

PENRHYS newsletter

Volume 1, Issue 5

Autumn 2005

SKOOLS OUT 4 SUMMER

Reflections on
the summer and
looking ahead to
2006

Inside this issue:

Getting things off the Ground	2
Surgery Saved and Healthy Ideas	3
Friends of Penrhys Primary launched	4
Housing - Your Future - Your Vote	5
Llanfair Uniting Church	6
Penrhys Remembered	6
What's On	7

Special points of interest:

- * [Make a Difference in 2006](#)
- * [Penrhys welcomes new friends](#)
- * [Forthcoming Community Events and Activities in 2005](#)



SKOOL was definitely out for Summer at the Penrhys Village Festival. The bell rang at 3.00pm on Saturday 28th August to start the event. With fantastic weather conditions and the backdrop of the Rhondda Fawr, the event was the biggest and best yet. The day was fun packed with bouncy castles, inflatable assault course, face painting, balloon racing.

The Tylorstown Communities First Police Team organised the Skool Sports, with joint winners from Yale and Oxford University.

Organised by the Penrhys Partnership, the event welcomed international volunteers from around the world, as part of an UNA Exchange Programme and they participated with local children in performing a traditional Maori dance

with the Penrhys Haka Warriors.

The event was only made possible with the support of local residents and numerous agencies who work with the community throughout the year.

Councillor and Mayor Emlyn Jenkins who attended the event commented that it was a 'wonderful event was thrilled with the warm welcome'.

During the evening, local performers sang songs and danced the night away, with the 'one night only' band of Dai Science and the Prefects' as the support act to Racing Cars.

An explosive end to the event followed with a huge firework display which lit up the night sky.

The event was supported by the Welsh Assembly Government Communities First Programme, the Arts Council of Wales and the European Regional Development Fund.



Penrhys Environmental Action Team (PEAT)

The Penrhys Environmental Action Team (PEAT) continues to work well together to improve the Penrhys landscape. Recent developments include the grass cutting of large areas of land, which have not been cut in years. The jet washing of the pavia at the front of the Village Centre, clear-

ance of fly-tipping throughout the community, working with Groundwork Rhondda Cynon Taf to develop local project and further.

The group are seeking to develop a Multi Use Games Area at an area of land known as 'The Cage'. A preliminary application

has been made to the Sports Council of Wales to extend the fencing at the north 'Cage' and create an all weather surface for both football and basket ball. The group has received great support from the children and young people for this project. We will keep you informed of progress.

We still have a lot of work to do, but hopefully we will continue to improve the environment throughout Penrhys.

The Penrhys Environmental Action Team is made up of various Departments within the Local Authority including Housing, Leisure, Highways and Street Cleansing. The community is represented by **Penrhys Community Action Group** and **Penrhys Partnership**- if you would like more information contact them on **730490** or **755008**.

Getting things off the Ground (with Groundwork)



Groundwork Merthyr & Rhondda Cynon Taff has recently been awarded £1,500,000 in funding from European Objective 1 and the Local Regeneration Fund for the Greencare Stage 2 Implementation programme, which covers the areas of Merthyr Tydfil and Rhondda Cynon Taff. A Dedicated cluster team is now operating in the Rhondda Fach area.

Greencare Stage II implements delivery programmes of practical and physical improvement projects. The programme recruits local volunteers and provides local employment and also trains community members in project management and practical and environmental skills.

Types of practical and environmental projects include: -

- Physical improvement projects
- ICT projects
- Cultural/art projects
- Biodiversity projects

- Training /skills enhancement projects
- Access and tourism projects.

The Greencare Team for Rhondda Fach are Richard Dowman, Project Officer and Carl Stone, Trainee Project Officer. They have begun their work in Penrhys where they have been working with teachers and pupils of Penrhys Primary School improving an outdoor area at the school. Work has begun, based on the ideas brought forward to enable the pupils and staff at the school to work in a different environment to the classrooms. While the outdoor areas can be used for lessons on the local community and the environment, it can also be used for play times in the sensory garden and the staged area.

Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC and Groundwork are also working with the Partnership and residents on a Remembrance Garden with the local community. This project will be officially opened in the Spring of 2006.

If you have any ideas or would like to start an Environmental Project contact the Rhondda Fach team via the **Penrhys Partnership office on 01443 755008**.

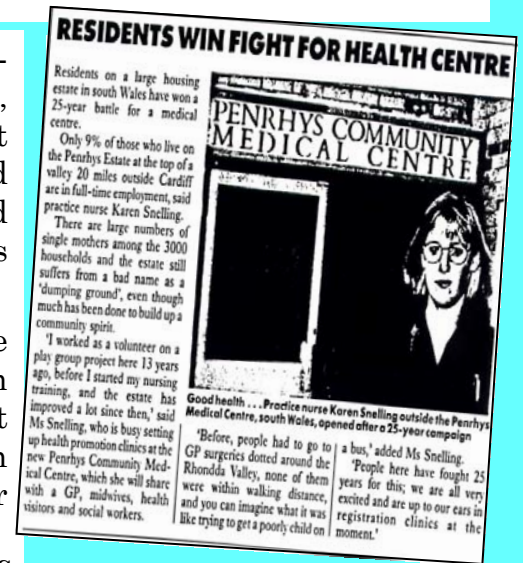


PENRHYS REMEMBERED

The many long standing residents of our community will remember the struggle in the early 1990's to improve the access to health services in Penrhys. In 1993 the campaign to get a Doctor's Surgery proved successful and the Practice opened its doors, providing facilities and services that were second to none in the valley. It is ironic that 12 years on, we

continue to campaign for access to basic health services, and once again the support of residents who fought hard to retain the much needed service, the Surgery was saved.

We must be grateful for the support we received from near and far and hope that we can build on the health services that exist in our community.



Courtesy: Nursing Times 24th November 1993

Llanfair Uniting Church

Letter from Llanfair

The first thing I'd like to say is, "Hello - and thank you for the warm welcome I've received!"

In some ways it feels as if I've been here for ages, although it's really only been about four months. Penrhys already feels very much like home, and that's not too far off anyway since my parents both came from the Upper Swansea Valley and some of my relatives live as near as Williamstown.

Llanfair is a busy place, there's always plenty to do and lots of people to meet. Since I've arrived I've met people from all over the world as well as people who have lived in these valleys all their lives.

As well as meeting people here (we have lots of visitors as I'm sure you know) I've also travelled quite a bit in the past few months. I've seen more of Wales in the past four months than I had in all the

years before I came here! We've had church trips to Snowdonia, Carmarthen and Caldey Island - all of which were fun and enjoyable - it's not been like work at all...

I have also had the privilege of conducting three baptisms, Joshua in July and Naomi and Darcey in October. I hope that they will always find us a welcoming and fun place to come to.

Penrhys School visits us each week (the classes take it in turn to join us in worship on Monday mornings) and I have been into the school to meet and talk with the young people.

It's a great way to start the week and I always enjoy it. It seems that many of our younger friends enjoy singing as much as I do and we've learnt quite a few songs already.

One of the other great treats of Llanfair is that I get to work with so many interesting and lovely people. Our volunteers from Madagascar this year are Gabrielle and Hanta. They are giving us a year of their lives to live, share and work with us. Their energy and enthusiasm is a great encouragement and inspiration to us and we're very grateful to be able to have this time together.

Siân Collins



PENRHYS newsletter



Citizens Advice
the charity for your community

ACT NOW AND CLAIM IT!

Are you claiming all the **benefits** you are entitled to? Don't Know? Not Sure?

Call in to Penrhys Partnership and staff will help to ensure that you are receiving all the benefits you are entitled to.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Monday 19th December

Children from Penrhys Primary School will see

SANTA CLAUSE COMING TO TOWN

@ Canolfan Rhys

CHRISTMAS PANTO

Thursday 22nd December 2005

Muni Arts Centre, Pontypridd

Free and Confidential Advice on a range of issues, covering: Welfare Benefits, Debt, Consumer advice, Housing Advice, Education, and Health Care advice.

We can also help people to appeal for benefits that have been refused, reviewed or taken away. We can also refer to legal advice if needed.

Thursday 1.30pm - 3.30pm
At Penrhys Partnership

PENRHYS COMMUNITY CENTRE

Monday, Wednesday, Friday 9.00am - 9.00pm

Tuesday, Thursday 9.00am - 5.00pm

Saturday 10.00am - 5.30pm

Sunday 12.00pm - 7.30pm



communities first cymunedau yn gyntaf



CEFNOGI CREADIGRWYDD
CYNGOR CELFYDDYDAU CYMRU
THE ARTS COUNCIL OF WALES
SUPPORTING CREATIVITY

The Penrhys Newsletter is published by Penrhys Partnership with support from the Welsh Assembly Government- Communities First Programme, European Regional Development Fund and the Arts Council of Wales

Penrhys Partnership is a not for profit company limited by guarantee.
The Penrhys Partnership Trust is a Registered Charity-No. 1027848

Penrhys Partnership, Y Ffynnon Centre, Penrhys, FERNDALE, Rhondda Cynon Taf, CF43 3NS
Tel: 01443 755008
Fax: 01443 735400
E-mail: penrhys@penrhyspartnership.co.uk
Web: www.penrhys.com



SAVE OUR SURGERY

Patients of the Penrhys Surgery were informed in September that the local service may be withdrawn from the community.

As a result, the community rallied around and held a Public Meeting in October. With a packed meeting at Llanfair Church, residents shared their concerns with the Director of Primary Care - Mr Steve Davies of the Local Health

Board and local Councillors and Assembly Member - Leighton Andrews.

As a result of the meeting, the Penrhys Community Action Group organised a petition, and **over 500 signatures were collected** opposing the closure, along with **over 50 letters of support** from various residents, agencies and supporters, being sent to the Local Health Board.

We are now pleased to inform patients and residents that the Local Health Board **unanimously rejected the closure** of the Practice.

We would like to thank everyone who supported the campaign and look forward to working with the Practice in providing essential health services to the community.

IMPROVE YOUR HEALTH IN 2006

We probably all know that it is recommended to eat five portions of fruit and vegetables a day.

Did you know that you can now order and collect your weekly fruit and vegetables at the Penrhys Partnership Offices.

As part of our new Health Scheme you need to **place your order and pay by Tuesday** of each week, with collection on **Thursday between 1.00pm and 3.00pm**. **PRICES are:**

Bags of Fruit at £2.00

Bags of Vegetables at £2.00

Stew Bags £1.00

Sack of Potatoes £4.00

The contents of the bags cannot be specified

IMPROVE YOUR HEALTH IN 2006

Do you enjoy walking, perhaps walking the dog, going for a stroll, walking to lose a few of those unwanted pounds, if this is you, we have been approached by residents who wish to get healthier in the New Year, and to see if a local health group can be established to help you get fitter and healthier.

We are looking to work with Local Health Board to provide possible opportunities to local residents in improving their health and wellbeing.

The New Year we think is a good start and our first meeting is planned for:

**Monday 9th January
at 10.00am
in the Training Centre.**

If you are interested in joining the group, contact Julie or Denise at the Centre on 01443 755008



communities first cymunedau yn gyntaf

Your HOUSING - Your FUTURE - Your VOTE !



Did you know that the Welsh Assembly has recognised that council housing across Wales is in poor condition and has introduced a new Welsh Housing Quality Standard to make sure that it is improved. These new standards must be met by all Welsh local authorities by 2012.

Our challenge in Rhondda Cynon Taf is to ensure that every one of our Council properties meets that standard.

We currently do not have the money to carry out the work. A problem that is being faced by most Welsh Councils.

For Rhondda Cynon Taf, the cost of meeting the standard is estimated at £484 million. With the funds available over the next thirty years, we would be at least £250 million short, and we only have 7 years to carry out the work. The Council has to find a way to find the money.

The Welsh Assembly has limited Councils to only **3 possible options** to find the money to meet the Standard.

Option 1: To identify investment through raising income by increasing rents and borrowing the money.

We could, potentially, keep all our housing and borrow the money to bring it up to standard. However, because a Council can only borrow money for housing against its income, it has to pay the interest on any loan from rents. Rents are already paying for a historic debt of £150 million from the time when councils were encouraged to borrow to build council houses. The additional interest would mean a **significant increase in rents** with initial calculations suggesting this would be at least 5% over and above the 'normal' annual increase every year. Many local people would not be able to afford this and it would be such a large increase it is unlikely that the Welsh Assembly would allow it.

Taking this option would also be likely to result in **cuts in services** such as our district housing offices and maintenance repairs because rents would have to be used to pay the debt.

Option 2: To transfer some of the housing stock to one or more existing Housing Associations or Registered Social Landlords, which could then invest in that stock to bring it up to the Standard. We would still have to find the funds to improve the remaining stock.

One of the obvious issues in this case would be deciding which properties to transfer.

or

Option 3: To transfer all the stock to a new not-for-profit trust or company.

It is possible to transfer the stock to a company called a 'Community Mutual Trust', which would have Councillors and tenants on the Executive Board to manage it, and give each tenant a share to vote at AGMs. Essentially, the Trust would be owned by the tenants and regulated by the Welsh Assembly Government. **All funding would be used to improve and develop the stock.**

As the trust would be able to borrow money in the normal way using the value of the houses as an asset, funding would be available to improve all properties up to the standard, maintain it and improve services, without significantly raising rents.

If such a company was set up, the Council would be able to negotiate the terms under which it would transfer the stock, **protect the rights of staff and tenants** and include the development of initiatives such as Extra Care and supported housing for vulnerable people.

Any transfer would need the **support of tenants through a ballot**. Each tenant would have a vote and 51% of those voting would have to agree. Tenants would know their rights, rent forecasts and proposed improvements to the services and stock before they voted. Any promises made to tenants by the trust before the voting process would be legally binding and monitored by the Government.

Transferring all stock would mean that our historic housing **debt – around £150m – would be paid off** by the Government. Transferring some stock would mean a proportionate part of the debt would be paid

Having Your Say

Over the coming months there are a number of ways you can have your say or ask for more information.

- Freephone: 0800 0286355
- Visit our website – it can be found by visiting www.rhondda-cynon-taff.gov.uk
- Look out for our information trailer, which is visiting estates and venues across the county borough.
- Speak to the Independent Tenant or Staff advisors. These advisors are separate from the Council and can give free and impartial advice.

Numbers and addresses?

-Write to: Sue Gilby, Divisional Director for Community Housing, Rock Grounds, High Street, Aberdare, CF44 7AE.

Penrhys Community Learning Programme



Get your community online

Shape-it.org is an exciting and groundbreaking community programme. It aims to encourage groups and individuals to communicate and work together in Rhondda Cynon Taf through a community website and internet-based TV channel.

We will provide FREE computers and broadband to enable you to participate in the programme, along with training and support so that you can add information to the website which reflects the interests in your community.

To find out more contact the Shape-it.org team
01443 680680 | info@shape-it.org

Shape-it.org
Your community online

Shape-it.org is a Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council led online community project.

Looking for a new challenge in 2006, then come along to Penrhys Partnership Training and

Education Centre.

We have a fully fitted Computer Suite, with broadband internet access. A fully fitted Training Kitchen.

We also have a range of courses on offer during the day and evening.

New for 2006, we are looking to offer course such as:

- Creative Gardening
- Digital Photography
- Arts and Crafts
- Cookery
- Food Hygiene
- Access to Learndirect

Pop in for a chat or telephone 01443 755008, and we can tailor courses to meet your training needs.

Penrhys Primary School

Friends of Penrhys Primary School

A new group has been established to support the work of Penrhys Primary School, made up of parents and staff, the group's aims are:

To support the work of Penrhys Primary School in building a safe, caring and happy environment for all.

To provide learning opportunities, which promote self-esteem, courtesy and respect for others.

Healthy Schools Initiative

The school has successfully passed phase one of the programme and are now developing activities for stage 2. These activities include involving children in a Heritage Trail Walk and the introduction of recycling initiatives.

Balloon Race

A big thank you to all the people who generously supported the event. A total of £1900 was raised to support the schools activities. The balloon that travelled the furthest was found 172 miles away in Devon.

Pre-school Provision

The Penrhys Pre-School Consortium was established in July to seek ways of improving pre-school provision in Penrhys. The group is made up of various organisations who will deliver services in the community. If you have children who you would like to benefit from this, please contact Beth Williams at the school on 01443 730037, or speak to someone at Llanfair Uniting Church.

Up and coming events

Operation Christmas Child – we are helping to teach our children that there are others less fortunate than ourselves, and we are aiming to send over 50 boxes of Christmas presents to children in war torn countries. Please contact us at the school if you are able to help.

Two visits are planned to the pantomime this year, one at Maerdy Community Centre to watch the Sherman Theatre's Christmas show and one organised by the Penrhys Partnership to watch a performance of Cinderella at the Rhondda Fach Sports Centre.

Canolfan Rhys Arts Centre

NEW!

Tuesday

Ages 5 – 11 years

Pick and Mix

4.00 – 5.45pm

Ages 12 - 16 years

Pick and Mix

6.30 - 8.30pm

Pick and Mix is a new fun and exciting arts and play project offering new opportunities for children between 5 and 11 years.

Activities include: arts, crafts, team games, music, digital media, cooking and creative play.

The project is funded by Rhondda Cynon Taf CBC Cymorth Play Grant

Wednesday

4.00 - 5.00pm

Art & Music Madness

Thursday

Singing and Songwriting

Ages 5 - 11 years

4.00 - 5.00pm

Ages 12 - 18 years

5.00 - 6.00pm

Booked Music

6.00 - 7.00pm

AND FINALLY ...

A HALLOWEEN TO REMEMBER

On the most ghoulish night of the year Canolfan Rhys was taken over by what can only be describe as the cast from 'THRILLER'. There were witches, ghosts, vampires and even pumpkins walking around.

The children and young people had fun dancing the night away as well as devouring the lovely cakes and chocolate apples kindly prepared by our very own Penrhys cooking class.



It was great to see so many people with over 130 attending. Keep a look out for other events that are to take place at

Canolfan Rhys Arts Centre in 2006.



Look out for the Penrhys Calendar for 2006, which will be distributed soon.

The Calendar was created through weekly workshops with the children of Penrhys Primary School in conjunction with Canolfan Rhys and the Penrhys Partnership.

Have a great Christmas and a Peaceful New Year to all our readers, supporters and friends.



The Cage Graffiti Project was completed by young people from Penrhys and supported by Canolfan Rhys Arts Centre, through funding from the Arts Council of Wales