



THE RADYR AND MORGANSTOWN ASSOCIATION



GENERAL MEETING

Via Zoom on Monday 22nd November 2021 at 7.30pm

Present: David Silver (Chair), Tom Evans (Vice-Chair), Nick Hawkins (Secretary), David Cargill (Treasurer), Eric Blackwell, Moy Lewis, Anne Rosser, Ian Thomas, Richard Wales, Cllr David Suthers, and 11 members.

Apologies: Cllr Allan Cook and Jane Woodward

Introduction

The Chairman welcomed everyone to another Zoom meeting.

Kat Jones: 'Headway Cardiff and South East Wales'

The Chairman introduced Kat Jones, the Fundraising & Communications Manager for Headway Cardiff & South East Wales. Kat joined Headway in 2018 after a period with MacMillan Cancer Support. She has a degree in Theatre Design and Production and has worked as a team manager onboard cruise ships!

Kat started her presentation by saying she just wanted to tell everyone about Headway Cardiff and South East Wales - the 'What the Where and the Why'. Unless people have been affected by 'acquired brain injury' (ABI), or know someone who has, they have probably not heard about Headway. It is a very small charity, based in Rookwood Hospital (although it might shortly move to Llandough). It was established in 1985, originally as a support group for families affected by ABI. Since then it has grown and evolved, and the community needs in south east Wales have increased. From Rookwood, Headway run a four day a week Independence and Wellbeing Centre, Information and Outreach, Welfare Benefits and Counselling Services, and a monthly Family and Friends group. They reach out into the community with Information and Outreach Officers visiting people wherever needed. They also run weekly social and activity groups that meet in various locations in Cardiff and Pontypool. Headway's mission is to promote understanding of all aspects of ABI and to provide information, support and services to people with ABI, their families and carers.

She quoted a few statistics. In South Wales over 10K people every year are admitted to hospital with an acquired brain injury and Headway normally work with about 1K of them. There is a defined route from a hospital A&E department to Headway so they only work with relevant patients. For instance, those with significant mental health problems can be referred to the Welsh Specialist Neuro-Psychiatry Service. Those with ongoing social or emotional needs can be referred to Headway. This can be an involvement for life - Headway become part of the family.

TBI is caused by a trauma to the head (head injury) and there are many possible causes - including road traffic accidents, assaults, falls and accidents at home or at work - and the main effects are physical, cognitive and emotional & behavioural. The symptoms are numerous, ranging from balance, memory, problem solving to language problems personality change, mood swings etc. It is a very challenging and interesting environment in which to work. Headway's goal is to encourage people to achieve the greatest difference in their lives and she emphasised that this is a person-centred service, not a clinical one.

Headway only have seven employees, of which two are 'Information and Outreach Officers' (currently sponsored by Hugh James and part funded by the Aneurin Bevan Health Board). They work with the family and friends of the injured to sort out where support can best be provided (not always by Headway), welfare benefit assistance, assessing the right funds, helping with tribunals and appeals, and generally providing support. Patients have to be referred to Headway and there are specific entry criteria. Headway run Social and Activity Groups (an opportunity to meet up with others who have been through similar experiences to share understanding and offer support); a Counselling service; an Independence and Wellbeing Centre based at Rookwood and the biggest part of the operation (with structured activities aimed at independent living); and Family and Carer support (where friends and carers can meet, have a break and attend events). Only part of this is funded (normally from the patient's local authority). Everything else comes from charitable funding, which is why the Association's choice to support Headway is so important. The team of seven is currently boosted by four volunteers on placement from Cardiff University. All the Trustees are volunteers.

In February 2018 Headway commissioned an external evaluation of their services, asking: 'If support from Headway Cardiff and South East Wales had not been available to you, what do you think the consequences would have been for you?'. The feedback was impressive with a typical remark being 'I really don't like to think what might have happened! To be able to pick up the phone and ask for help and know that, that help would be given without question is definitely a shining light in the darkness.'

Kat finished her talk by talking about Jane, as an illustration of how lives can be changed in a split second. Jane simply stood up too quickly in her bathroom and cracked her head against the underside of a cupboard door. She was in a coma for six months and, when she came round, she had a change of personality and language loss. Her family had both to grieve for the person they had lost and learn to live with the person they now had. Fortunately, things have started to improve after therapy. Further details about Headway Cardiff and South East Wales can be found on their website www.headwaycardiff.com.

The Chairman thanked Kat and asked for questions. These included 'Why was funding such a problem - surely funding Headway would actually benefit Councils?' - There is simply not enough money available. There was some National Lottery funding a little while ago which allowed the present organisation to be set up, but nothing since; she continues to apply for funding. The Cardiff & Vale Trust gift the use of the basic accommodation at Rookwood and it is hoped that the same will apply in the move to Llandough, possibly in April 2022. 'Are there other organisations doing similar work?' - Yes, but they do not operate in the same way. Councils offer 'care in the community' and there are other support groups who provide activities like craft groups. Headway Cardiff and South Wales is, effectively, unique and needs to be distinguished from 'Headway UK' which is an umbrella charity to which it is affiliated. However funding for the two organisations is entirely separate. 'Are there specific projects which need funding?' - Yes, to fill in gaps in the support network, notably in Newport. However, funding bodies prefer capital projects and it is very difficult to get funding for on-going care costs.

At the end of the talk, the Chairman again thanked Kat for such an interesting talk which he summarised by saying that everyone now knew about the Association's new charity and its need for funding. He also noted that Headway Cardiff and South East Wales were active within the R&M Community. He promised to send Kat the usual 'thank you' present.

Minutes of the last meeting (16th August 2021) and matters arising

The minutes were accepted as a true record. It was noted that green bin collections had restarted on an infrequent basis.

Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer reported that the two Festivals in 2021 (May and September) had raised £6232 - well down on previous years due to the pandemic - but expenses had been very high. The decision had been taken to pass £2K to Tenovus Cancer Care (*Secretary's note: bringing the total raised in the R&M community to £4800*). Retained funds now stood at £5741.

There were no questions.

Christmas Lighting, 3rd December 2021

The Secretary noted that, weather permitting, the event would take place as usual although due to problems with the contract between the installers and the R&M Community Council, the lights would not be turned off and on. Instead, Santa's arrival would be made the focal point of the evening. A good number of stalls had been booked and all the usual food, drink and activities would be present. He did, though, make an appeal for anyone with a large van that could be used for transporting items to and from the Old Church Rooms on the day and also for an electrical engineers who might be available to assist with testing and setting up the lights in Station Road on the evening. Anyone with contacts or suggestions should get in touch with him.

Festival May 2022

The Chairman reported that the Festival Committee had had a first meeting and it was hoped that next year's Festival would largely run as usual. Some areas (e.g. the involvement of the local schools) remained to be confirmed. A further Committee meeting was scheduled for 1st December.

Planning

Ian Thomas said there was not a lot to report. Significantly, he was still waiting for a reply from Transport for Wales to the list of questions he had put to them.

David Cargill reported that, following the receipt by Cardiff Council of the petition highlighting concerns over the design of the junction between Heol Isaf and the Llantrisant Road, a response was expected the following week.

Future Role of the RMA

The Chairman said that the Association's Executive had embarked on a review of what the Association did and how it was resourced. Should all the activities continue or should they change? A consultation exercise would be starting soon but he asked all for their ideas.

Any other business

The Chairman noted, with pleasure that Anne Rosser had agreed to join the Executive Committee.

Next Meeting

The next meeting has been set for 21st February 2022 but a speaker has yet to be found.