

Joint Submission by Dinas Cross Community Council and County Councillor Bob Kilmister concerning the Pembrokeshire Coastal National Park Deposit Plan.

We reject the plan that has been submitted for our Community. Our reason for doing so is because it fails to offer a sustainable future and our consultations at earlier stages in the process have been largely ignored.

We held a Public Meeting on Tuesday 24/03/09 starting at 19.30 at Yr Hen Ysgol Dinas to discuss the proposals. We wrote and invited all persons who were on the electoral roll for AKO division, which is 367 houses and 710 people. We asked all persons attending to sign in and we had 106 signatures. This represents 15% of the population which clearly shows the interest the community takes when somebody bothers to involve them.

We consider the consultation process undertaken by the National Park to be woeful. The Community Council and I attended a Community Panel meeting in September 2008 where a draft plan was presented by consultants. We gave our response at the time which was:

- 1). Insufficient affordable housing.
- 2). Retirement housing not available.
- 3). New allotment land not available.
- 4). No new employment.
- 5). Area of land identified for housing unlikely to be released by owners.

In the response document only number 5 was addressed and the other points were not answered at all. The Community Council and I submitted alternative suggestions but these have not been worthy of a response. This is not a consultation process but rather just going through the motions. No offer was made to come and discuss the matters or to search for common ground. It is quite evident that the National Park considers it knows best. The National Park although informed about the Public Meeting did not send a representative.

The plans were outlined at the Public Meeting by County Councillor Bob Kilmister. He outlined the reasons for the plan, the process and then went through the map C8 for Dinas Cross. All those attending were given a copy of the map, provided by Bob Kilmister. He then asked the public for their comments. He outlined that the Community Council's response and his own would be driven by their views. There were a huge number of comments and questions. In particular great opposition was expressed about housing site HA749 which it was felt would scar the recreation ground. There was a long debate about retirement housing, affordable housing and the fact that large chunks of Dinas Cross were excluded from the map altogether. A series of votes were taken at the end of the meeting. The results were:

- 1). Do you support the principle of ensuring that land is made available for the provision of sheltered or retirement accommodation for the elderly in Dinas Cross?

Yes = 83
No = 03

- 2). Do you support the principle of ensuring that land is made available for the provision of affordable housing. The volume being that identified by the Rural Housing Enabler in his report?

Yes = 80
No = 05

3). Do you support the principle of providing new allotments in Dinas Cross?

Unanimous Yes

4). Do you think the Pembrokeshire Coastal National Parks Deposit Plan will provide the village with a sustainable future for Dinas Cross in its present form?

Unanimous No

5). Do you approve of site no HA749 as suitable for new housing provision?

Unanimous No

6). Do you approve of site HA387 as suitable for new housing?

Yes =53

No =10

Abstain =12

Bob Kilmister then outlined the opportunity that individuals had to submit their own views and all attending were given the National Park response form.

The Community Council and Bob Kilmister met on 02/04/09 to discuss the plans as a result of the public meeting. Bob Kilmister agreed to draft their response which would be further debated on 16/04/09. This document is that formal response.

1). We believe that housing allocation HA749 should be excluded from any plan. The site would be visually unacceptable and would have a severe effect on the recreation ground. It should be noted that PCC highways department rejected plans to site recycling facilities here previously on access grounds. Road access to the site is very poor and it was unanimously rejected by all as unsuitable at the Public Meeting.

2). The National Park have designated that 75% of new housing should be affordable in the Dinas Cross area. We support this move but only if retirement housing is excluded. There is a substantial need for appropriate housing for the elderly in Dinas Cross. According to the 2001 Census this area had 54.7% of the population aged over 45 against the County average of 46.29%. The National Park in its submission states that the age of the population is likely to increase considerably. Many of these people find themselves eventually living singly, in unsuitable accommodation which is much too big for them and unable to deal with maintenance and garden issues. They can become isolated as a result and lonely. Care provision can be very difficult with often a need to provide adaptations. Most of these people want to continue to live in Dinas Cross with its sense of community. Unlike neighbouring areas most of Dinas Cross is relatively flat with easy access and the elderly find its mix of facilities meets their needs. The lunch club Cymdogion attracts over 50 people every month. It is essential that any site is close to all the relevant facilities. We believe that retirement housing is an absolute priority for this area and the public meeting showed that this view is shared by nearly all those attending. Retirement housing will also create some jobs which are badly needed.

3). Affordable housing is also a huge issue. The Rural Housing Enabler in 2006 identified that the area needed 26 affordable homes. We would like to see this provided for by using shared equity schemes and rental only properties. The public meeting shared this view and we believe that it is essential that the younger population is encouraged to stay in this area. This will provide the two shops and licensed premises with the growth they will require to keep trading.

4). Allotment provision currently stands at 4 plots. There are people waiting with absolutely no likelihood of getting a plot. We believe that growing your own food should be encouraged as it is part of a sustainable future. It is essential that new plots are identified urgently.

5). We believe that Retirement housing, affordable housing and allotments as we have outlined could be provided on land at SA42 OXB Rhoshelyg and the adjoining field. We have enclosed a map showing this and the two landowners involved have been consulted and approve. We also believe that any scheme here should include a balancing lake which would provide an opportunity to solve some drainage problems affecting nearby Spring Hill. This would provide increased bio diversity and the opportunity to build really sustainable housing using a ground source heating scheme. The area has excellent hedge banks which should be retained. The retirement homes should be situated close to the road which would offer easy access to the shops, post office, community hall, the licensed premises and bus stops. It is an ideal location for such a development. Parts of this land have previously been earmarked for development but the Company concerned went into bankruptcy before developing the site and permission was lost. Part of the site has previously been turned down for executive housing on the basis that it would spoil the view. We believe these proposals are far superior to the site HA749 which would have a much bigger visual impact whilst failing to provide the much needed facilities.

6). We are happy for housing site HA387 to be included but still are concerned that it may not be made available and have little confidence in the view that the National Park would compulsory purchase. We believe there is no evidence to back this up as the Park has no track record of ever doing this. We believe this approach is not a suitable one and if the land is not made available then it would be better suited as a green wedge.

7). We are extremely concerned that only part of Dinas Cross has been included on the map. Western Dinas Cross simply does not exist including the settlement areas known as Cwm Canol, Yet yr Bontbren, Cilwenen and the main A487 which is developed along substantial areas. In addition the Cross, Pwllgwaelod and settlements at Soar Hill have been excluded too. To call all these rural is simply inaccurate as there is more housing at these places than exists in Llanychaer or Pontfaen. There are opportunities for some development here on suitable plots. This should be affordable housing which many of the owners wish to provide for their own children. We believe this constitutes affordable housing and believe that the National Park policy on this matter makes no sense. Affordable housing does not have to be carried out just by Housing Associations and rural communities need to be allowed to construct affordable housing by families on land they already own provided the land designated is suitable. Concern about these properties being sold on could be addressed by allocating them for rent only. By failing to draw a settlement boundary in the areas we have listed you automatically prevented any such development as we have outlined taking place. We believe strongly that you have a statutory duty to draw maps for ALL settlement areas and not just what you wish to recognise as such.

8). We do not believe your Welsh Language policy deals with the issue. Affordable housing for local people will allow the language to prosper. All housing in this area previously has not been affordable and there has been an influx of retirement aged persons to the properties built. The local school which taught in the Welsh Language has closed due to low numbers. Families have been simply excluded by price from living in this community. We believe National Park policies have brought this about and call on you to take action by allowing affordable housing for locals to take place. Many rural farms are Welsh speaking but your policy of allowing them to only construct holiday lets or to put them to economic use when using their redundant farm buildings has prevented them building affordable housing for their children and workers who are in many cases also Welsh speakers. This policy has damaged the language and should be altered immediately.

In conclusion we are extremely disappointed by your plans and the methods you have adopted to reach them. We believe that we have submitted compelling evidence of how our community feels. We have submitted evidence where the Park has not justified theirs. We have engaged with the whole Community not just parts of it. If this is a real consultation then please engage with us and

produce a plan that will give Dinas Cross a sustainable future. We live in a National Park and understand how sensitive the area is but we also do not want to live in a museum.

**Bob Kilmister
County Councillor Dinas Cross Ward**

**Councillor E.J. Nicholas
Chair Dinas Cross Community Council
On behalf of Dinas Cross CC.**