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The voice of RTPI Cymru

CYNLLUNIO

Winter 2009 Edition

Bumper Edition of Awards

Details of the 2009 Wales Awards inside



INSIDE this edition of Cynllunio:

RTPI Cymru Awards · Annual Review · RTPI Services
Policy & Research News · Events · DCfW Update
Young Planner's Conference · University News
Casebook Wales · much, much more



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Welcome to the winter edition

Welcome to the final edition of Cynllunio for 2009. It's been another packed year of activity across Wales and the Annual Review pages provide details. Thank you to everyone who has made 2009 a real success for RTPI Cymru. Despite the economic climate, activity and involvement by members has not diminished; I hope that this continues and even grows in 2010 – the 10th Year Anniversary of the single all-Wales branch of the RTPI.

2009 has also been a year of celebration, with Welsh projects being recognised at the 2008 RTPI Planning Awards in London and also a number of Awards being made at the RTPI Cymru Annual Dinner in November. Congratulations to everyone and for all of those who took the time to enter.

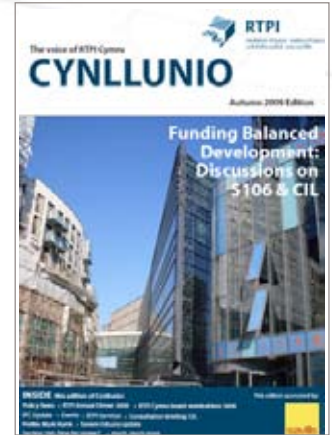
The Annual Dinner this year proved to be a real success, sponsored by Capita Symonds and Savills. Held at the National Museum in Cardiff, 140 RTPI Members and their guests enjoyed the evening. Starting in the Impressionists Gallery with the chance to informally catch up, then to dinner which was littered with Awards and Presentations.

Gareth Wardell was the guest speaker this year, and proved to be a very popular speaker with his quips about his father 'the oldest barber in Tumble'. The improved sound also made it a real success!

Over the last few months there has been a lot going on on the policy and research front, and this edition of Cynllunio details the latest news.

Following the notice in the last edition of Cynllunio, we had great interest in places on the Management Board, and will be holding an election to decide on places.

Do you hear about RTPI Cymru events directly from us, or do you think you miss out? If so, this probably means we don't have your e-mail address. We send e-mails from time to time providing up to date information on events and other key news. In 2010, we will be launching a new e-bulletin, providing details of news and information more regularly than we are able through Cynllunio – but we can only do this if we have your e-mail address. Please e-mail wales@rtpi.org.uk to request to be put on our mailing list



Cynllunio, Autumn 2009

(which we do not share with third parties).

Remember if you would like to sponsor our events or programmes, or advertise in Cynllunio, please get in contact and we can discuss how you can support RTPI Cymru. There are options for most budgets.

In signing off for 2009, I wish you all the very best for the season and look forward to seeing you in 2010.

Roisin Willmott
Editor

Contributing to Cynllunio

Contributions are welcome from RTPI members and others on a wide range of topics and in a variety of different forms:

- Conference announcements
- Reports on conferences
- Critical thought pieces
- Updates on policy in Wales
- Recent project successes
- Humorous items
- Images, photographs

Croesawn erthyglau yn y Gymraeg.

The copy deadlines for the next issues of the Cynllunio newsletter are:

- Thursday 28th January 2010
- Thursday 3rd June 2010
- Thursday 13th August 2010

If you want to make or help secure contributions to the newsletter then get in touch on 029 2047 3923 or email roisin.willmott@rtpi.org.uk.

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The Chair's Challenge

Lucie Taylor sets out her stall for her year as RTPI Cymru Chair.

There is increasingly widespread acceptance that culture, heritage and sport add a huge amount of value to our communities.

My key aims during my year as Chair will be to help:

- realise that different cultures have a huge amount to offer in providing a sense of place,
- build on the merits of our built heritage and bring back buildings into effective community or other uses,
- encourage the use of sporting facilities in association with the physical activity agenda in general, to help boost local economies and bring people together.

As culture, heritage and sport have no joined up statutory function, working in separate spheres is common, and in the past there has been a definite lack of coming together on these agendas in Wales.

Since Technical Advice Note 16 on Sport, Recreation and Open Space (January 2009), this theme has been brought into the heart of the Welsh planning arena. But what are we as planning professionals doing to help deliver such aims and aspirations?

The planning system has an important role to play in encouraging playing field and open space obligations, but I think as planners (amongst all

the other things we are being asked to do!) we could do more to encourage day to day physical activity so that this exists on all our doorsteps.

In our efforts to get people out of their cars by building developments in the right locations, we also need to influence developers and house builders to lay out their developments with this in mind (and not just by decreasing parking standards).

We also need shared delivery and to harness the endeavour of local authorities, the private sector, local communities and the voluntary sector, to make our places and spaces better. In my view it really is about maximising opportunities, speaking to other services areas and really listening to communities.

This type of working can produce much clearer visions and stronger aspirations for areas. Professionals can then begin to play their part in working out what really needs to be achieved for what are always locally distinctive communities.

Progress can be fraught with the 'negative undeliverables': We've all been there: meetings that last far too long and focus on the negative side of current activities, providing no constructive solutions.

As planners we have to challenge this and work proactively



Above: Lucie Taylor, Incoming Chair RTPI Cymru

across professions and across communities, striving for a more joined up, deliverable approach.

In the area where I work, Newport, there is a multi-cultural and diverse population that has a huge amount to offer.

These people genuinely want to see buildings brought back into effective uses, and know what is good about their areas, and also what buildings and land uses are not so good.

They know where the focus needs to be. It is my belief that we can use agendas like sport, culture and heritage to move these ideas forward.

Next year Newport is hosting one of the world's greatest sporting events - the Ryder Cup. On the back of this Newport City Council is trying to ensure that as many people as possible have the chance to take part in celebrating their community.

The Council has a fund with grants available for residents and businesses to create a lasting impression in their community.

It is just this type of programme that can bring people together and potentially create a lasting impression on communities, whether it is through the regeneration of an area or building, or through improving access to open space from existing housing areas.

I'm sure that as planners we all have a building we would like to see brought back into use, or even know a member of the community who genuinely wants to improve their area. Maybe in Wales we now have the tools to actually deliver it.

Lucie is Planning Policy Liaison Officer at Newport City Council and will be the RTPI Cymru Chair for 2010.

2009 - My Year as Chair

James Hooker reports back on the highlights of his year as Chair of RTPI Cymru.



Above: James Hooker, Outgoing Chair of RTPI Cymru

Have you ever been to SA1 in the rain? Rain or shine it is well worth a visit and was a destination in the RTPI

President's West Wales tour in July. I would like to express my thanks to everyone in Neath Port Talbot, Swansea, Carmarthenshire, and the Planning Officer Society Wales for providing such a warm welcome, and showing how professional and close knit the planning fraternity is in Wales.

Despite the challenging times we have been facing in 2009 the 2nd Annual Welsh Planning Conference in Cardiff was a great success with over 250 delegates attending. A successful Climate Change Conference and North Wales Dinner was held in March, and it was a welcome opportunity

to meet with planners from North Wales – local authorities and private sector. RTPI Cymru also co-hosted a reception at the Senedd for Assembly Members with Planning Aid Wales. It was very reassuring to hear Jane Davidson's unwavering commitment for the need for a strong planning system in Wales and how in many areas Welsh Planners are leading the field.

Coming towards the end of the year the Annual Dinner was held for the second time in the National Museum of Wales where more than 170 guests met up with old friends and colleagues; many partying on late into the

night. If your hangover was anything like mine then I am sure you had a great time on the night!

So the time has come to pass on the baton, and it is with great pleasure to hand over the Chair to Lucie Taylor and wish her the best of luck in 2010. A small piece of advice Lucie..... take an umbrella with you on the President's visit, it always seems to rain in Wales! So I would like to end my year as Chair as I began by wishing you all a peaceful and prosperous New Year.

James is Regional Planning Manager in Capita Symond's Cwmbran Office.

New Scholarship Launched

Neil Harris tells us about a new scholarship at the School of City and Regional Planning

Cardiff School of City and Regional Planning is delighted to announce a new scholarship as part of the University's 125th anniversary celebrations.

The George Rich Scholarship, awarded by the Jean Rich Foundation, is a substantial scholarship fund that forms part of a suite of new scholarships available to University students. The George Rich Scholarship is awarded annually to a student in the second year of the BSc City and Regional Planning.

It is awarded based on excellence in examinations and coursework across the second year of the Royal Town Planning Institute accredited degree. The scholarship has been initiated in memory of George Rich who had at one time been active in the building trade in Cardiff, and is administered by the Canada-based Jean Rich Foundation.

One of the conditions of the award is that the scholarship must be of use within the programme of study, with the School determining that the award should be based in the

second year. It may therefore be used during the recipient's placement year – to attend seminars and training events that they would not otherwise be able to afford – or in the final year of undergraduate studies.

The first recipient of the scholarship in the 2008-9 academic year is Rhys Govier. Rhys is a deserving recipient of the scholarship and is currently on his placement year with Bristol City Council.

In an article in this edition of Cynllunio, he demonstrates that he is already putting the scholarship to good use through attending this year's Young Planners Conference in Newcastle.

Neil is a Lecturer at the Cardiff School of City and Regional Planning

Bill Unsworth Memorial Prize



Above: Charles Thomas-Davies receives the Bill Unsworth Memorial Prize from James Hooker, RTPI Cymru Chair

The Bill Unsworth Memorial prize for excellence in examinations and coursework is awarded to a student in the first year of the BSc. in City and Regional Planning at Cardiff University who reaches a high level of achievement across all their course work. The 2008/09 Prize was awarded to Charles Thomas-Davies at the RTPI Cymru Annual Dinner in November.

Mapping Urban Space

Sarah Fox reports on the 2009 Urban Planning and Design Summer School, Finland



Above: Sarah Fox stands outside Alvar Aalto's Paimio Sanatorium, the former tuberculosis sanatorium in Paimio.

The Urban Planning and Design Summer School, based in Finland, is a great opportunity for students and young professionals to meet like-minded people from around the world. It is also a chance to get involved in current international planning projects, influencing city authorities, voicing your ideas to local experts, the general public and the press.

The course is held by The Centre for Urban and Regional Studies (YTK) at the Helsinki University of Technology (TKK). The theme of the Summer School changes every year. This year's programme was 'Mapping Urban Space.' We explored alternative strategies for emergent urban forms; our project work was based in the old capital of Finland, Turku, where we were tasked with discovering forgotten spaces within the city, which could be transformed for temporary cultural uses. We were given the opportunity to suggest innovative uses and improvements for the city of Turku; 'how to make visible and even a success story of what is often now unseen, misunderstood or forgotten?' Through a variety of field work, lectures, workshops and group work, we formulated our ideas over the two weeks. All articles and work produced are then published in the Summer School's annual publication.

This year there was a strong focus on cultural issues, particularly as Turku will be the European Capital of Culture in 2011. This gave us the chance to sample plenty of the cultural activities Turku had to offer, particularly at night! We were undoubtedly overwhelmed by the prominence of the work by the famous Finnish architect, Alvar Aalto. Various guided tours and excursions also took us around many of the stunning homes of local architects and we could not leave Finland without enjoying the customary Finnish sauna! The School's sense of informality gave us all a chance to form strong friendships over national borders.

There was a busy schedule packed into the two weeks which, at times, meant a lot of work in a short space of time. However the end result was really rewarding and the City were really pleased with the outcome. The School was very well organised, the people were very friendly and accommodating and I can highly recommend the whole experience.

Details of the School can be found on the web at <http://ytksommerschool.tkk.fi/>

Sarah is an undergraduate student on the BSc City and Regional Planning at Cardiff University

Newcastle-upon-Tyne Young Planner's Conference

Rhys Govier shares his experiences from attending the 2009 Young Planners Conference following his award of the new Cardiff University George Rich Scholarship

Newcastle was well placed to host this year's Young Planner's Conference on the 2nd and 3rd October, which focussed on participation in planning and the subsequent creation of better places. As a runner up for the 2008 Capital of Culture it boasts a sense of diversity, ambition and drive for its own future, not only for its football club but also through its urban regeneration programmes. The conference venue itself was an exemplar blend of Newcastle's heritage meeting current day change. Over 140 young delegates from the public and private sectors listened intently to a range of speakers in a converted turbine hall which formerly powered the City's trams.

This was the first Young Planner's conference I've attended and it was a surprisingly lively affair. Speakers covered a whole host of subjects and opinions around the core theme. Little, however, did I expect a barrister to successfully combine a presentation on the legalities of planning conditions with a wildlife quiz. It was later established Phil Williams had studied ecology and spent several years delving in the rainforests of Trinidad.

It was hard to escape the cynicism of Dr Hugh Ellis, Chief Planner at the TCPA, who spoke cynically about the planning system and the legacy of failures he anticipated would arise from the 2004 and 2008

Planning Acts. Calling the 2004 Act a "mistake" he explained, referring more broadly to England and Wales, how the complex framework consists of more acronyms than you can "shake a stick at" and is not the right framework to take us forward into increased participation, leaving only a negative impression of planning.

The variety of breakout sessions offered numerous topics for individuals' specific interests. Of particular relevance for me was a session offered by Tracey Hoskins, RTPI Young Planner of the Year 2008, providing a useful insight into community led planning, drawing upon her experiences of the Petersfield Tomorrow project. Having grown up in a surrounding village this was of particular interest, being able to relate well to the pressures for development in south east England and personal experience of Petersfield's community ambience.

Likewise, the urban design seminar on a particular neighbourhood of Newcastle, led to an interesting discussion of how a whole community has become directly involved in the future of their area with the assistance of Planning Aid volunteers, which still appear to be realistic despite the recession. It was a living example of how communities, once briefed and guided in the first instance, have the ideas and creativity to help



regenerate areas far better than any planner could do sitting at his desk. After all, these people live there on a daily basis and can identify day to day difficulties with the urban form, Chris Anderson of Planning Aid North explained.

The breakout sessions worked well in establishing a case study basis, but the underlying consensus from all aspects of the conference hinged on the need to increase participation without being at the expense of decision making speed. Early active stakeholder participation is possible, marred only by the attempt to streamline the planning system.

The conference wasn't overwhelmed by academia however, a three course

dinner held at the Centre for Life complex was the ideal opportunity to relax and network over a few glasses of wine and a rather impressive local live band.

My visit to Newcastle lasted a little under 72 hours but nonetheless was an invaluable and rewarding experience. Fingers crossed that Young Planners Cymru have a successful bid to host the 2010 conference, if only to prevent another train journey in excess of 5 hours!

Rhys is a student of Cardiff University and is currently on placement at Bristol City Council.

New E-Bulletin for RTPI Cymru

In 2010 RTPI Cymru will launch a new free e-bulletin to provide members in Wales with regular updates on news and events.

If you would like to receive this e-bulletin, but have not yet registered your e-mail address with RTPI Cymru, we will need you to do this. Your details will not be shared with third parties and we will carefully screen anything we e-mail to you, to ensure that you are not showered with information.

To register please e-mail: wales@rtpi.org.uk

(you don't need to do this if you are already registered with us)



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E-Bulletin

Delivering affordable housing using section 106 agreements: a guidance update

Sarah Monk summarises findings underpinning new guidance on using s106 to deliver affordable housing in a difficult economic climate

The Welsh Assembly Government published its practice guidance, 'Delivering affordable housing using section 106 agreements' in July 2008. Its aim was to assist local planning authorities improve the development, negotiation and implementation of s106 agreements so that more affordable housing is delivered through the planning system.

Since July 2008 Wales, like the rest of the UK, has been affected by the global credit crunch and house prices and housing starts have fallen substantially. It is likely that house prices will not quickly return to previous levels and this will pose problems for land bought and schemes conceived in 2007 at the height of the housing boom. In this context the Assembly Government commissioned an update to the guidance in order to help maintain the delivery of affordable housing.

The update, which was published in October 2009, highlights the importance of not being too pessimistic or to assume that a drop in house prices necessarily translates into a long term fall in housing output. Evidence from past recessions indicates that this is not the case. However, lessons learnt then suggest that a recovery in housing activity requires positive intervention by both central and local government, as well as flexibility and willingness to consider new

ways of doing things, in both the private and social housing sectors.

The update looks at how local authorities can use the planning process to facilitate and bring forward development, while ensuring that they continue to deliver the maximum possible amount of affordable housing. It draws on emerging good practice from across the UK and provides examples of clear protocols for the review of s106 agreements and evaluation of scheme financial viability. It emphasises that if schemes clearly are no longer viable, then it will not be possible to deliver exactly the same amount of contributions through s106 as in the original planning agreement. However, if developers and local authorities can agree that getting development going is more important than sticking to the original s106, then it is possible to minimise the shortfall and maximise the delivery of affordable housing.

However, the planning system alone cannot maintain affordable housing delivery. The Welsh Assembly Government has put in place a number of initiatives, such as the Strategic Capital Investment Fund (SCIF), to support the delivery of affordable housing and it is continuing to work with local authorities and its wider delivery partners in the housebuilding industry and the

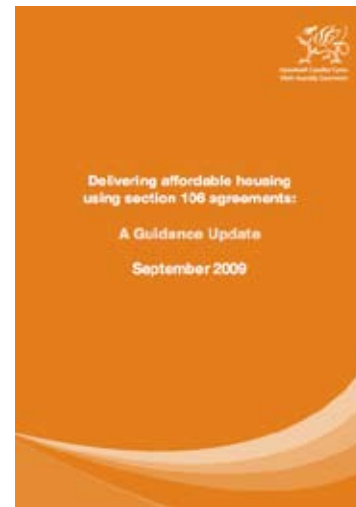


social housing sector to develop new mechanisms to aid recovery.

Equally local authorities need to review the range of powers open to them and consider how they can best support the provision of affordable housing in their area.

Although the update is primarily about planning, it touches on the use of wider local authority powers and provides pointers to a range of new initiatives which are emerging at national and local levels. The update covers, first, an overview of what has been happening in the housing market and a look at what happened in previous recessions.

Next, current initiatives undertaken by the Welsh Assembly Government are summarised. This is followed by a section on understanding the viability of new development



and the way in which affordable housing and other planning obligations impact on viability.

The final three sections outline emerging planning mechanisms for dealing with the effects of the downturn on new development, procedures that might be used to address the uncertainty of the housing market, and emerging options that local authorities might wish to consider.

Sarah is Deputy Director of the Centre for Housing and Planning Research at the University of Cambridge.

The Guidance Update was prepared for the Welsh Assembly Government by the Cambridge Centre for Housing and Planning Research & Three Dragons and is available from the Assembly's website.

George Pepler International Award

Entries are now open for the George Pepler International Award 2010. The closing date is Monday 26 April 2010.

This biennial Award is awarded to young people under the age of 30 (at 31 March 2010) who wish to undertake a short period of study (say 3 - 4 weeks) on a particular aspect of spatial planning. It is open to candidates living in the UK who wish to visit another country and to overseas candidates wishing to spend some time in the UK. Candidates have to provide a statement describing the nature of the study that they wish to undertake together with an itinerary. The Institute will nominate three judges and the successful candidate will be awarded a sum of £1,500 which will be paid in two instalments, two-thirds being paid before the visit and the balance after the visit and on submission of a report.

Please note however, it is not meant to provide finance for postgraduate studies or those working for a doctorate.

Further information is available from the RTPi website: or by e-mailing: awards@rtpi.org.uk

Local Barriers to the Delivery of Affordable Housing in Rural Wales

John Flint discusses the findings of a recently published study into the local barriers to the delivery of affordable housing in Rural Wales

In One Wales, the Welsh Assembly Government committed to ensuring the delivery of an additional 6,500 affordable homes by 2011. Previous research, including the Joseph Rowntree Commission and the Essex Review has identified the scale and severity of the shortage of affordable housing in rural Wales. We were commissioned by the Welsh Assembly Government to investigate the local barriers to the delivery of affordable housing in rural areas of Wales, to identify those factors which enabled delivery and to disseminate good practice. In addition, we were asked to consider the potential impacts of the recession and credit crunch and the role of Community Land Trusts.

Our research included a literature review, interviews with key national stakeholders, a survey of Local Planning Authorities (LPAs), case studies of seven local planning authorities and case studies of individual developments in rural areas where affordable housing has been delivered.

We found considerable variation in the definition of affordable housing and a conflation with 'housing for local need', a lack of specified targets and significant delays between planning approvals and the completion of developments. Although the priority given to affordable housing and the measures put in place by the Welsh Assembly Government were widely welcomed, the effectiveness of local policy and practice varied and only a minority of LPAs reported that the local capacity to deliver affordable housing had increased. The limited delivery of affordable housing was attributed to a combination of structural barriers (including land supply and price, house prices, the limited

social housing stock, a lack of developers, the economics of individual developments and opposition from residents) and an implementation gap (arising from a failure to maximise the potential of mechanisms including Section 106 Agreements and rural exception sites). The recession and credit crunch had largely exacerbated these barriers as finance became increasingly difficult and expensive, land was retained and developers sought to renegotiate Section 106 Agreements.

However, our research also identified several successful affordable housing developments in rural areas and a range of enabling factors, including Rural Housing Enablers and Affordable Housing Officers, political leadership and commitment, the use of clear and consistent policies supported by robust evidence of need, strong partnerships and the flexible and innovative use of Section 106 Agreements and rural exception sites.

It was often the cumulative impact of several barriers or enabling factors that determined the success or otherwise of individual housing developments. Whilst it is undoubtedly the case that structural barriers remain and indeed may have become even more significant in the last 18 months, our research did reveal

that, in some circumstances, these barriers may be overcome at the local level, resulting in additional units of affordable housing being provided in rural communities.

We have set out a series of recommendations for local authorities, local planning authorities and the Welsh Assembly Government. These include ensuring the political prioritisation of affordable housing in rural areas, an increasing emphasis on maximising the potential of the existing housing stock, enhancing the consistency of local policies and procedures, a proactive strategy for identifying and releasing land, reviewing Acceptable Costs Guidance, addressing problems with Section 106 Agreements and ensuring that the network of Rural Housing Enablers is sustained.

The full research report is available at:

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/planning/planningresearch/publishedresearch/affordablehousing/?lang=en>

John is Professor of Housing and Urban Governance, at the Centre for Regional, Economic and Social Research, Sheffield Hallam University

New TAN 5 Published

The Welsh Assembly Government has published a revised version of Technical Advice Note (TAN) 5.

This provides advice about how the land use planning system should contribute to protecting and enhancing biodiversity and geological conservation.

During the work to revise the TAN, case law developed and this is detailed in a letter from the Minister, Jane Davidson, available on the Assembly Government's website, along with the TAN:

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/planning/?lang=en>

Renewable Energy Research

In order to establish an evidence base for the review of the renewable energy planning policy, the Welsh Assembly Government has recently let two research contracts. The first of these projects will look at validating and re-examining the capacity of the Strategic Search Areas (SSAs) which have been identified in Technical Advice Note 8. A contract for this work has been awarded to Arup, who will look at what windfarm development has taken place or is likely to come forward in the SSAs and then use this to determine the potential for additional electricity generation from the SSAs. The project will update assumptions about the size of wind turbines as well as consider the impact of some of the constraints associated with developing large windfarms in remote areas of upland Wales. The empirical evidence from this study will be used as the basis for future planning policy review and it is expected to be completed by March 2010.

The other project will explore and understand the land use planning implications arising from a range of proposed renewable and low carbon energy developments (at different scales and locations) and the role of the local planning authority in preparing LDPs and dealing with applications to facilitate all forms of renewable and low carbon energy development. The contract for this piece of work has been awarded to Land Use Consultants in association with the Centre for Sustainable Energy. The research will not consider those microgeneration technologies captured under permitted development as set out in the T&CP GDPO Amendment Wales Order 2009, energy projects above 50MW (Section 36 of the Energy Act), large-scale wind farm developments over 25MW (TAN8 'Planning for Renewable Energy' - SSAs), and 'energy from waste' (TAN 21 'Waste'). The research is expected to be complete in February 2010.

Competition Commission Stands Firm

Anna Prescott and Christine Reeves discuss the recent advice from the Competition Commission to introduce a competition test to planning decisions for larger foodstores.

In early October this year, the Competition Commission (CC) formally renewed its recommendation to the Assembly Government, CLG and the other devolved administrations that they take the necessary steps to introduce a competition test for planning decisions on larger foodstores.

The CC's findings were published in the report *The Groceries Market Investigation: Remittal of the Competition Test by the Competition Appeal Tribunal – Decision*.

The publication of the recommendations followed a challenge by Tesco in relation to the lawfulness of the test originally proposed by the CC in April 2008.

The 'competition test' proposed at this time was to apply to all grocery stores over 1,000 sq m and take account of a combination of fascia and market shares (based on grocery floor space) within a 10-minute drive-time isochrone. Tesco challenged the proposals on two grounds:

- Failure to take into account the 'economic' costs of the competition test; and
- Failure to take account of considerations which are

relevant to the proportionality of the competition test.

However, whilst Tesco's challenge was subsequently upheld by the Competition Appeal Tribunal on both counts (March 2009), the CC has since undertaken further analysis of the implications of the test and concluded that the benefits of the test would substantially outweigh any costs arising from it.

The CC's latest and formal recommendation is that the test should be applied to all grocery retail applications (i.e. including extensions) that result in stores with a net sales area exceeding 1,000 sq m. The only exception would be extensions to existing stores of up to 300 sq m sales area, provided that the store had not already been extended over the past five years.

As previously, the assessment is based on a 10-minute drivetime isochrone, existing fascias and market shares. Applications would pass the test if within the isochrone:

- The fascia/operator is not already present; or
- There are four or more fascias; or
- If there are three or fewer fascias, the grocery retailer



proposed for the development has a share of net grocery sales floorspace (including the proposed development) of less than 60%.

Under the process, the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) would provide advice to local planning authorities on whether a particular retailer would pass the competition test. For schemes with no named operator, the OFT would advise as to which retailers would be permitted.

Accordingly, the CC has advised the Assembly Government and the other administrations to make the OFT a statutory consultee to LPAs on all applications for planning permission for development of grocery stores exceeding 1,000 sq m.

Whilst this is likely to require changes to primary legislation in England, it appears that Welsh Ministers already have devolved powers in this regard (under Sections 61 and 72 of the Town

and Country Planning Act 1990).

That said, it remains to be seen whether the Assembly will share the CC's appetite for the introduction of a competition test. The CC's view is that there is a need for a test in order to block developments by retailers who already have a strong large foodstore presence in a local area. However, there remain concerns that it will create unpredictability in the planning system and will prevent investment and regeneration at a time when the UK is looking to emerge from the recession.

Further information can be found at the Competition Commission's website: www.competition-commission.org.uk

Anna and Christine work in Nathaniel Litchfield and Partners' Cardiff Office

Review of the Planning Application System in Wales

Mike Sant outlines work underway for the review and opportunities to input

In September this year the Assembly Government launched an important review of the planning application process in Wales. To inform the review, GVA Grimley are currently carrying out a major research project which will examine how the system is currently operating and identify and recommend ways in which it could be improved.

The research study has two key stages. The first is the assessment itself which should be completed around the turn of the year, and the second is the recording and presentation of the

findings and recommendations which are due to be with the Assembly in early Spring 2010.

Significant progress has already been made on the study, with a detailed questionnaire having been sent out to all the Welsh Local Planning Authorities, which will rigorously examine how the system is currently working and seek to identify areas for improvement.

A series of Focus Groups will gather the views and experience of key figures and organisations from the public, private and

voluntary sectors in Wales. A number of carefully selected case studies will be undertaken to draw out key messages and lessons for the future.

This is an important initiative and comments from readers of Cynllunio will be welcome. We would be grateful if these focus on the strengths and weaknesses of the application process, the key challenges it faces and the priorities and targets for reform and best practice (although comments on other matters will of course be read).

Those wishing to submit comments can do so by writing to either Tim Gent or Ben Lester at GVA Grimley or Roisin Willmott at RTPI Cymru and should do so by email (ben.lester@gvagrimley.co.uk or roisin.willmott@rtpi.org.uk). The deadline for responses is **5th January 2010**.

Mike is chair of the steering group to oversee the review.

The Wales Planning Award

The Wales Planning Award Scheme received an excellent range of entries in 2009 from across Wales, giving the judges another difficult year in selecting the Award winner. The Scheme's purpose is to recognise and applaud good planning practice in Wales.



This year's scheme is sponsored by DPP and RTPI Cymru is grateful for this essential support.

Gateway to St Davids: St David's Gallery and Oriel y Parc Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority

WINNER

The opening of Oriel y Parc in July 2008 marked the culmination of a 20 year plan for the development of the National Park Authority's Grove site, located on the main A487 road entrance to St David's, historic cathedral city and focal point of the area's tourism industry.

The scheme provides the City's principal visitor car park, and is strategically located to relieve vehicular traffic pressures on the City's streets. By providing a hub for three of the County's coastal bus services, the scheme also serves to reduce traffic pressure on the narrow lanes of the wider St David's Peninsula. The scheme aims to encourage visitors to park, receive their orientation at the National Park Visitor Centre, gain heightened awareness of the landscape experience at the Gallery and proceed to the city or adjoining coast and countryside on foot or by bus.

Oriel y Parc itself houses galleries, educational facilities, National Park Visitor Centre and café, to provide a place of inspiration, exploring and explaining the outstanding landscape of Pembrokeshire, its conservation and sustainable development, including through the display and interpretation of some of the collection of the National Museum of Wales, a key partner in the project. The building itself – built to BREEAM Excellent standards – is well placed to serve public awareness-building on the challenges of responding to climate change.

The Wales Planning Award 2009 has been awarded to the scheme because in the opinion of the judges this project provides a model of good practice for the management of large numbers of tourists in environmentally sensitive areas. In particular the judges were impressed by:

- The location and range of facilities, including a gallery for the National Museum of Wales, provided for the 300,000 tourists visiting St David's during the year;
- The application of sustainable design principles in the construction of the building (achieving BREEAM Excellent) and the way the building itself is used to promote sustainable design;
- The way the building and the car park are 'absorbed' into the landscape;
- The integrated public / private transport facilities that have resulted in 40,000 passengers in the last year using the three coastal bus services that radiate from the Visitor Centre car park; and
- The role of Planners in conceiving the Gateway concept and ensuring its delivery.



Above: Oriel y Parc



Above: Phil Bennett accepting the Wales Planning Award on behalf of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority

Cardiff Conservation Area Appraisal Programme Cardiff Council

Commended

Cardiff has a rich built heritage with over 27 conservation areas within its boundary. In 2006, in a bold gesture of support for these special areas, the Council took a decision to fund a review of conservation area protection throughout the City in a single Council led project.

In Wales, Assembly Government and Cadw guidance emphasises the importance of public engagement in reaching consensus on the special character. But what is their 'special architectural and historic interest' and is it the same as 'the familiar and cherished local scene'? In many areas, officers found a tension between the assessment and administration of heritage protection and the expectations of those who live in areas of character. In response to this challenge, the Council created two new Conservation Areas, extended some existing boundaries and reduced others.

Unusually, the Council took a decision to undertake the project in-house. This provided an opportunity for officers across every Service Area to learn more about Cardiff's heritage and to consider how local identity means different things to different people and service providers. Budgets and maintenance agreements have been adjusted as a result. The project also offered an attractive CPD opportunity for officers, enhancing and diversifying skills within the wider Strategic Planning Service Area.

The judges feel that recognition should be given to the comprehensive way the Council's planners have tackled this work, the way they have involved local communities and the fact that the appraisals now provide an agreed framework for Council's activities in conservation areas.



A Run through the Entries

Whilst the Award and a Commendation have been made for 2009, the other entries also deserve a mention, so here's a run through.



Swansea City Centre Core – City & County of Swansea

The project's aim is to raise the quality of public realm and facilities within the city centre core area. The area is an established pedestrianised retail area with a mix of high street brands and local independents, and lies adjacent to the largest indoor market in Wales and a retail precinct. The built-form lacked character, with contemporary buildings replacing many key buildings which were lost during the Second World War. Contemporary 1950's design solutions have left much to be desired.

The £4 million completed project (supported by the European Objective One Programme and the Assembly Government) has delivered continuity in treatments to the quality of the public realm by advocating high quality natural materials, maintained street and spaces, with links to its maritime history, yet respecting the needs of users. The project has delivered key public realm enhancement by improving the look and vibrancy of the pedestrian public spaces. Since (and during) the completion of the work significant investment has been witnessed in the area.



Cardiff International Sports Village: Swimming Pool - Savills

Cardiff International Sports Village (CISV) is a public-private funded project located in Cardiff Bay. It is one of the largest regeneration projects currently in the UK.

The £32m swimming Pool at CISV opened in January 2008, built on a former landfill site, and is now the centre piece of the development and a good example of how sport development can act as a catalyst for the regeneration of a wide area.

The building has incorporated sustainability, using an on-site combined heat and power supply, achieving a 35% reduction in primary energy usage compared with grid supplied electricity and conventional boilers; natural lighting was maximized in the building's design and there was additional investment in insulation.



Refurbishment of Beechwood House, Newport – Newport City Council

Beechwood House is a Grade II listed building built in 1877-78 by Habershon, Pite and Fawkner, architects of Cardiff and Newport. It was built as the private residence of George Fothergill, a tobacco manufacturer and former mayor of Newport.

Refurbishment, using £4.2million grant from European and Assembly Government funding, has restored the building, created high quality, flexible managed workspaces for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and provided community facilities, which will be managed on behalf of Newport City Council by Venture Wales. Beechwood House Entrepreneurship Centre opened in March 2009.



Ceredigion Coast Path – Ceredigion County Council

The new Ceredigion Coast Path follows a 60 mile route between the Teifi and Dyfi estuaries in Ceredigion, and was officially opened by Jane Davidson AM in July 2008.

The Coast Path links coastal towns and villages along the spectacular scenery of the Cardigan Bay coastline. Four sections of the coastline are Heritage Coast and there are other designations that serve to highlight the rich coastal resource – SSSIs, the Dyfi National Nature Reserve, Biosphere and Ramsar site, and two marine Special Areas of Conservation. The area's rich history is also much in evidence, from iron-age hill forts to 19th century harbours. The involvement of the local community has been vital in ensuring the success of the project. Partnership working has also been central to its implementation, including input from CCW on biodiversity considerations and extensive and ongoing liaison with landowners to discuss path creation and the impact of path development.

In the delivery of the Coast Path, volunteers from the Ramblers Association, Aberystwyth Conservation Volunteers and United Nations volunteers have all made key contributions. The Coast Path project and the methods devised and adapted help to serve as a model of good practice in the development of Coastal Access in Wales.



Wood Street Railway Bridge Public Realm Enhancement Scheme – Cardiff Council

Located next to Central Square and the Millennium Stadium, Wood Street Railway Bridge forms part of the London – Swansea railway line and leads into Cardiff Central Railway Station at one of the main gateways into the city centre.

The underpass originally consisted of a two lane vehicle carriageway, bordered by pavements on either side; however the road was subsequently closed off at one end which resulted in the carriageway no longer being used. Over the years the environmental quality of the underpass had declined, creating an uninviting pedestrian environment throughout the day and at night. The project involved public realm improvement works within the underpass and surrounding area and a public art lighting scheme within the underpass and across the wider Wood Street Railway Bridge, using S106 funding achieved from an adjacent student residential block.



Refurbishment of Malpas Court, Newport – Newport City Council

Malpas Court is a Grade II listed building, originally designed by Thomas Wyatt of London and built in 1836-8 for the Prothero family. The house was brought back into Council care in 1998 after falling into considerable disrepair. The project received £32.7million from European, Assembly Government and Heritage Lottery funding.

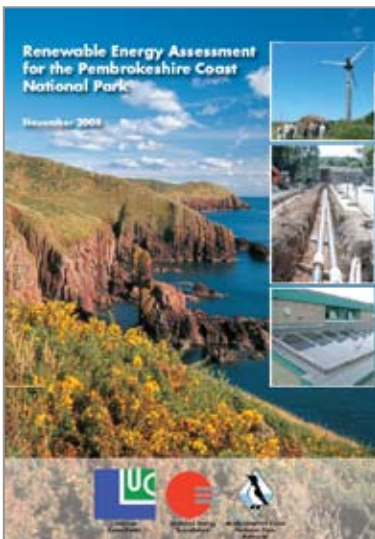
The redeveloped Malpas Court is being set up as a Sustainability Centre, as an exemplar of environmental sustainability and a model of environmental good practice.



Clifton Street Regeneration Scheme – Cardiff Council

Clifton Street is a commercial hub of Adamsdown, a largely residential area of inner city Cardiff. It is generally accepted by the community that Clifton Street has experienced better times as a district centre. The first impression of the area was one of a run down, unattractive and therefore initially unappealing destination. However, it still exists as an important centre for meeting the daily shopping and service needs of the local community.

The regeneration strategy for Clifton Street is the outcome of a process of survey, analysis, appraisal and consultation which Atkins, together with Lambert Smith Hampton, Martin Sewell Consultants and Artworks Wales, were commissioned by Cardiff Council's Neighbourhood Planning team in 2005 to undertake a study into the potential opportunities to regenerate Clifton Street, with funding support from the Assembly Government.

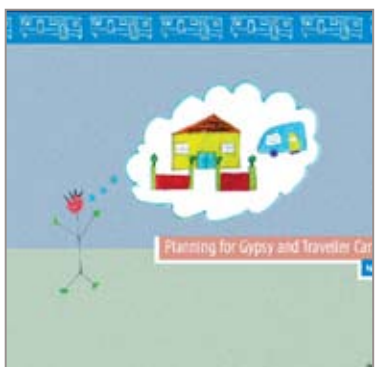


Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Renewable Energy Assessment – Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority

Recognising that renewable energy is an important topic and one of the key issues being considered as part of the Local Development Plan, a Renewable Energy Assessment has been prepared.

A study was commissioned to form the basis of the Assessment; the study assessed the potential for low carbon and renewable land based technologies and energy saving within commercial properties. A range of energy technologies were considered, as well as a landscape sensitivity study. A Stakeholder Workshop was held in September 2008 and was well attended and stimulated lively debate. It included members of the community with an interest in renewables and renewables suppliers and growers, as well as representatives of individual organisations:

The Assessment will be used as a background paper to the LDP's preparation. If the LDP renewable energy policies, on which the assessment is based, receive a favourable response when placed on Deposit, the Authority may be able to bring the Assessment forward as supplementary planning guidance under the current Joint UDP.



Planning Guidance for Gypsy and Traveller Communities – Planning Aid Wales

Following a collective response on behalf of Gypsy and Traveller communities in Wales submitted by Planning Aid Wales in 2007 to the consultation draft circular (Land Use) Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites in Wales, the Assembly Government funded Planning Aid Wales to develop a proposal to prepare a practical, user-friendly booklet explaining the relevant land use planning aspects of finding new caravan sites for Gypsy and Traveller communities.

The format conveys key information using cartoons and other accessible imagery, combined with short passages of plain language. Image captions and margin notes summarise the content of associated text for quick orientation. Members of the community were used to assist in its design.



Anderson Field Community Park – Cardiff Council

This project is for environmental improvements and art provision at Anderson Place in Adamsdown, as part of the West Adamsdown Renewal Area programme. The open space lacked identity, was under-used and had little visual amenity value.

The project included landscaping works and the integration of public art.

The Judging Panel

RTPI Cymru is very grateful for the effort which the Wales Planning Award judging panel have put into the scheme, for yet another year. Our sincere thanks go to all of the panel members: David Wilson - Panel Chair, Eric Bowles and Kirsty Henderson.

However, David and Kirsty have decided to stand down from this year, after many years' service

and make way for new blood. We are grateful to Eric for remaining on the Panel to provide essential experience. RTPI Cymru is therefore on the look for two new judges to join Eric. The RTPI relies on members to undertake many activities and this is one key area where we look for volunteers.

It offers an excellent opportunity

to travel around Wales looking at new and interesting projects. However the time commitment isn't onerous; it usually takes no more than 4 to 5 days in total. All travel and subsistence expenses are paid for and you even get a free place at the Annual Dinner for your hard work.

If you would like to find out more about volunteering, please

contact Roisin Willmott on tel: 029 2047 3923 or e-mail: roisin.willmott@rtpi.org.uk. The deadline for applications is 1st March.

Whilst thanks are being offered, a huge acknowledgement must go to Nick Mills who manages the Award scheme, providing essential support to the judging panel.

RTPI Recognises Outstanding Service

The Institute Outstanding Service Award is made from time to time to recognise individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to the work of the Institute.

Following a nomination by RTPI Cymru, the Institute has made an Award to Lyn Owen for the extensive contribution he has made to the RTPI.

Lyn joined the Institute as a Student Member in 1973 and became involved with the (then) South Wales Branch. He became a Corporate Member of the Institute in 1988, and is now a fully retired member of the Institute.

Lyn has been very active within the Institute for some time and his service includes a long list of duties, including: a Member of the Management Committee of the South Wales Branch: 1988 – 1999; preparation of first Branch Business plans; Lyn established the Planning Wales magazine in 1991 and was subsequently involved in its production; he was the Deputy Representative on the RTPI Council: 1995 – 1997 and the RTPI representative on the Planning Aid Wales Board of Directors: 2000 – 2005, representative on the Professional Standards Board of Cardiff University School of City and Regional Planning 1998 – 2003 and representative on the Wales Transport Strategy Group: 2003 – 2008.

Lyn was involved in establishing the Wales Planning Policy Panel and policy officer post in 1995 and was subsequently an attendee for the Welsh Office and National Assembly; he was a Panel Member between 2002 – 2005 and Panel Chair in 2005 – 2006. Lyn has been a Member of the RTPI Cymru Policy and Research Forum since 2006.

He was closely involved in the establishment of RTPI Cymru as a single Branch for Wales, which was achieved in 2000 and was a Member of the RTPI Cymru Management Board between 2000 and 2008, including Chair in 2001 – 2002. During this time he was involved in Branch development to secure a full time Director.

Lyn has also ensured that the Welsh language is evident in RTPI Cymru practice. He was responsible for translating the RTPI strapline: mediation of space . making of place into Welsh: cyd drefnu gofod . creu cynefin.

RTPI Cymru Chair James Hooker notes: *"It is with great pleasure that I recommended Lyn Owen to receive an Outstanding Service Award from the RTPI. Lyn has put significant personal time and effort into promoting the RTPI in Wales for more than 25 years, and was a key part of the transformation from a branch into a national presence. I am sure that it is in no small part because of these efforts that membership*



Above: Lyn Owen pictured with RTPI President, Martin Willey, and past Chair of RTPI Cymru, Owain Wyn

now stands at more than 1,000 in Wales. Lyn rightly deserves recognition of his efforts and I would like to thank him for his involvement with RTPI Cymru."

Owain Wyn, Past Chair of RTPI Cymru and former Wales Planning Policy Officer for the RTPI said: *"I have worked with Lyn over the last ten years. In fact one of the first meetings I had upon my appointment as Wales Planning Policy Officer in 1999 was with Lyn. Since then I have worked with Lyn on developing RTPI Cymru and on planning policy in particular and have been impressed with the energy, commitment and intellect he has contributed to this work."*

Roisin Willmott, National Director

said: *"Lyn has been an extremely positive member of the RTPI Cymru Management Board and Policy and Research Forum and extremely supportive to me as I was developing the new National Director post. Lyn always reminds me of the Institute's full role in Wales, including its geographical coverage. He has also been particularly encouraging of new younger members to become active in the Institute. Lyn is well respected across Wales."*

Lyn was presented with his Award at the RTPI Cymru Annual Dinner by RTPI President, Martin Willey.

Today's and Tomorrow's Leaders' Awards

The planning profession has always faced huge challenges and the current global economic climate is particularly demanding for every planner in whatever sector or specialism they are employed. Today's and Tomorrow's Leaders' Awards is

a new initiative established by Martin Willey, RTPI President for 2009. It spotlights and celebrates the achievements of planners in each UK Region and Nation who have shown outstanding leadership qualities or who have already demonstrated the

potential for such leadership.

The profession is renowned for 'hiding its light under a bushel' - these awards are intended to help increase the profile of planners and show how important they are within their communities.

There were six candidates nominated in Wales and after fierce on-line voting the following have been chosen as the Wales' Leaders of Planning. The Awards were presented by Martin Willey at the RTPI Cymru Annual Dinner in November.



Today's Leader

Rob Thomas is a Chartered member of the Institute and is the Head of Planning and Transportation at the Vale of Glamorgan Council.

Rob has been the lead officer in the successful bid to bring the Defence Technical College project to St Athan, working with key partners, the promotion of the site through the adoption of a Development Brief, and being fully involved in the master planning and pre submission processes over the last 2 years, culminating, earlier this year, in the submission of the most significant planning applications in Wales in recent times, which has now received approval.

He has also implemented major performance improvements within the Vale, particularly in Development Control performance, Enforcement and S106 agreements.

Outside of the Vale, and over the last 18 months Rob has assumed a lead role on behalf of POSW, in working with the RTPI in Wales to deliver a training programme for Welsh planners. This has involved delivering training on a range of issue, often delivering the training himself, in partnership with colleagues from other organisations. On other occasions he has mobilised colleagues, often from his own authority to advise on good practice and initiatives. The training has been very well received, and the aim is to continue this free programme.

Rob is extremely enthusiastic and positive about the role and importance of Planning and good quality public services. He is dynamic and leads by example.



Tomorrow's Leader

The Tomorrow's Leaders Award has been made to Victoria Abraham, coincidentally also from the Vale of Glamorgan Council.

Vicky, a Chartered planner since 2005, is the lead officer for all aspects relating to S106 Planning Obligations in the Vale. Following appointment to this new post in April 2007, Vicky reviewed existing practices and introduced new procedures and working arrangements to improve performance in this key area.

To improve negotiation Vicky has led on the production of a Planning Obligations SPG which following wide consultation was adopted this year. Vicky has also established a database of all S106 agreements, which has been used to identify and secure outstanding obligations. In addition, Vicky has developed effective working relationships with service areas from across

the Council and has established protocols for consultation with Elected Members prior to the spend of Section 106 monies.

The Council's improved performance in this area is evidence of Vicky's effective negotiation skills and proactive approach. Last year alone, 23 agreements were signed off, which in addition to on-site requirements yielded financial contributions totalling £940,555. Elected members have been very pleased with the improved performance in this area.

Vicky has also been actively involved in Wales-wide work on Planning Obligations (POSW 2008). She is currently the WLGA representative on the Assembly's Steering Group producing new guidance on the use of s106 agreements during the economic downturn.

Andrew Charles

Andrew Charles tells us about how he has shaped his career around his interest in sustainability.



How did you come into planning in the first place?

Having grown up in an area where pollution was all too plain to see, I had an early insight into how people interact, sometimes to the detriment of the environment around us. A career in planning was not initially on my radar. However, through my studies on human geography and environmental sustainability I generated an appetite for understanding the built environment and began to appreciate the contribution that planning can make towards balancing the needs of society against environmental concerns. Planning seemed therefore to be a natural career progression.

What has been your career path to date?

While studying for an MSc in Sustainability, Planning and Environmental Policy at Cardiff University in 2003/04, I was fortunate to be asked by my previous University (Glamorgan) to work as a part-time lecturer, which was an exceptionally valuable experience, where I attempted to explain the complexities of land use planning to a small group of students.

Later that year I began as a National Management Trainee on the National Graduate Development Programme (NGDP). This is a UK wide graduate management development programme, run by the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA). The programme is designed to develop future leaders in local government, involving a two-year minimum placement

at a host local authority, sector specific training and a Post Graduate Diploma in Local Government at Warwick Business School, which I obtained in 2006.

I was fortunate to secure a placement at Ashford Borough Council, Kent, where my first placement took me to the planning department. Although the intention of the scheme was to move around the Council, my interest led me to stay in the planning department for three years. I joined Ashford shortly after the town had been identified as one of the four 'growth areas' under the UK Government's 'Sustainable Communities Plan'. This had the unenviable task of masterplanning how the town would double in size within 30 years; add to this the introduction of the new Local Development Framework system.

The challenges and opportunities offered by this were unique and helped me gain experience and understanding of the planning system in a short space of time. Halfway through my placement I was offered a permanent position of 'Senior Planning Officer – Sustainability Issues'; I also studied part-time at Westminster University to obtain an MA in Urban and Regional Planning in 2007.

Ashford was a fascinating and rewarding place to work and I was given responsibility and input into a wide range of emerging planning policy areas such as sustainable design, renewable energy, biodiversity, assisting on masterplans, SEAs and Habitats Assessments. In leading on some of these I was called upon to represent the Council at the Core Strategy Public Examination to defend Ashford's innovative approaches to delivering more sustainable developments. One of the most rewarding pieces of work was leading the bid for the Council to achieve 'Beacon' status for 'Promoting sustainable communities through the Planning Process', which it achieved in 2007. Like any graduate's first 'proper job' I have fond memories of Ashford, but I always knew that I would return to Wales. It was only by chance and reading Planning magazine (back to front as we

do) that I saw a position at the Welsh Assembly Government. I had local experience of this role, and the logical next step was to develop these skills at the national level. I moved back home to Wales to take up the role of 'Senior Planning Manager' which had a range of responsibilities, particularly promoting the climate change agenda.

What does your job involve?

I work within the Planning Division of the Assembly Government, which has responsibility for the land use planning system in Wales and ensuring that it meets the needs of the people of Wales. Part of this role includes taking forward the planning implications of the Assembly Government's 'One Wales' programme. I sit within the Planning Policy Branch which develops national planning policy on a range of topics such as transport, housing, minerals and many others. I am responsible for managing and working with colleagues on the delivery of the planning for climate change (mitigation) agenda to give further emphasis to climate change in national planning policy.

This involves formulating national planning policy and technical guidance, and a range of supporting work, including research to inform future policy and publications, such as the 'Improving Your Home – A Climate Change Guide'. More recently I have been working closely with RTPI Cymru in facilitating the training for planners across Wales on the two key changes that have emerged in 2009, that of Design (and Access) Statements and 'Planning for Sustainable Buildings'.

What do you like about it?

I thoroughly enjoy the opportunity to put directly into practice my studies and interests in sustainability and climate change at the national policy level. I like the variety that the role offers; it is not purely a planning policy role, but one which covers research, providing advice to Ministers and working with key organisations such as RTPI Cymru and the Design Commission for Wales.

How does the devolution of planning influence your work?

Simple answer: No devolution – no job!

Are you involved with the RTPI?

I drew what I thought would be the short straw and became the 'Communications Manager' on the newly formed Young Planners Cymru (YPC) steering group set up in 2009. As one of seven on the steering group I have been involved in taking the group forward, establishing it as a representative voice of young planners in Wales and to provide a forum for informal networking (and the necessary socialising). I have also contributed to the 'Planning – A Careers Guide' to promote planning to a new generation. I have attended the past two National Young Planners Conferences in Brighton and Newcastle, and like my fellow YPC steering group members am excited by the prospect of bidding to bring the national conference to Cardiff in 2010.

What about the future of planning in Wales?

One of the main reasons I came back to Wales was to see how a different level of governance and policy framework to the rest of the UK can deliver locally distinctive results. As a small nation, Wales is the optimum size with which to tackle some of these fundamental global issues on a smaller scale, and the planning system is a key part of this. The sustainability agenda depends on a functioning and responsive planning system to shape places that meet sustainability principles and adapt to climate change. Having been involved with the RTPI Cymru training on these issues it is evident that there are many planners in Wales who understand this emerging agenda, and it can only go from strength to strength.

My optimism is also shaped by my involvement in the YPC steering group where I have met other enthusiastic young planners who are committed (and often vocal) about the role that planning can and should play in shaping places for the better.



RTPI

mediation of space · making of place
cyd drefnu gofod · creu cynefin

RTPI Cymru Annual Review 2009

RTPI Cymru has had a packed 2009 with a full range of activity including a programme of events and training sessions, policy engagement and promoting planning as a career.

2009 has been a difficult year for many involved in the built environment, and planners have not been immune to this. However, planners in Wales have shown resilience and have been proactive to minimise the negative effects. This has been particularly felt by RTPI Cymru activities, with continued support for events and initiatives held throughout the year and even a very successful and popular Dinner in November.

CPD Events & Training

The joint programme of Development Management CPD events with the Planning Officers Society for Wales (POSW) and the RTPI's Development Management Network organised a number of popular seminars. With sessions attracting almost 100 planners in two events held in Tredomen, Caerphilly and St Asaph (despite snow) on Effective Decision Making. Presentations from John Davies at PINs and Rob Thomas from the Vale of Glamorgan for the south event and Rhun ap Ieuan from Gwynedd Council in the north, providing the local government perspective. A follow-on event was held in March - Effective Appeals - in Rhayader attracting some 80 delegates, with presentations from John Davies, Morag Ellis QC from the Planning and Environmental Bar Association (PEBA) and Steve Ball and Justina Walsh of the Vale of Glamorgan Council.

Working with the RTPI Networks, a joint CPD event was held in February with the RTPI's International Development Network (IDN) featuring International Development Stories from Wales, with speakers from the built environment community including planning, landscape architecture and engineering.



The Wales launch of the new joint RTPI and Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) Network for housing took place in Pontypridd in February on a snowy day. With 40 planners and housing professionals coming together to discuss the affordable housing agenda. Unfortunately the event in Blaenavon to discuss the DCMS's consultation on World Heritage for the Nation: Identifying, Protecting and Promoting our World Heritage did not survive the snow that day. But did successfully take place a few weeks later.

In support of new policy and guidance to deliver sustainable buildings, RTPI Cymru organised training, funded by the Welsh Assembly Government, to support the roll out of this new policy and guidance, with support from the Design Commission for Wales, in April and May. The training was delivered by a joint team of AECOM (formerly Faber Maunsell) and Barton Willmore to over 110 local planning authority officers. Later in the year, the training was also delivered to LPA Members, and all of the Wales Planning Inspectors. The courses were also rolled out to a wider audience, involving other public sector officers, the private sector and other professions, including architects. The courses received very good feedback from all delegates.

At the National Eisteddfod at Bala in August, RTPI Cymru held a well attended seminar to discuss the delivery of affordable rural housing in Wales, with perspectives from local government, the private sector, social housing and the

Top Left: Housing Network Launch

Bottom Left: Sustainable Buildings Training



Chartered Institute of Housing in Wales, as well as the President of Plaid Cymru, Dafydd Iwan. Again, the seminar attracted a good mix of planners and housing professionals, leading to interesting debates on the issues.

In November, a successful seminar discussing the issues around introducing climate change issues into historic buildings and places was held. The seminar was jointly organised and sponsored by the National Trust and delegates came from across Wales to Craflwyn in Snowdonia to learn about the issues and see the practical work underway by the National Trust.



Above: National Eisteddfod Housing Seminar

Spring Conference

March saw a new event in the RTPI Cymru calendar, with a Spring Conference in Llandudno. The theme this year was Planning for Climate Change, in anticipation of the new policy and guidance from the Welsh Assembly Government. The day was Chaired by Cindy Harris of the Design Commission for Wales and had a strong line up of speakers considering the Assembly's activity, recent research on potential barriers, case studies and the role of the local development plan.

Wales Planning Conference 2009



Above: Conference Panel at the Wales Planning Conference 2009

The second Wales Planning Conference, held on 2 June 2009, in Cardiff was a resounding success, attracting nearly 250 delegates despite a difficult economic climate. The Conference drew together the full mix of the profession - a key aim of the Conference, with local planning authorities from across Wales attending, alongside private planning consultancies and developers, lawyers and third sector representatives.

The theme of the Conference was delivery of the Welsh planning system, and Welsh Assembly Government Minister, Jane Davidson, used this as the focus of her address to the conference to explain how she believes planning can help deliver the Assembly's climate change policy and how it can deliver improved public services to the people of Wales.

The Minister announced at the Conference the establishment of a steering group to oversee the streamlining the planning system work, which aims to report in 2010. RTPI Cymru is represented on the steering group by the National Director.

Policy

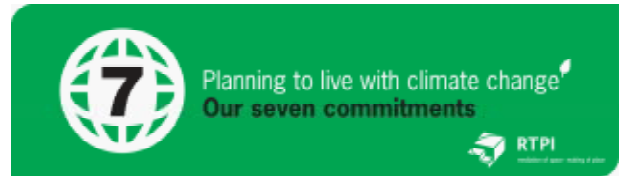
RTPI Cymru has continued to be active in the policy arena, with its Policy and Research Forum monitoring and responding to consultations in Wales and contributing to those issued externally which have an influence in Wales. Consultation responses include:

- Draft TAN 22 – Planning for Sustainable Buildings
- The Assembly Government's Climate Change Strategy Action Plan
- The Wales National Transport Plan
- Draft TAN 6: Planning for Sustainable Communities
- Community Infrastructure Levy, contributing to the RTPI response
- Proposed Changes to PPW to support the requirement for travel plans for specific types of development
- Cadw's Conservation Principles.

Earlier in the year RTPI Cymru gave evidence to the National Assembly for Wales's Sustainability Committee's Inquiry into Carbon Reduction.

Represented on the Wales Planning Forum and its sub-groups, the Zero Carbon Hub Steering Group and other groupings, RTPI Cymru engages actively in policy discussion wherever possible. In response to an appeal at the Wales Planning Forum, RTPI Cymru teamed up with POSW to hold a discussion workshop in March to investigate ideas on how planning can assist in the economic recovery of Wales. Over 40 people attended and round table discussions led to a range of feedback and ideas.

At a joint reception with Planning Aid Wales at the Senedd in June, hosted by the Minister, Jane Davidson, the RTPI's Seven Commitments to Planning to Live with Climate Change were given their Wales' launch and RTPI Cymru is developing its action plan to complement the wider RTPI work.



Planners of the Future



Above: Planning Ambassador Training

APC (Assessment of Professional Competence) briefing sessions were held in June in Caernarfon and Cardiff for those either already underway or about to embark on their APC, attracting some 40 up-and-coming planners.

Looking at those who haven't yet considered, or even heard about planning, working with Construction Skills Wales, RTPI Cymru has been recruiting Planning Ambassadors to visit schools and colleges across Wales explain the role of planning and planners.

RTPI President's Visit

Martin Willey, the RTPI's President in 2009, made a number of visits to Wales during his year. He attended the Wales Planning Conference in June and then came back a month later for a full two-day visit, meeting with Rosemary Thomas, Chief Planner at the Assembly Government and then heading west, accompanied by James Hooker, RTPI Cymru Chair and Roisin Willmott, National Director. Martin met with officers in Neath Port Talbot Council and heard about their excellent work to improve their development control service through a 'system thinking' concept.

The visit then moved on to Swansea, with a further opportunity to meet with planning officers and also the Authority's Cabinet Member for Planning. An excellent guided but 'damp' tour around SA1 followed, with the President leaving very impressed with the work to regenerate Swansea. The following day started early with a tour of Newton House, National Trust property near Llandeilo, where work is underway to restore the estate and integrate sustainability issues into the buildings and its operation. Then it was off to the newly opened Ffos Las to meet the Planning Officers Society for Wales. The President left Wales with a strong impression of the joint working amongst the planning community in Wales.

Martin returned in November for a third visit to Wales to attend the Annual Dinner and present a number of Awards.



Above: RTPI President's visit to Swansea

Celebrating High Standards

There have been a number of awards for Wales during 2009, starting in February, when two Welsh projects were recognised at the RTPI's Award ceremony in London. The Ebbw Valley Railway, entered by Blaenau Gwent CBC and Capita Symonds were Commended for Infrastructure and Pembrokeshire County Council was also Commended for its Town Regeneration of Pembroke Dock. Cardiff University planning student, Karen Montgomerie, was Commended in the Outstanding Student Achievement in Planning Education Award.



Above: Wales Planning Award presented to Phil Bennett of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority by RTPI Cymru Chair, James Hooker, and Gary Sutton of DPP, sponsors of the 2009 Award.

The 2009 Wales Planning Award was presented to Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority for the St David's Gateway and Oriell y Parc Gallery Scheme and Cardiff Council were Commended for its Conservation Area Appraisal programme.

RTPI President, Martin Willey, launched a new Award for 2009 to recognise leaders in planning. The competition in Wales led to a double award going to officers at the Vale of Glamorgan Council, with Rob Thomas receiving the Today's Leaders Award and Victoria Abraham receiving the Tomorrow's Leaders Award. The Bill Unsworth prize for excellence was awarded to Charles Thomas-Davies.

Capping a successful year in Wales, Lyn Owen has been recognised by the RTPI and received the Outstanding Service Award from the Institute. The Award is made from time to time to recognise individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to the work of the Institute.

Who would be a Planning Councillor?

Andrew Matheson discusses the challenges faced by planning councillors and highlights the service available from the RTPI to support politicians in planning

At the invitation of the RTPI's General Assembly, at their October meeting a Planning Councillor Member of the Politicians in Planning Network (PIPA) gave GA Members a bottom-up view of planning – from the ranks of the local Planning Committee Members.

GA Members were reminded that if Planning Officers often feel like a punch-bag, absorbing the attacks and parries of community, commercial and many other legitimate interests, how much more acutely do these impact on the Councillor on whose analysis the final decision so often rests! In their planning role Councillors face challenging training expectations to keep themselves abreast of current guidance and good practice, to fulfil their democratic duty they must listen to the aspirations and concerns of constituents whilst not pre-judging issues until decision day, they must weigh these with advice from their Officers that may on occasion be hard to stomach, face criticism if they delay or don't delay the progress with proposals, face sanction from the Standards Board if they do all of this with less than a scrupulous attention to conflicting interests and face an award of costs against their Authority if

the Planning Inspectorate decide at Appeal that they have acted unreasonably! Who would really choose to take on this tangled web of onerous responsibilities?

And yet I have met many PIPA Councillor Members who are the most committed and enthusiastic advocates of effective planning, who have served repeat terms on the Planning Committee out of choice and who realise that they shoulder a significant responsibility for their communities.

Against this background it is perhaps not surprising that the new Infrastructure Planning Commission has been created with relatively little local authority resistance. The main scepticism has largely rested with the Campaign to Protect Rural England which fears a 'rubber stamp' mentality from the Commissioners. The new Commission which covers England & Wales but not Scotland started work on October 1st but is not expected to have casework until March 2010. It is clear that major infrastructure projects – which the Commission has been created to address - transcend local authority boundaries but it is still open to local authorities to



Above: Assembly Government Minister Jane Davidson with PIPA at the Wales Planning Conference 2009

have their say alongside all other interested parties in front of an IPC Commissioner. Additionally, relevant local authorities will be asked to offer their views on the adequacy of the consultation that the infrastructure applicant has undertaken in preparing the application. So in these instances local Councillors will be free to take a stance not only without being held accountable by their electorate for the final decision but also positively seen to bolster participation by the electorate. For major infrastructure issues policies will be defined by Parliament and the Commissioners are then left to demonstrate in public how an impartial decision has been reached within the policy constraints.

Like their new Commissioner counterparts, local Councillors on the Planning Committee (or whatever it may locally be called) have to be seen to assess carefully, test and weigh the balance of advantages on any planning issue, whether at plan-making or decision-taking, within policy constraints. This necessarily entails being well informed and confident about their brief. All PIPA Members receive a regular Member Bulletin that flags up all the available training and other event opportunities on offer

(some from PIPA itself), keeps readers abreast of legislative changes and consultations in Wales, and signposts to good practice and helpful writing that will allow Councillors to reflect on the conduct of their planning role. And if from this reflection questions or queries arise, the Network of PIPA Members, and through this the 14 other RTPI Networks, provides a route to exploring answers with others in similar circumstances or with useful experience. The Network seeks to be an active grouping, facilitated by a part-time Network Manager, providing mutual support and assistance. So PIPA membership can help to make manageable the responsibilities of being a planning Councillor – and help to make real enthusiasts of those already committed to the role! Please pass the message on.

The RTPI offers PIPA membership free because it is committed to an effective democratic planning system – and this relies on Members and Officers working well together, playing to each others strengths. To join PIPA go to www.rtpi.org.uk/politicians_in_planning_network/ or email: pipa@rtpi.org.uk

Andrew is the RTPI Network Manager for PIPA.

Cymorth	Planning
Cynllunio	Aid
Cymru	Wales

Change of Address

Notice is hereby given that as of 25th November 2009, the Planning Aid Wales head office will be relocated to the following address:

174 Whitchurch Road, Heath, Cardiff, CF14 3PN.

The Planning Aid Wales Public Helpline number will also change to 02920 625000. Please visit www.planningaidwales.org.uk for further information.

Support for Members during the Recession

The RTPI has been working hard to find new ways to support members during the recession explains Chris Sheridan.



The economic climate has created uncertainty for some employed planners, those who run their own practice and graduates looking to gain employment.

During 2008 the UK and Ireland entered an economic slowdown. Initially this affected planning consultants whose main clients were housebuilders and developers, and the RTPI was quick to respond. We developed a range of online guidance and information designed to

support consultants and small consultancies. This includes free management guidance factsheets covering a wide range of small business issues including HR and finance topics, such as debt management.

As the downturn moved into a recession its effects were felt more widely. We reviewed the recession guidance to ensure it offered support to all RTPI members affected by the recession. We are committed to supporting members during

this difficult time and help them consider some of the options available to them.

The RTPI's 'recession support' guidance is published online and set out under four separate headings; 'facing redundancy?', 'finding that next job', 'work for yourself?' and 'how we can help.' Support includes free access to an employment law helpline, the latest planning job adverts and information on updating your CV and 'successful job interviews'.

The recession has led to a contracted jobs market. It is important to remember that RTPI membership provides you with a competitive edge - it is a clear recognition of your professionalism, your competence and your expertise.

For further information and support please visit http://www.rtpi.org.uk/member_services/piwp/

Chris is the RTPI Planners in the Workplace Manager

Events Corner

Bridging Troubled Waters: Hydrology and Spatial Planning: BHS National Meeting

Date: Thursday 14 January 2010, 10:00-16:30

Location: Victoria Building, University of Liverpool

Website: <http://pcwww.liv.ac.uk/~nim/bhs10/hydroplanning.htm>

Attention to issues concerning water and planning has been rising. Faced with a climate of increasing extremes with a greater need to manage water resources sustainably, to maintain and improve water quality - reveals the significant challenge that the spatial planning system faces when considering water management.

The primary focus of the meeting is on the commonly experienced challenges of interdisciplinary working: how to promote communication, collaboration and knowledge transfer to yield workable solutions to the problems we face. It is hoped new relationships and further interdisciplinary research and

practice opportunities will emerge from this agenda.

Price: £70.00 (discounts available for BHS members & non-earners)

Deadline for registration: 22 December 2009

To register tel: 020 7665 2234 or email: Tim.Fuller@ice.org.uk

Delivering Housing in a Fragile Market

Date: 29th January 2010 09:30 - 16:00

Location: Armada House, Bristol

Delivering new housing has never been so challenging and expectations so great! Planning will undoubtedly take centre stage in the housing industry's revival and transformation, but this will require commitment to addressing climate change and its impacts. An understanding of how this is assessed will be crucial. Our speakers will examine what the numbers are telling us, how development economics and new sustainability standards are affecting the housing industry and how we can enable delivery in turbulent times.

Price: £75 + VAT

Further information: southwest@rtpi.org.uk

RTPI Cymru Spring Conference: Planning for Flooding

Date: March 2010

Location: Llandudno

Sponsored by the Environment Agency Wales

RTPI Cymru's 2010 Spring Conference will consider the planning issues around flooding - both coastal and surface run off. The increasing problem of flooding is rarely away from the news and the urgency of addressing the problem is increasing. The Conference will discuss the role for spatial planning and the tools and policy available to support work in this important area in Wales.

Further details available from: www.rtpi.org.uk/rtpi_cymru

Integrated Management of Coast and Sea

Date: March 2010

Location: Cardiff

This joint Conference with the Severn Estuary Partnership and the RTPI South West will draw together planners from both sides of the Severn estuary to discuss the spatial planning issues around integrated management of estuaries.

Further details to be made available via: www.rtpi.org.uk/rtpi_cymru

National Planning Aid Conference

Date: March 2010

Location: Cardiff

Hosted by Planning Aid Wales, this Conference bring together the UK Planning Aid services to share their experiences in community engagement.

Further details available from www.planningaidwales.org.uk

Diary Marker:

Wales Planning Conference: The Making of Place

7th June 2010, City Hall, Cardiff

Placing Wales Symposium

Ian Carter reports back on a thought provoking day on challenging design



Above: Irena Bauman discusses market towns

On Friday 9 October 2009 the Placing Wales Symposium* was held with the intention of investigating ways of designing enduring and distinctive places. The setting was the former National Westminster Bank, one of Cardiff's finest examples of neo-classical architecture or as described by one speaker Irena Bauman, "*the Temple of Finance*". Despite the biting chill in the room, the issues discussed throughout the day were met with warm reactions.

Organised by the Design Commission for Wales, the Welsh School of Architecture and the RSAW Design Circle, as part of the Cardiff Design Festival 2009, the symposium focussed on encouraging people from all facets of design to attend and discuss the design of our places.

After a brief introduction from Chair Carole-Anne Davies, Chief Executive of DCfW, Wayne Forster of the Welsh School, kicked off proceedings asking the audience if "*design had become too focused upon protecting rather than enhancing?*", which led him onto the notion that perhaps we had "*lost touch with designing buildings that reflect our culture and landscape*".

As designers we should not be confined by the boundaries of our site and we "*should not contain our designs within the red line boundary*". Wayne also raised the role of national policy in this context and questioned as perhaps a well intentioned tool but one that is written for non-designers and which often fails to respond to the analytical, intuitive and innovative process that is the practice of design.

Next up Irena Bauman of Bauman Lyons delivered her findings on her, as yet unpublished, work on distinctive market towns.

A short presentation on why we like and dislike market towns and why they are in decline led onto the idea that design can sometimes be a '*process of elimination*' and that "*placemaking is not an aim, more often it is a bi-product in the process.*" Where market towns are concerned the lesson was to look to the future and try to enhance the sense of place, and in doing so build upon the reasons the aspects of market towns which make them successful. Among distinctive factors Irena highlighted the Welsh language as a key

differentiator and an enormous advantage in case studies of both Hay on Wye and Machynlleth.

An interesting presentation followed from Deer Park Alpha on strategies for preparing people to consider change. Deer Park Alpha have been commissioned by DCfW to run its 'Know Your Place' design awareness project. In short, the project involves direct interaction with people in communities to find out how well they '*know their place*' and what they value about it. Using techniques such as sketching, story-boarding and discussing the history behind places, members of the public engage in the process of place making. As designers we need to make people part of the process and there needs to be a more integrated approach between highways, planning, designers and the public so that we can join together to make great places.

The morning closed with Dominic Stevens of Co. Leitrim, Ireland, who discussed the notion of vernacular. To Dominic vernacular is obvious but we should explore how it comes apart, that is, we should investigate how structures are built as opposed to simply what they look like. As design professionals when dealing with our heritage our objective should be to increase it. Dominic talked in particular about rural communities and the buildings and places required to sustain patterns of living in such areas.

After lunch Andy Taylor of Taylor Patel made a heartfelt plea for boldness and for "*great spaces need to be imbedded into the city*", to avoid disjointedness and lack of connection. Through a myriad of examples, old and new, Andy was clear that to create great spaces a bold, simple, and strong form is vital and that



we should strive for the highest quality of design so that we can easily adapt and maintain spaces in the future.

The day was closed with group discussions and report back on a number of issues related to place making and the topics of the day. As a public sector employee it was interesting to discuss the shortcomings and restrictiveness of planning policy with private sector architects and designers!

The day was thoroughly enjoyable and as professionals in the built environment, creating not just great places but places that respond to our heritage, culture and public requirements, should be our target. In order not repeat the problems of the past we need to get under the skin of those problems, learn from them and most importantly we need to get the public involved in design. Education is possibly the key to this and through projects such as 'Know Your Place' perhaps there is hope for great places of the future.

Ian is Principal Urban Designer at Newport City Council and Design Commission for Wales Advocate in Practice

* Symposium – Definition: A meeting or conference to discuss a particular topic.

Balancing Historic Conservation with the Climate Change Imperative



Above: Delegates hear about the Heryri youth project centred in one of its yurts.



Above: Delegates tour Craflwyn

A packed room of professionals involved with the historic environment, including planners, met at the National Trust's Craflwyn in Snowdonia to discuss issues around adapting and mitigating historic buildings to climate change.

Chaired by Andrew Matheson, the RTPI's Network Manager, leading on the Historic Interest Group, the seminar heard from Trefor Thorpe, Cadw's Chief Architect, who set out the Assembly's commitment to climate change, highlighting emerging guidance on climate change and historic buildings.

Gwilym Jones and Ifer Gwyn followed from Snowdonia National Park, setting out the local perspective. Gwilym highlighted the frustrations he suffers on a daily basis from promotions by suppliers of UPVCu windows, in particular, encouraging the scrapping of wooden sash windows in the name of 'greening'.

He argued that our forefathers knew what they were doing and we can learn lessons which are just as important today. Ifer introduced the Sustainability Guide produced for the three National Parks in Wales, which

aims to encourage sustainability and the design process.

Keith Jones, the National Trust's Environmental Practices Advisor for Wales, then discussed the Trust's experiences. He highlighted that we are now asking our historic buildings to do different things; there is no longer a fire burning through the day for example, changing the performance of a building. He also stressed that one size does not fit all – different solutions are needed for different situations.

The day included a tour of Craflwyn, looking at measures to

address climate change and to the Heryri youth project centred around yurts. The afternoon heard from Stephen Kane, Deputy Head of Building at the Trust who highlighted the need to address climate change impacts on the historic environment and work underway by the Trust, highlighting the business case for the work.

The day concluded with two European funded research projects - Nicole Solomons from the Marches Energy Agency set out SECHURBA - Sustainable Energy Communities in Historic URban Areas, which is investigating how buildings can incorporate new and zero carbon technologies. Frances Voelcker from Sustainable Gwynedd Gynladwy, announced a new project – SUSREF – which is to monitor how energy moves through traditional solid stone walled buildings in the North Wales' climate and investigate ways to provide effective insulation.

Further information from the seminar can be found on the RTPI Cymru web-site. If you are interested in joining the RTPI's free Heritage Interest Group, please e-mail: andrew.matheson@rtpi.org.uk

Jon Fox the Goat



Above: Jon Fox with his alter ego: 'Jon Fox the Goat'

The raffle held at the RTPI Cymru Annual Dinner this year raised £1,000 for Macmillan Nurses and Marie Curie Cancer Care. Thank you to everyone that supported the raffle. One prize was to name the RTPI Cymru Oxfam Goat – Phil Griffiths, winner of the prize, elected to name the goat 'Jon Fox'.



Above: Smiles all round, as Dinner guests win raffle prizes

Get out more in 2010

James Clemence makes a welcome return to Cynllunio, with some advice to us all for 2010.



I'm assuming you'll be reading this article in mid December. I'm also assuming there's a fair chance you'll be having a break of some sort, inside, possibly behind your pc. Finally, I'm assuming this is not the first time your lunch break or 'downtime' takes on this sort of format.

Well, if so, maybe it's that time of year to make that dreaded resolution that challenges this moribund existence. Why not get out more in the coming year?

Maybe it's just too easy these days to just sit behind a pc to complete our chores, explore the world and scan the news. And all this in a thirty minute lunch break. Maybe we're becoming soft and prefer a cocooned environment to taking on the elements.

But how can sitting inside behind a pc invigorate us for the afternoon ahead? How can we be at our creative best without some fresh air, a free and undervalued commodity?

For me, a quick blast around the gleaming public realm of Cardiff Bay can provide the change of scene necessary to solve the thorniest of prickly problems.

Indeed, increasing research findings are consistently showing

the huge benefits of interaction with the natural environment. Most significantly, the health and social gains are highlighted showing that open spaces are about far more than providing for recreational need.

It is heartening to see that Planners are responding to this. There are excellent examples across the region of initiatives that provide opportunities for the public to enjoy the countryside on our doorsteps.

We need to continue this good work and liaise with other sectors in doing so but also ask ourselves if we are getting out enough. You never know, a bit more fresh air every now and again may stimulate even greater ideas and productivity. In the new era of, 'more for less', this is not a notion to be dismissed lightly.

James is Operational Manager - Urban and Natural Planning at Cardiff County Council.

DC CASEBOOK WALES

Change of use rejected

An inspector has dismissed an appeal for a proposed conversion of an existing double garage into a two bedroom house with a conservatory and the provision of two parking spaces in Pembrokeshire. The appeal was rejected on the grounds that a proposed development will have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area and does not provide acceptable living conditions for neighbours and future occupants with particular regard to their privacy.

Whilst the appellants argued that the existing garage would be properly developed to accommodate the conversion by retaining the existing stonework and the proposed conservatory would be developed to enhance and integrate the appearance of the area with trees, hedges and other planting.

However, the inspector disagreed, stating the proposal was not of a good design standard and would thereby have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area.

APP/L9503/A/09/2106514

Bungalow rejected

An inspector has upheld the council's decision to refuse granting of planning permission for a proposed development of a two bedroom detached bungalow in Canton, Cardiff on the grounds that the proposal would be harmful to the residents' living condition in the area.

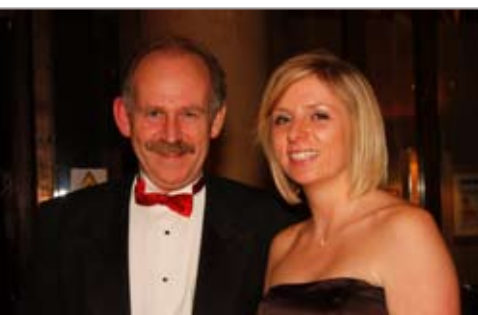
The appellants argued that the proposed development would be built in a way that would encourage neighbourliness with the adjacent building.

However, the Inspector disagreed and stated that the proposal would be oppressive and have an un-neighbourly impact on the occupants in the adjacent building. He also noted the concerns of an adjacent resident that the site in question will compromise the enjoyment of their rear garden which is contrary to the council's Residential Design Guide.

APP/Z6815/A/09/2107763

Many thanks to Solomon Anyiam for preparing this month's DC Casebook Wales. If you are interested in preparing summaries for this section, please contact James Davies by email at james@planningaidwales.org.uk

Annual Dinner 2009



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