



MAERDY NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 3 - ISSUE 4 • AUGUST 2004

Together we can make a difference

Communities First Funding – SECURED

The Welsh Assembly Government has awarded Maerdy Communities First Partnership continuation funding. The funding will enable the Partnership to continue undertaking small community projects.

The total funding approved is £531,252 but this has to be spread over the next three years.

The funding is specifically for:

- STAFF WAGES
- ADMINISTRATION
- MARKETING
- YOUTH DEVELOPMENT WORK (like the Youth provision that Communities First runs at the Community Centre)
- PREMISES & VENUE HIRE
- DEVELOPMENT & TRAINING
- SMALL AMOUNT OF NEW EQUIPMENT



The funding cannot be used to directly fund physical projects like the demolition of the Hall or new developments on the Colliery Site. The money will help the Partnership to continue to develop these projects and secure the much needed additional funding from other sources. Major improvements take a long time to come to fruition. It may be another eight years before we can be certain that we have achieved lasting improvements.



Together we can make a difference!



SOME OF THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE LAST 2½ YEARS

- 3 full-time staff
- Rent and equip an office and base
- This Newsletter
- Launch Day
- Intergenerational Christmas Celebration
- Full Community Audit (ahead of most other wards!)
- Open action planning process
- Training
- New Drugs & Information service
- Ferndale Community School's drama for the Shell Connections National Theatre Competition
- Fact finding visits to other areas
- Learning Taster Day
- Kids-R-Us Playscheme
- Environment Day
- Maerdy Learning Development Project
- Environmental clean-ups
- Reinstatement of the Miners' Garden at All Saints Church
- Maerdycommunitiesfirst.com
- Maerdy Community Directory
- Hanging basket/Christmas tree brackets for local businesses
- Additional youth sessions 3 days a week
- Mobile Skate-park
- Pre-school Consortium
- Equipment/Funderfinder software/Resource Library/Volunteer Room with PC facilities for use by Maerdy groups
- Local Youth Workers employed
- Child Protection Training
- Additional funding to develop Colliery site plans
- Help with Trust Fund grants

Thanks must go to everyone who has helped to make all this possible. Whether you are a Communities First Volunteer, a Board Member, a member of a local group, a member of a Communities First Sub Group or have just lent a hand from time to time, your contribution is equally (if not more) important than the funding itself.

Together we have made a difference! – THANK YOU!

PARTNERSHIP BOARD NEWS

As promised, The Partnership Board is currently organising a review of its current structure and communication methods. Further news will follow.

WALKING TO HEALTH



Two local men have been bitten by the walking bug: John Barnes of Station Terrace and Sid Roberts of Blake Street. They recently went on a pilgrimage to the monument on the Brecon Beacons erected in memory of Sid's uncle, Tommy Jones.

Tommy, from Maerdy went missing in August 1900 while visiting his grandparents' farm in Brecon. Tommy was only 5 years old and the monument marks the spot where his body was found.

A full account of Tommy's story, as it was published in the local press in 1900, is available as a leaflet at the Brecon Mountain Centre

There has recently been a drive from health and fitness experts stressing the benefits from one of the easiest forms of exercise to take – walking. One of the latest ideas is to form walking groups, where participants discover the countryside and woodlands around them and have a chance to meet new people.

No specialist equipment is required. All you need is suitable outdoor clothing - you know what the weather is like in Maerdy - and a sensible pair of boots/shoes.

We have asked Glyn cornel to suggest some walks and grade them for difficulty. We will publish them in the Newsletter when we receive them.

If you are interested in walking and would like to meet other like-minded people to take walks in the area, then contact the Communities First office to see what can be arranged.

Communities First Kids'R'Us Play Scheme HOORAY!

Summer Play Scheme is under way and the children are being offered fruit or toast and juice or milk during the sessions.

The children have been choosing the healthier option!



The children have also been taking part in sports and other fun activities like Football, Parachute, Games and Hoola-Hoop.



Youth Activity Day

The Communities First Partnership recently held a very successful Youth Activity Day in the Community Woodland and surrounding area. The young people who took part learned lots about nature, wildlife and the environment through river dipping. They walked miles whilst doing orienteering sessions, and enjoyed a picnic lunch, camping advice from Phil Jenkins and story-telling from Bleddyn Knott.



*Well done to all who took part and
Thanks to all the volunteers and
Groundwork – Merthyr & RCT!*

Letter to the Editor

Following various articles in the Rhondda Leader regarding the recently distributed Community Directory, we have received this letter that we print in full.

We also print a response to the letter from Ros Davis, the CF Coordinator. It is a pity that the concern, which was an issue for the people in the Maerdy Ward, was expressed in the *Rhondda Leader* for anyone to see - washing our dirty linen in public.

Why not use the pages of this Newsletter to openly discuss Maerdy Ward matters, where the people that matter – the residents – can form their own conclusions.

To the Editor

I refer to the Maerdy Directory recently circulated by the Partnership. I am surprised that such a project would attract Community First funding and cannot see that it meets the Partnership criteria "to bring about lasting improvement to the ward through community development and regeneration projects".

We are looking at a small village with 15 to 20 shops with the majority within 150 yards of each other and I would think that the people of Maerdy are well aware of what is sold in each shop. This is not a town with a shopping mall to attract visitors. As far as I am concerned the only redeeming feature of the directory is the list of useful telephone numbers. This information could have been produced and circulated as a card, something that in the past has been produced by our local councillors.

It would be interesting to know the cost of producing the directory and delivering it to each household.

If it is a necessity, why is there no mention made of the Community Centre, a centre that should be at the heart of the community, and the Church and its activities.

Don't they belong to the people of Maerdy?

BRENIG JONES

Reply

We welcome Brenig's comments about this publication, as these will help the Partnership to fully assess its value.

The Directory was funded out of Maerdy Communities First's "Marketing" budget. Had we not produced the Directory out of this budget, the money would have had to be spent on another marketing activity or returned to the Welsh Assembly Government.

I agree that most people know the various shops available in Maerdy but does everyone consider giving them their custom before rushing off to the nearest supermarket?

Our village shops provide a vital service to some of our Community's most vulnerable residents. Lasting improvements will not come to Maerdy if current strengths are not defended.

*Maerdy may have its fair share of problems but we feel it's important to celebrate the many good things we **do** have.*

The recent Community Audit identified the fact that not everyone has lived in Maerdy for all their life. Many newcomers miss out on the family links and support structures that the rest of the community is able to give each other.

Surely the very least we can do is to provide information about the Village and its life?

Not every organisation wanted to be included in the Directory, but I do greatly regret that an administrative error caused All Saints Church to be omitted.

Any organisation or business wishing to be included in future editions should contact the Communities First Office for an application form.

The Directory may also be viewed on our web page at maerdycommunitiesfirst.co.uk

Ros Davis

on behalf of

Maerdy Communities First Partnership

Tel: 01443 755687

Seion Toddlers Leaving Party



The Toddler group at Seion held its 7th Leavers' Party this week.

Tia, Morgan and Ellie are pictured receiving their presentation Bibles as they say farewell to start "big school" in September.



Also receiving leaving gifts were Mrs Jean John and Mrs Irene Marsh. Jean has been a dedicated volunteer since we first opened in September 1997 and Irene has also given up many hours of her free time to join her in recent years. Seion Chapel is deeply grateful to them for their unwavering commitment and



many hours of hard work over the years. We are now thrilled to enter a new phase in our history with the arrival of a Nursery Nurse to help develop the group. Mrs Kathleen Pike will be supporting the Parent Toddler group from September, and the group will then be meeting twice weekly.



SEION PARENT & TODDLER

STARTING BACK ON SEPTEMBER 6th

Mrs Kathleen Pike will be running the group for
TWO MORNINGS EVERY WEEK
MONDAYS & THURSDAYS

9.30 a.m. – 11.30 a.m.



If you have been a hospital in-patient because of heart problems and need support

JOIN OUR GROUP

Rhondda Cardiac Support Group
Established for people like you!

Meets at 7.30 p.m. every 3rd Monday in the month
at Tonypandy NUM Club

We feel sure you will find something of benefit to you

For more information contact: Lorna 01443 684346

Maerdy Juniors – School Report

Summer Term at Maerdy Junior School has been very busy!

Academically, the school SATs results were the best ever! Teachers, Governors and parents have been delighted.

Unfortunately, the school population continues to decrease and this year, because of smaller pupil numbers, the school has had to lose Miss Jamie Jones as a full-time teacher.

On a brighter note, the children have had a busy social life. They have been involved in rugby, netball, played bowls at the park, swimming and did well at the inter-school Sports; we came second and won seven trophies. Twenty boys and girls went to Ogmere camp where, despite poor weather, they all had great adventures! The school also went to see the newly released Harry Potter film. The Special Needs class spent the day in Ogmere Castle and Porthcawl, and the following day, the whole school went to Oakwood for the main summer trip.

Parents of the Sports Team attended our Presentation Assembly at which Amy Day (past pupil and ladies Welsh International), Neil Boobyer and Chris Jones presented trophies. Neil Boobyer will be working with the older pupils next year to develop ball and rugby skills.

Over 50 parents came to see their children at the Year 6 "Leavers' Assembly". This was the last "normal" event of their year before their transition into the "Community School" - they were superb! Song, dance, piano, violin, rap, a Hakka, and fond memories drew a few tears and lots of laughter. The day was rounded off with the BBQ and Disco provided by Ralph Morgans of Maerdy Con.

As we end the term, ready for a long summer holiday, it is good to see how our pupils have grown in confidence and responsibility. To all the children leaving, we give our sincere good wishes; to those coming back in September, have a brilliant holiday and return ready for work!



ALL SAINTS CHURCH

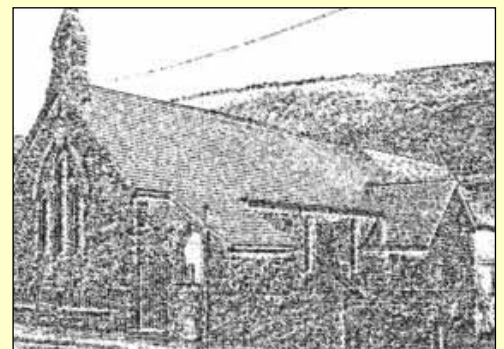
SUNDAY SERVICE: 9.30 a.m. – 10.30 a.m.

Monday **Children's Club** 6.00 p.m. – 7.00 p.m.
Starting back in September

Tuesday **Service** 10.00 a.m. – 10.30 a.m.

Tuesday **Coffee Morning** from 10.30 a.m.

Wednesday **Mother's Union** from 7.30 p.m.



To arrange weddings, funerals and christening services, contact:

BARBARA DANIEL, Vicar's Warden 76 Richard Street – Tel: 01443 755446
or **MICHAEL DAVIES**, People's Warden, 4 Glanville Terrace – Tel: 01443 755670

All Saints Church – welcomes the whole Community of Maerdy

THE MAERDY ARCHIVE SOCIETY

Llest Wen Reservoir

Construction work began on Castell Nos Reservoir in 1881. It has a capacity of 20 million gallons, covers an area of 682 acres and is approximately 38 feet deep.

Construction work began on Llest Wen Reservoir in 1896. It has a capacity of 242 million gallons, covers an area of 1,484 acres and is approximately 64 feet deep. In 1969, a potential flooding disaster was averted.

A chance incident involving a horse and its rider who, when riding across the dam wall, fell into a large hole just above the water line

It appeared that the whole structure was in a dangerous condition and urgent action was taken. Mr George Thomas MP, Secretary of State for Wales, contacted civil engineers in London, who confirmed an emergency, and local police began evacuating residents from Station Terrace and Oxford Street, Maerdy, and throughout the Rhondda Fach.

The Reservoir was drained and the necessary repairs made without risk to anyone. All the major coal seams are present in the strata below the Reservoir, varying in depth from 180 feet to 1,380 feet below the dam. In order to protect the dam against mining subsidence, coal was not extracted from the dam 'pillar'. However, coal has been worked under part of the Reservoir and the effects of mining subsidence were at one time seen on parts of the by-wash channel.



Repairing the brickwork to the tower at Castell Nos Reservoir in 1963



The tunnel under Llest Wen Reservoir in 1963

For many years, a small 13hp diesel-powered locomotive provided the means of transport for workmen between the reservoirs. Mr Ken Mazey lovingly maintained the locomotive. This was abandoned in 1969/70 and access by road from Maerdy or Rhigos is now possible.

The Maerdy Archive was formed by a group of local residents, who consider that the real history of Maerdy and the surrounding area must not be lost. It is intended that the Archive collects items which relate directly or indirectly to Maerdy in any form and in any condition. The Archive will not limit its collection to the past, but will also encourage the use of video and audio recordings relating to people's experiences, both past and present.

The Archive collects photographs, letters, maps, plans, documents, books, post cards, invoices, deeds, tools, artefacts, newspapers, drawings, models, stories, adverts, certificates, membership records, tickets, etc.

If you would like to assist in this project, please contact us on 732073, 755623 & 755320.

THE MAERDY ARCHIVE SOCIETY

Thank you one and all for giving the Maerdy Archive the missing names in Photograph No.1, in the last magazine which was taken at Pentre Road, Maerdy in 1928 and special thanks go to Megan and Alma Knight, Rosa Rees, Jean Williams and Don Podmore.

Did you know the names of the buildings that were built where the fence was in Photograph No 2?

The answer is Richard Street, Maerdy.

Charlie Marsh of 85 Oxford Street and Trudy Gauvain of 27 The Parade each received a copy of Maerdy School Days for the correct answer.

HERE IS THE PHOTOGRAPH QUIZ FOR THIS EDITION!



Where was this photograph taken in Maerdy?

The first correct answer will receive the Maerdy School Days book.
Phone David Owen on 732073 or Ken Williams on 755623.

MAERDY TANG-SOO-DO

Maerdy Tang-Soo-Do would like to congratulate team members who recently took part in the Tang-Soo-Do National Tournament on May 15th.

Ieuan & Michael Wilding, Daniel Thomas, Jamie Evans, Jamie Pugh, Samantha Thomas, Rhys Davies, Jordan Roberts, Jay Redlar, Justin Jones, Christian Thomas, Rob Dorrington and Cloe Roberts all took part. Between them, they took nine trophies.

WELL DONE TO ALL WHO TOOK PART!

CRAFT ANGELS – ART CLASS

The Art Class we promoted in the last edition of the Newsletter has been very successful. The group have learnt a variety of skills and techniques.

Here is a photograph of the group at their last session on July 15th before the summer break.

Tragically, Dave Williams, the artist who established the group (pictured bottom right) was killed in a cycling accident days after this photograph was taken.

Dave was a wonderfully talented artist and teacher, and all his pupils who knew him through the Craft Angels Class are saddened at the loss of such a great man.



CHANGES TO DOCTORS' SURGERY APPOINTMENTS

There have been several comments overheard throughout the Ward on the changes to the appointments at the two surgeries covering the Ward. To clarify the matter, we asked the surgery staff to outline the changes and how they affect you. We received this reply:

In order to meet the new Government Guidelines, that patients must be given the opportunity to see a GP within 24 hours, morning surgery appointments were abandoned. An open surgery was introduced, where patients are seen by any of the GPs; there is no choice of doctor. However, this has caused problems with waiting times. The system has been revisited and 'tweaked' slightly. Morning surgery is still an open surgery, but when a patient presents at surgery, they will now be given an appointment time. The patient then has the opportunity of waiting, or returning nearer to their allocated appointment time. However, if the patient returns late for their time slot, then they have to wait until the end of surgery to be seen, or return the following day.

It is hoped that this will reduce the congestion in the waiting room and the waiting time for patients, whilst still achieving the Government's 24-hour objective. As with most new systems, there are 'teething problems' and if this does not work, then it will be revisited again. Until a patient is in the consulting room with the GP, it is difficult to estimate how long each patient's consultation will take. Estimates are made, but the allocated appointment times may well run over and this cannot be avoided. This is the nature of General Practice - you do not know what problems are coming through the door - each day is different.

Evening surgery is by appointment only. This is for those patients who wish to see a doctor of their choosing and their medical problems can wait, and also for those patients who are working and cannot wait in morning surgery. However, if a patient believes they need to be seen as an emergency during evening surgery, the doctor will speak to these patients and decide the appropriate course of action.

THANK YOU!

Thank you to all the Community Volunteers for delivering our last edition. Special thanks to Gill & Arthur Chambers and Bleddyn & Karen Knott who rallied round, delivered loads of newsletters and encouraged others to join in.

Thanks also to: Sid Roberts, Graham & Sian John, Kay & Brian Humphreys, Jean Williams, Gaynor Williams, Viv Condon, Marian Roberts, Gina & Mike Stevenson, Iris Thomas, Joyce Mullins, John Thomas, Selwyn Williams, Christine O'Flaherty, Cullen Morris, Merville Bowen, Jenny Hurley and all the other volunteers!

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communities first cymunedau yn gyntaf

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Please contact the Communities First office in Teify House if you wish to have a copy of the Newsletter in Welsh.

Maerdy Newsletter can be accessed on www.maerdycommunitiesfirst.com

The views expressed in this publication are those of the Communication Committee and do not necessarily reflect policies being followed by Communities First Partnership