



THE RADYR AND MORGANSTOWN ASSOCIATION



GENERAL MEETING

Via Zoom on Monday 5th October 2020 at 7.30pm

Present: David Silver (Chair), Tom Evans Vice-Chair), Nick Hawkins (Secretary), David Cargill (Treasurer), Eric Blackwell, Allan Cook, Bob Roberts, Ian Thomas, Richard Wales, Cllrs Helen Lloyd Jones, Clive Morgan & David Suthers, and 13 members.

Apologies: Julie Davies, Robert Owen Griffiths, Judith Marsh, Brian & Linda Willis.

Introduction

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting, which was again being held electronically due to the COVID Pandemic. He hoped everyone had enjoyed the recent Mini-Autumn Festival, which ended on Sunday, 27th September.

Jamie Grundy: '90 Minutes of Freedom'.

The Chairman introduced Jamie Grundy by saying that his background in Radyr and working with community projects had been fully set out in the invitation to the meeting.

Jamie thanked the Chairman for his introduction and said he was still plugging away at getting the Play Area in Parc Radur up and running again.

He explained that he had always had an interest in prisons and soccer. He found out that *Sporting Heritage* were looking to sponsor projects in Wales, and he was 'the right person at the right time'. He suggested something very rare - a prison football team that played all its fixtures (home and away) inside the prison. *Sporting Heritage* were interested, and the project began - at HMP Prescoed Football Club. It took him 14 months of lengthy discussions to get the necessary permissions to start his research which eventually led to the writing of his book.

His research was considered and slow to start. He contacted the prison PE staff and started watching games and just chatting in the changing rooms. He became so much part of the fabric of the operation that the prisoners did not realise initially that he was not a prisoner himself. If he had set up formal interviews at the start, people would not have contributed and he wanted them to tell the truth, not what they might have wanted him to hear.

He explained some of the background to Pencoed Prison. It is an open prison with around 720 prisoners; all assessed as low risk (even though they may have been convicted of anything from theft to murder). It is in a remote location where the prisoners work during the day (e.g. managing the dairy herd - a major source for Muller Yoghurt - working in the local saw mill, or even working more remotely in branches of Timsons and Greggs and in The Clink in Cardiff prison. The object is to give them personal responsibility, employment skills, and also some money which will prove useful on release. The prison is proud of the football team and keeps a lookout for talented footballers (some ex-professional) in other prisons so they can arrange a transfer. Chris Zebroski (who now plays for Chippenham Town) played for the team.

His book has 12 chapters, based on the prisoners' words and saying what football means to them. It was published 14 months ago and has generated a lot of interest. He wanted the book to be about humanity and explore the backgrounds of those in prison - he found deprived upbringing, anxiety syndrome, manipulative friends - and felt, at the end that he understood more about the causes of crime. He was delighted that Neville Southall, a Welsh former international footballer agreed to write the foreword.

Playing football in the prison works on many levels. It affects behaviour (they have to follow the football rules), discipline (turn up on time, bring your own kit), dealing with stress and helping the transition to leaving prison, and improves social skills (you can't be selfish in a team and you can show leadership). Prescoed FC is a proper team playing in the Gwent Central League (*but see next*) and is very keen on winning. Jamie was present when they lost their first game in three years - and they were gutted! They won the second division easily. The pitch (there are two - one training, one playing) is kept in excellent order and is used by notable external teams.

Jamie concluded his talk by asking for help. Prescoed FC has just been refused permission to rejoin Gwent Central League, stating concerns over the age of players from visiting teams, who may be under eighteen, and the fact that all of Prescoed's games have to be played in the prison, home and away. An appeal against the decision is due to be heard on 15th October. As stated in his book, and in his talk, the Club is hugely important to HMP Prescoed and he has started a petition on Change.org.uk to support the appeal. Over 200 people have signed so far. (Secretary's note: [here is the link](#) if you would like to sign the petition.)

(Jamie's book is available on Amazon and other sites, and you can also see a copy in The Radyr Tap. [He also has his own website](#) if you wish to read more about him.)

There were a number of questions at the end of Jamie's talk. Do other prisons have football teams? There are a few, but they are more common in other countries, particularly Holland. How did Jamie get involved with Prescoed FC? He used to work with Cardiff Met University, working with immigrants. He then set up training courses in prisons, which took him to HMP Prescoed who liked the idea of working with a university - and some prisoners ended up studying there. Has he spoken to schools about his experiences? He does a lot of work with [Inside Out Support Wales](#), which takes him into many varied venues. What is the impact of football on prison leavers? He thought that sport can be really effective in changing attitudes for all people in difficulty. Many projects have demonstrated how effective it is.

At the close of the talk, the Chairman thanked Jamie for such an inspirational talk. He said that the Association would get the traditional token of appreciation to him as soon as possible.

Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer presented the Association's formal accounts for 2019. He said that the Association had had a good year raising £8K directly and being involved with raising a total of £12k for the charity 'Action for Children'. The Association had finished the year with a small deficit of £333, but that should be seen in the context of having invested nearly £2400 in essential capital equipment. Total assets at year end were £6292.25. There were no questions. Acceptance of the accounts was proposed by the Secretary and seconded by Moy Lewis, and agreed by all.

In the current year the Treasurer reported that around £3K had already been raised for Tenovus Cancer Care but that the cancellation of the May Festival had had a significant impact on fundraising. The present bank balance remained at around £6300, despite the expenditure that had been incurred in setting up the abandoned Festival, but considerably helped by the R&MCC grant. Redrow Homes had recently provided £700 sponsorship for the Festival Website.

Future Plans

A few items were mentioned.

- The (mainly on-line) Mini-Autumn Festival had given confidence that something similar could be done in May should current restrictions remain (as seems likely).
- Remembrance Sunday would be different with a short service (with few attendees) at the War Memorial being broadcast live at 11:00. This would be followed by individual groups laying wreaths at different times during the day, and taking a picture. All the pictures would then be made into a montage and placed on the Community Website.
- The format of the Christmas event was still being developed, but the usual Community event in Station Road would not be possible. A meeting was to be held shortly with the R&MCC to decide on what would be done on the night.

Any other business

The Chairman thanked Ian Thomas for setting up the technology for the meeting. He noted that some members had had difficulty getting access and said that the problems would be researched, and hopefully resolved by the next meeting

Next Meeting

No date was set for the next meeting. Discussions had started with Transport for Wales who have offered a speaker to talk about the future of the Metro. Members would be informed as soon as the details were worked out.