

## GENERAL MEETING

Old Church Rooms on Monday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2016 at 7.30pm

**Present:** Tom Evans [Vice Chairman], Nick Hawkins (Secretary), Bob Roberts (Treasurer), David Cargill, Ralph Vaughan, Cllr Rod McKerlich, PC Sam Willis, PCSO Laura Moore & 11 members.

**Apologies:** David Silver [Chairman], Eric Blackwell, Raymond Rivron, Allan Cook, Julie Davies, Neville Evans, Judith Marsh & Wyn Phillips.

### **A Talk by Peter Vaughan, Chief Constable, South Wales Police.**

The Vice Chairman introduced the Chief Constable. He said Mr Vaughan had had a distinguished career in the police, starting in the South Wales force in 1984. He had served at every rank in all parts of the force and spent three years as Assistant Chief Constable for Wiltshire prior to returning to South Wales in 2007. In 2010 he succeeded Barbara Wilding and became the Chief Constable. He had received many honours, being awarded the Queen's Police Medal in 2013; he is a Deputy Lieutenant of Mid Glamorgan and has been invested as an Officer of the Order of St John. In 2014 he was awarded an Honorary Fellowship by Cardiff University and in 2015 he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate by the University of South Wales.

Mr Vaughan started with some statistics about South Wales police. The force is the seventh largest of the 43 police forces in England and Wales. Although it only covers 10% of Wales, it covers 42% of the population. It is also very busy, currently dealing with 400K incidents per year, 1.3M calls to the central help desk (which works out at one per member of the population), 202 major events per year (in Wiltshire there were only two) and with police cars travelling a total of 13M miles per year. When he came back to South Wales in 2007 the recorded performance was not good. The sickness record was the worst in the Country, the force was bottom of the league in customer satisfaction, there was a huge amount of antisocial behaviour and there was confusion of the myriad priorities then being set by the Home Office - but the force was top in dealing with major events.

On being made Chief Constable he decided things had to change. He started working with Prof Martin Innes, a criminologist at Cardiff University, to establish how the force should operate. Communication turned out to be the key. The police needed to start listening, 'knocking on peoples' doors', finding out what they wanted. He also found that people were not informed when problems had been resolved so they still felt threatened.

Mr Vaughan thought he had the best job in the world in sorting out the problems but then came the financial crisis of 2010. £47M has now been taken off the original £300M annual budget, the force has shrunk from 3400 officers to 2800 and, overall, he has had to shed 1100 people. Fortunately, savings have brought better ways of working. Originally, there were seven control rooms, now there is one; that saved £4M. The 101 calls performance was awful but, given the challenge, the control room people worked out a better way of handling them. He has worked though the whole force in a similar way. Now, even with the cuts, South Wales police is in the top ten of Customer Satisfaction, antisocial behaviour has fallen, the force is rated as 'outstanding' and is working within budget.

Many of the achievements have been the result of introducing technology. All officers are equipped with Samsung smart phones through which all information is delivered, track kept of their position and guidance is provided. In fact South Wales police has a reputation nationally and internationally of being the best force for the application of technology. This helps because crime is also changing. Even previously simple matters like harassment have become complex - involving the Internet, Facebook as well as face to face incidents. He gave an example of bringing a sex offender to justice which involved 52 personnel and cost around £300K.

In summary, Mr Vaughan said he still enjoyed doing the job after six years. He believed fervently in wanting the police to be visible and always contactable. He said his motto was the same as the Prince of Wales - 'Ich Dien' - 'I serve'.

In response to questions, Mr Vaughan said that the likely large increase in Cardiff population was not a great concern to him. He noted that the large developments planned under the LDP would bring financial contributions via Section 106 and the new Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), which would help. He believed in a flexible force which deployed its numbers and talents according to demand and in line with minimising risk. He noted that crime had changed. Youth annoyance used to be high on the agenda but smart phones, which allow youths to communicate without necessarily congregating, plus providing more for them to do, mean that it had almost disappeared. There had also been a massive change in the pattern of theft - not so much to do with policing, more to do with the improved security of cars etc. Most petty crime now was opportunistic - caused by people leaving cars and doors unlocked or by putting valuable items on display. He had enjoyed his 32 years in the police force. He expected to retire soon at 55 and had no immediate plans for a new career.

The Vice Chairman thanked the Chief Constable for such an interesting and warming talk. He congratulated him on the splendid results that had been achieved under his leadership and he presented him with a token of appreciation.

## **Minutes of the previous General Meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> November 2015**

The minutes were approved.

### **Treasurer's Report**

The Treasurer reported that he had balanced the Association's books for 2015 (*note: the Association's financial year is the calendar year*) and the accounts would be going to the auditor shortly. In 2015, the Association had presented a cheque for £5600 to the NSPCC (the nominated Charity for the year), being the amount directly collected by us. Together with other indirect collections, notably that from Radyr Golf Club, the NSPCC had received a little over £12K. The newly formed Film Club had generated a surplus of £520. Overall, the Association had generated a surplus of £301.52 over the year - mainly due to successful bars and BBQs at our events. He warned, though, that such income was heavily weather dependent. Both the May Festival and the Christmas event could have been washed out, in which case the results would have been very different. The Association's reserves currently stood at £7423, although that included £526 in restricted funds - £276 for Velindre (from the Christmas event) and £250 for a defibrillator (donated by Cardiff West Rotary).

### **Local Planning**

Cllr Rod McKerlich reported that the Cardiff LDP process had now ended with the Welsh Government Inspector ruling it 'sound' and Cardiff Council voting to accept it on a majority of 40 votes to 27. The first implementation of the LDP was the planning application for 630 houses at the south end of Heol Isaf which was scheduled to come before the Planning Committee very shortly, on 10<sup>th</sup> February at 14:30 in City Hall. He hoped that as many people as possible would come along to the Committee to show interest. He noted that both he and the Association's Secretary (the latter by virtue of having submitted a petition some time ago - see below) would be able to speak at the Planning Committee. It would be necessary for the two speakers to co-ordinate their presentations but, as far as he was concerned, the key points were:

- 350 houses on an 11.9 Hectare site (thinking of only the Radyr part of the development) was 'too busy'
- Traffic lights at the end of Heol Isaf and at the exit from Parc Radur would cause excessive traffic queues
- No heavy construction vehicles should be allowed on Heol Isaf - this should be included in planning conditions
- Sufficient schools should be provided and developers should not be able to argue later that they are not required and adopt the allocated land for more development

- He was concerned that ancient hedges might be grubbed out
- The stipulation of a three metre cycle track along parts of Heol Isaf was ludicrous
- He was concerned that putting concrete over a large area of grassland could result in flooding. He had little confidence in the use of 'Sustainable drainage systems' (SuDS) to mitigate this risk
- The approach into Radyr needed to be protected, although he was pleased to note that some protection had been agreed for The Thatch.
- Sink holes had appeared in a number of places around the proposed development and he felt no development should proceed without a full geological survey.

The Secretary reminded the meeting that the petition originally had two themes - that the planning application was premature in that it was preceding the adoption of the LDP and the fear that traffic chaos will ensue. The first objection had obviously disappeared but he still thought it worthwhile dwelling a little on the traffic issues. He mentioned that there was a site meeting on Wednesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> February and everyone was encouraged to attend.

The Secretary also mentioned that the Community Council had still not decided to go ahead with the preparation of a new Village Plan. This was very concerning as a new VP could provide much needed evidence when it came to negotiating any Section 106 or CIL agreements arising from developments such as the 630 houses. It would also provide a checkpoint on a number of measures to see how the R&M Community had progressed over the last six years. He encouraged the R&MCC to initiate this item of work soon.

### **Entertainment being organised**

The Vice Chairman gave details of some events being organised in the near future - a performance by the RPMG of 'Kiss me Kate' from 17<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> February in the Bishop of Llandaff School; the showing of the film 'A Walk in the Woods' at the OCR on 25<sup>th</sup> February (when ice creams should be back on sale and a new sound and projection system trialled); and even a performance by Fluellen of 'Shirley Valentine' on 8<sup>th</sup> December in MVH.

### **Old Church Rooms Development**

The Secretary updated the meeting on the current state of progress. The completion date had slipped again and the work would probably be completed (including ground work) towards the end of February. The much-awaited architectural lights for the Garth Room were promised for the coming Wednesday. The new upstairs room - almost as big as the Weir Room - was almost ready for occupation. Suggestions for a name were invited.

### **Festival 2016**

David Cargill reported that 29<sup>th</sup> Festival was almost fully planned. It would have a Roald Dahl theme and there would be 38 events in the fortnight. He was now busy concluding details with sponsors and advertisers. He noted, with regret, that Radyr Golf Club had this year decided to adopt a different Charity to the one chosen by the Association (Velindre), but he still hoped a goodly amount would be raised. The Vice Chairman reported that the Association had done more work on the dedicated Festival Website and programme details would be added very soon. The wish was to build the site into a repository of information about all aspects of the Festival and also as a centre for ticket sales. If any organisation selling Festival tickets wished to be included, they should contact him or the Secretary.

### **General R&M Matters**

David Cargill reported that Cardiff Council had started to levy a charge for road closures and the policing of them. The approximate charge was £500 for the closure and £500 for the policing. There was a possibility that, with police cooperation, the second charge could be avoided and he disputed the calculations done by the Council in making up the closure cost. He suggested it would be useful to work with other communities similarly afflicted by these charges to get things changed. He noted that the Association could not afford to take these charges on board.

Ralph Vaughan reported that a defibrillator should be installed in Station in February and he was working with St John's Cymru to arrange the associated training.

### **Any Other Business**

PCSO Laura Moore said she was enjoying her new role in R&M, although her patch covered a much wider area. It was a big area and she would have to place herself wherever crime was occurring. However, crime numbers were low and that was giving her an opportunity to get to know everyone and to make sure she is seen and known. She was therefore organising 'drop in meetings' in The Orchard and Pugh's. Dates were being worked out and it was suggested that they be fully advertised in the events diary on the website and on the R&M Facebook Hub. In discussion, it was noted that PACT dates needed to be settled - there was no reason why they should be restricted to a specific day - also that she might like to keep watch over the content of the Forum on the website and the R&M Hub. Both of these channels gave a good insight into what was concerning the residents at any particular time. Laura mentioned that she was already aware of the parking issues at school times in both Heol Isaf and Park Road and had spoken to parents. There would be more patrols to try to keep things under control. She also mentioned that she was aware of rogue traders working in the area. She emphasised that it was important, if approached by such people, to glean as much evidence from them as possible - vehicle registration, leaflets, other descriptive material - and pass it as quickly as possible onto the police. However, as mentioned by the Chief Constable at the beginning of the meeting, the best way of combating crime was to keep things secure and to be vigilant.

The Secretary reported that the Chairman and Secretary of the Association had attended an advertised public R&MCC meeting and, after a short bit of business, a motion had been passed to exclude them from the meeting. This was very disturbing and he wanted to know what the basis was for the exclusion, what the meeting was seeking to achieve and whether it had achieved it. One Councillor had said that the public should be excluded as the R&MCC 'did not wish to wash its dirty linen in public'. He was raising this because there were urgent matters for the R&MCC to be dealing with on the R&M Community's behalf and the issue had clearly been a huge distraction of their time. Cllr Rod McKerlich responded on behalf of the R&MCC. He said it had been necessary to exclude the public as confidential matters were being discussed and the R&MCC had a right to pass such a motion. He also confirmed that the issue had not been resolved during the meeting. The Secretary said he did not accept that the reasons for exclusion were valid and he would be taking the matter further.

### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be on Monday, 18<sup>th</sup> April 2016 commencing at 19.30 in the OCR. This would be the Association's AGM and refreshments would be offered after the formal proceedings.