



# THE RADYR AND MORGANSTOWN ASSOCIATION



## GENERAL MEETING

Via Zoom on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021 at 7.30pm

**Present:** David Silver (Chair), Tom Evans (Vice-Chair), Nick Hawkins (Secretary), David Cargill (Treasurer), Allan Cook, , Ian Thomas, Richard Wales, Cllrs Helen Lloyd Jones, Huw Jones, Rod McKerlich & Ralph Vaughan, and 35 members.

**Apologies:** None

## Introduction

The Chairman welcomed everyone to another Zoom meeting and wished everyone a Happy St David's Day. He mentioned that the meeting was being recorded and would be available to view shortly on the Community Website.

## Simon Bradwick & Paul Barrat: 'The Living Taff - Mark your Spot'

The Chairman introduced Simon and Paul, who were both involved in eco-tourism in the Taff Valley and across Wales and responsible for organising events and walking tours etc. They were both now involved in setting up the 'Living Taff Project'.

In a series of photographs, our speakers told the story of the River Taff. One of the sources is at Pen y Fan in the Brecon Beacons National Park, near the Storey Arms. From there it flows down to Cardiff, a mere 40 miles. Whilst the Taff has always been an important river, closely associated with the industrial past of the area, it has never felt really 'connected' with Cardiff, nor seen in a positive light. The photographs showed its passage through Merthyr Tydfil, where flood defences keep it hidden. The river once used to run black due industrialisation but is now green, and abundant with fish. Some of the structures, like the Pontygwaith Bridge on the Trevithick/Taff Trail are world-famous. In Pontypridd, the river flows between a shopping area and a park - both orientated away from the river. At Blackweir, in Bute Park, the river becomes tidal and flows down into Cardiff Bay. In the lower reaches it is, perhaps, more connected with its environment.

The Living Taff Project was launched in 2015 at the Pier Head Building in the Bay, attended by around 400 people. The aim was to establish what the River Taff meant to them. A number of projects then arose including walking tours, a 'Jazz on the Taff' Festival and a film was made by Will Millard about how the river 'came back from the dead' (and was shown on BBC 1 in 2016). The project has linked with similar groups across Europe who are celebrating the rejuvenation of rivers. A conference in Slovenia drew up a 'wild river manifesto'. The Taff is actually a good example of a river that had 'died' due to industrialisation but has been 'reborn'. One favourable aspect has been the fact that the river is not associated with much farming. This means that, now the polluting waste has stopped, it is not been further polluted by chemicals.

The 'Mark your Spot' project is a further spin-off from the Living Taff Project. The idea is to gather an archive of stories associated with the Taff, plus associated pictures, that can be put on a website and built into a map. This can then be used by residents to hear about their local river and also by visitors to the area. The concept is for people to write brief stories (100 words) - which may be truth or fiction - and upload them via a website (Secretary's note: [www.livingtaff.org/mark-your-spot/](http://www.livingtaff.org/mark-your-spot/)). Some interviews may be recorded and added to the website in due course.

In summary, the speakers emphasised that the River Taff has never been promoted as a national asset for Wales. Its importance has been underestimated. Important buildings lie alongside the river's path, from Cyfarthfa Castle in Merthyr, via Castell Coch, down the The Bay. The project team had never looked for grants, all the work having been done and funded by them. The aim was to link the River Taff with other significant rivers around the world. A lot more could be done with enough people involved.

The Chairman thanked the speakers for their presentation and asked about the relationship between this initiative and the Taff Trail. Paul said that he had help set up the Taff Trail when he was working with the Wales Tourist Board. Questions were invited. These included: 'where does all the plastic that can be seen hanging from the branches alongside the Taff in Radyr come from' - this isn't really known. Technically, this is not 'pollution' but 'rubbish management'; 'how will the

stories be managed' - a group will be formed to vet the stories. A Facebook page has been established. Some stories have been submitted already. Arriva Trains had agreed to set up a competition to encourage entries but they lost the contract to Transport for Wales, so work on that idea is starting again; 'could kayak trips be incorporated' - possibly but there are some difficult stretches on the river; 'are contacts with schools and universities being developed' - this is in prospect and bi-lingual content was welcome as well.

Ian Thomas, on behalf of the Radyr Community Website, undertook to put more information and contact details on the site. He emphasised that the stories - contributed in the language of choice and accompanied by pictures - should show what makes the Taff special now, throughout the recent lockdown, and historically. It was also important that the Taff is looked after, particularly in Radyr & Morganstown.

Simon thanked everyone for listening to the presentation and said he had been given 'food for thought'. He noted that the Taff Trail had been very well used during lockdown and this bode well for the Living Taff Project.

At the end of the question and answer session, the Chairman again thanked Simon and Paul and said the traditional token of the Association's appreciation was on its way.

## **Minutes of the last meeting (1<sup>st</sup> February 2021) and matters arising**

The minutes were accepted as a true record. The Chairman noted specifically that the Association's Zoom license had already been well used.

### **Treasurer's Report**

The Treasurer reported that the Association's accounts for y/e 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020 were still being audited and would be presented at the AGM in April. He noted that there had not been much movement on the account since the previous meeting, although there had been income of around £706, largely due to the receipt of sponsorship for the forthcoming Festivals. The Association's retained surplus now stood at £8541.

There were no questions.

### **Festivals in 2021**

The Chairman repeated the information given at the previous meeting that the decision had been taken to run two festivals in 2021 - from 1<sup>st</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> May, mainly on line, and from 11<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> September, hopefully largely 'as usual' depending on the state of the pandemic.

Content agreed for the May Festival included a talk on wine, a cookery demonstration, Tenovus quiz, on-line Bingo, a Family Treasure Trail, Open Gardens (Covid allowing), plus competitions - photographic (animals in R&M) and colouring and drawing.

The September Festival would hopefully be much more like the traditional May Festival, with a Concert in the Parc and a Fete. Being held in September, opportunity would be taken to revisit a 'Produce and Craft Show' - featuring vegetables, cakes, crafts, etc, and probably held in Morganstown Village Hall. More details would be provided in due course, but budding gardeners and allotment holders should take note!

Details were planned to be in the forthcoming Radyr Chain.

### **May Election Hustings**

Ian Thomas reported that the Association was arranging to hold a Hustings (on Zoom) on Monday, 19<sup>th</sup> April, prior to the Senedd Election on 6<sup>th</sup> May. One representative from each of the competing parties was being invited and would be given a limited time to respond to questions. The same questions would be given to each representative and he invited people to send in the questions they would like raised. They should be sent to [hustings@radyr.org.uk](mailto:hustings@radyr.org.uk). Ian also advised people to register now for postal voting if they wished, and also to ensure they were registered to vote. (Secretary's note: see <https://radyr.org.uk/are-you-registered-to-vote/> for details).

### **Planning**

It was noted that the Association had set up a new page on the Community Website concentrating on local planning matters. This could be accessed at <https://radyr.org.uk/rmassociation/local-planning/>. The following matters were mentioned at the meeting:

**Cardiff LDP** The Secretary gave an update on progress since the previous meeting. Contact had been made with the North West Cardiff Group (NWCG) and ways suggested how the Association might work with them to support and enhance their endeavours. A response was awaited. In the meantime, we were formulating our plans.

**Mound Field/ Bridge over the Railway line (Planning application 21/00235/MJR)** This application relates to the building of a bridge over the railway in connection with the Transport for Wales upgrade of the line. Concerns have been expressed about the size of the bridge and the impact on the environment (for details see the above website). The Association would be objecting to the application on the grounds that the bridge is too large and a smaller one would suffice as vehicular traffic over the bridge will be small. A larger bridge potentially opens the door more easily to developers if flood plain objections are overcome. Further objections in a similar vein would be useful. The R&MCC had already sent in their objections. The expiry date for objections is 11<sup>th</sup> March.

**Application to build 36 houses in Woodland behind Danescourt between De Braose Close and Radyr Court Road (Planning Application No:20/00187/MJR)** This application is important to Radyr as it concerns the loss of a section of woodland and the loss of an important stretch of Green Corridor on the west side of the Taff. The Association will be objecting to this application, as will the R&MCC. The expiry date for objections is 15<sup>th</sup> March. A petition has also been raised against the development - see <https://saveourwoods.org/new-petition/>

**Waugron Road** The pre-planning consultation for this development expired on 26<sup>th</sup> February. It concerns the development of the previous household waste site to include a seven-storey building with 50 flats, plus a bus hub and shops. Objections include the fact that the land is contaminated and is actually much better used for its original purpose for waste collection. Letters have been written to Mark Drakeford and Kevin Brennan asking for support. Cllr McKerlich explained the background to the closure of the site for waste disposal and doubted that the current Council would contemplate its reopening.

**Hedgerow along Llantrisant Road** It was noted that hedgerows had very recently been removed by Redrow, against conservation advice. The Association agreed to write a letter of objection.

## **Any other business**

**Census** It was noted that the National Census was due to be conducted on Sunday, 21<sup>st</sup> March and Census packs would soon be delivered to all properties. They are not Junk Mail and should not be thrown away! As returns are to be made via the internet, neighbours may need help.

**Green Bins** It was noted that fortnightly Green Bin collections would be starting again on Tuesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> March. In response to a question about the recent change of collection day from Monday to Tuesday, Cllr McKerlich said that there had been some teething problems but they had been resolved. Any further problems should be reported to him.

**Cllr David Suthers** The Association expressed its congratulations to Cllr Suthers on the occasion of his 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday on 2<sup>nd</sup> March.

## **Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be on Wednesday, 24<sup>th</sup> March starting at 19.30, again via Zoom, when Transport for Wales would be providing an update to Association Members.

Following that, the next meeting would be the Association's AGM on 12<sup>th</sup> April starting at 19.30, again via Zoom. This would include the election of Officers and members of the Association's Executive. Anyone interested in joining the Executive was asked to contact the Chairman or Secretary. We would like to make our Executive more diverse than its current makeup of 100% male and 50% over the age of 70.