



MAERDY NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 4 - ISSUE 2 • AUGUST 2005

Together we can make a difference

MAERDY HALL – END OF AN ERA



The once proud Maerdy Workmen's Hall has towered over Maerdy since 1905. For over 80 years it has played a central role in the cultural and leisure life of the village.

- It provided education for the villagers with its extensive library.
- It was renowned throughout the valleys for the shows it presented.
- It was the centre for local support for the 1984-5 miners' strike.

Sadly, with the closure of the Colliery, the Hall has slumped into disrepair and has come to be regarded as an eyesore.

In 2002, the Communities First Partnership commissioned the University of Glamorgan to research the needs of this Community. Local residents worked with professionals to gather evidence. What became clear was that "something had to be done about Maerdy Hall".

A survey of the building ascertained that the building would cost in excess of £6 million to do essential restoration work. With no realistic project to sustain a building of this size, the Partnership concluded that the only viable option was to seek to secure the building's demolition.

Over the last three years, the Communities First Partnership has been working with the Council to secure the funding for the demolition. This month, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council announced that the Welsh Development Agency has agreed to finance the work and that they would be proceeding with the demolition in the current financial year.

Councillor Robert Bevan, Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration, said, "The building's proud history will not be forgotten. For a long time it was a focal point and represented the strong community spirit of the area. My father was a trustee of the hall during the 1950's. This is a significant announcement in the history of Maerdy, a chance for us to create modern and much needed facilities for the area, in its place."

Councillor Kevin Williams, Vice Chair of Maerdy Communities First Partnership, said, "The Hall has played an important and historic role in the life of this community. Sadly though, it has now come to signify decline and dereliction. Local residents want to see the building brought down as a starting point for renewal and regeneration in the village as a whole. The next step for the Partnership is to come up with a fitting project to place on the site. However, we must ensure that the history attached to the Hall is retained."



Cllr Kevin Williams



Mike Richards

Former trustee and local resident, Mike Richards, commented, "It's a sad day but also a necessity. The building has attracted many thousands of people for leisure and pleasure over the years. Now something more befitting to Maerdy people in the 21st century can be put in its place."

Graham John, Chair of Maerdy Communities First Partnership said, "This is an example of effective Partnership working. Communities First does not have huge resources at its fingertips but by working together we will eventually achieve our aims".



communities first cymunedau yn gyntaf

Do you have any special memories of the Hall you would like to share with readers?
Contact the Communities First office.

ARCHIVE CORNER

*In the last competition, we asked the date of the opening ceremony of Ebenezer Chapel, which originally stood on the Teify House site. The answer was 1912 but, unfortunately, no correct answers were received. **Come on, Maerdy!***

The Ystradyfodwg School Board ran Maerdy Infants School and the first day began with a procession. The Hirwaun Brass Band led the way followed by colliery officials and the children singing hymns specially learned for the occasion. The Chairman made a speech. The children were refreshed with a substantial tea and then given two apples. Distinguished visitors were entertained to "luncheon" at the Maerdy Hotel and a concert was given in the evening. Seventy-eight children were admitted. The head teacher records "Only six children knew their letters", and "The children did not understand much English". The education provided was not free; the children were expected to pay their "school pence" which were billed to the colliery at Ferndale if they failed to pay. The head teacher had to teach monitors first and then they taught the younger children. These older monitors then had to pass "pupil teacher examination" each year; later, qualified teachers were appointed.



nors, parents and the local people of the village have raised thousands of pounds to benefit the school. Thanks must be given to all that have given their time and help over the past one hundred and twenty five years

"The school has always aimed to identify positive qualities or talents in all the children, to give them a sense of pride in their achievements and to encourage their self-confidence, self-awareness and motivation in preparation for the future and their next big step – the Maerdy Junior School."

Mrs G Maliphant - Headteacher



The school was enlarged in 1907. Milk was not supplied until 1935. The entry for Monday 4th September 1939 (the day after World War II broke out) states only "The milk was late".

Fire broke out at the school on 18th November 1964, when the Main Hall and four classrooms were gutted. Two classes were accommodated at the Junior School and the remainder at Ebenezer Vestry (now Teify House). The new nursery block was officially opened on 1st May 1976.

Since the school began, the staff, children, governors, parents and the local people of the village have raised thousands of pounds to benefit the school. Thanks must be given to all that have given their time and help over the past one hundred and twenty five years

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THIS MONTH'S COMPETITION QUESTION

ON WHAT DATE DID MAERDY INFANTS SCHOOL OPEN?

Phone Ken Williams on 755623 with your answer.

The first correct answer will receive the new 'Mardy Collieries' book by David Owen.

Have you any memories or poems of Maerdy? Maerdy Archives would like to know about fun times you've had. Jot them down and drop them in to Ken Williams 34 Maerdy Road, Cullen Morris, or Maerdy Communities First Office – Teify House.

For more information about the Archives Group, contact 01443 755623 or 01443 755320



*Are you affected by cancer?
Have you been giving support
to someone affected by cancer?*

If **'YES'**, Community Cancer Services are offering **FREE** complementary therapies.

FREE Counselling will also be available at Seion Chapel, starting in July.

Community Cancer Services are a new project providing support to people living in Rhondda and Taf-Ely who are affected by cancer. We can also offer Complementary Therapies and Counselling at our centre in Tonypanyd, along with a Transport Service, an Information Service and a Drop-In Centre. All of our services are **FREE**.

The services are available to anyone who is affected by cancer, including those family and friends who have been providing significant care/support. If you would like to make an appointment to attend our sessions, or simply want more information about what we can offer, then please don't hesitate to contact us.

ANDREW PENNY

Project Coordinator

Community Cancer Services
8 Dunraven Street, Tonypanyd
RCT CF40 1QE

Tel: 01443-421999

Fax: 01443-421888

E-mail: communitycancer@tiscali.co.uk

Introducing the Reverend Gillian George-Rogers



Hello! I'm Gillian, the fairly new Parish Priest in the newly-formed parish of Rhondda Fach Uchaf. I have, of course, already met many of you, in a variety of situations. I am very pleased to have been asked to write this article to tell you a little of my life in the parish since arriving here in mid January. [I actually began work here at Candlemas, February 2nd.] It's amazing just how much can happen in such a short space of time! Former parishes had been amalgamated to form this new one and so I now look after three main churches, in Maerdy, Femdale and Tylorstown, as well as the smaller one at Blaenllechau. Each church is very different from the other three, in both architecture and churchmanship, so it is a very varied life. Part of my remit is to unite these areas into one parish and I hope to do that without any of the churches losing their own individual identity. Human beings generally find change and new situations difficult and sometimes quite a painful process, but I think we are all beginning to relax in the situation and find new strength and hope in trying to live out Christ's wish that we should 'all be one'. Certainly there are people in each of my churches who have skills and talents which they are happy to share with the other churches when needed and part of our 'coming together' has to do with being together socially, which is where friendships are often begun and nurtured.

The main challenge, in all of my churches, at a time when church going can sometimes seem unfashionable, is to build up our congregations. There are many things we need, and need to happen, if the church is to survive in Rhondda Fach, but most of all we need people to come and join us in worshipping our wonderful Creator God. Many people have given up going to church and they can't even remember why, they have simply drifted away. To them I would like to say, 'Please come back. We miss you and we need you. No one is going to ask why you've been away for so long. All they will want to say is 'Welcome home'. The truth is that once people return they are usually so happy that they have and they rediscover that wonderful sense of belonging. God's family really is for everyone; church is the one place where it doesn't matter who you are or what your social status, you are valued because you are you.

There is a very particular challenge for those of us who worship at All Saints Church, in Maerdy. We have recently had our five-yearly inspection and there is a great deal of work that needs to be done to bring the church hall up to standard. We would dearly love to see the hall used by all sorts of groups and organisations from the community, for a wide range of activities and for all age groups. The church itself is in pretty good shape. We hope that as this year progresses we will be able to make a start on all that needs to be done, so that our church can once again be at the heart of the community. But we are a small congregation and we need all the help we can get. Obviously we are going to need a lot of money, so keep a look out for advertisements for events that we hope to organise. Perhaps you even have some suggestions that might help us raise much-needed funds, or perhaps you are simply feeling generous? We will need help in other ways too, pairs of hands to help lift things out of the way before work can begin and so on. If you can help in any way, we would be so very pleased to hear from you. We have a huge task ahead of us. A church should be at the heart of the community and when a church is under very real threat it often happens that the local community, even those who do not attend church regularly, would be genuinely sad to see it go and so join in the fight for its preservation. We pray that will happen in our case and if you can help, or if you have any ideas that might be useful, please contact me or any church member; you will find us 'at home' in All Saints on Sunday mornings at 9.30 a.m. or Tuesdays at 10.00 a.m., or you can telephone me on 732 321.

If I haven't already met you, please introduce yourself if you see me walking around – I would love to meet you, and thank you, Rhondda Fach, for helping me to feel at home.

With all good wishes,

Reverend Gillian

COMMUNITY FIRST EVENTS



Anniversary Tea Dance

This Tea Dance was organised to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the end of the Second World War. The event was staged by Communities First Partners: Ferndale Community School together with Arthur Hughes, who was MC for the evening, and Megan Evans, who both represent Maerdy Residents on the Partnership Board.

"Thanks must go to everyone who helped to make the evening a success. The young people treated us like royalty and kept up a constant supply of tea and home made cakes" said Megan, "We need to organise more events like this."

Maerdy Homewatch Day a Big Success

Members of the Communities First Safety Group organised a Community safety event which took place on the 14th July. The aim of the event was to establish the new-style Neighbourhood Watch scheme in Maerdy.

Crimewatch Co-ordinator Phil Davies said, "We need to explain to people that the new Homewatch scheme is very different to the old Neighbourhood Watch system. We don't encourage patrolling anymore and participants can remain anonymous. The scheme really works and helps to reduce actual crime and make people feel safer. Residents in Home-Watch areas can get cheaper insurance."

Local resident Gill Chambers has recently become Chair of the Community Safety Group. She said, "What we need to get across to people is that although the Police play a vital role, building a safer community is not just about policing issues. It's about members of the community "looking-out" for each other.

It is this community spirit that Maerdy people are famous for. We must ensure that this caring community is preserved and made full use of."

Over 120 people attended the event and many people have come forward to join the scheme. For more information, contact Roger Hughes or Phil Davies, the Crime Watch Co-ordinators, on 01685 874917



Maerdy Looking Better

On 22nd June, Maerdy Communities First held a Presentation Night to celebrate the achievements of Maerdy residents in the Maerdy Looking Good (Environmental) Project. Deputy Mayor Cllr Joyce Cass attended. Maerdy Looking Good Project aims to bring about immediate improvements in the quality of the Maerdy environment while, at the same time, raising awareness about the need to protect one of the community's most important assets.

Over the last year, work undertaken by local residents included litter and rubbish clear-ups in the village, a major rubbish clear at the reservoir, a riverside clear-up, the establishment of a new garden at Maerdy Infants School, more work on the garden at Maerdy Juniors, new flower beds at Maerdy Community Centre, hanging baskets for our local shops, and woodland management days.

'We were able to bring on board a whole new raft of community partners for this project,' explained Rev. Graham John – Chairman of the Maerdy Partnership Board, 'Namely Maerdy & Ferndale Angling Club, Ferndale Boxing Club, Maerdy Mini Football, Maerdy Mini Rugby and the Cheryl Lindsay Dance Troupe.

Rewards were given to groups who participated; for example, we were able to provide the Junior Rugby Club with trophies which they, in turn, used to celebrate their sporting achievements.'

These local groups were supported by the Group for Environmental Awareness in the Rhondda, Groundwork Merthyr Rhondda Cynon Taff, Wastebusters (Rhondda Cynon Taf's environmental clean-up team), and Keep Wales Tidy.

Local people of all ages participated in the project. Deputy Mayor Cllr. Joyce Cass praised everyone for their magnificent effort. She then presented everyone with Certificates of Achievement.

PROJECT UPDATES



Good News on New Community Woodland

Funding officers responsible for CYDCOED 2 (Objective 1) money, which can be used to develop new woodland areas, have indicated that they are interested in investing in Maerdy. CYDCOED want to ensure that Maerdy residents are fully in control of the project. They have agreed to "ring-fence" £250,000 worth of funding until we have constituted Maerdy Regeneration Ltd.

"The new company will be resubmitting the bid in the autumn" said Ros Davis, Communities First Co-ordinator.



CCTV Project

CCTV cameras are now viewing Ceridwen Street, Maerdy Square and the area to the rear of Teify House. Already the new technology has assisted the Police with several minor incidents. Cameras have also now been sited on the Community Centre to view the Park. Maerdy has also secured funding to install cameras in the vicinity of the Council Housing Office and at the Bus Terminus. The contract to install these is being managed by the Rhondda Cynon Taf Community Safety Partnership. Regrettably there has been a delay due to some technical difficulties, but we are assured that these additional cameras will be installed very soon.



Tegfan Play Area

Maerdy Communities First Forward Plan (2004 –2007) commits the Partnership to do something about the site that was formerly a play area in Tegfan. The new Partnership Board has now decided that this part of the plan should be given a higher priority. To this end, members of the Partnership have been conducting a survey of residents' views about the site. If you have any comments or would like to be involved in developing ideas for the site, please call into the Communities First Office or telephone 01443 755687. Partnership Board Member Karen Knott said, "We have got to be clear that Communities First is for everyone in the Maerdy Ward, which starts at North Road Garage"



SUMMER FUN!

Maerdy Kids R Us, the Communities First Playscheme, starts 28th July at the Community Centre. For full programme, see your Summer Fun brochure or contact Deb at the Communities First Office.

Wednesday 3rd August	10am-12noon	Dance and Storytelling	9-12yrs	15 places
Wednesday 3rd August	2pm-4pm	Instrument Making and Percussion	9-12yrs	20 places

Staff from Maerdy Communities First have been working with organisations throughout the Rhondda Fach to ensure that children and young people have a range of summer activities to choose from. The Summer Fun guide giving full details has been delivered to every house in the Valley. Copies are also available from Teify House.

Toddler Activity Day



A special Toddler Activity Day was held at Techniquet, Cardiff Bay, on 16th May. Eighteen toddlers went from Seion Chapel.



Gone Fishing

Over the past two years, the Maerdy & Ferndale Angling Club have benefited from Communities First Trust Fund grants, which will allow them to make alterations to the fish farm, demanded by the EEC. Also they have been able to double the quantity of fish produced. The Club want to ensure that they are themselves contributing to the regeneration process. To this end, the management recently announced that young people under the age of 12, living in Maerdy or Ferndale, may now apply for a **FREE** fishing permit.

Parents or other responsible adults should contact the Communities First office for more information – **01443 7555687**.

STOP PRESS

Are you aged 16 - 25?

Do you feel that your self-confidence could do with a boost?
Do you think having a positive attitude towards life will help you get where you want to be?

Then come and join us! We currently have a project running called STEPS. STEPS is all about building self-confidence, improving assertiveness levels, increasing a positive attitude and having fun! STEPS will help you to believe in yourself. We are currently holding the project in Maerdy. So if you live in the Maerdy area and wish to take part, then give me a call:

Rachel Walters
Trainee Youth & Community Worker
Rhondda Housing Association
Tel: 01443 424203 Mobile: 07834753747
Email: rachel@rhondda.org

Your Children Need You!

MANY HANDS MAKE LIGHT WORK!

Can you spare an hour or two of your time to help out with Playscheme?

Contact Ros, Deb or Cath at the
Communities First Office



Junior Rugby Club News:

Maerdy Junior Rugby Club has announced that they are now going to play at Greenwood Park on Sundays. Organisers want to emphasise that they are still Maerdy Junior Rugby Club but that the move will enable them to take full advantage of all the facilities at Ferndale Rugby Club's ground. During term-time they will continue to meet at The Barn, Ferndale Community School on Thursdays between 6 pm and 7 pm. The Club is open to boys and girls between the ages of 7 and 14 years

SURGERIES

Cllr Kevin Williams will be holding Surgeries from 6pm to 7pm at Teify House on the following Thursdays.
11th August 05 • 15th September 05 • 13th October 05 • 17th November 05



Miss Betty Davies
celebrated her ninetieth birthday
on Sunday 6th June – *Congratulations!*



First Aid Training



Martine Mitchell; Marina Ham; Nicola Barnes; Alex Gill; Christine O'Flaherty; Gemma Evans & Kelly Davies attended the training held at Seion Chapel while the 'Genesis' mobile childcare team looked after the little ones.

Special thanks go to Rhondda Housing Association for organising this. RHA is a new member organisation of Maerdy Communities First partnership



USEFUL NUMBERS:

Stray dogs **01443 682789**
Rat problems **01443 442100**

To report an abandoned car
To report any used needles or syringes
To arrange refuse collection of bulky items

01443 494700
01443 494700
01443 494700

For support and information about problems with drugs or alcohol –
Phone TEDS on 01685 880090



communities first cymunedau yn gynnal

Maerdy Newsletter is funded by Maerdy Communities First

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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.



RHONDDA CYNON TAF



Uywodeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government