



Planning Aid Wales Community Newsletter

January 2012

Welcome and Happy New Year!

Hello, and welcome to the winter edition of the Planning Aid Wales Community Newsletter. This edition contains news, information and updates on Planning Aid Wales training, development and outreach work. We have a lot of exciting events and projects to update you on this quarter and hope that there is something to interest everyone inside.

The Community Newsletter is three years old this month! To celebrate we are offering a box of chocolates to the person who sends the **most interesting answer** to the question:

What does planning mean to you?

Please send your answers to sioned@planningaidwales.org.uk

The navigation system (right >) allows you to click and jump to specific items. To come back to the menu, click on the 'up' arrows on the right hand side of the coloured headers.

If you have any feedback on the newsletter, or would like to contribute to future editions, please don't hesitate to contact me on 02920 625 004 or email by clicking [here](#).

Happy New Year from Planning Aid Wales,

Sioned Pearce
Development and Training Officer

This Newsletter will be published quarterly in Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter.

In this edition....



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Case study:
traveller appeal



Engagement:
engaging versus
consulting



Outreach:
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spaces



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Planning Aid Wales / RTPI Cymru Senedd Reception

Planning Aid Wales and RTPI Cymru held a joint Senedd Reception at the National Assembly for Wales on 1st November 2011. Assembly Members, Welsh Government officials and other key representatives attended to find out more about the planning system and how communities can engage with it.

The Minister for Environment and Sustainability, John Griffiths, gave a speech on the important role played by RTPI Cymru and Planning Aid Wales in sustainable development. Our Chief Executive, Elwyn Thomas, gave a short address on the importance of helping communities engage with planning and the role of planning in sustainability.

RTPI Cymru ran an exercise, inviting attendees to place coloured dots against a set of 'provocative' planning questions; the results are summarised [here](#).

The reception event was successful and has resulted in requests from Assembly Members for some of our key publications as well as generating interest on the day. We will be aiming to hold another reception next year.

Towards a Welsh Planning Act: call for evidence

With the advent of primary policy making powers, the Welsh Government has started a review of current planning legislation. An Independent Advisory Group has been established and is now calling for views and opinions from the public on how the planning system can be made easier to understand and use.

This is a great opportunity to have a say on how the planning system in Wales should develop in the future. If you would like to know more or to respond to the consultation click [here](#).

The consultation will close on **3rd February 2012**.

A strategic monitoring framework for the planning system

This consultation proposes to measure the impact of planning on achieving sustainable development, as defined by the Welsh Government's sustainability scheme One Wales: One Planet. Following a research project undertaken by Arup consultants on how best to measure this impact, the consultation seeks views on a proposed Strategic Monitoring Framework.

Since sustainability is at the heart of the Welsh Government agenda and planning is one of a few key delivery agents, we will be developing a response to this consultation. Consultation responses need to be submitted by **27th January 2012**.

For more information or to respond to this consultation click [here](#).



In July 2009 a traveller contacted Planning Aid Wales for help with submitting a planning application on behalf of himself, his wife and their six children. He had previously applied for planning permission to live on a site used for stabling horses but had been unsuccessful. A Planning Aid Wales volunteer helped the family to submit a second application seeking three years temporary planning permission. In the time between the first and second application the Welsh Government introduced a Gypsy and Traveller Circular* (2007) which was significant and timely for the application.

The second application was also turned down and our volunteer helped the family to submit an appeal. During the appeal process the family became homeless and there were no alternative sites in the Newport area for them to stay. The hearing for the appeal took place in July this year and the volunteer represented the family in front of a planning Inspector. The appeal was won and the Inspector granted the family a two year temporary permission. The family was delighted with the outcome.

These types of cases tend to be resource-intensive and can require two or three volunteers working on them at one time. Given our limited resources as a charity, we can't take on as many as we would like. To help raise capacity we held a training event for volunteers on working with gypsies and travellers in October 2011. Designed for caseworkers, this event covered a range of planning and other issues related to work with Gypsy and Traveller communities.

Planning Aid Wales is currently helping another traveller family to gain planning permission. Interestingly the family's grandson (pictured below) is expected to be part of the Olympic boxing team and is tipped to win a medal in 2012.



Picture 1: Traveller family



Picture 2: Traveller site, Newport

As a result of our work with gypsy and traveller communities, we have helped the Welsh Government produce an accessible guidance publication, *Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites*. This can be downloaded from our website by clicking [here](#). Hard copies can be ordered by contacting [Sioned](#).

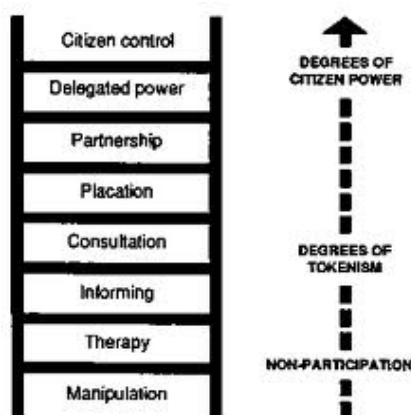
*For more information on the Welsh Government's Gypsy and Traveller Circular click [here](#).



Are we consulting or engaging ?

A Planning Aid Wales article in the summer edition of the RTPi Cymru quarterly newsletter *Cynllunio* considered the key differences between consultation and engagement in planning. The article argues that there is increasing pressure for community involvement in planning, with consultation currently acting as a 'safety valve'. It discusses the possible options for change and concludes with a key message at the heart of our work: we should employ a range of participation techniques instead of a single predetermined one when engaging with communities in planning. For the article click [here](#) (p.23).

The image below shows Sherry Arnstein's **Ladder of Participation** (1968) which we use in our training to show the differences between engagement and consultation. The degree to which planning undertakes engagement as opposed to consultation is the difference between doing work in partnership with communities and working for them.



For more information on Planning Aid Wales's community involvement techniques contact us by clicking [here](#).

Outreach: planning for green spaces



As part of our outreach activity we have been working to make links between planning and green spaces. Planning is important to the provision and management of green spaces and planning policy plays a part in deciding which green spaces go where in communities and neighbourhoods. Planning can work as a barrier or a facilitator of green space use and provision in Wales. Because of this knowing more about planning is valuable for community growers. Part of our work is making planning more accessible to everyone and lessening reactive interest in planning (e.g. not taking an interest in planning until it directly affects you). The earlier you get involved and know more the easier it will be to influence an issue affecting you such as acquiring land for food growing.

We are aiming to produce information on planning and green spaces including allotments and community growing initiatives in Wales. Some of this work will be done in partnership with the Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens and the Wales-based project Tyfu Pobl.

Watch this (green) space for more information on outcomes of the project and please feel free to contact Sioned by clicking [here](#), for further information.

For more information on Tyfu Pobl click [here](#).

Conferences

Planning Aid Wales has taken part in annual conferences held by three groups that are key to our work:

One Voice Wales – exhibition stand - November 2011

Communities First – exhibition stand and workshop on engaging with planning – November 2011

Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) – exhibition stand and workshop – November 2011

Planning Assistant appointed

Planning Aid Wales has now appointed its first Planning Assistant, Angharad Hobbs, who took up her post in June 2011. Angharad works in our Cardiff office on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays and deals with all incoming Helpline calls. We are extremely pleased to welcome Angharad onto the team.

New office volunteer

We are also very pleased to welcome our new office volunteer, Stephanie Irvine, onto the team. Stephanie joined us in early November for a three month placement in the Cardiff office working three days a week on a range of projects.

Annual Report and Annual Review

We have recently published our 2010-11 annual report, which contains information on the activities we've been involved in over the past year.

We have also printed our first annual review giving a brief and accessible two page summary of the main report.

You can download the **report** by clicking [here](#), or you can order a paper copy of the **review** by emailing info@planningaidwales.org.uk

New 'good practice' leaflets

We prepared the four leaflets below to showcase our work engaging with community groups on planning issues in Wales. If you would like a copy of any of these, please email Sioned by clicking [here](#).

 <p>Helping communities engage with planning</p>	 <p>Helping communities engage with planning</p>	 <p>Helping communities engage with planning</p>	 <p>Helping communities engage with planning</p>
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Disability Wales 'Way to Go' project

Way to Go is a project co-ordinated by Disability Wales for access groups and planners. It aims to raise awareness of disability and equality issues in the planning process. Planning Aid Wales delivered a training module in the second phase of Disability Wales' 'Way to Go' project on 19th July in Swansea.

The most recent Planning Aid Wales Way to Go training entitled 'An Introduction to the Planning system' was held on 26th September at Glasdir, Llanrwst, North Wales. For more information on Disability Wales and its work campaigning for disability equality click [here](#). For more information on Way to Go click [here](#).

Planning training for Community and Town Councils

Since October 2010 we have successfully delivered twelve training sessions in partnership with One Voice Wales and one bespoke session for Maesteg Town Council. Plans are now in progress for future partnership work with One Voice Wales to deliver more planning training.

Many thanks to the eighteen Planning Aid Wales volunteers who supported the thirteen events. This was an excellent turnout and we really appreciated all their efforts and feedback.

If you would like to volunteer for Planning Aid Wales contact James by clicking [here](#).

For more information on our training packages for Community and Town Councils or evaluation results from the sessions, email Sioned by clicking [here](#).

Contacting Planning Aid Wales

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