



THE RADYR AND MORGANSTOWN ASSOCIATION

(A Civic Society affiliated to the Civic Trust for Wales)



GENERAL MEETING

Old Church Rooms on Monday 15th June 2015 at 7.30pm

Present: Tom Evans [Vice Chairman], Nick Hawkins (Secretary), Bob Roberts (Treasurer), Eric Blackwell, David Cargill, Ralph Vaughan, Cllrs Julia Hallinan, Rod McKerlich & David Suthers and 19 members.

Apologies: David Silver [Chairman], Raymond Rivron, Allan Cook & Julie Davies

A Talk by Peter Barrett-Lee, Professor of Breast Cancer Studies, Cardiff University & Velindre NHS Trust Medical Director, Cardiff.

Ralph Vaughan introduced Professor Barrett-Lee. He noted that R&M had, historically, shown great support for Cancer organisations; £300K had been raised for Tenovus alone. Velindre Hospital had been chosen as the Association's Charity for the coming year so this was an excellent opportunity to find out more about what went on there.

Professor Barrett-Lee said that he chose to move from London to work at Velindre 20 years ago mainly because of the work being done there but also for family reasons. He could not now think of a better place to be. He mentioned that Velindre Cancer Centre (VCC) is now the oldest Health Trust in Wales and has responsibility for both cancer treatment and the Welsh Blood Service. Despite what people might read in the press, cancer care in Wales is good with 89% of patients rating their care as excellent or very good.

There were a number of challenges facing cancer care in Wales. For various reasons, the incidence of cancer is increasing - an ageing population, alcohol consumption, smoking, low fruit & vegetable consumption, weight problems (57% of adults are clinically overweight), lack of physical activity, etc. However, overall life expectancy is improving. The net result is that the number of people living with cancer is predicted to rise from 110K in 2010 to 130K in 2015, 160K in 2020 and 220K in 2030. The present organisation of cancer care in Wales is unnecessarily complex and must be simplified to meet this challenge. People need to be involved but there are simply too many public bodies to be effective.

Talking specifically about VCC, Professor Barrett-Lee said the current site, started in 1955, was no longer fit for purpose. Over time the site had simply grown with the result that everything was now in the wrong place and there was no space to install more radio-therapy units (linear accelerators). A business case for building a new hospital (either alongside the present unit on the Whitchurch Hospital campus or elsewhere) was now being developed with the Welsh Government; the aim being to move to the new site in under seven years. It was, however, essential to plan a new facility to reflect the way cancer care will be operated in the future. The wider community can help in this process by telling VCC how they think cancer care should be organised.

Some aspects of way cancer care can improved are already understood - 'awareness' is the first step. Seeing a doctor early enough is often the key; late presentation is a real issue in some parts of Wales. Care also needs to be centred on patients in their homes, rather than in a specialist (central) cancer unit. He envisaged a scenario in which patients are treated primarily at home, visiting a 'local cancer centre' for simple treatments (e.g. chemotherapy), a satellite radiotherapy unit when required, and only going to VCC for complex treatment (which might include the use of experimental drugs). The new site needs to be designed for this sort of scenario and doctors need to be trained appropriately - this takes a long time. 'Best practice' also needs to be defined and propagated. Sadly, this does not happen as much as it ought to at present. Palliative care, which is actually quite good at present, also needs to be integrated.

Professor Barrett-Lee also gave a quick insight into some of the research work being done at VCC at a cost of over £3M per year. Treatment of breast cancer using Tamoxifen tends to lose its

effectiveness over time and it is now thought this is due to an interaction with e-cadherin, a 'key adhesion molecule'. This interaction may be suppressed using a new drug saracatinib and a clinical trial (styled ARISTACAT) is just about to start. This is just one example of the way that observation, statistics, low level research and clinical trials can result in better results for patients.

In response to questions, Professor Barrett-Lee said that cancer treatment is improving and one of the keys is awareness and early diagnosis. However, he cautioned about over-diagnosis. It benefits neither the patient nor the finances of the NHS to treat 'low-level' cancers which will cause the patient no significant long-term problems. He emphasised that doctors do not currently know how to prevent cancers although two simple actions reduce the risk of getting it - stop smoking and take regular exercise. He spoke briefly about the use of stem cell research - currently used in the research process rather than as part of a cure. Finally, he described the integration of VCC with Tenovus. Tenovus focus on patient care rather than the underlying science. In that they are marvellously helpful and successful.

Ralph Vaughan thanked Professor Barrett-Lee for giving such an interesting and thought-promoting talk. He said that, if anyone wanted to pass the Professor their views on any aspects of cancer care, they should let him (Ralph) know. He presented him with a token of appreciation.

Minutes of the previous General Meeting on 2nd February 2015

The minutes were approved. Under matters arising it was noted that Radyr Library had had a reprieve and had not closed, although the long term future was still uncertain. It was also noted that the Wine Club based in Cicchetti was going strong and now met there at 11:00 on the second Tuesday and the fourth Wednesday of the month. If anyone wanted to get involved, they should contact the Secretary.

Report on May Festival

David Cargill reported on the May Festival, which had been a great success. Everyone had been involved and the NSPCC had benefitted greatly. After a successful charity day at the Golf Club the previous weekend, he thought the total sum raised by the R&M Community over the year would come to £15K. He passed his especial thanks to Allan Cook (who had been presented with the Ken Innes Cup) for his work on all the arts content and to Maggie Roberts for looking after the Festival Queen and Princesses so well. In her contribution to Radyr Chain the Festival Queen had said she had had a fantastic time which she would remember for the rest of her life. Looking to next year's Festival, David said that he wished to involve younger people in the planning and running of events and he also noted that there would be some changes from the normal pattern of events because the Twinning Partnership would be celebrating their 30th anniversary on the final weekend. The theme would be Roald Dahl.

Anyone with any comments on this year's Festival or ideas for next year's was asked to contact David.

Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer reported that the Festival had been very successful financially - both for the Charity (who would receive a cheque for £5300 from the Association, plus £6K from other sources excluding the Golf Club) and the Association (who would have a surplus - including Film Night profits - of around £1000). He did, though, note that the Association had already spent £900 on building the new Festival Website and on the Hanging Baskets in Station Road (including having a new 'animal' made and painted). Balances stood at £8836 C/Ac, £1 Reserve, £3759 COIF, total £12,696. However, once payment was made to the NSPCC, this would reduce to £7395.

General R&M Matters

Cllr Rod McKerlich first of all congratulated the Association on being awarded the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service. He noted the many aspects of R&M Community life touched by the Association,

often in conjunction with the R&MCC, and he thanked the Association most warmly on behalf of the R&M Community.

Cllr McKerlich also spoke about the Cardiff Local Development Plan. He said that Cardiff Council had responded to the 180+ action items raised by the Inspector, but in a largely indigestible form. A new (and final) inspection was now in progress (due to finish on 23rd July) during which the Inspector would be reviewing the responses: he did not know what she would make of them. Cllr Julia Hallinan, newly elected Chair of the R&MCC, said that the RMCC would shortly be initiating the preparation of a new Village Plan.

The Secretary noted, on behalf of the OCR Hall Management Committee, that it was hoped that the redevelopment work would start in mid-July and be completed in early September. The Garth Room and kitchen would be completed early to allow the Nursery School to return on time but there would be disruption to other users. The car park would undoubtedly become a temporary building site. More information would be given out soon once there was confirmation of the funding for the project.

Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony

It was noted that this year's ceremony would be held on 4th December. Anyone with any ideas for the ceremony was asked to contact the Secretary.

Any Other Business

The Vice-Chairman congratulated the R&MCC on arranging a superb WWI Exhibition. Over 900 people had attended - a truly impressive result.

The Secretary reported that it was hoped that a performance of The Railway Children could be arranged for December; also that the Film Nights would be restarting in September although the selection of available films was not yet known. He emphasised that the Association would be very happy to pass over the running of the Film Nights (a profitable enterprise) to another owner. He also reminded everyone that 2016 was the centenary of Roald Dahl's birth and it was planned to schedule a number of events during the year, apart from making it the theme of next year's Festival. Any ideas or offers of help would be gratefully received.

The Vice-Chairman noted that work was in hand to convert the R&M Community Website to a new technical platform. At least initially the site would look roughly the same but the method of operating it would be changed.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on Monday, 14th September 2015, commencing at 19.30 in the OCR. The speakers will be David Cargill and Brian Evans, who would be talking about Magistrates Courts.