

GENERAL MEETING

Old Church Rooms on Monday 4th June 2018 at 7.30pm

Present: David Silver [Chairman], Nick Hawkins (Secretary), Eric Blackwell, David Cargill, Bob Roberts, Ian Thomas, Cllrs Rod McKerlich and Ralph Vaughan & 21 members.

Apologies: Tom Evans [Vice Chairman], Ellis Jenkins (Treasurer), Allan Cook, Raymond Rivron, Cllrs Helen Lloyd Jones and David Suthers, Colin Johnson, Brian & Gaynor Leaf.

Introduction

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Ian Giblett - Cardiff Conservation Volunteers (CCV)

The Chairman introduced Ian. He had joined the Volunteers when just leaving university and looking for something to do. He had a desire to get involved with manual work outdoors. A friend introduced him to CCV and the rest is history...

Ian explained that CCV, a Charity, started in 1978 (so 2018 is the 40th anniversary) with the objective of looking after the green spaces around Cardiff whilst keeping 'the old skills' going. Currently about 90 people meet by the University in the City Centre every Sunday and disperse to work on a number of projects. They do as much as possible using hand tools. He brought along a selection of his own tools (including billhooks - from different countries - and axes) and admitted to have become an avid collector.

He explained the main tasks done by CCV - managing woodlands, dry stone walling, fencing, repairing and creating hedges, sorting out ponds, creating and restoring paths and steps, and much more. Regarding woodlands, he talked about the historical changes in management. Originally, woods were mixed and coppicing was carried out regularly, often on a seven-year cycle. Coppicing trees (effectively cutting them down to the ground and allowing them to re-grow from the base) keeps trees in a juvenile state (some trees can actually be over a thousand years old) and produces crops of good quality timber - straight and long. The wood was used for building materials and charcoal making. But much was lost after WWI when vast areas of conifers were planted. A return to the old methods now creates a much more varied habitat that lets in light, encourages flowers, then insects, then small mammals.

He spoke about fungi, which thrives on the deadwood created as part of active woodland management - different species thrive in the different habitats created by the coppicing cycle. He described the problems arising from invasive plant species like Himalayan Balsam and Knotweed.

The old crafts make the best solutions. He explained the techniques of constructing a dry stone wall (which can last for centuries), how to put up fencing (don't use 'postcrete'!) and how to form a 'living hedge'. All these 'eco solutions' are effective, not costly to do, and create varied habitats for a wide selection of creatures. He described how footpaths and steps are created. Some people may think of these as manmade artefacts not in keeping with a natural habitat. On the contrary, they provide safe passage for people to experience and enjoy the environment as well as minimising the effect of erosion. He explained that, historically, ponds used to 'wander'! A pond would appear and flourish and fill with plants but would eventually silt up and the water would naturally flow to another location. That is not welcome with land ownership nowadays so CCV do clean out ponds, or even create them from scratch. A lot of all this work he illustrated with pictures taken at Forest Farm, Radyr Woods, and many areas around Cardiff and elsewhere.

He summarised the aim of CCV as being to encourage biodiversity using practical management; to preserve habitats that exist; and to have a good time!

Ian's talk generated a number of questions. All the work done by CCV comes about at the request of the land owners. Local Councils (including the R&MCC) ask them to come in and do work - for which

they charge a low daily rate (which pays for tools and materials, all the labour being voluntary). They do welcome young people (e.g. Duke of Edinburgh scheme) onto working parties although there are restrictions on age and supervision because this is a physical environment with heavy and sharp tools. Disabled people, supported by carers, are also welcome. Some work is done using recycled materials - the new plastic based boardwalk in Radyr Woods being a typical environment.

Ian asked people to let him know of any area which required work (but not private gardens). Generally speaking there is a reasonable balance between the number of volunteers available and the schedule of work.

At the close of the talk, the Chairman thanked Ian for giving such an interesting and stimulating insight into an often neglected area of the world in which we live. He gave him a token of the Association's appreciation.

Minutes of the previous General Meeting on 5th February 2018

The minutes were approved. There were no matters arising not on the agenda.

Report on the May Festival

The Chairman (who also acts as Chair of the Festival Committee) said that the Festival had been very successful. The weather had been superb, which meant that all the external events had proceeded as planned - although a couple of events had actually slightly reduced attendance, probably because the weather was too good! He had been particularly pleased with the number of youngsters who had been involved. He highlighted three events which had been run specifically to raise funds for the nominated Charity, Alzheimer's Society Cymru, all of which had raised over £1000. They were the Coffee Morning, Open Gardens event and the Vintage Tea Party. He also mentioned the Barn Dance on the final Saturday which had been run by the Twinning Fellowship. Everyone had had a good time and the fusion of English, Welsh and French barn dance instruction-giving was wondrous to witness!

Treasurer's Report

On behalf of the Treasurer, Bob Roberts said that, as usual, it was too early to give precise figures for the outcome of the Festival. He noted that, through the year, the very active local Alzheimer's Group - formed specifically as a result of nominating the Charity - had raised £15K. To that needed to be added around £7K raised through Festival events, including bucket collections and the prize draw. The result was that the R&M Community will have raised in excess of £22K for the Charity. (The dummy cheque given at the final Festival event was for £18.5K.)

As far as the Association's own finances were concerned, the Festival had resulted in a surplus of £1400, almost exactly in line with the predicted budget. He noted that last year's surplus (of £1100) had already been spent via the purchase of a number of essential items (BBQ, gazebos, etc) which will allow the Association to carry on its work. He also noted that the (now closed) Radyr & Morganstown Choral Society had passed the Association its remaining funds (£3,073.55) with the request that *'the money would be held and used by the RMA as a designated fund for the purpose of supporting music for all ages in the Radyr and Morganstown Community'*. This money had been placed in a restricted account.

The net result was that the Association currently held around £15K in its accounts, of which £7K was being held for Alzheimer's and £3K for the RMCS. This left the Association's true reserves broadly in line with its reserves policy.

Members were asked to give regard to the monies being held for music making and send any ideas for the allocation of the funds to the Secretary.

There were no questions.

General R&M Matters

The Chairman said that he had been asked before the meeting to place on the agenda the subject of the planning (and licensing) applications for a 'micro pub' in Station Road. He noted that the planning application could be accessed on line and that, at the time of the meeting, there were 45

public comments registered, all in favour. He also noted that the matter had been the subject of very active Twitter discussions. He invited comments from members present.

The following points raised were noted in a lively discussion:

- The location abuts residential accommodation and there is concern that excessive noise will be generated by various aspects of the business.
- The proposed opening hours were too long - notably on a Saturday when closure time is stated as being 12:30am.
- The business will worsen already existing traffic and parking issues in the locality.
- Rowdy behaviour and smoking outside the establishment will be to the detriment of the Community.
- The planning application did not contain sufficient information to allay local residents' fears on these and related matters and contained potential inaccuracies.
- There were other locations (not specified) within R&M more suited to having such a pub.

More positive comments included:

- Some people felt this was a perfect place for a micro pub and would complement existing 'eateries'. Radyr needed a pub; the closest alternatives being the Tynant or Radyr Court pubs.
- The location was well served by bus and train routes and was close to the Taff Trail.
- There were no plans for access to the back garden and sound insulation was being proposed.
- The licensing hours were no different from Cicchetti's and that establishment had not generated any concern.

In actual discussion it was noted that:

- Three potential businesses had expressed an interest in the site, a gin bar, a take-away, and the micro-pub.
- The planning and the licensing applications appeared to contain slightly different operation times, with the licensing application being the more restricted.
- Some concerns might be lessened if the opening hours were more restricted at the outset; the point was made that it is generally easier to extend hours than to restrict them retrospectively.
- Could a 'memorandum of understanding' be established which provided some guarantees to the local community in advance of the opening?
- Any response to the planning application must be phrased in terms of valid planning matters.

At the end of the discussion it was agreed that part of the problem was that local people really had limited knowledge of how the micro pub would operate in practice and they would welcome the opportunity to discuss their concerns with, and receive the assurances of, the applicants. The Secretary undertook to arrange such a meeting, which would need to be soon in view of the deadline for making comments on the applications.

Secretary's Note: at this point many members left the meeting.

The Chairman noted that Plasdŵr were arranging a further 'drop in session' in the New School Rooms from 4pm to 7pm on Thursday, 14th June.

Entertainment

Eric Blackwell reported that he was working on the next films to be shown. The Film Club would restart in September.

Initial thoughts on the Christmas Tree lighting ceremony on Friday, 7th December

The Secretary apologised for raising this matter so early but said it was simply to note the date (which has been agreed by the R&MCC) of this popular event and issue an open invitation to anyone who has any thoughts on how the event might be improved to get in touch with him.

Any Other Business

Radyr Recorded. Ian Thomas reminded members of the Association's initiative to create an electronic archive of 'R&M past and present'. This had been established to link in with the recent Festival's theme of 'Memories'. He had collected a lot of material from the Festival but was looking for any photos from past Festivals that could be added to the archive. It was also noted that he was interested in any other material that reflected the history of R&M via other events and groups - Tenovus, WI, etc. If people have the technical ability, pictures can be uploaded to <http://flickr.com/Groups/Radyr>. But, if people just wanted to express an interest or get involved with the project, contact the Secretary on rma@radyr.org.uk.

Planning. There was a brief discussion on what was happening with respect to all the local building work. Cllr McKerlich said that he was working hard to try to resolve, and get implemented, the plans for the future designs of both Heol Isaf and the Llantrisant Road (as far as Creigiau). He recognised the real concerns being expressed regarding speeding and increased traffic on Heol Isaf and calming methods needed to be introduced. Unfortunately, he was afraid that, if and when these were implemented, Bryn Derwen might become a dangerous rat run. His concerns for the Llantrisant Road included trying to ensure that different builders did not choose to install competing sewers at different times with the potential effect of endless road works.

Traffic Accidents. Details of a recent traffic accident (which had involved the police) were mentioned in the context of increased traffic along the Llantrisant Road. It was noted that such matters ought to be brought up at the next **PACT meeting**, which is scheduled for 7pm on **Wednesday, 27th June** in the Old Church Rooms.

Future Role of the Association. The Secretary drew members' attention to the short article in the recent Association Newsletter concerning what role the Association should take in trying to secure the continuation of 'Community Spirit' within R&M. He noted that the Association's objectives could be summarised as '*making Radyr & Morganstown a great place to live and work*' and he wondered what the Community would look like in, say, 10 years' time when many of the present 'leaders' might no longer be involved. He would be interested in any ideas or thoughts members might have on this topic.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be on Monday, 24th September 2018 commencing at 19.30 in the OCR. The speaker will be Ian Flower - of 'Engineers for Overseas Development'.