

The Group's activities include maintaining a library service in Newport on an ongoing basis and continuing to ensure the availability of:

- a wide range of books and audiovisual materials refreshed frequently
- an ordering and reservation service
- a professional librarian supported by volunteers
- IT facilities.

Further activities will be developed in the future as detailed below.

We work in partnership with Pembrokeshire County Council Cultural Services, and we also work closely with the local primary school and other local organisations.

5) Background to the Group and achievements to August 2017

Newport Library Working Group was set up in November 2015 to establish a Community Library in partnership with Pembrokeshire County Council. Without this group, our volunteers and donors including local businesses, and the support of Newport Town Council and Pembrokeshire County Council Library Service staff, Newport would have lost its permanent library and received only a mobile library service with much reduced hours.

To date, the Group has:

- Negotiated a rent reduction on the current premises
- Established a constitution for the group as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation
- Opened a bank account

- Recruited, trained and supported 30+ volunteers, of whom 18 volunteer regularly in the library
- Agreed a Service Level Agreement with Pembrokeshire County Council
- Undertaken training in the Library Management System and other policies
- Continued positive liaison and discussions with Pembrokeshire County Council's Head of Cultural Services and his staff through 6 monthly review meetings
- Conducted market research with users and non users
- Developed policies and procedures for volunteers
- Established a rota to cover volunteer opening hours
- Developed links with the local primary school and host regular visits from the pupils
- With our volunteers, held fundraising events including Christmas market stalls, coffee mornings, open gardens in the summer, a literary evening with signed books for auction, an illustrated talk about Ivor Novello, storytelling sessions, 2 literary and poetry events, a summer book themed competition for children, a historical walk, and a Chinese auction.
- Set up a Facebook page (Newport Community Library)
- Contacted Newport community groups
- Built up local information in the form of contact lists for local neighbourhood support groups and local voluntary organisations and a diary regular local activities and events.
- Displayed within the Library, information on local organisations, activities and events
- Represented on the Preseli Practice Patient Participation Group
- Gained recognition as an Investor in Carers, the first library in Wales to achieve this
- Built and distributed information for unpaid Carers, held meetings giving information to Carers, and helped establish Newport Area Carers' Group
- Started to investigate sources of grant support
- Hosted regular drop in advice sessions with Citizens' Advice Bureau and Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services Community Connectors
- Increased the volunteer run hours of opening from 7 to 10 per week
- Conducted an audit of stock and made recommendations for improvements, particularly to Welsh language stock
- Received training in the use of the town's defibrillator
- Held the first AGM
- Been commended in PAVS Volunteer Awards for a group aged over 25
- Attended Alzheimers Awareness Session to become Dementia Friends

6) Goals of the Group

Goals for the next year are to:

- 1) Keep the town library open
- 2) Maintain a rota of trained volunteers
- 3) Strengthen links with other community groups in Newport
- 4) Investigate and develop other potential uses for the library
- 5) Develop links with outside groups such as PCNPA
- 6) Develop the library as a comprehensive information hub for the community
- 7) Explore the possibility of running specific sessions for jobseekers
- 8) Reassess opening hours to ensure they are the most appropriate for the community
- 9) Investigate the feasibility, costs and benefits of relocating the library to Newport Visitor Centre, which is fully accessible, next to the public car park, and closer to the school and where there will be benefit to both services of synergy in working alongside each other

10) If possible and financially viable, to relocate to the Visitor Centre

In the next 2-5 years our goals are to:

- 1) Build on the above activities
- 2) Ensure the financial stability of the library
- 3) Widen usage of the library services
- 4) Improve the stock of Welsh language books
- 5) Run events for Welsh learners
- 6) Run ad hoc IT training and workshops
- 7) Develop links with Pembrokeshire College, Cardigan College and adult education centres
- 8) Improve the library premises and accessibility where possible

7) Benefits to be gained and public needs

The key needs identified by the Group, which the ongoing library provision will address, are:

- Education
- Research
- Entertainment and relaxation
- Social contact
- Interactions with public authorities
- Access to information technologies
- Information about local services

8) Key Beneficiaries

The main groups benefiting from the library services are (and will include in the future)

- 1) Local children
- 2) Parents and guardians
- 3) Jobseekers
- 4) Older people
- 5) Carers
- 6) Welsh learners and speakers
- 7) Adult learners in general
- 8) Those without access to IT facilities at home
- 9) Adult members of the community as a whole
- 10) Visitors

We summarise below the key benefits that each group receives/will receive (based on the results of two consultation exercises conducted by PCC and the Group's market research in the library).

1) Local children

We have spoken with the Head Teacher of Ysgol Bro Ingli, and understand that the school is currently striving to increase reading for pleasure amongst pupils.

The library provides a welcoming and well stocked children's section.

In tandem with ongoing events for children and their parents & guardians this will help promote the habit of reading both for enjoyment and education.

Discussions with local teenagers suggest that it would be useful to promote the book ordering service to this age group, as popular recently published books are often not available in the secondary school libraries due to budget restrictions.

2) Parents & guardians

The library provides an invaluable service to parents & guardians seeking a free and ready supply of books for young children

3) Jobseekers

The library provides access to computers, and hence to job search websites and the DWP.

We intend to explore the possibility of running specific sessions for jobseekers.

Free access to books is also very important for those out of work, both for improving their skills and also for entertainment and relaxation.

Jobseekers in particular need a local library because of the high cost of travel to other County libraries.

4) Older people

A high proportion of current users are older and many need the access provided by the library to large print books and audio books.

Many older people in the area are not comfortable using IT, so the availability of volunteers to assist them to access information on local services will be particularly valuable

The library also provides social contact and we aim to increase this through the organisation of regular events.

5) Carers

Information hub services are important for carers who are often isolated and in need of support

6) Welsh learners & speakers

Access to Welsh books of varying levels of difficulty is important for Welsh learners, and the library also provides a stock of Welsh language books for all Welsh speakers.

7) Adult learners in general

As well as the book stock, the library IT provision is valuable for adult learners

10) Access to a library for holidaymakers and visitors with children is important for continued reading opportunities

9) What similar services are currently available?

There are no similar services available in Newport. The nearest other libraries are Fishguard (7 miles), Cardigan (12 miles) and Haverfordwest (22 miles).

There are library facilities in both of the local LEA secondary schools providing young adult books.

10) How will the organisation collaborate with other activities and providers?

We will continue to work actively with PCC who provide a liaison between us and the professional librarian. We have 6 monthly review meetings with PCC to look at statistical returns and the performance of the library, and consider service improvements.

We have also already contacted other local groups and are seeking to work closely with them.

We are in contact with Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority and will explore ways of working together.

11) Performance monitoring and key performance indicators

We will continue to liaise with PCC and collect library usage figures

Key performance indicators were those established under the Fifth Quality Framework of Welsh Public Library Standards 2014-2017. A sixth quality Framework for 2017 – 2020 has been published.

We will also monitor volunteer satisfaction and retention.

Performance indicators will be reported to the trustees on a quarterly basis

12) Promotion and advertising

Promotion and advertising is really important to us in widening access.

- Promotional leaflets were distributed and will be updated regularly
- We publicise events and activities on the Pembrokeshire Libraries' Facebook page, our Facebook page, and on the local Newport websites
- We advertise events and activities through posters around the town and in neighbouring locations
- Liaising with Ysgol Bro Ingli enables us to promote events to pupils and their parents / guardians
- We regularly send press releases and photographs about NCL events and achievements to Western Telegraph, County Echo, Pembrokeshire Herald and Tivyside Advertiser
- We will develop an email circulation list for events
- We will run further market stalls periodically to raise awareness

13) Risks and actions to be taken to mitigate these

1. Risk: PCC reducing or withdrawing their input.

Mitigation: We have a long term Service Level Agreement with PCC

2. Risk: Injury or accident to users or volunteers

Mitigation: The group has taken out public liability and employers' liability insurance, and has a Health & Safety policy.

3. Risk: A claim against the trustees

Mitigation: The group has taken out trustees' indemnity insurance

4. Risk: Volunteers behaving inappropriately

Mitigation: Full DBS checks are undertaken on volunteers where appropriate and we liaise closely with PCC regarding safeguarding

5. Risk: Shortfall in income

Mitigation: Management accounts are presented to the trustees monthly so that appropriate action can be taken in good time

Yearly accounts will be prepared and audited

6. Risk: Loss of current premises

Mitigation: We have established contact with the library landlord, who has expressed keen interest in maintaining the library in the current premises

We are holding the list of other possible premises prepared by Newport Town Council which can be revisited if necessary.

7. Risk: Staffing difficulties

PCC provides 5.5 hours professional time which allows for a minimum service level in emergency. We have a volunteer co-ordinator who manages a group of volunteers and recruits actively on an ongoing basis.

14) Running the Group and the Library

The group has appointed officers and Trustees as follows (all officers are also Trustees of the group):

Chair	Jean Coyne
Secretary	Paddy Davies
Treasurer	Kate McEvoy
Other trustees	Jane Villiers
	Philly Morrall
	Sandra Bayes
	Kathy Benzinski

The trustees and other Group members have between them a wide range of relevant experience with backgrounds including

- Accountancy
- Librarian
- Company director
- Charity director
- Local government officer (research, policy development, performance management and service improvement)
- Further Education college director
- Teaching
- Market research
- Special needs education
- Working with volunteers
- Publicity
- Barrister
- Editor

15) Library Staffing

PCC has committed to provide 5.5 hours of professional staffing on an ongoing basis.

Volunteers were used initially to maintain the then current opening hours, and volunteer opening hours were increased with effect from April 2017.

Full training was provided to volunteers by PCC. We hope to recruit sufficient new volunteers to warrant a further training session.

We aim to provide opportunities for work experience and also for Duke of Edinburgh Award community service.

16) Equipment

Computer equipment will continue to be provided and maintained by PCC.

17) Policies and Procedures

We have established policies and procedures for the following:

- Equal opportunities
- Safeguarding
- Confidentiality
- Complaints
- Volunteering
- Volunteering Code of Practice

18) Fundraising Strategy

Our fundraising strategy is to address revenue funding and to build up a reserve. Most fundraising takes place within the parish of Newport.

We have established a Friends of Newport Library Group and we have received both funds and further offers of support.

We run a programme of events annually, to raise further funds.

There are limited opportunities for trading from the library, but we are exploring these.

We will seek grant funding. We are aware that grant funding is very rarely available for revenue expenditure, but we hope to access grants for capital works and to run special programmes.

19) Income and Expenditure

Our financial year runs from December to November, but we started working in the library in partnership with Pembrokeshire County Council on 1st July 2016. Therefore the tables below show our actual income and expenditure for the year July 2016 to June 2017.

We received a large one-off donation in this year, which will not be repeated, so we include a column showing income minus this donation, which gives a truer representation of future income.

NEWPORT LIBRARY WORKING GROUP									
	Expenditure								
	Rent & buildings insurance	Other insurance	Bills & other expenses	Admin & prof. services	Fundraising expenses	ILC spend	TOTAL		Total minus rent
Jul-16	-	-	5.33	33.69	-	-	39.02	✓	39.02
Aug-16	1,190.41	-	-	13.43	-	27.70	1,231.54	✓	41.13
Sep-16	-	-	211.76	-	17.20	-	228.96	✓	228.96
Oct-16	-	-	11.60	-	-	35.00	46.60	✓	46.60
Nov-16	875.00	-	-	-	-	-	875.00	✓	-
Dec-16	-	-	93.57	-	79.44	-	173.01	✓	173.01
Jan-17	875.00	-	23.83	-	-	-	898.83	✓	23.83
Feb-17	-	-	15.00	17.72	-	-	32.72	✓	32.72
Mar-17	-	-	220.19	-	-	366.22	586.41	✓	586.41
Apr-17	865.00	-	-	7.99	-	-	872.99	✓	7.99
May-17	388.71	-	19.85	35.00	-	-	443.56	✓	54.85
Jun-17	-	194.56	121.57	-	-	21.95	338.08	✓	338.08
Total	4,194.12	194.56	722.70	107.83	96.64	450.87	5,766.72		1,572.60

	Income							
	Annual donations	Single donations	Local organizations	Fundraising	Grants	TOTALS		Total minus one-off donation
Jul-16	110.00	210.00	-	1,936.10	420.00	2,676.10		2,676.10
Aug-16	305.00	230.00	-	81.00	-	616.00		616.00
Sep-16	10.00	6,000.00	-	25.14	-	6,035.14		35.14
Oct-16	10.00	-	-	206.00	-	216.00		216.00
Nov-16	35.00	75.00	-	-	-	110.00		110.00
Dec-16	10.00	-	-	487.29	-	497.29		497.29
Jan-17	10.00	-	-	697.00	-	707.00		707.00
Feb-17	10.00	55.00	-	-	-	65.00		65.00
Mar-17	10.00	-	-	-	-	10.00		10.00
Apr-17	10.00	350.00	-	546.00	-	906.00		906.00
May-17	20.00	100.00	-	432.35	-	552.35		552.35
Jun-17	10.00	-	-	154.05	-	164.05		164.05
Total	550.00	7,020.00	-	4,564.93	420.00	12,554.93		6,554.93

Financial Appendix

Newport Library Working Group (NLWG) estimated annual expenditure and income in the Visitor Centre

Note

We have used 40% of Visitor Centre running costs for 2016-2017 to calculate Newport Community Library's contribution. Although there is near parity in floorspace occupied (52% to 48% according to Newport Town Council), the library is currently open only 15½ hours a week, as opposed to an average of around 40 hours per week for the Visitor Centre. But Newport Community Library also hosts out of hours sessions and would use the meeting room for its monthly meetings. So we think 40% is a fair contribution to running costs. The estimated running costs are based on the Visitor Centre budget outturn figures for 2016/17.

Estimated expenditure and income based on Newport Town Council proposals

Expenditure	£	Notes
Rent	50	Peppercorn rent
Utilities		
Electricity	288	Based on 40% of PCNPA outturn budget 2016-2017
Gas	150	Based on 40% of PCNPA outturn budget 2016-2017
Water	58	Based on 40% of PCNPA outturn budget 2016-2017
Total utilities	496	
Overheads		
Stationery/miscellaneous supplies	-	Stationery, printer cartridges etc are supplied by Pembrokeshire County Council
General maintenance	140	Based on 40% of PCNPA outturn budget 2016-2017
Toiletries	16	Based on 40% of PCNPA outturn budget 2016-2017
Telephone, fax etc	-	Telephone is supplied by Pembrokeshire County Council
Total overheads	156	
Total utilities and overheads	652	NLWG contribution to running costs
Additional costs		
Employer's liability insurance	200	Based on NLWG current expenditure July 2016 to June 2017
Buildings insurance	500	Based on NLWG current expenditure July 2016 to June 2017
Bills and other expenses	200	Based on NLWG current expenditure July 2016 to June 2017
Admin and professional services	120	Based on NLWG current expenditure July 2016 to June 2017
Fundraising expenses	100	Based on NLWG current expenditure July 2016 to June 2017
Total additional costs	1,120	
Total estimated expenditure	1,822	
Income		
Donations	550	Based on NLWG current income July 2016 to June 2017
Total estimated income	550	
Fundraising required	1,272	To break even. NLWG would aim to raise more each year to build up reserves and manage unexpected outgoings.

APPENDIX 3



APPENDIX 4

New Models / New Programmes

The Provision of Information to Visitors Working Group agreed that the following list or potential projects provide a good overview of the types of services that PCNPA should be seeking to deliver in the years ahead.

Initiative	Investment
<u>Parkwise</u> – a tailored training programme to train business staff in Pembrokeshire to provide up-to-date visitor information about the National Park (creating an informal business-based ‘TIC’ network).	£10,000 – training materials, marketing activity and additional staff time to implement.
<u>Naturally Connected</u> – a project to promote biodiversity to tourism businesses in Pembrokeshire. Raising awareness of the biodiversity present on key business sites and providing an action plan to enhance on-site biodiversity.	£5,000 – promotional materials and additional staff time
<u>Seasonal Pop-Up Events</u> - to provide a range of new and exciting ‘pop-up’ events on beaches and key business sites (large camp sites, major attraction sites, etc) during the 2017 summer season and beyond.	£15,000 – devise programme, marketing materials, recruit seasonal staff, train volunteers and secure associated PCNPA staff time.
<u>Tourism Ambassador Scheme</u> – to train and support a network of community ambassadors, in conjunction with PLANED, that can provide information for visitors as well as walks and talks in key village locations throughout the National Park.	£10,000 – devise training programme, recruit volunteers, provide support materials and mentoring, fund annual ‘get together’ to celebrate achievements.
<u>Interpretive Materials</u> – to provide a tailored series of interpretation materials across key business and community sites across Pembrokeshire to promote people’s enjoyment and understanding of the National Park.	£5,000 – design, produce and distribute interpretive materials (inc’ associated staff time).
<u>Update ‘Roadshow’ Materials</u> – to refresh and update the branding of PCNPA’s ‘roadshow’ materials (e.g. pop-up equipment and trailers) used to promote	£10,000 – re-design and purchase revised ‘pop-up’ equipment to increase PCNPA’s ‘presence’ at key shows and events throughout the year.

the National Park at local village fetes and events.	
<u>Haverfordwest Library</u> – to develop a joint visitor services offer between PCNPA and PCC at the new ‘state-of-the-art’ library building (to be located at the present Riverside Market site).	£5,000 – develop a fully integrated interpretation plan, interpretive materials and operational plan for the visitor related services based at the new PCC managed library facility.
<u>PCNPA Web site</u> –_we could invest to make the PCNPA website more user friendly and work with PCC to support the Visit Pembrokeshire web site.	£20,000 – but dependent on approach taken.

The above package of new and/or expanded initiatives would cost the Authority in the region of £60K per year to implement, with a one-off cost relating to the web site. With no new funding forthcoming the preferred option put forward by the Task and Finish Group is for the Authority to support the proposed new programmes of work (detailed above) by changing our existing activities in Tenby and Newport.