



Bridgend Civic Trust

Newsletter No 20
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www.bridgendcivictrust.org.uk

Your Committee for 2002 / 2003

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★ Connie Say			
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*A happy New Year to all our
members and other readers*

Bridgend Civic Trust

Our Chairman Roger Sellick will be giving a talk “Do You Get My Drift” at the meeting of the Bridgend Local Historical Society at 7.00 p.m. on 26th February. There will also be a stall advertising the activities of the Bridgend Civic Trust.

Proposed Events for 2003

March : Presentation of award—Hope Chapel

May 17 : Coffee morning

June : Guided walk

September : Heritage weekend

Further details will be announced when they become available.

During May we are hoping to organise an evening of “Stories of Bridgend”. If you know anyone who has some interesting memories or tales they are willing to share then let us know. This event will be open to the public.

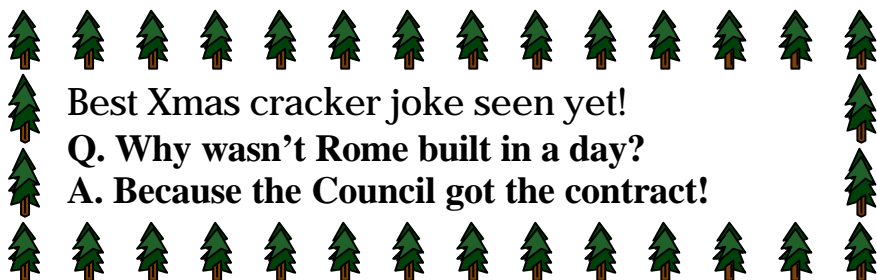
As we look forward to 2003 and bid a fond farewell to the last year we can look back on the activities of the Bridgend Civic Trust with pride. A lot has been happening locally and you can be sure that your committee and members are working hard to ensure that civic pride is top of the agenda. Please remember to spread the word and encourage more people to take an interest in their town by supporting our activities.

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Don't forget!
 Membership vouchers are available from Allan Underhill. Why not give a friend a lasting present and boost our membership at the same time!



New Publications

Murphy, Natalie. *Bridgend: Coity Higher and Lower*. Tempus Publishing ISBN 0752426532

Bridgend and District History Society. *Bridgend: a History in Photographs, 1952-2002*. Bridgend and District History Society

Bridgend Civic Trust Secretary' Report - Year 2001/2002

During the year :

- We held 10 Committee meetings.
- Vanessa Jones and Jackie Harriss were co-opted to the Committee. Jackie later moved from the area and resigned.
- We learned, with regret, of the death of Malcolm Thomas, Director of Planning & Environmental Services of Bridgend County Borough Council. We sent our condolences to Keri Lewis, Chief Executive, who replied, thanking us.
Mr Thomas has now been replaced by Rhodri-Gwynne Jones. We wrote to welcome him to Bridgend.
- 3 newsletters were sent to members in December, April and September. Vanessa has taken over editing the newsletter.

Events.

- At last year's AGM, Antony Hontoir spoke to us about his local film making activities. He has since resumed the Bridgend film that he is making and we have sponsored this by purchasing a mention in the credits.
- In October, the Revd Tony Parkinson gave a very interesting talk on the moving of St Teilo's Church to St Fagans.
- In May, Brett Exton gave a talk on Island Farm POW Camp illustrated by extracts from his comprehensive web site.
- In June, we organised a walk around the Town to show the features that people may have missed. This was guided by Natalie Murphy, Buffo Coles and Derek Hillier.
- In July, Connie Say organised a members dinner at Frolics in Southerndown. Entertainment was provided by John and Carol Jones and Connie.
- In September, our annual Heritage Day event took place at Brynteg School. Thanks to Phil Tapper for running guided tours and arranging an exhibition of items from the School Archives.

We are members of the Civic Trust for Wales, the Civic Trust (UK), BAVO, Bridgend Chamber of Trade and the Newcastle Hill Hospice project.

We have taken advertisements in the programmes for the three Town Centre events, "Crank Up", the Summer and Christmas Festivals.

Projects :

- We have mounted a slate sign in the Rugby Club under the old Market Plaque explaining its origin.
- We have commenced repainting the 3 milestones in Caroline St, Bryntirion Hill and Cowbridge Road. The funding for this has been agreed with the Council.

- We have started on a project to get shops to display their history in their windows.
- We are about to reposition an old lamp post on the Island Farm site to within the Hut 9 perimeter fence.

Awards.

- No major award last year.
- We wrote to the Council congratulating them on the appearance of the Town Centre for the Queen's visit.
- Our major award for 2002 is being presented to Jenkins Gould Partnership for the Union Offices in Quarella Rd.

- We intend to present a Certificate to Hope Baptist Church for their refurbishment.

Visits.

- Five members attended the Civic Trust for Wales conference in Carmarthen.
- Two members attended the formal designation of Merthyr Mawr Warren as a National Nature Reserve.
- Three members attended a presentation of the Heritage aspects of the proposed Life Centre.
- Barbara Thorp and Natalie Murphy regularly monitored planning applications.
- We had regular representation on the Town Centre Regeneration Forum.

Town Centre Regeneration

Currently under discussion are Street Furniture, and Phase 4 items. These include the junctions at

- Market St / Dunraven Place,
- Caroline St / Queen St / Dunraven Place,
- Market St / Derwen Road,
- Caroline St / Nolton St / Court Road
- The Bus Station area.

UDP.

A busy year collecting evidence, writing rebuttals of the Council's evidence and making appearances before the Inspector on the following :

- Island Farm green wedge / WRU centre of excellence.
- Proposed Tesco site on Northern Distributor Road.
- Embassy Cinema site.
- YMCA site.
- Cowbridge Road / Coychurch Road link road.

Also written observations / objections were submitted to the enquiry on :

- Car parking at the proposed Brackla Station.
- Allocation of sites for Life Centre and Bus Station.
- Tremains Road car park.

Planning Matters.

We raised objections with the Council on the following :

- Tesco application on Northern Distributor Road.
- Aldi application on the Embassy site.
- Call Centre in Brewery Lane.
- WRU application on Island Farm.

Other Matters :

We wrote to :

- The Police regarding parking in Tondu Road.
- The Council concerning lack of footpath on the South side of Coychurch Road opposite the Haywain. A footpath was subsequently constructed.
- The Council concerning the blocking of the footpath between Broadlands and Park Woods.
- The Council concerning the building of new properties too close to established trees.

Communications.

- Web Site. Vanessa's husband Kevin Jones has recently set up a web site for us, which will be going public very soon. The address is "www.bridgendcivictrust.org.uk". Any suggestion for content will be welcome. Thanks to Kevin for his work on this.
- Notice Board. We have been trying, without success, to find a site for a Notice Board in the own Centre. Any ideas would be welcome.

WRU Academy—Island Farm

Main text of letter sent to Welsh Rugby Union

Dear Mr Moffett,

WRU Academy - Island Farm, Bridgend

In common with most other organisations and people in Wales, we are fully supportive of efforts to improve the fortunes of the Welsh Rugby Union. We therefore wish you well in your new position.

The main purpose of this letter, however, is to request that you urgently review the proposal for the Academy at Island Farm, Bridgend. You will have heard of the massive amount of opposition to the project that has been generated in the locality.

Bridgend Civic Trust fully supports this opposition for the following reasons.

- There are many places that will provide as good or better environment, some of these being in Bridgend Borough.
- Transport links to the Island Farm site are not good. There are 7 roundabouts between M4 J35 and the site with several severe traffic bottlenecks. The rail link is poor with the prospect of a station on the Barry line a mere pipe dream.
- Bridgend is surrounded by housing estates including Brackla, Broadlands, Cefn Glas, and the projected Parc Derwen. In addition there is the Industrial Estate to the east. There is no requirement for more housing over and above the UDP proposals.
- Your projected site is the only lung left to the Town. To build on this site will be to close that lung and be the thin end of a huge wedge that will mean the eventual linking of Bridgend Town with the historic villages of Merthyr Mawr and Ewenny.

We hope that you will find the time to look objectively at the proposals and come to the same conclusion as ourselves that **this scheme is neither wanted nor desirable in this location.**

Yours Sincerely,

Charles H. Thorp
Hon. Secretary,
Bridgend Civic Trust.

			
	Useful web sites:		
			
	www.civictrustwales.org	The Civic Trust for Wales	
	www.bridgend.gov.uk	Bridgend County Borough	
		Council	
	www.wales.gov.uk	National Assembly for Wales	
	www.cadw.wales.gov.uk	CADW	
	www.bridgendcivictrust.org.uk	Bridgend Civic Trust	
	www.bridge.org.uk	Roundabout Action Group of	
		Ewenny	
	http://www.island-farm.org	Island Farm Action Group	
			
			
			

WRU Academy—Island Farm

Notes made by Secretary of Bridgend Civic Trust regarding Development Control Committee meeting

Island Farm / Welsh Rugby Union Academy

On Thursday 19 December, the Development Control Committee of the Council, with **Cllr Roy Bowser** in the Chair, met to discuss this very contentious item. This was the application by the Welsh Rugby Union and others to build a Rugby National Academy, sports and Leisure facilities, a Hotel, Restaurant and some 200 houses on the site of the old Island Farm POW camp and farm land to the south. Island Farm itself is scheduled for high tech jobs in the 1995 Ogwr Local Plan which is still current. This plan is due to be replaced by the Bridgend Unitary Development Plan some time in 2003. In this application, generally speaking, the housing and Hotel would be on the Island Farm site with the WRU academy on the farm land to the south. Most of the land scheduled for high tech jobs in the local plan would be lost. Thus the application is out of accord with the current local plan.

The meeting opened with members being asked to declare any interests. There were none of any consequence. After that, local Council members who were not on the committee were permitted to speak. These would not be permitted to vote at the end.

Cllr Cheryl Green referred to the loss of jobs if the application were allowed to succeed. Estimates showed some 6 jobs for the WRU scheme as opposed to potentially some 200 if more factories were built on the science park extension on Island Farm.

(Half way through Cllr Green's speech, the meeting was interrupted due to the lack of sound being transmitted to the members of the public who were in the nearby committee room. After some discussion it was agreed that all speakers should come up to the microphone on the platform that was working.

Cllr Green was the asked to start her contribution again. (The Bridgend Civic Trust has written to the Chief Executive Officer requesting urgent attention to the sound system. This is the fourth time we have written on this matter.)

Cllr Edith Hughes spoke of probable problems with the highways at peak times and the damage to the environment. She also stressed the loss of privacy that a 3 storey hotel on the A48 would mean to the residents of Merthyr Mawr Road.

Next **Martyn Hooker, the Assistant Director of Planning** gave his reasons for his recommendation to accept the plan. He stated that this was one of the most difficult applications he had had before him in his seven years in the job. He admitted that the application was at variance with the local plan. He had not yet received the Highways Impact Analysis. He referred to a "106" agreement (this means that the developers will fund an associated project if permission to proceed is granted) that would be necessary to improve the A48. He also referred to the loss of high grade agricultural land and to the loss of dormouse habitat. Members would have three options. 1. To reject the application, 2. To defer a decision until after the highways impact study was received or 3. To accept the application in which case the matter would have to be referred to the full council (because it was "out of accord") after which it could be called in by the National Assembly.

Cllr Richard Young spoke of the inadequacies of the A48 and of the problems an extra 200 houses would cause the local sewerage works. The stench in his garden in Wyndham crescent was already very unpleasant.

Cllr Richard Power called for and proposed deferment of the application pending a full site meeting so that members could see the situation for themselves.

(comment : in our view any members who had not briefed themselves thoroughly on this high profile topic before this meeting, were guilty of incompetence !).

Cllr Bill Evans expressed the view that he thought the WRU was not in a position to finance the Academy.

Cllr Norah Page was concerned for the conservation issues.

Cllr David Anderson said that the whole scheme should be laid to rest. It was difficult land to build on and would not be financially viable. The burden on 200 houses to finance the entire scheme was too great.

Cllr Meryl Wilkins was concerned for the road and access systems that would be necessary. She also stated that this was not a good use for the land.

Cllr Peter Foley was not enamoured of the WRU and stated that no Council money should be used to assist them with their scheme.

Cllr Derek Gregory was concerned about the number of jobs that the scheme would put in jeopardy. A precedent was a M4 junction 35 (Bocam site) where houses had been built but as yet no factories. Would this be mirrored here?

Cllr PA Evans thought that the WRU would not be able to run their academy and was worried about the loss of grade 2 farm land.

Cllr Mel Mathias felt it was the duty of Councillors to represent the feelings of people who had elected them. There was overwhelming evidence that people were against this scheme. It was "out of accord" with the local plan. There was loss of farm land which could never be recovered. If the Island Farm was lost as the Science Park extension where else could high tech companies go?

Cllr Lyn Morgan felt that the proposal should be accepted because the Officers had recommended it. When asked by the Chair to explain his reasons he was unable to say any more.

Cllr Mel Nott, the Deputy Leader of the Council, said that the Officer's recommendation should be followed. He had been sent a tape of a BBC broadcast and a list of questions by objectors. He inferred that the tape had been edited. In answer to some of the questions, he felt that no extra traffic would be generated, that the scheme would protect wildlife species and that the houses would not require enough extra schools spaces to cause a problem. He formally proposed that the application be accepted.

Cllr Lyn Jenkins spoke of the deprived valleys areas and how the better parts of the Borough should be shared by all.
(comment : he did not make it clear how this land would be available for sharing after it had been built on).

At the end,

- The motion for deferment and a site meeting was lost by 5 votes to 23.
- A motion to approve the application was lost by 14 votes to 15.
- A motion to reject the application was won by 15 votes to 14.**

(comment : quite why the final motion was necessary after the other two motion had been lost, is unclear. With the only other options defeated, there was no other alternative).

We would complement **Cllr Roy Bowser** on the good humour and tolerance and with which he chaired an emotional and at times rowdy meeting.

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Eweny Road / A48 Roundabout - Text of letter received from BCBC

JUNCTION OF A48 AND EWENNY ROAD, BRIDGEND

Thank you for your letter dated 27th November 2002 in connection with the above.

Further to your concern, I would wish to advise you of the background behind the scheme. In the first instance, an analysis of all personal injury accidents having occurred within the Bridgend County Borough Council area, identified Eweny Roundabout as the highest priority site requiring attention, having experienced 19 personal injury accidents resulting in 23 casualties during the five year period 1996 to 2000 inclusive.

In addition to the accident related problems, as I am sure your members will be aware, the roundabout experienced congestion and there was much concern over the safety of pedestrians. The roundabout was operating at or close to capacity during peak hours, with queues observed on all approaches.

A number of factors were considered to have contributed to the accident history and concerns over road safety at the roundabout, including lack of visibility on the A48 eastbound approach, the close proximity of pedestrian crossing signals on the A48 immediately east of the roundabout, residential access points on the roundabout itself and poor vertical alignment.

Further to the above, it was known that additional pressure will be put on the roundabout in the future, from committed developments at Broadlands and Brocastle, Consultants were therefore requested to design a scheme which would provide additional capacity, improve pedestrian crossing facilities and reduce accidents.

Removal of the roundabout altogether and replacing it with a signalised cross roads as suggested in your letter, was considered initially. However, the carriageway levels in the vicinity of the roundabout, together with the presence of a water main running beneath the roundabout, would have resulted in the necessity for major reconstruction works, the cost of which could not be accommodated.

Essentially, the scheme operates in a similar manner to a signalised cross roads, whereby those vehicles wishing to turn right are required to stop to allow traffic travelling straight ahead to proceed.

Following detailed capacity analyses undertaken using computerized models the layout arrived at, which cost approximately £350,000 was considered to provide the most cost effective option for improving road safety and traffic capacity at the present time. The Department of Transport Highways Economic Note No.1 entitled '2000 Valuation of the Benefits of Prevention of Road Accidents and Casualties' published in November 2001, quotes the average value of prevention per injury accident as £63,000. Therefore, if the scheme reduces accidents by only 30 percent it will have paid for itself in five years.

As expected by the Council, there were problems initially. As you and your Members evidently appreciate, with any scheme of this nature teething problems always occur while the signal timings are adjusted to best suit the traffic flow conditions and local drivers get used to the new layout. As I am sure you will appreciate, this junction has to cope with significant changes in traffic flow generated by commuters, holiday makers and the school trip.

As a result and to allow the new signals to deal with this, an 'intelligent' system has been introduced which can sense the traffic demands and control the traffic signals to make the system as efficient as possible. The programming is being regularly updated.

I can further advise you that a pre-opening safety audit was undertaken prior to the commissioning of the traffic signals and as with all Bridgend County Borough Council schemes of this size, a 'post-implementation' safety audit has been completed, to assess how road users are adjusting to the new system and to identify any shortfalls not picked up during the previous audits. Although this is a fairly common system of control, it is new to Bridgend and as a result of a study of drivers' reactions to the new system and observations received from motorists, you may be aware that some signal heads have been repositioned/realigned and additional road markings have been provided. Upon receipt of the Final Safety Audit Report, it is likely that a small number of additional amendments will be undertaken.

Feedback received from members of the public has been of particular relevance to the audits and their observations have been and will continue to be recorded and acted upon where appropriate. You may also be interested to learn that in line with future monitoring of the junction arrangements have been made for thorough surveys to be carried out. Whilst one such survey has already been completed, the results are yet to be analysed.

I trust that the above information is of assistance to you.

Yours sincerely

A. Godsall for DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND PLANNING SERVICES

Regeneration—Phase 4

The next phase of the Town Centre regeneration will be starting in the new year. Two areas will be getting the makeover treatment. There will be a certain amount of disruption again in the streets of the Town .

Dunraven Place - Cenotaph.

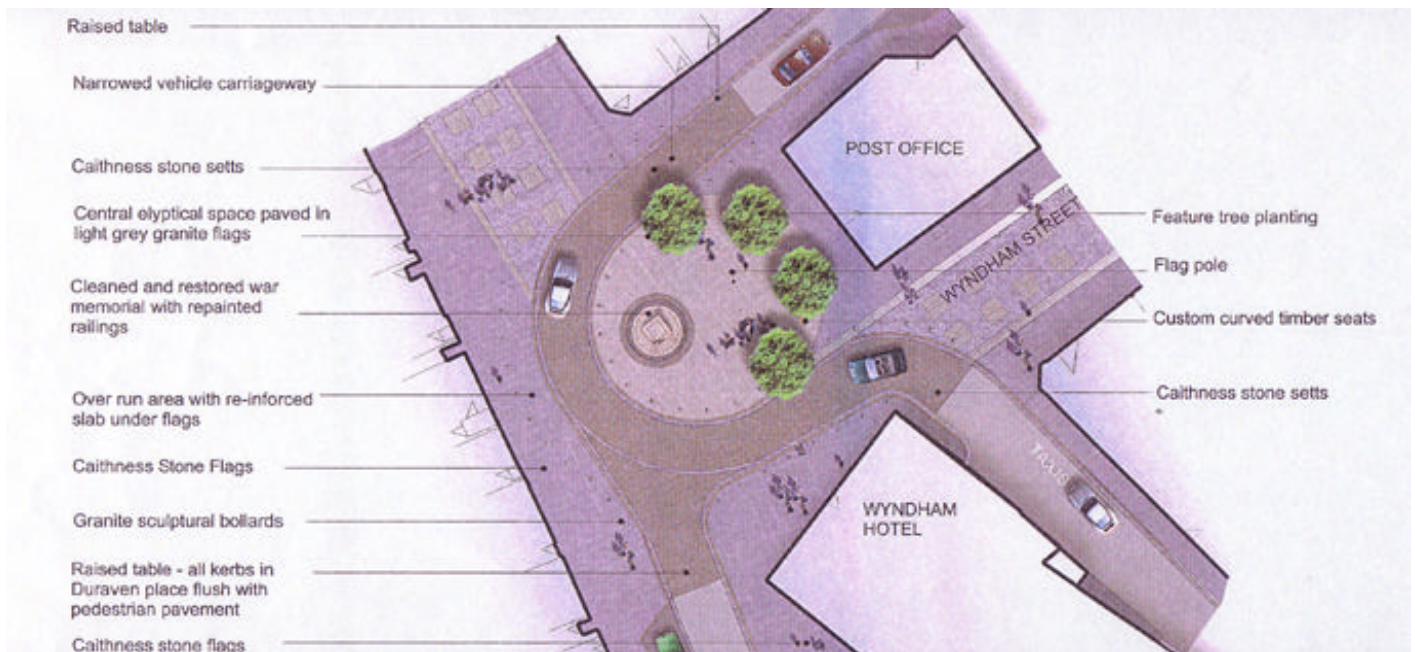
Firstly the area around the Cenotaph will be worked on. There will be four trees in front of the Post Office in a crescent formation. These will help to mask the ugly Post Office building. Plans at present show these to be Acer Platanoides “Emerald Queen”. They will be mature trees with a girth of about 1 foot, that will hopefully deter the vandals. The road way will be narrowed and paved to the same level as the footpaths but in a lighter coloured stone. A few bollards will be installed to ensure traffic and pedestrian separation. The Cenotaph itself will be refurbished and illuminated with uplighters sunk into the ground. New railings in the same design as the present ones will be installed slightly further from the Cenotaph than the current ones. Seating and rubbish bins will be provided under the trees. It will be possible to install a number of flag poles for special occasions.

The Council is due to go out for quotations in early January with a view to starting work in about March. This is a very sensitive area and it is appreciated by all involved that work must be completed well in time for the Remembrance Service in November.

Traffic will still use the road on a regular basis and therefore the foundations must be of a very high quality or else the stones will become displaced.

During construction work the road will be closed on a few days (probably Sundays) to enable work to progress.

Dunraven Place—plan



Market street - Bus Station.

Secondly, and probably at the same time, the Bus Station and Market Street will be upgraded. During the works, bus stops will be relocated, probably to Cheapside. There are several elements to the plans :

- The current buildings will be demolished and a new waiting area constructed mainly of glass will come into being. This will have doors and will be locked at night. It will contain a waiting area, toilets big enough to take shopping or a suitcase in with you, staff rest room, an information point and a semi-sheltered area for people catching coaches at night. The information point is to be a state of the art electronic job which will display timetables—bus and rail, give information about the Town, allow access to the Council web-site and anything else that may be deemed appropriate.
- There will be 12 bays - the same number as at present arranged in a similar format. However we understand that there are plans for the future to take over other premises nearby and increase the capacity.
- The bus station will still be on an Island site thus forcing passengers to compete with buses for use of the roadway.
- Traffic in Market Street will not be able to venture into Quarella Road. All traffic will proceed up to the end Market Street to Derwen Road. Traffic wishing to enter Quarella Road (south) will have to do so from the Cross Valley link road. The only traffic permitted to leave Quarella Road (s) into Market Street will be Buses and taxis.
- A new junction with Derwen Road will be constructed and will be controlled by traffic lights. This will involve the demolition of the old Camera shop in Derwen Road. This is all part of the new “integrated transport” route which will eventually see the construction of a link road from the rail station to Brackla Street.
- A gap will be opened up in the central reservation of the Cross Valley link road, which will be exclusively for the use of buses. This will enable them to turn right into the bus station when approaching from Tondy Road and also to turn right onto the Cross Valley link road when heading east from the Bus Station.

Comments.

Bridgend Civic Trust have been urging the Council to relocate the Bus station on the Brackla Street car park behind Wilkinsons. This site is pencilled in for the new Life Centre.

We believe that this location has several advantages over the current site:

1. There is plenty of space to build a big enough station to last for many years without the expense of acquiring land. A taxi rank could easily be included on the site.
2. Footpaths can easily be constructed next to Wilkinsons and the old Darlows shop thus linking the Bus station with Nolton Street.
3. It is closer to the Rail station thus enabling a better integrated transport hub. A roadway (see above) from the Rail station to Brackla Street is already planned.
4. It is closer to the geographical centre of the Town, which we would define as the junction of Adare Street and Caroline Street.
5. With the potential arrival of ASDA in Cheapside, this will be more convenient for many people.
6. Relocation of bus stops during the construction phase will not be necessary, thus reducing inconvenience. It will also be unnecessary to create the gap in the Cross Valley link road.
7. A car park could be created on the old bus station over shops.