

Pewsey Community Area Status Report – Jan 2021

Background and context

The overarching aim of this document is for Pewsey Area Board and its partners to obtain a better awareness of the issues within the Pewsey Community Area. This in turn will inform our understanding of how to support local responses from communities, businesses and organisations and link this to the work of Wiltshire Council, it's partners and agencies, so that collaboratively we can tackle these issues including those arising from Covid-19.

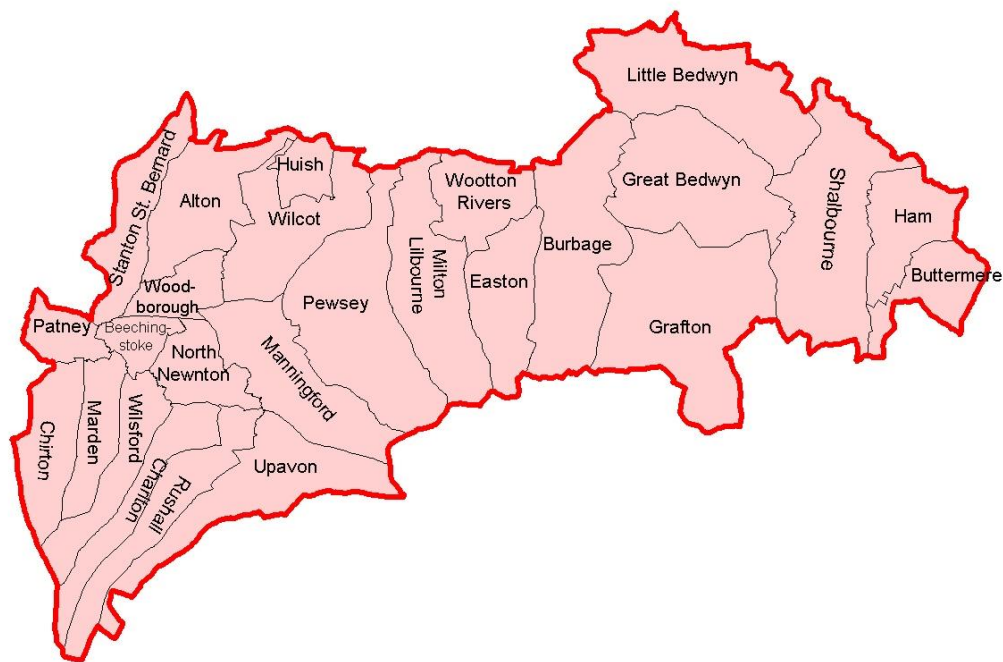
The Pewsey community area has seen an incredible response to the COVID19 pandemic with volunteers leading the response and strategic partners working collaboratively to support our communities. Every person within the area has access to support from one of the community groups that were set up, some of which have gone on to offer additional services for the community. This builds upon a foundation of strong partnership working between the community and supporting organisations.

As we look ahead, this document provides a summary of information that can help inform the local community response. It brings together many of the differing data and information sources from across the community area that will help us to understand the state of our community and some of the impact of COVID-19. It also highlights communities that may have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic and it considers how the actions, projects and plans that are emerging will be collated and supported.

Over time this document will need to be updated in response to changes, new information and actions undertaken. Whilst the impact of COVID-19 in some areas is considerable, it is recognised that many of the issues identified in this report were existing ones.

The Pewsey area is very rural and consists of the 23 parishes of Alton, Beechingstoke, Burbage, Buttermere, Charlton & Wilsford, Chirton, Easton, Grafton, Great Bedwyn, Ham, Little Bedwyn, Manningford, Marden, Milton Lilbourne, North Newnton, Patney, Pewsey, Rushall, Shalbourne, Stanton St Bernard, Upavon, Wilcot & Huish (with Oare), Woodborough, and Wootton Rivers. All within the community area have the same opportunity to engage with this work and the consultation that has begun will continue to ensure that this report will be as inclusive as possible.

When the boundary review changes are implemented at the May 2021 elections, the parishes of All Cannings, Tidcombe and Fosbury, as well as Froxfield will move into the Pewsey Community Area. They have not been consulted in the production of this report but have been consulted in their current community area. As this is an organic report, any issues that they subsequently raise can be added.



Whilst it is natural to focus on the issues where improvement is required, it is important to recognise and build on the positives that have arisen during the pandemic. These include the closer working between organisations, increased community cohesion, new volunteers and the wider use of the internet and social media.

Community data and information

Local data is being collected from a range of sources to provide an overview of the current situation within our community. This is being combined with the outcomes of discussions on the impact of COVID-19 to inform the key issues emerging and where resources should be focussed.

- Data Collected includes
 - I. [JSNA local data sets](#) – (collected in winter 2019)
 - II. JSNA 2020 – Demography and overarching indicators
 - III. [Children and young people mental health needs Assessment](#)
 - IV. [Gypsy, traveller and boater populations health needs assessment Wiltshire](#)
 - V. [Office for National Statistics](#)
 - VI. COVID19 support group survey – (June 2020)
 - VII. Wiltshire CAJSNA 2020 Community Survey Results (Pewsey)
 - VIII. Pewsey Area Board Councillors discussion

IX. Pewsey Business Survey (May 2020)

- Meetings notes from the Pewsey Health and wellbeing / Recovery Group on
 - I. 21st July 2020
 - II. 8th October 2020

- The following groups have also helped input into this report
 - I. Police
 - II. Fire & Rescue
 - III. Pewsey Land Trust
 - IV. Pewsey CCA
 - V. Pewsey Parish Council
 - VI. Parish Councils
 - VII. PCAP
 - VIII. Youth Clubs
 - IX. Open Blue Bus
 - X. Roots and Shoots
 - XI. Leisure Manager
 - XII. Pewsey Vale Tourism Partnership
 - XIII. Travellers and Boater via the Julian trust
 - XIV. Southern Streams Farmers Group

Some conversations have taken place with the schools, the surgery and the NHS but further discussions will be helpful. No direct input from carers has yet been obtained

Context for this report

It is important to read this report with the following in mind:

- The process of identifying and agreeing the key concerns is not an exact science and both statistical and anecdotal evidence can be misleading. No two people will completely agree on what should be included so trends, commonality and correlation have been looked at when deciding what to include. This report should therefore be viewed as an informed indicator to the state of the Pewsey Community Area.
- The Pewsey Community area is an excellent place to live and work. It is recognised that a tremendous amount of good work and substantial improvement has taken place over the past few years due to the dedication and hard work of so many within our community. The JSNA data indicates that the area is consistently performing amongst the top places in Wiltshire. However, the remit of this report does not include capturing these examples and the focus is upon those issues identified by the community as being the most important to focus on.
- Some of the areas highlighted from the JSNA data where the Pewsey Community areas seems to not be doing so well will need looking at in the context of when and how it was collected.
- The variance between JSNA data in all community areas may not always be of any great significance. Wiltshire is also a great county to live in and sometimes we are comparing good with excellent
- Further investigation will be required with some of the data as it may not tell the whole story. E.g. who particularly is being affected? Are there differences between local communities and minority groups? Is the issue located in a specific

geographical area? Equally in some cases the most recent data available is a few years old and the situation may have altered.

Additional local information and the impact of COVID-19

This section is a summary of the data and feedback that has so far been received to aid our understanding of where improvement may be required. The picture will evolve over time especially when the full impact of COVID-19 is realized and perhaps again when Brexit takes place. This document is therefore organic and there will be further opportunities for those who have not yet engaged to do so. What is clear is that some people need more support than others.

Health, Wellbeing and older people

- The JSNA data suggests that the mortality rate from cancer in persons aged under 75 years is high (133 per 10,000) compared with the Wiltshire average (118 per 10,000)
- There are four surgeries in the community area based at Great Bedwyn, Burbage, Pewsey and Upavon, each having varied rates of doctor / patient ratios. The Kennet and Avon Medical Partnership which also encompasses Marlborough collectively have a range of practice staff including an advanced nurse practitioner, advanced adult care practitioner, a clinical pharmacist, health care assistants, a practice manager, practice nurses, dispensers, social prescribers, TCOP Nurse, and a TCOP social navigator
- Fitness and health levels in the area are generally excellent . However, with a very high elderly population (24% over 65), access to provision and local GP appointments can be a problem especially for those who do not live in these parishes. Relationships with health are improving and work is just beginning to improve combined social media and communication. Pewsey does not have a local area coordinator
- The JSNA data highlights fuel poverty as a possible problem in the area with over 10% of households experiencing fuel poverty. This figure is likely to have increased due to COVID and impacts particularly on the travelling communities
- There are a range of valued activities for older people within the area such as U3A, the heritage centre, tea rooms, Movement to Music, Woodborough Gateway Club, Walk for Life and the Ramblers. However, loneliness and isolation remain a huge issue in the area due to both the elderly population and the very rural geography. The current pandemic has made the situation far worse despite the excellent community support that is in place. The opening of the leisure centre and the running of on-line classes has been appreciated
- Continued support is required for those living with dementia and the Memory Café should start again once the restrictions are lifted
- The Gateway Club in Woodborough is doing very well and includes provision for SEND adults
- Pewsey no longer operates a food bank, but support is being offered to those who need it. This includes hot meals being provided once a week to vulnerable people by the PCCA, primary and secondary schools doing food boxes and the weekly market where fruit and veg is purchased through a “what you can afford” basis. The reestablishment of a permanent food bank has been suggested.

Children and Young People

- Most secondary school age children attend Pewsey Vale School but a sizeable number attend St Johns in Marlborough. Pewsey Vale School does not have a sixth form, so students need to go outside of the community area to take “A” levels
- The JSNA data suggests that the percentage of KS2 pupils reaching the expected grade (72%) was well above average for Wiltshire (64%). However, the average attainment 8 score and average progress 8 score is very low. These measure GCSE qualification standard achievements.
- The dedicated Children’s Centre in Pewsey run by Spurgeons closed about a year ago as it was underused due to the rural nature of the area making access difficult. The area is now served by the ones located in Tidworth, Marlborough and Devizes.
- There are currently no youth clubs in Pewsey or places where young people can go and just be. There are uniformed groups and a range of sporting and cultural clubs. Some discussion has taken and there is support for a local café to open one evening a week for young people as well as one-off events. However, there is strong agreement that something more regular and sustainable is required. In the other villages, some youth clubs exist such as in Great Bedwyn and Grafton, but most have no provision. In addition, the Open Blue Bus operates when restrictions allow in Burbage and Upavon offering a place for young people to safely go. Two young people were being driven from Pewsey to Upavon so that they could join in suggesting that there is unmet need in Pewsey. The Youth Adventure Trust have also been grant funded to offer support to local vulnerable or struggling young people
- Many young people in the villages are desperate to engage and do something outdoors once the restrictions are lifted. The feedback from Parish Councils is that there is generally a lack of youth provision for their young people. However, there is a recognition that the normal model of provision will not work in a very rural setting as there are simply insufficient numbers living in one place and the youth organisations do not deem it as viable to operate in these remote areas.
- Pewsey Vale Secondary School have concerns for their student’s mental health and educational attainment because of the restrictions introduced around COVID.

Community Safety

- Due to COVID-19, crime and ASB may alter once the restrictions are lifted and we may see a different situation to what is occurring now. Additionally, if debt and unemployment continue to rise, this may also increase criminal activity.
- There is a perception that ASB has recently increased but the police report that this does not seem to be the case. Prior to the pandemic, there were issues with youths congregating in places such as the Pewsey Co-op car park, behind Pewsey Vale Campus and in the Ashton Park and Bouverie Hall car parks. This has not increased but that may be due to the restrictions that have been in place. The lack of youth clubs or after school clubs does not help this situation
- There has been an increase in theft of garden machinery in the villages, particularly in the Great Bedwyn and Crofton areas as well as a horsebox from Woodborough and two trailers from other areas.
- Reports of incidences where numbers have exceeded the COVID restrictions have been low and mostly dealt with by warnings and occasional fines
- Shoplifting within Pewsey has increased recently but this trend is often seen before Christmas
- Before COVID, there was a problem with ‘Boy Racers’ but this has decreased. It may well start again once restrictions are lifted
- Hare Coursing continues to be an issue with 7 incidences reported since September 2020.

- There have been rumours of the footpaths being very busy during the COVID restrictions, but the police only have one incident between a boater and resident.

Housing

- The JSNA data confirms that house prices in the community area are considerably higher than the average in Wiltshire. It is a very desirable area to live in and attracts those with higher incomes.
- Additionally, the area has rail stations at Pewsey and Bedwyn offering a direct route to London. This has attracted many people to live in and around Pewsey as well as a high percentage of 2nd homes for those who live in London. The estate agents have also indicated that there is an increase in people moving out of London as they can either work from home or it is too expensive for younger people to buy properties there. The Pewsey area is one of the most popular destinations.
- The result of this high desirability is that it makes it increasingly difficult for young adults and lower income groups to afford to rent or purchase. Collaborative work is required to build affordable rented accommodation and land made available for self-builds.
- Several organisations have suggested that continuing support for community led housing provision and engagement with the community in response to forward planning and development control should be encouraged. This will inspire local people to set aspirations and targets for its own development. The Pewsey Community Land Trust is leading locally on this approach.
- The environmental performance of housing will need to be developed to improve health for all age groups and to help meet the Carbon targets that have been set. The Community Land Trust is investigating the potential use of roof space for solar energy generation

Environment

- Many of the Parish Councils report that there are still problems caused by ground water flooding and that maintenance of ditches may not have been carried out as well compared with previous years. Flood risk management is taking place along the river Wylye catchment and tributaries including near Upavon. Many of the parish Councils have emergency plans in place.
- There is significant enthusiasm for the development of green infrastructure, particular to support the uptake of electric vehicles, but also to provide power to homes, businesses and organisations.
- Improvements in small business waste management and establishment of low cost, low energy-use housing may result in reductions in energy poverty.
- Meeting national energy performance targets during the next thirty years will be a considerable drain on household resources but could also provide major employment benefits locally.
- A reduction in travel has occurred as a result of more people working from home due to the pandemic. This should be encouraged where practical as well as the provision of local employment opportunities especially for young people
- The Pewsey Vale is a beautiful area that is enjoyed both by local people and tourists. There is a need to manage the impact of this including reducing litter and fly tipping as well as verge maintenance. Pewsey Parish Council has a 5-year environment plan which some groups in the community have indicated that they are keen to engage with.
- Farmers and groups such as the “Southern Streams Farmer Group” carry out important local conservation work and management of priority habitats. This should be encouraged and supported.

- There are various national and local schemes that are run at different times to help us reach our 2030 climate change targets and it was felt that these could be promoted and supported more in the community area
- There are reports that planning may have been relaxed and examples of barn conversions in AONB areas taking place.
- There are concerns over the high degree of monoculture (largely maize crops) impacting on good quality Pewsey Vale land (grade 1 and 2), loss of topsoil, compaction and reduced biodiversity.

Economy

- The JSNA data indicates that people living in the community area have a higher than average personal loan. However, it is unclear if this is because they can afford to or that there are financial challenges. The office of National Statistics show that the number of people in the Pewsey area claiming universal benefit has doubled since March 2020 and the Citizens Advice Bureau report that help with debt has become their number one issue with an increasing number of people unable to pay their household bills
- The local business survey carried out during the first lockdown showed that the loss of business was hurting but through innovation and creativity, most have survived quite well. However, some have fallen through the government support gap and have struggled including self-employed, farmers and new businesses.
- Many pubs have still not reopened as they deem it to not be financially viable to do so.
- It has been vocalised that to maintain a viable community, we need to continue to make it possible for all activities and contributors to establish and thrive. The reasons that people choose to live in the Community Area must be supported to maintain the diversity and services that residents and businesses rely on. Hence greater understanding of the inter-dependency of service providers and consumers is to be encouraged
- As travel is an issue in the area and a reduction in car use is to be encouraged, it has been suggested that opening the recycling centres, such as those in Marlborough and Devizes, on the same days as their market will help not only this issue but increase footfall into these towns.
- There is no bus service from Pewsey to Hopton Industrial estate which would aid employment opportunities.

Community resilience and minority groups

- A common theme has been the need to manage and support the move to doing more on-line. The pandemic has led to a huge increase in on-line meetings and the delivery of services and this trend seems likely to continue once any restrictions are lifted. The benefits in an area like Pewsey are enormous as it negates some of the need to travel and opens opportunities to those who had difficulty accessing them previously. However, this shift also excludes a percentage of our community and importantly these are often the people that need support the most. Assistance is therefore required to help those who can't afford the equipment as well as those who do not know how to, are unable to, or are fearful of using it.
- Some of the schools are struggling to provide remote teaching to those students who are unable to attend school. This is mainly due to the lack of suitable equipment or/and unsuitable internet connection. Projects have been established to try and provide some tablets to schools but more help is needed.
- Most of the villages have a community hall and the indication is that they will all reopen once they are able to. However, many of them do not have internet and this

restricts what they can offer and how they can be used. The Bouverie Hall in Pewsey did receive a grant to help with loss of income but if the restrictions continue for some time and not all users come back, the hall may struggle financially

- The community area has both land-based travellers and boaters living in the area
- Land based travellers often base themselves around the Barge at Honey Street and the All Cannings areas. There is currently no outreach work in place to engage with them and this is an issue that needs to be looked at. During the pandemic, it is very hard to operate the Test and Trace system, arrange vaccines, and offer holistic health advice. In addition, for all local travelling communities, it is difficult to obtain census information back from them with the next census to take place in May 2021. Winter fuel poverty is also a key issue and it is likely that post COVID support will be required for them. There is a Friends, families and travellers website where guidance can be added.
- Pewsey Vale Leisure Centre has been closed or had restricted activities for much of 2020. Membership had been good, but a large number have subsequently cancelled significantly impacting income. However, the activities that have been provided have been well received and there is confidence that the situation will improve once the restrictions end.
- Pewsey Library is separate from the leisure centre. It is highly valued despite the JSNA data showing membership as the second lowest in Wiltshire (14% of population). This is largely due again to the rural nature of the area and difficulty of access. There is potential to offer more in the library and to work with the community to do so and discussions hosted by the area board with all stakeholders have begun. The mobile library also operates in most of the other villages.
- Pewsey is a popular tourism and heritage centre and the pandemic has affected this industry. Most sites have been closed or are offering limited access with a knock-on effect to the hospitality industry. Wilton Windmill and Crofton have managed to survive partly thanks to donation boxes.
- The Pewsey Vale Tourism Partnership website is well regarded offering helpful local information including walks for the increasing number of people doing so or cycling. This has caused some issues around respecting the countryside and parking.
- The Pewsey heritage centre has been finishing the education centre and although closed has fortunately received grants meaning that it has managed to survive.
- The co-op is the only supermarket in the community area, and it is relatively small in size. Many residents would be very keen to have an alternative choice without needing to travel to the other market towns.

Transport

- Road traffic collisions within the area are approximately 25% higher than the Wiltshire average and the fire and rescue service are running a publicity campaign to educate people to the dangers on rural roads. Road deaths are high as they are in the other very rural areas of Wiltshire.
- There is wide-spread concern around the condition and use of the roads in the area. The JSNA indicates that there is a higher proportion of roads that need treatment compared with the Wiltshire average. Local roads are viewed as getting worse with potholes and ridges being a problem as well as surface water flooding
- There are also concerns regarding freight usage of the roads and calls for this to be reviewed.
- The area is served by two stations at Pewsey and Bedwyn offering direct trains to London. There was also a low-level station just outside of Burbage until 1966. The Pewsey Vale Rail users group works with TransWilts and GWR to improve the services, facilities and timetables offered. It has had success in improving rail connections and is working with Devizes Gateway Project to have a new station.

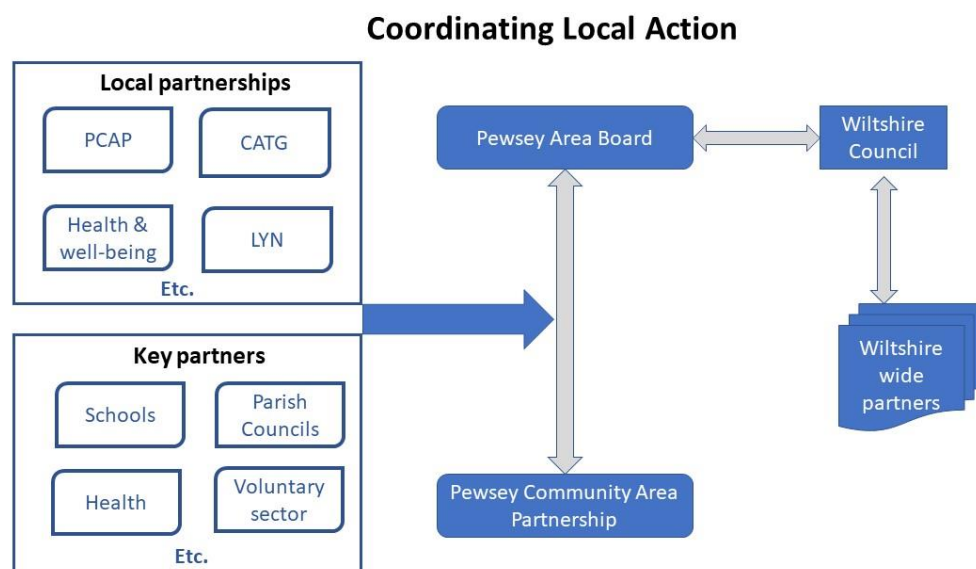
- Bus services within the area are mixed and for many this is not a realistic option. They do not always join up or run regularly enough making it difficult to get to the surrounding towns. If you do not have your own transport, then it can be very isolating. A possible electric car scheme for the villages has been suggested.
- The Link scheme is reliant upon volunteers and most of these are elderly themselves. There is a need to recruit younger people to be drivers. During the pandemic this has been very limited in what it can offer but reports are that demand has also not been there due to the vulnerable mainly staying at home.
- The area is looking to get the Walkers are Welcome accreditation during 2021 and this encourages links to public transport and cycle hire. There may be opportunities to work with young people and schools

A summary of the key issues raised so far can be found at the end of this report.

It is important that this is an inclusive process as possible with special attention to ensure that the villages and minority groups have equal opportunity to feed into this report and the subsequent addressing of community priorities. However, it is recognised that not all issues have been captured and there will be a lot of work undertaken independently. This report is a snapshot within that process

How local actions will be supported

The local response within the Pewsey Community Area is one of co-production recognising that to rebuild our communities, it is important that we work together, sharing information and resources where appropriate.



Pewsey Area Board covers the whole community area and is responsible for the production and management of this document. It links local delivery to Wiltshire Council, police, health and other partners. It is an accountable body with influence and powers. It has its own

funding to help support local initiatives. The Area Board will produce its own work plan to show how what actions it can take as one of the partners to help address the issues raised by the community and captured in this report. Pewsey Area Board will receive regular updates around its own work plan of actions that will support and contribute to the local priorities.

Pewsey Community Area Partnership (PCAP) supports and helps organisations and Parish Councils in the Pewsey Community Area. Working with local groups, Parish Councils, businesses and Wiltshire Council, through the Pewsey Area Board, PCAP strives to resolve issues and make changes for the better. PCAP meets quarterly and it is a public meeting where Parish Councils, Wiltshire Council and other interested organisations are invited to take part. Projects and other actions are generated by the meeting and are monitored through the PCAP plan and through a quarterly Parish Council Issues Report.

PCAP has a committee covering the following themes:

- Management Group
- Countryside & Environment
- Education & Lifelong Learning
- Housing & Local Development
- Transport & Highways
- Crime & Community Safety
- Culture, Heritage & Leisure
- Economy
- Health & Social Care

Other Partners – There are a number of organisations, community groups, businesses and stakeholders who working collectively and collaboratively with the wider community will look to deliver improvements and make the area an even better place to live, work and play. COVID-19 community support is provided by both the [Pewsey Community Coronavirus Assistance](#) and the [C19 Vale of Pewsey Support Network](#)

What are the Next Steps?

- This report will be considered for acceptance by Pewsey Area Board at its meeting in January 2021
- Those who have not yet had an opportunity to contribute significantly will be invited to do so. This would include the surgeries, schools and care homes
- An Area Board work plan will be presented to the Area Board at the first opportunity following local elections in May 2021
- The CEM will engage with partners and stakeholders so that they understand the report and can consider how they will play their part in responding to the issues raised
- Updates will be a standard item at future area board meetings

List of emerging issues as identified by the community and supporting data

Issue	Key supporting evidence source
Mortality rate from cancer in persons under 75 is high	JSNA data

Partnership working and communication with the Kennet and Avon Medical Partnership and local surgeries needs to be improved	Discussions with partners
There is a high rate of fuel poverty especially amongst travellers.	JSNA data Julian Trust
High level of loneliness and isolation especially amongst older and vulnerable people	Partner discussions and JSNA data
No food bank exists	Discussions with foodbanks
Average 8 attainment score is low	JSNA data
Lack of youth activities in rural areas	Common message from all Parish Councils
No youth clubs or place for youths to hang out within Pewsey	Common message from all stakeholder conversations
Some young people are suffering from poor mental health	Feedback from Pewsey Vale School
ASB in some parts of the community area were high before COVID-19	Police statistics
Increase in rural theft of agricultural equipment	Parish Councils and Police
Increase in hare coursing	Police
Lack of affordable housing	JSNA data
Lack of community involvement in developmental planning	Community Land Trust
Need for more environmental housing with reduced carbon levels.	JSNA data and environmental groups
Ground water flooding occurs in many places in the community area	Parish Councils
Lack of green infrastructure including electric vehicles	Conversations with partner organisations
Challenge to achieve energy performance targets and climate change targets in an affordable way	Community Land Trust
Need to manage the impact of tourism including parking, litter and the management of the countryside.	Pewsey Vale Tourism Partnership
Personal debt and financial challenges are increasing rapidly	Office of National Statistics, JSNA data
Businesses affected by COVID-19 will need support to keep going	Local Businesses
The increased emphasis upon the use of on-line has excluded parts of the community including those who need support the most	Local support group conversations
There is a lack of equipment and broadband for schools to teach all students remotely	Schools
Many community halls in the villages do not have internet.	Parish Councils
No outreach and support work for land-based travellers in the area	Julian trust
Difficult to engage and provide support and information for all travelling communities	Julian Trust
Pewsey library is not used fully.	JSNA data and discussions with library

Heritage and hospitality sectors have been hit hard by COVID-19	Pewsey Vale Tourism and Business Partnership
There is a high level of road collisions and deaths	JSNA data and Fire and Rescue Service.
Roads are in relatively poor condition often exasperated by heavy goods vehicles	JSNA data and PCAP
Transport is very difficult for non-car owners.	All partner discussions
Link schemes do not have enough drivers	Link Scheme and PCAP

