

THE RADYR AND MORGANSTOWN ASSOCIATION

(A Civic Society affiliated to the Civic Trust for Wales)

President: Rhodri Morgan A

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NEWSLETTER TO MEMBERS – MAY 2011

Welcome to our fourth newsletter.

Festival 2011. We hope you enjoyed this year's Festival and took full advantage of all that was on offer. We must admit to being a little shell-shocked at all the work involved but we thank David Cargill, in particular, for masterminding yet another success. You may not have realised that he has led every Festival since the start in 1987. Next year (if he accepts the challenge) will be his Silver Jubilee.

It is rather early to have done all the accounting but we know that the Festival Charity, the Radyr & District Good Neighbours scheme, will receive at least £3500. So thanks to all those who bought draw tickets, threw money into buckets or contributed in any other way. We know the money was desperately needed and will be put to good use.

A full report, and pictures, will be in the next edition of Radyr Chain so we will not say more here. However, if you have any thoughts on this year's Festival and how next year's – and yes there will be one – could be better, do get in touch. We are happy to consider any suggestions, including shortening, lengthening or even moving events. And if you could offer help with any aspect....

AGM. We had our AGM on 11th April and those that were able to attend heard the reports of what we had been doing the previous year, elected the new Executive Committee and had a drink and a chat afterwards. The draft minutes of the meeting are now posted on the R&M website (see www.radyr.org.uk/docs/539) so you can see what was said. All officers were confirmed in their present posts although we have to report that Rev Kieran Webster has regrettably had to stand down subsequently due to pressure of other work. Do get in touch if you would like to join the team as we can co-opt members at any time. And we do have fun doing what we do.

Future Meetings. We plan to continue the new format of meetings started in February – i.e. a topical speaker followed by a small bit of business. At our next meeting, on 6th June, you will be able to hear our own Allan Cook talk about 'The Village that moved and moved' – the origins of Radyr and Morganstown. **Note that the meeting will be held at the Comprehensive School** because we wish to encourage all our members to participate in the earlier meeting (which starts at 6pm) concerning the Cardiff Local Development Plan.

We hope that Rhodri Morgan will be able to talk to us on 5th September, Ron Eccles has agreed to talk about his work on the Common Cold Unit on 7th November (we hope that will not prove too topical), and PC Huw Thomas will be addressing us on 6th February next year. Please put all these dates in your diary now.

Traders Association. The Traders Association (essentially covering Station Road) have had several meetings and momentum seems to be growing. A representative from the Executive Committee is usually invited to attend. New members from local businesses are always welcome.

Matters discussed include problems such as cars parking on double yellow lines and disturbances by groups of young adults loitering around on Station Road. Traders are keen to participate in community events. Shopkeepers in Station Road dressed their windows in the Alice in Wonderland theme. Plans for the Christmas Festivities will be on the agenda at the next meeting which will take place at 5.30pm on 13th September at Seasons Restaurant.

A new barbershop and a vintage shop are welcome additions to Station Road and the Spar shop is planning a complete re-fit, which will also improve the look of the area. The hanging baskets featuring animals painted by local artist Keith John have finally been put up. The accompanying flowers/plants are eagerly awaited!

Radyr Library. As you know, we have been working closely with the Community Council and our County Councillor in trying to ensure the best outcome for the new library proposed for Park Road. To be frank, recent events have disappointed us although the existing library will now be enhanced. We wrote an article jointly with the Community Council for publication in the forthcoming edition of Radyr Chain but we regret to say they refused to publish it. We therefore give a copy of the article below as we want our members to be fully informed.

We now know the future of the library in Park Road. In the April 2010 edition of Radyr Chain (available on line on the Radyr website www.radyr.org.uk) we reported that Cardiff Council had £600,000 in its capital budget which would be added to £400,000 planning gain (from the Sidings development) to finance a brand new and much bigger library. We asked you where the library should be built and you chose to have it remain in Park Road. We have effectively been waiting (not passively) to have plans approved. At a meeting on 9th May in County Hall we were eventually told what would be happening.

Cardiff Council have decided to refurbish the current library and not to build a new one. In essence, Cardiff Council have reallocated their capital budget for our library; what little money there is in Cardiff's overall library budget is to be spread thinly across a number of Cardiff communities. The planning gain money now stands at £457,000 and we have been fortunate in also gaining a Welsh Assembly Government grant of £120,000, which requires Cardiff Council to provide match funding of £12,000. Cardiff say that this £12,000 will be their minimum contribution but with £589,000 to spend, we find it hard to imagine that they will need to contribute more.

You might think that £589,000 would buy quite a sizeable building but such are the costs estimated by Cardiff Council that the proposal is only to refurbish the existing building and provide a new extension and entrance. Due to the provision of (agreed to be necessary) back room areas, the actual public space in the library will grow by about 17m². The building will be gutted and will be refitted to what will undoubtedly be a high standard. We have been promised involvement with the planning of that refitting. There is no promise of extending the opening hours, although these will be reviewed. The library will be closed for approximately six months with a possible opening date of August 2012. A mobile library may be provided on alternate Fridays with Tongwynlais, although visits may be possible to sheltered housing.

We place on record our severe disappointment with this outcome. For many years, Radyr & Morganstown residents had been promised a new and bigger library for our increasing population. This was implicit in the 'Section 106' agreement signed in 2002 which designated the Community Plot in Radyr Sidings as the potential site. Although our community has grown significantly, Cardiff tell us now that our library is of sufficient size.

We did contemplate challenging this decision but timescales are against us. Deliberations by Cardiff Council have taken so long that, unless the current proposal is accepted, we risk losing all because both the Planning Gain and WAG monies will expire in 2012.

So, reluctantly, we have agreed in principle (we suggested some minor amendments) to the plans put forward by Cardiff Council. The refurbished library will undoubtedly be better than the present one, and we delight in that fact. But Radyr & Morganstown, who contribute vast sums to Cardiff Council via the Council Tax, find yet again that we get little back. We have also lost the Community Plot on Radyr Sidings, which Cardiff Council are returning to the developer. We had hoped that that area would have been the heart of the Sidings community but it will soon be covered with more houses. We do not blame Taylor Wimpey for the loss of that plot; they could have been more generous but they have acted as would any business. However, we do feel that the community of Radyr & Morganstown has been badly let down by Cardiff Council in view of the reallocation of the library budget and the loss of the Community Plot. We would have thought that Cardiff would have been able to renegotiate the planning gain agreement once they knew in 2005 that the plot would not be used for a new Library or Health Centre. Surely we deserve better than this.

Contacts. If you would like to comment on any aspect of this Newsletter or require further information, then either email the Secretary, Nick Hawkins, at rma@radyr.org.uk or ring the Chairman, Cyril Williams, on 029 2084 2250.