Annual Report 2011/2012

Comment…

Another very busy year in which we can look back with pleasure on some aspects of our work, and with some anxiety about others. Our core projects have grown, and seem to be having the desired effect of raising our profile and getting more people engaged in the reality of climate change and of our personal ability to do positive things that make a difference – however small. We have not made the progress we had hoped in relation to rolling out a programme for encouraging households to reduce home energy use, switching to green energy tariffs and reducing water consumption. Maybe we were too ambitious too early, and certainly most green organisations have been affected by what has been happening at national level, where the climate change debate has slipped down the priority list as the economic situation and world emergencies, particularly in the Middle East, have not unreasonably grabbed the headlines.

As I step down from chairing GPG after 3 years, I am not down- hearted. Here in Penarth we cannot create a green global economy. We can, however, continue to build a slower-living, more environmentally aware and sustainable community which will be better informed and better prepared. GPG has a strong Management Committee which enjoys working with like-minded organisations locally; together we are now in a stronger position to take forward some of the energy-related issues mentioned above.

It has been a privilege to chair GPG and my heartfelt gratitude goes to everyone who has helped make it part of our community – and of our future.

Tricia Griffiths

Chair of the Management Committee

Aims to action – raising awareness, projects & events…

Awareness-raising..

Keeping up the flow of information about climate change is our priority and we have approached this in different ways. Open meetings at the Windsor Arms were held on: energy saving in the home, solar energy, local food and transport. The film 'Power to the Community', on self sufficiency in Cuba was shown. We were at the National Pier Event, had a stand at the Christmas Lights switching-on, a presence at the Horticultural Show and decorated a green tree for the Christmas Tree Festival & provided green tips for Christmas. GPG jointly arranged a recycling event with Vale of Glamorgan Council. Talks were given to several organisations, including the WI, the Rotary Club, Transition Cardiff and several Church Groups. Use of social media for GPG is increasing as we are now on face book. Our web site has been updated and is more accessible. GPG gets informative articles into the press and on various social networks. The Green Question Time taking place after the AGM this year will be the first of its kind for GPG and something we hope to repeat.

Abundance and Apples

The Abundance Scheme got off to a modest start but large quantities of fruit were rescued from several local gardens and put to good use in local care homes or turned into chutneys. Apple Day in October proved popular as people took part in pressing and identifying apples, and eating toffee apples, cakes and pancakes. This event really proved the value of making a connection between a product (i.e. apples) and where it comes from…and it was great fun!

Big Picnic



This took place in Wordsworth Park in June and thanks to enthusiastic support from local people was a really enjoyable occasion. Apparently, it is the first time for decades that a community event of this kind has been held there.

The Penarth Bag

Three hundred of the 600 bags printed with the award-winning design by Alec Smith were distributed to primary school children. The remaining 300 have been sold by Shop in Penarth retailers.

Community Gardens

Three are now at the planning stage. Bute Lane Nursery is a joint venture with GPG helping with planning, design and general support. Provisional permission has been granted by Arriva Trains for raised beds on the station, This is a very public site and will not only enhance the station, but also provide good publicity. Huge effort has gone into the Wordsworth Park (the 'Rec') project and after months of working on reports, site visits and talking to the Vale of Glamorgan Council, we now await the Council's decision. Whilst waiting, it is hoped to run a few courses at the Art Department in Tennyson Road for gardeners of all ages.

Community Orchard Thirty trees were planted last January and most survived the hard winter and produced very attractive blossom in the Spring. Five replacement trees were planted in January. It is planned to leave the orchard to mature for another year before staging events there.



Food Festival



This was a first for GPG and for Penarth. It was generally agreed that the buzz around the Kymin said it all. Hundreds came to taste and buy from the thirty stalls, and also to chat and relax in what someone described as 'a real Penarth event from the old days'. All being well, this will become an annual event.

Shop in Penarth (SiP)

Interest was revived in this scheme when it was re-launched in December with clearer branding, an eye-catching leaflet with a map, and a voucher scheme. The popular iconic cards with their retro image have been kept. The scheme, which now has 50 participating retailers, aims to support the local economy and encourage people to stop jumping into their cars and visiting out-of-town retail parks. Look for the 'SiP' tick sign in all SiP shop windows and see the offers at www.gpgpenarth.co.uk

Funding… SiP is self-funding as were the Big Picnic and the Food Festival. We are very grateful to the Penarth Town Council and the Co-operative Society for their generous contributions towards the Community Gardens Scheme.

Future plans…

We will continue to build on our key projects – the Local Food Festival, Shop in Penarth (SiP) and the Orchard and Community Gardens. Issues such as recycling, incineration and fracking (extraction of oil from shale) are among several serious concerns that will be debated during the year. The Car Free Day in September will take thought and planning, but it should help galvanise people into thinking about scarce resources and the need to make better use of public transport. We shall continue to work with the Post Graduate architecture students from Cardiff University whose work on sustainability last year was so stimulating. Home energy and use of water will be high on the agenda.

Events planned so far…

- **April - Recycling – the bigger picture**
- **June – Film related to local food**
- **July 15 – GPG Local Food Festival in The Kymin**
- **August – event to raise awareness about Car Free Day**
- **September – Car Free Day**
- **October – Abundance & Apple Day**
- **December - Event at Christmas lights switch on.**

All events are posted on our web site and we circulate people on our mailing list. Please let us know if you would like to go on the list – contact details below.

Management Committee 1011/12

Tricia Griffiths (Chair)

Catherine Wenger (Vice-Chair)

Damian Evans (Treasurer)

Sandy Clubb (co-opted)

Phil Rapier, Russell Jones, Anthony Slaughter

Thanks… GPG is a relatively small organisation which relies on the commitment and energy of its members and supporters. We are grateful to everyone who has helped over the year.