



## Village Action Plan Monthly Report to the Parish Council

December 2011

I would ask that the Parish Councillors be made aware of the following please:

### Environment

#### Footpaths

##### **a) Walks leaflets/Book**

The VAP Footpath Team is working on production of a Book of the Plumpton Walks that would be for sale at various retail outlets. The Team has won sponsorship from Southern Railway for £1,000 and VAP will match-fund this. Work is under way to approach the local businesses to explore with them whether they might be interested in also sponsoring the project in return for advertising space. This work is being co-ordinated jointly with the VAP Business Team.

##### **b) Jubilee**

The VAP Footpath Team is also exploring the possibility of producing a new walks leaflet that commemorates the boundary of the parish under a 'Beating the Bounds' scheme. A meeting is to be held with Godfrey Broster to explore this further as he has expressed interest in this initiative. Should this progress, it will be the Team's contribution to the Jubilee celebrations.

#### **Plumpton Goes Green**

##### **a) Apple Press**

Following the VAP PGG Team's successful bid for grant funding from the SDNP Sustainable Communities Fund for the purchase of a community Apple-press, the Team organised a demonstration apple pressing event to coincide with the Festive Fair on 26<sup>th</sup> November. Several people had donated fruit and there was considerable interest from the community. Next year, the Team intend to organise training workshops to teach people how to use the equipment so they can hire it to juice their own fruit. The Team also hope to hold several fruit pressing days when villagers can bring along their apples and pears to have them juiced.

##### **b) Community Energy**

In Spring 2011, the VAP Plumpton Goes Green Team carried out a survey of the energy consumption and environmental footprint of a small number of households in the village – the "**community footprint**". The survey showed very clearly that, while Plumpton residents' energy consumption is about average for the Lewes district, our oil consumption puts Plumpton way above the norm. The PGG Team has since been exploring how we can both save ourselves money as a community and if we can source more environmentally sustainable alternatives to oil. Our aim is not just to help cut individual energy costs in the short term, but also to look at the energy consumption and needs of the village as a whole, and explore a community-wide, cost-effective and sustainable energy strategy for the long term.

To this end the Team will be holding an evening event in February for the community to determine whether there is sufficient enthusiasm and buy-in to explore a range of possible initiatives further. Examples could be collective ordering of oil, or a community-wide insulation scheme, or a district-wide heating scheme.

## **Business**

### **a) Festive Fair**

The Plumpton Festive Fair took place on Saturday November 26<sup>th</sup>. Apart from a highly popular performance by the Plumpton Primary School's choir and the surprise appearance of the Three Kings (and supporting camel!), there was a fantastic turnout from visitors and a strong range of stallholders – all of whom have said that they would like to take up a stall at next year's Fair. This has to be taken as a positive message for latent support for such an event – the 2012 date has been booked for November 24<sup>th</sup>.

### **b) Broadband**

Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) has allocated £10.64m to ESCC to roll-out super-fast broadband across East Sussex, provided that it can demonstrate demand for the new service. Following on from the ESCC conference which Reg and Darryl attended, Darryl has liaised with Paul Nicholson with a view to engaging the VAP Business Team to work with the business community in Plumpton as a means of demonstrating demand for an improved broadband service in Plumpton.

Confusingly, Defra has also launched a £20m scheme which is aimed at taking an improved broadband service out to those remote areas of Sussex that the ESCC scheme might not reach.

Action in rural Sussex hosted a further conference to which a PC and VAP representative attended. This was extremely helpful and gave an opportunity for direct contact to be made with the delivery personnel within ESCC and LDC who are keen to engage with business operators in communities and to try to gather data across the county in a uniform manner that will enable ESCC to put together its collective bid for the funding. To this end a representative from LDC will be attending the next VAP Business Team meeting in early January to establish the best way to take this forward within Plumpton's business community. ESCC has set a timetable over the next 18 months to finalise its bid, but is looking to communities to demonstrate demand as soon as possible. (Note, it is only the Defra scheme which has a deadline of 31<sup>st</sup> January 2012; this scheme is not suitable for Plumpton as the village is not deemed to be 'remote').

Clearly the PC and VAP need to work together to determine the best way of publicising the initiative to the wider community.