



Planning Aid Wales Newsletter

February 2010

Annual Planning Aid Conference in Cardiff

'Planning Aid - Engaging with Communities'

This year's National Planning Aid Conference is being held in Cardiff on **Thursday 29th April and the morning of Friday 30th April 2010**. It will bring together a range of people from all over the UK in a friendly, relaxed environment that will encourage them to exchange ideas, inspire, and learn from each other.

The conference is open not only to planning aid staff and volunteers, but also to 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.

Following a ministerial address by Jane Davidson, Welsh Assembly Government Minister for Environment, Sustainability and Housing, a lively programme of workshops, discussion groups and field trips will showcase best practice examples of community engagement in planning as well as inspiring community initiatives that will benefit from planning aid support.

Amongst others, workshops will include a first-hand report on the Lammas eco-village in Pembrokeshire by Paul Wimbush, one of the founders of this groundbreaking initiative. Patrick Anderson of Planning Aid for London and Cllr Lorna Campbell of the London Borough of Lambeth will examine ways to accommodate the needs of non-traditional faith communities in local planning. Ian Horsburgh of Planning Aid Wales will assemble a range of colleagues and clients to discuss how planning aid can help Gypsies and Travellers overcome planning hurdles. And delegates will explore the scope for local influence on decisions about nuclear power stations with Sue Webber and Sarah Martin of South West Planning Aid.

The conference, which will be chaired by Kelvin MacDonald of the University of Cambridge, is an invaluable opportunity for those involved in planning aid and community work throughout the UK to come together to be inspired and develop new ideas.

Programme details and a booking form are available to download from www.planningaidwales.org.uk/conference or by contacting Marika Fusser on 01286 882 834 or marika@planningaidwales.org.uk. Also contact Marika if you are interested in bringing an exhibition stand.

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It is now almost three years that Planning Aid Wales adopted its first Welsh Language Scheme, and it is time for a review. We have produced a draft of a revised Scheme for the next three years, and we'd like our clients' and supporters' views on it.

The original Welsh Language Scheme and the draft of the revised version will be available to download from <http://planningaidwales.org.uk/about-us/policies> from 15 March. Please send your comments to marika@planningaidwales.org.uk by 30 April 2010.

Planning Aid Wales & RTPI Young Planners Quiz Night



Quizmaster James is inviting Planning Aid Wales friends and supporters to another Quiz Night on **Wednesday, 28th April 2010** at 6.30pm (quiz to start at 7pm sharp) at the Park Inn hotel, Mary Ann Street, Cardiff city centre.

The cost of the quiz (payable on the night) will be £4 per entrant (£3 for students) with proceeds going to Planning Aid Wales and RTPI Young Planners Network Cymru. No specialist planning knowledge is required!

We welcome team or individual entries to the quiz. We are looking for teams of no more than five to enter. It's fine if you want to enter individually as we will allocate you to a team on the night.

A registration form and directions to the venue are available on
<http://www.planningaidwales.org.uk/volunteering/quiznight>

If you have any questions about the quiz, please contact James Davies on 02920 625 000 or
james@planningaidwales.org.uk.

Review of the planning applications process in Wales



As part of a comprehensive review of the operation of the planning application process in Wales, the Welsh Assembly Government has commissioned a research study which is examining distinctive Welsh issues and concerns arising from the planning application process.

Planning Aid Wales took part in one of the focus groups organised as part of the research. It contributed the perspective of lay users of the system to the discussion, based on our clients' experiences.

The Planning Aid Wales team has also submitted a written summary of its thoughts on the focus group questions, which you can read on <http://planningaidwales.org.uk/about-us/consultation-responses>

The report of the research study will be available to download from the GVA Grimley website www.gvagrimsley.co.uk/wagplanningconsultation from Monday 8th of March. Publication of the report will be followed by a four week consultation period and details of how to submit comments will also appear on the website. The consultation period will close on Thursday 8th April.



The Brecon Beacons National Park Authority has commissioned Planning Aid Wales for a second time to help community and town councils contribute to preparation of a Local Development Plan for the Park area.

In 2008, at the early stages of the Local Development Plan process, Planning Aid Wales delivered a series of training and capacity-building events for all community and town councils within the national park area. These workshops explained the Local Development Plan process and encouraged community and town councils to play a proactive role in it. They also introduced participants to a range of tools and techniques for involving their local communities. As a result of this work a majority of councils worked with their local communities to develop a local contribution to the emerging Local Development Plan.

In January 2009, the National Park Authority published its Preferred Strategy, and consultation events and meetings have been held to gather the views of individuals and community and town councils. Communities themselves have also organised their own events and meetings. A regular timetable of consultation and engagement activity has enabled the National Park Authority to build a picture of some of the key concerns and issues that community and town councils hold regarding the emerging Local Development Plan.

Now Planning Aid Wales is commissioned to deliver another programme of training and capacity-building workshops to support community participation during the later stages of Local Development Plan preparation from the so-called 'Deposit consultation' through to the public inquiry. The interactive training programme will include three different half-day workshops delivered sequentially between end-March and mid-June 2010.

Participants will learn about the plan preparation process so far and the key stages still left to complete. One aspect of plan-making that has traditionally attracted much interest from local communities is the selection of specific sites for housing development, so the methodology developed by the planning authority for this will be explained in a clear and logical way.

Participants will be alerted to key consultations and will consider practical ways of identifying and feeding through the views and aspirations of their local communities in these. They will also have an opportunity to explore what they can do to maximise the effect of their involvement in the process.

The programme will finish with a drop-in session that will provide assistance and guidance for community and town councils considering preparing a consultation response on the deposit Local Development Plan.

**If you are interested in attending these events, please e-mail strategy@breconbeacons.org
If you'd like to find out more about the possibility of having a similar training programme in your area, please contact Planning Aid Wales' Training Officer, Maria Allen on 02920 625006 or maria@planningaidwales.org.uk.**

A word from our new Training Officer



My name is Maria, and I am the new Training Officer for Planning Aid Wales. I began working for Planning Aid Wales at the beginning of December and I work 18.5 hours a week Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays (morning only). My role is primarily focused on developing new training projects as well as coordinating Planning Aid Wales' existing training programmes for disadvantaged groups, community representatives and planning professionals.

I have previously worked for a mixture of NGOs in Wales including five years with Age Concern Cymru. I have also ventured into working for Local Government and spent a year at the Welsh Local Government Association and most recently with Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council. My main area of focus in previous roles has been in equality, diversity and inclusion and I completed a Masters in 2006

in equality and diversity at Cardiff Uni.

I would be really pleased to hear from you if you would like to know more about our training work. We have considerable expertise in providing tailored training packages to suit a range of audiences and needs. Contact me at the Planning Aid Wales Cardiff office on telephone number 02920 625006 or email maria@planningaidwales.org.uk

Case study

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Small business wins appeal against planning refusal

Mr A runs a small business from a van selling burgers and kebabs in an ex-mining village in North Wales. He sells on most evenings of the week and is a popular member of the local community. Many of his customers experience hardship, and Mr A has been known to give food away to people in need. Before setting up his business, he asked the council if he needed planning permission. He was told at the time he did not, and has run his business ever since without any complaints from the community.

However, a few years later Mr A was told that he did need permission. He applied, but the application was refused after a single resident objected. The Council received several letters of support from the local community, one person stating that he had seen Mr A picking up litter thrown away by customers.

Mr A was advised by the planning officer dealing with his case to contact Planning Aid Wales to help fight his appeal. A Planning Aid Wales volunteer provided valued support and assistance during the appeal procedure, and was successful in showing that his business is no threat to the amenity of local residents. Mr A won the appeal and has resumed his business.

Mr A finds it difficult to communicate in either English or Welsh, and runs a very small business. He is therefore eligible for help from Planning Aid Wales. We were very pleased that Planning Aid Wales was able to help him win his appeal, as he is a considerate and valued member of a tight-knit community, providing a service which is greatly appreciated by local people.

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).

11 March, Glyncoch near Pontypridd

Community regeneration: delivering in partnership. Seminar for community development and regeneration practitioners organised by the Regeneration Skills Collective Wales. For details and bookings please contact Richard Essex on 0781 257 6729 or ressex@rics.org

15 March, Rhyl

Regenerating Rhyl: strategy to delivery. Seminar for sustainable regeneration practitioners organised by the Regeneration Skills Collective Wales. For details and bookings please contact Richard Essex on 0781 257 6729 or ressex@rics.org

30th March, Brecon

Planning 'The Knowledge'. Free seminar for businesses in the tourism industry provided by Planning Aid Wales, organised by the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority. For details or to book a place e-mail nicola.williams@breconbeacons.org

14th April, 5-9pm, Telford Centre, Menai Bridge

Multicultural event organised by Medrwn Môn. Free tasters in different cultures, advice and information. Including an information stall by Planning Aid Wales. For further details phone 01248 724944.

28th April, 6.30pm, Cardiff

Quiz night organised by Planning Aid Wales and Young Planners Network Cymru. Please see above for details.

29th-30th April, Cardiff

Annual Planning Aid Conference. For details see article above.

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