



Maerdy Community Newsletter



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Maerdy

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Progress made within Community First

Welcome to this month's Community Newsletter. Substantial progress has been made so far in 2003. A new Partnership Board has been agreed and there are also plans for a new Community Forum for Maerdy. This month we bring you a report on these developments and an outline of the **Community Audit** that will be undertaken by the University of Glamorgan. Starting in March it will establish what Maerdy's most pressing needs are. **Please help them to ensure the report reflects your views.** There is also a report back from the Health and Well-being seminar held in January at which 25+ residents attended. This month's community **spotlight is on the Patients' Participation Group.**

Partnership Members Elected

At the Open meeting held at Teify House on Wednesday 15th January, a motion was passed to approve, in principle, the setting up of a Partnership Board to co-ordinate the Communities First process within Maerdy. The Board will consist of residents, members from the voluntary & business sector and representatives from the statutory sector in equal numbers – $\frac{1}{3}$ of the Partnership coming from each section.

Each member will eventually be required to sign up to a partnership agreement. They will be charged with the responsibility of pulling together an initial Action Plan for Maerdy in response to the Community Audit. The Focus Groups will continue to have open membership and these will assist the Partnership board in firming up proposals and to secure the funding to bring new initiatives and projects to fruition.

From the meeting, the Residents Steering Committee, together with active volunteers were charged with finalising the framework of the Partnership. The Residents Steering Committee were also given the task of selecting Resident's representatives to sit on the Partnership Board. At the meeting, which took place on Wednesday 22nd January, **John Thomas, Selwyn Williams, Bryn Jones, Gaynor Williams and Gill Chambers** were chosen to become the first Maerdy Ward Residents to join the **Partnership Board within Communities First – Maerdy.** It was also agreed that **Peter Thomas** would represent 16 -25 year olds. Congratulations to you all!

Money Allocated To Maerdy

Rhondda Cynon Taff Borough Council has been allocated £1.3m to be spent in Communities First areas. The money is for (i) Play and recreational activities for children and young people; (ii) Transport Initiatives and lighting for walkways etc. The only snag is that the money has to be spent before the end of June effectively ruling out projects that require planning permission. The Communities First Office team were asked to carry out a quick consultation exercise and as a result an open residents meeting was held on Tuesday 21st at Teify House. The meeting recommended that the **lighting between the Community Centre and Library be improved** and the remainder of our allocation be spent on the **refurbishment of Maerdy Park Play Area and the acquisition of some more challenging play equipment to suit older children.** If possible some remedial work will also be done on **Brookfield play area.** The work, if accepted, has to be completed by June this year and will cost approximately £80,000

Spotlight on – The Patients' Participation Group

We continue our policy to highlight the work of other organisations working in our community with an insight into the work of the recently formed Patients' Participation group. Jean John from Oxford Street reports:

Some time ago, notices were posted in the local Maerdy and Ferndale doctors' surgeries inviting people to be part of a Patients' Participation Group. Four names were received from both Maerdy and Ferndale.

The Maerdy representative is **Mr Ben Cripps of 88 Oxford Street** and he joins Mr B Bailey, Annette Davies and Julie Haycox representing Ferndale and Blaenllechau. The Ferndale representatives can be contacted via the Ferndale surgery. Julie is also a member of the Health Council but this is a separate organisation.

If you have any ideas for improving the service then please contact one of the above, in confidence, by letter. The group is strictly non-political and has been set up to improve local services. The Doctors are concerned about patient care and not political gain.

The group meets monthly and to prioritise the letters received. All letters are discussed with the Doctors, the Practice Manager (Mrs Chamberlain) and the Practice Assistant Manager (Mrs Parry) and ways are found to deal with the concerns raised. This does not stop anyone contacting the Practice Manager directly if they need help and /or advice.

A big problem that is affecting the efficiency of the service provided by the Surgeries is the number of people failing to turn up for their appointments. In a two week period, 60 people failed to keep their doctors' appointment and 142 people their nurses' appointment. This obviously results in patients having to wait longer for appointments. Any suggestions how to deal with this problem would be greatly appreciated by the doctors and their staff.

Maerdy Community Audit

As part of the Communities First Programme for Maerdy the National Assembly requires a **Community Audit to take place to discover community views about issues and problems in the area. The idea is to look at the needs of the whole community in Maerdy Ward and to produce some ideas of what the community wants to achieve.** This information will be fed into the Community Action Plan that will request the funding from the Assembly to make these things happen.

The University of Glamorgan, Programme for Community Regeneration is helping with the Community Audit and their workers will be in the area from about Mid February. There are various ways for everyone to get involved:

- ◆ As volunteers helping out with a door-to-door survey (please contact Ros on 01443 755687) if you are interested
- ◆ By completing a questionnaire when you are asked
- ◆ By taking part in special focus groups which will be held throughout the community
- ◆ By attending a Community Visioning event, which will be held in March or April.

The University team has carried out many of these audits and are looking forward to working in the Maerdy area. **This is an opportunity to make your views known and for your voice to influence the future of Maerdy. Please help in anyway you can and make sure that the University team gets the information it needs.** If you have any questions about the Community Audit process you can contact Dave Adamson at the University Tel: 01443 482599
Email: dladamso@glam.ac.uk

Health and Well-being Workshop

In January we told you about a Health and Well-being Workshop we were holding in Cwmaman Institute. Well over 25 residents of Maerdy joined people from several organisations involved with health. It was good to see 7 pupils from the Community School taking an active part in the day.

Julie Bishop from the local health group asked all present to identify what we considered to be the health needs and concerns in Maerdy. These were put in order of short-term achievability and long-term aims. A report will be available soon.

A question was raised regarding Dr Marina. It seems that she will not be returning to Maerdy at present. However, we would like to take this opportunity to welcome Dr Kumar who joined the Maerdy/Ferndale practice in January.

Details of further workshops will be available soon.

Maerdy People Get an Early Christmas Present

The Action Team For Jobs, working in partnership with the Job Centre Staff, interviewed 68 people for factory work at Thomson Broadband just before Christmas. 28 people were offered employment - 8 from Maerdy - and they were due to start work on 2nd and 6th of January. To help these people take up the offer of work, the Action Team subsidised a bus travelling from Maerdy through the Rhondda directly to Thomson Broadband.

Action Team for Jobs are at the Maerdy Community Centre every Monday from 1.30pm ~ 4.30pm and their Mobile Bus is outside Maerdy Court Flats on Wednesdays between 2pm ~ 4 pm If you want help and/or assistance in your search for work, why not drop in to see if they can help you or Freephone 08003897936

Community Notice Board

Maerdy Community Forum plan to hold an inaugural meeting in Teify House on Wednesday the 19th February at 6.30pm The forum is open to ALL RESIDENTS and will be your platform to have your say on the matters concerning the Maerdy Ward. Please make every effort to attend. This is your opportunity to have your say about what concerns/views you have about living in the Maerdy Ward.

All Saints Church hold a Coffee Morning every Tuesday from 10.30. All are welcome to drop in and join them.

The Community Swimming Pool at the rear of Excelsior Terrace is including an Aqua-aerobics Class during its Wednesday Ladies Night. The classes will start on 26th February and commence at 7.15pm and will last 1 hour. Please come and support your local swimming pool.

Seion Mums and Toddlers Group welcome past and present members to attend a Charity Coffee Morning on Friday 21st February between 10 ~ 12 o'clock in the Seion Vestry. Welsh Costume is optional.

Information & Advice. Staff from the Pension Service (formally the Benefits Agency) will be providing a local service at Teify House to give advice and information about benefits, in confidence, to people aged over 60. The surgeries will be from 10.30am~12.30am starting on 11th February 2003. The surgeries will be held fortnightly.

Free children's disco sponsored by Action Team for Jobs. Children up to 11 years welcome but must be accompanied by an adult. Includes party games, and puppet show. Refreshments provided.

**Maerdy Community Centre
Tuesday 20th February 03
11am – 1pm**

"Half-term Workshops"



Maerdy Youth Club

Monday 17th Feb - Screen Printing and Circus Skills

Wednesday 19th Feb - Dance and Graffiti

Friday 21st Feb - Drama and Mosaics

Maerdy Community Centre

Tuesday 18th Feb - Singing and Percussion

Thursday 19th Feb - Hip Hop, Breakdancing and D.J. Mixing

Open to young people who are in year 6 and above.



Any queries contact Debra Hanney

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Tel: 01443 755687/Mobile: 07811 143083

Email: debrahanney@rhondda-cynon-taff.gov.uk

Next Steps is restarting at Seion Chapel on Thursday 6th February 2003 between 1 pm – 3 pm. This will be a chance to chat, drink tea, and learn a few simple craft techniques under the guidance of a friendly tutor. A qualified nursery nurse will be on hand to help entertain any children you have with you. Open to mums, dads, carers and grandparents. And it is free!