



# THE RADYR AND MORGANSTOWN ASSOCIATION



## GENERAL MEETING

Via Zoom on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> June 2021 at 7.30pm

**Present:** David Silver (Chair), Tom Evans (Vice-Chair), Nick Hawkins (Secretary), David Cargill (Treasurer), Eric Blackwell, Moy Lewis, Ian Thomas, Cllrs Huw Jones & Clive Morgan, and 14 members.

**Apologies:** Allan Cook, Julie Davies and Nick & Roseanne Holmes

## Introduction

The Chairman welcomed everyone to another Zoom meeting

### Ian Ogden: 'LionAid'

The Chairman asked Ian to introduce himself. He noted that, with pleasure, just how many speakers at recent RMA meetings had been drawn from the local community and Ian was no exception. Clearly, we are a very informed and talented community.

Ian started his presentation by thanking the Association for the opportunity to speak on a subject that is very dear to his heart. He has had a life-long interest in wildlife matters and used to be a member of the North of England Zoological Society in Chester. For some years he worked as a volunteer in the education centre at Chester Zoo and, in 1997, organised a Safari tour to Northern Tanzania. Later, he was involved in conservation work in Tanzania and Botswana concerning both lions and elephants. He noted just how much lions, and lion symbols, were embedded in common culture, being symbols of bravery, nobility and power from prehistoric times to The Lion King.

He asked why we should be worried about the lion population. The facts are that there are now only 10K lions left in Africa - a 90% decline over the last 50 years, of which 60% has been in the last 20 years. Despite global attention, wild lion populations are in 'free fall' and, without them (an 'apex predator'), lesser prey species will overgraze the land and the African savannah will become a very different habitat. Historically, lions roamed over most of Africa but now there are just small isolated pockets of habitation. Even the Indian lion, a different sub-species, is threatened with just 450 surviving.

He put the relatively small number of lions in the context of other recognised threatened species. There are 19K white rhinos, 48K orang-utans, 125K lowland gorillas, 25K polar bears, 200K chimpanzees and 400K African elephants. Lions are one of the most threatened species. This has come about though disease (even including Covid), conflict with farmers (like the Maasai) who wish to protect their livestock (and worsened because there is an increasing demand for meat production), trophy hunting (which has become highly organised using sophisticated weapons and transport - arguments that such 'sport' aid conservation are false). He recalled the famous case of Cecil the lion being illegally killed by a dentist on safari, which is the subject of a recommended book 'Lion Hearted' by Andrew Loverage. Habitat loss has also been crucial as there has been an exponential increase in land taken up by an expanding population (in Kenya the population has grown from 9-30M). Lions live in prides and do not migrate; they are territorial and need the space to live in. People want their own land to grow their own crops and there is even increased activity on commercial crops for export. Even in areas where lions are protected by a natural habitat (Ian mentioned an isolated caldera) has resulted in in-breeding, with terrible effects.

Ian mentioned some the projects being championed by LionAid. These included a 'human/wildlife conflict mitigation project' which consists of setting up a contract with the local Maasai people where their domestic animals are protected by secure bomas (a securely constructed enclosure), any animals killed by lions are replaced from an 'insurance herd' (established for this purpose) so stopping the 'retaliation killing' of lions. The scheme even extends to the provision of solar electricity. LionAid are also lobbying to stop the import of lion trophies into the UK and are liaising with the many African governments to get them to understand the problem and interact with the local native communities. Finally, LionAid are establishing a worldwide education platform for both children and adults, encouraging young ambassadors and volunteers to 'spread the word' and support fundraising activities. Ian has already established contact with the local schools.

Ian concluded his talk by saying that LionAid was a relatively new but very worthy charity. Full details are available on the charity's website, <https://lionaid.org/>. Donations towards their work would be very welcome and he encouraged all to join LionAid and become an activist. Contact [bridget@lionaid.org](mailto:bridget@lionaid.org) for details.

The Chairman thanked Ian for his very interesting - and in some ways disturbing - talk and asked if there were any questions. These included asking about other organisations with similar objectives - Ian mentioned the '[World wildlife fund](#)' and '[Born Free](#)' (follow links for information). There are also small scale game reserves. What would be the impact of increasing the lion population - would people then be afraid of lions? Ian thought this unlikely as there is much greater understanding of control. The aim is to get back to where the lion population was 20 years ago, which would still not be huge.

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

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

The minutes were accepted as a true record. The Chairman noted specifically the Hustings that the Association had arranged prior to the May Senedd election and the various planning matters which had all been actioned.

## **Treasurer's Report**

The Treasurer reported that there had not been a lot of movement on the Association's accounts in the year. Grants of £880 had been received and expenditure of £962 incurred - including the cost of insurance, the website and the Lottery licence. £2278 had been transferred to the current charity, Tenovus Cancer Care, from the restricted funds. Unrestricted funds now stood at £7916.

There were no questions.

## **Festival September 2021**

The Chairman reported that the Association was still planning on holding a festival in September but the form it would take was largely dependent on announcements from the Welsh Government. An announcement is due in July and it is hoped that this will remove restrictions - which currently make many planned events non-viable. The hope was that the festival will proceed as planned, but decisions need to be made by 1<sup>st</sup> August.

## **Transport for Wales**

Cllr Huw Jones reported on this item on behalf of the R&MCC. He noted that the application for the bridge at Gelynys Farm was due to be heard at the July Planning Committee. Both the Association and the R&MCC had issued objections, and the R&MCC had proposed an alternative. Discussions were on-going regarding the provision of temporary changing accommodation for Radyr Rangers once the existing structure was removed as part of the TFW work at the Mound Field. Plans were for the replacement facility, to be erected once work is complete, would be designed around wider community use. He also noted that TFW were keen to promote Community benefit, particularly bio-diversity. Finally, he noted that TFW had a 'mock-up' of the new train carriages that would be in use. Residents were invited to view them at Taffs Well.

## **Planning**

Ian Thomas reported that there was not much news to impart. The bridge at Gelynys Farm had already been mentioned and other applications were still awaited. Regarding the LDP, the Association had attended the official launch and the 'consultation website' had appeared but lacked detail. Members would be briefed once more information became available. Cllr Huw Jones mentioned that the planning document very much concentrated on the development of central Cardiff and he wondered if R&M residents should comment on such matters or just confine comments to parochial matters. In a brief discussion, it was agreed that R&M interests should extend into the development of Cardiff but that the means of accessing central facilities (transport links etc) were another crucial factor.

## **Any other business - nothing raised**

## **Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be on Monday, 16<sup>th</sup> August starting at 19.30, venue to be confirmed, when the speaker will be another local resident, Ruth Marks, Chief Executive of Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA), a subject of great interest to us all.