



Planning Aid Wales Newsletter

November 2009

New Planning Aid Wales office

The Planning Aid Wales head office is moving. From 25th November 2009, you can contact us at the following address:

**First Floor
174 Whitchurch Road
Heath
Cardiff CF14 3PN**

The Planning Aid Wales public helpline number will change to:

02920 625000

The following staff contact numbers will also change as follows:

James Davies, Planner and Case Manager: 02920 625009

Kay Sharman, Administrator and Finance Officer (General Enquiries): 02920 625006

The website address and all email addresses for the organisation will remain the same.

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Although the responsibility for the planning system in Wales generally has been devolved to the National Assembly for Wales, planning for major energy and harbour infrastructure that is considered 'nationally significant' still remains within the remit of Westminster.

The 2008 Planning Act introduced a new system for dealing with applications to build such nationally significant infrastructure facilities in England and Wales. A new independent body, the **Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC)** will examine and decide applications for major new infrastructure development. The IPC will base its decisions on individual planning applications on the relevant **'National Policy Statements' (NPS)**. If the proposed development is in accordance with the relevant National Policy Statement, and the promoter has undertaken a programme of consultation with local communities before the application is lodged, then consent is likely.

If you want to influence decisions on future applications for developments such as large wind farms, port developments or a possible nuclear power station in your area, you should get involved in the consultation on the relevant National Policy Statements.

Consultations are currently open on the following documents:

- Overarching National Energy Infrastructure Policy

- Renewable Energy Generation
- Fossil Fuel Power Stations
- Gas Supply Infrastructure, Gas and Oil Pipelines
- Electricity Networks
- Nuclear Power Stations
- Ports

The closing dates for the current batch of NPS consultations are 15th February 2010 for the ports NPS and 22nd February 2010 for all of the energy NPSs.

More information on National Policy Statements and links to the consultation documents are available on www.nationalpolicystatements.org.uk.

Annual Planning Aid Conference in Cardiff

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Planning Aid Wales will be hosting the UK wide annual Planning Aid Conference next year. It will be held on Thursday-Friday, 29th-30th April 2010 at the Park Inn hotel in Cardiff.

The conference will bring together a range of people from all over the UK in a communicative environment that will enable them to learn from each other. There will not only be Planning Aid staff and volunteers, but also representatives from community and voluntary groups, community and town councils and others who have been or are currently involved with the planning system. The idea is that planning aid really only makes sense when it is supporting people within the community to help them realise their visions and practical projects.

We are thus looking for real-life examples of projects, movements or groups who have made or are making things happen for their community that we could showcase or discuss at the conference. It doesn't matter if your group has had help from Planning Aid, thinks it could do with some expert planning support or has succeeded all by itself: If you have tackled or are tackling a planning issue some way or other, we would like to hear from you.

If you think your group or project could fit the bill, please contact Marika for an informal chat on 01286 882 834 or marika@planningaidwales.org.uk.

New Training Officer

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The Planning Aid Wales team will be growing from December. Maria Allen will be joining us as our first dedicated Training Officer. The purpose of the job is to co-ordinate Planning Aid Wales' training services and to develop them further.

So if you want to hire a planning trainer for an evening session, would like us to design a bespoke training day for your group or have an idea for a joint capacity building project, Maria will be there to help you. She will be contactable at the Cardiff office initially.

Last autumn the Planning Aid Wales staff team spent an energetic day out in the woods helping to build a log circle and wildlife learning area at Porthkerry Country Park. We were looking for a challenge which would take us out of our normal roles and also help the community, and we certainly found it at Porthkerry.

Now we are on the lookout for another challenging community project for us to get stuck in at this year's staff away day. If your project would benefit from ten energetic helping hands for a day, do contact us (details below).


Case study

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Vulnerable lady allowed to keep fence

Mrs A. suffers from multiple sclerosis, is housebound and lives alone. Having been continually harassed by local youths for over a year, she arranged for a fence to be erected around her property to make her feel more safe. Mrs A. was unaware that the fence needed planning permission and contacted Planning Aid Wales asking for help to prevent enforcement action being taken. Planning Aid Wales helped Mrs A. apply for retrospective planning permission and submitted a full statement explaining her special need for the fence. As a result, the local planning authority allowed the fence to remain for as long as Mrs A. lives at the property.

Events

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If you would like to know more about any of the listed events, please contact us (see contact details below).

7th December, Cardiff

Consultation event on Ports National Policy Statement. For details see article above.

20th January 2010, location tbc

Consultation event on Energy National Policy Statements. For details see article above.

29th-30th April 2010, Cardiff

Annual Planning Aid Conference. For details see article above.

Contacting Planning Aid Wales

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