

# Rathgar Residents Association



Official Newsletter of the Rathgar Residents Association

Link No. 46 May 2010

## A View from the Chairman

*The Draft Dublin City Development Plan 2011-2017-Major Concerns.*

Elsewhere in this news letter you will read a piece by Cllr. Oisín Quinn about the process of providing the City of Dublin with a direction and plan for its future development. It is worth noting that the final determination of this plan is one of the very few real powers that councillors have been given by the various local government acts. But the city manager and his officials can still exercise a major influence by setting a direction in the drafting of the plan which requires resolute councillors to resist.

Within the last couple of years we have seen how the city planners were prepared to allow a major high rise development –some 37 storeys in the Ballsbridge area. It was only when determined combined residents' association, together with the councillors for the area sought a clear decision by An Bord Pleanála that the plan was comprehensively rejected.

The current draft City Development Plan envisages a dramatic change to the face of our city. It proposes to create areas for the development of high rise buildings (more than 160ft high) along the Liffey-Docklands, Georges Quay/Tara Street, Connolly Station area and Heuston.

As well it proposes to create nine further areas of at least 80 to 160 feet including Phibsboro, Grangegorman and in and around the Guinness brewery.

In addition generally, throughout the inner city and along major public transport

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routes the proposal is to allow development up to 80 feet. In residential areas, including Rathgar, development up to 60 feet or 6 storeys is to be allowed.

If these plans are finally adopted then the face of Dublin will be changed beyond recognition and the Dublin we know and cherish will be gone forever. These are plans for a developer's charter.

It is now important to stop these proposals and the only way is to remind your councillors that this is something you do not want. (Councillors alone have total responsibility for the Development Plan) Enclosed with this issue of *Link* is a draft letter you may wish to send to your local councillors, voicing your objection to the Plans proposals.

Also, you will find in this issue of *Link*, a list of your local councillors and where they may be contacted. In seeking to secure the modification of the draft Plan, your association is joined by other residents' associations, throughout the city, who are also opposed to the plan.

*Paddy Marron*



## **Support your local shops**

This is a very difficult time for business.

Your local shops and businesses are an important part of the Rathgar Community. Without them, we would lose an important element of that community. Please make a major effort to support those local shops and businesses.

## News for Noting

**The Rathmines Ranelagh and Rathgar Historical Society** monthly talks continue from September through to June. These are held in Rathmines Town Hall.

### Talks January to June 2010

- |                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| <b>28th January</b>  | <i>A personal Account of 3 generations of the Mulcahy family and their lives at Lissenfield House in Rathmines by Lisa Mulcahy</i> |
| <b>25th February</b> | <i>Belgrave Square – a green space for young and old by Elizabeth Smith</i>  |
| <b>25th March</b>    | <i>Publicans, Plasterers, Patriots, The Irish House Wood Quay by Peter Walsh.</i>  |
| <b>29th April</b>    | <i>The Vartry Water Supply by Dr Ron Cox.</i>  |
| <b>27th May</b>      | <i>Churchtown/Quakertown by Ged Walsh.</i>   |
| <b>19th June</b>     | <i>Visit to Masonic Hall, Molesworth Street.</i>   |

Further information: Principal, Rathmines College,  
rathmineshistoricalsociety@dublin.ie

**Congratulations to Rathgarites** for major achievements in sport Jonathan Sexton on his achievements on the rugby field. Martin Walsh on achieving a blue in the annual Oxford /Cambridge boat race.

**Nature is busy on the Dodder:** On the short walk from the footbridge to Rathfarnham Bridge weir you can see a pair of dippers busy building their nest within the weir, the flash of the kingfishers along the river surface and a pair of swans preparing for their brood. It is interesting to note that the "Dodder Dippers" have been nesting in the weir for the last 30 years

**The Association's annual garden competition:** Gardeners please get ready your front gardens for the annual competition which will be judged in late June / early July. The prize winner will be presented with the Dixon cup at the Rathgar Horticulture Society's annual Show in early July.

**Superquinn in Rathgar:** Although no date for opening has as yet been announced, work on the fitting out of the shop is proceeding.

**Dublin City Council cycling officer:** DCC have appointed for the first time a cycling officer. Your comments or views on cycling in the city may be addressed to Ciaran Fallon at tel. 2226268

**Repairs and maintenance** around the home for elderly residents Age Action Ireland has a team of honest and trustworthy trades people who will do repair work. Call 1890369369

*Items of news or local interest or your comments about Link would be appreciated.*

**PO Box 9574, Dublin 6, or [info@rathgarresidentsassociation.ie](mailto:info@rathgarresidentsassociation.ie)**

## Planning Report May 2010

Having been opposed for many years by local residents, a development for apartments at 8B Sunbury Gardens finally got the green light from An Bord Pleanala at the start of the year. It was a matter of third time lucky for the developer and it remains to be seen now whether the development will go ahead in the light of current economic circumstances.

Extensive additional submissions were made in respect of developments at **Marianella** which is still with An Bord Pleanala who have extended the time they will allow for their consideration of the development and will probably adjudicate on it by the summer.

Meanwhile a development on the **Winnfield Motors site on Maxwell Road** recently got the go-ahead from An Bord Pleanala in spite of a strong recommendation for refusal by the inspector

On foot of an appeal to An Bord Pleanala in respect of a development at **1 Cowper Road, Rathmines**, a decision was issued to permit the development but with improved conditions to that of the Dublin City Council.

In spite of a Bord Pleanala refusal for a development at **4 Laurelton, Bushy**



**Park Road** last summer, a subsequent section 5 application (exempted development) for a slightly modified scheme was approved by Dublin City Council in December. There was no notice or no information and the application did not appear on the planning lists supplied to this Association. This Association only became aware of the application by accident. Concerned residents subsequently submitted their own section 5 which was refused and this is currently with An Bord Pleanala.

A further attempt to get a development off the ground in the lanes between **Villiers Road** and **Upper Rathmines Road** having been previously turned down on appeal a few years ago, was refused again this time by the Local Authority. There was no appeal to An Bord Pleanala as the facts preclude any development being permitted under current legislation.

A development at **83C Kenilworth Sq.** (the second in as many years) was refused by An Bord Pleanala following an appeal from a local resident with support from us.

Meanwhile at no **58 Kenilworth Square**, a refusal for extensions to listed buildings by the Local Authority was appealed by the 1st party and to which a submission was made in respect of the decision. A ruling is expected shortly.

Support was asked for and given in respect of developments at **38 Brighton Road**. The matter in this case (off street parking) was decided against. A decision in respect of no **39 Brighton Road** (change of user to doctor's surgery of the garden level of the house) is awaited.

Much along the lines of **Marianella**, the St Louis order which runs **St. Louis School in Charleville Road, Rathmines** put in an application for a development of some 82 apartments on the grounds of the high school. In all there were some 80+ objectors to the plan including this Association and the application was withdrawn at the start of the year. However it is possible that the order may now await the adoption of the new up and coming Development Plan which, if passed in its current proposed form, will allow for much greater heights and much greater densities everywhere than would heretofore be considered.

Meanwhile in spite numerous complaints, protected structures at **47 Rathgar Road** and **18 Highfield Road** continue to suffer serious neglect at the hands of their owners with no effective action being taken by the Local Authority.

The first 4 months of the year has seen a marked reduction in development activity in the area, but notwithstanding this, the planning function of the Association continues to work on behalf of its members.



# Environment

Heading into the summer months we look forward with earnest to bright, rain free sunny days. We need it this year more than ever! I don't think it is possible to forget our winter but, now that the longer evenings are upon us we can with optimism get the swimming togs and bikinis out for an airing, and possibly a lot of use! However now is the time to plan for next winter. Some simple changes you can make in the home are:

## Heating and hot water

- Insulate your attic and roof
- Turn down the heat thermostat by 1°C
- Get your boiler serviced
- Insulate heating pipes and ducts with approved pipe insulation
- Invest in a good quality lagging jacket for your hot water cylinder
- Turn off heat in unused rooms
- Use lower wash temperatures i.e. 40 °C when possible
- Dry clothes on a line outside instead of using tumble dryer
- Put up some heavy curtains on windows and doors if necessary.
- Draft proof doors, floors, windows, ceilings and walls

## Lighting

- Don't leave unnecessary lights on all night
- Use CFL bulbs throughout the home
- Turn off lights in unused rooms

## Refrigeration:

Check that you have the right size fridge for your needs. The fridge is an energy intensive appliance and is on constantly. Buying a very large fridge, although A rated, will consume a substantial amount of energy.

The same local issues keep coming up and we do our best to address them as they arise.

## Public domain issues

**Graffiti:** We have had an increase in graffiti in the Rathgar area over the past few months. Having contacted D.C.C. and named areas that were particularly bad, we had a good response and the areas concerned were cleaned. We had positive feedback from residents who had contacted us on this issue.

We met with the Guards in Sept 2009 and Insp. Wheatley, Terenure, informed us that a database is in place to record the styles and type of graffiti and a number of people have been put on a register.

For anyone with a complaint please either:

Phone: D.C.C. 222 1000 or : [waste.management@dublincity.ie](mailto:waste.management@dublincity.ie)

**Parking:** We had complaints about commercial vans parking in a residential area. Further to contact with the local Guards they have informed us that there is no law preventing this from occurring.

**Bins:** We have followed up on the businesses that leave bins outside their premises continuously. The situation has improved somewhat but we understand that a few offenders remain. D.C.C. has promised to power hose outside one of the premises as it is greasy and unpleasant.

**Gullies:** If you have a problem with a blocked gully you should call D.C.C. On a day when there is heavy rain and flooding routine cleaning around the city is stopped and calls are considered a priority and responded to as a matter of urgency. Phone: 222 2155

**Bike theft / House break Ins:** There is a big increase in the number of bikes being stolen at present. It was pointed out that lack of identification on bikes makes it almost impossible to return the bike to their owner when recovered.

We are urged to be vigilant with house security in these recessionary times. Use the chain when opening the front door and keep windows closed when going out during the day, no matter how short the time. Get into the habit of turning the alarm on at night time.

**Roads:** D.C.C. has repaired a lot of the potholes that emerged from our cold winter. If there are any areas that need work urgently please contact D.C.C. Phone: 454 3736 or [customerservices@dublincity.ie](mailto:customerservices@dublincity.ie)

**Annual Junk Collection:** We had inquiries from residents as to whether D.C.C. is still doing "Junk collections". We have been informed that with the introduction of the mini skip canvas bag they have stopped this collection.

**Computers - No knowledge, but would like to learn?** Following our meeting for members to air their views in December the issue of teaching computers to members of our Association was raised. There is a program called “Log On, Learn” How does it work? “Log On, Learn” is a programme that allows transition year students to show people in the community the basic knowledge of the computer and the internet. Stratford College are eager and willing to achieve this opportunity with us. It will involve 8 weekly training sessions (1-2 hours each) starting in September taking place in the school. Up to 20 adults can be catered for. How Do I Join?

Contact me, Orla Devane 087 2414946 or env@rathgarresidentsassociation.ie. I look forward to hearing from you.

## From Links of the past

### *Rathgar Road Names ~ No 2 Roundtown Road*

The second thoroughfare in Rathgar started as a footpath across fields from Upper Rathmines Road to Terenure. It became a road early in the 1800s at the time the new Rathgar Road was constructed and for a few years around 1860 it was treated as part of Rathgar Road. The early entries in the directories from 1834 are more specific “Rathgar Road from Roundtown”. In 1862 it became the Roundtown Road and ten years later this became Terenure Road.

The current designation of Terenure Road East was not adopted until about 1930. That was also the time that house numbers were introduced: Until then residents had specified their address by the name of the house or terrace. The first terrace built (1853) was Victoria Terrace, now odd numbers 11-29. In 1862 there were 48 ratepayers on the road, 58 in 1872, 82 in 1882 and 94 in 1892. The most distinguished house on the road, Hopeton, No 33 with its remarkable coach house, was built in 1861 for Mr George Mitchell, importer of snuffs, tobacco and wine for his shop in Sackville Street. The most notable resident in that house was Judge Creed Meredith Litt.D from about 1925 to 1940.

*Fred Dixon: Link April 1983*



# Staying Alive 2010

*Mark Mc Dowell*

The numbers of many of our garden bird and butterfly species are in serious decline. Losing our wildlife is not an issue that should be left in the hands of large organisations or even small ones, it should concern everyone. Fortunately it is something that almost everyone can assist in preventing. Start at the most local level, in your own garden or window box for instance. We can no longer take our wildlife for granted and we must give it a helping hand or risk losing it.

It is forty years since I used to watch a Wildlife programme on telly called Disappearing World. Now that rate of disappearance has reached truly dangerous levels and is referred to generally as loss of biodiversity though in some cases it means actual extinction. Action is now being taken at an international level to try to halt the loss and preserve what we have and the United Nations has declared 2010 to be International Year of Biodiversity.

By planting a few butterfly friendly flowers or shrubs in your garden you can help ensure that Rathgar at least will retain its Red Admirals, Holly Blues and many others. The most useful plants are almost always our own native flower species such as kidney vetch, primrose, knapweed, and devil's bit scabious amongst others. Shrubs like holly and hazel are also excellent and, if you have the space, an oak tree is our most species-friendly tree, (never plant a tree near a wall).

Unfortunately many gardeners view these flowers as weeds and dig them up or spray them. This used not matter as they also grew in open spaces and meadows, but with changing agricultural practices, i.e. very few traditional meadows, and the development of many open spaces, gardens have now become a vital resource.

By planting beneficially for insects you also benefit the birds and bats that feed on them, everything is linked together. Our suburban gardens should now be seen as havens of biodiversity where our native butterflies, birds, bees, bats, whatever, can take refuge from sprays and concrete and destruction. It only takes small things to make a difference and if we all do them it will make a big difference.

International Day for Biodiversity is the 22nd of May. Many Irish environmental groups will be marking the occasion with a week-long series of events building up to the 22nd, so keep an eye on national and local media for details.

A couple of good websites with useful information on this subject are:  
The Department of the Environment [www.noticenature.ie](http://www.noticenature.ie) ,  
and the Irish Environmental Network [www.ienv.ie](http://www.ienv.ie)

## **Making a will: the benefits**

This piece is not meant to put anyone into a morbid mood but is more to do with being pragmatic about one's affairs. Death is not the end of us all. Making a will means that your assets can be dealt with as you wish..

First you must provide for an executor with full power to deal with your assets, accounts etc. It is best to meet with such person before he/she is appointed advising where your assets are. The executor must comply with legislation such as the Succession Act 1965 and Family Home Protection Act 1976. It is advisable to appoint two executors . Two witnesses are required to a will neither of which can be a beneficiary.

It is important to make a will when in good health to avoid later possible disputes. Where a will has not been made, ie where a person dies intestate, it is worth noting a number of examples of how the deceased's estate will pass:

- A married couple with children, the spouse will receive two thirds of the estate with one third passing in equal shares to the children. Where one of the children is predeceased then that persons children takes his/her share.
- Where a child with assets predeceases his/her parents and siblings, the parents are entitled to those assets equally.

It is very important for a single person with assets and no immediate relations to make a will and so avoid a lot of family disputes and unhappiness.

A couple with dependent children should seriously consider making a will and so make provision for guardianship in the event of their premature death. A will is also a way of making gifts to someone or cause after your death. There are certain tax implications however that may need to be addressed. These tax liabilities vary, depending on the relationship between the beneficiary and the testator.

## **Bowling in Rathgar**

Rathgar Bowling Rink is a fully equipped rink with an artificial surface allowing its use all year round. Currently we have 27 members, some annual some winter only. Members are usually full-time bowlers with other bowling clubs for the summer leagues. The club enters the Dublin based All Weather Bowling League and participates in the winter league. There are 24 teams in the league divided into 3 sections. Rathgar came sixth in our section this year.

## ❧ RATHGAR RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION ❧

However we did have one big success when Darren Richards represented Rathgar in the individual championship and he won it! Great celebrations were occasioned by this as you can imagine. Matches are played on Saturdays at 11 o'clock and last until 2 p.m. at the latest. Each team plays 14 matches between October and March. Even with the awful weather only two weekends were lost over the whole Winter.

The league is a mixed league with each team obliged to field at least 3 ladies for each match something which we found very difficult as we only have 3 lady members in total. We hope to improve on this for next Winter. We would be delighted to welcome any one curious about the game and club, to join us at the rink on any afternoon for the next few weeks. Members would make themselves and equipment available for this purpose.

Contact Dermot Treacy at 0872237904/ 4952748 or [dermot\\_treacy@hotmail.com](mailto:dermot_treacy@hotmail.com) for more information.

# The Darling Buds of May

*Mary Healy*

Following an exceptionally hard winter, gardeners are behind by approximately one whole month. There is a lot of work to catch up on, that should have been done in April, but it can still be done in May. Don't delay, get cracking!

**Lawns:** Weed, feed and kill the moss with a combined Spring fertilizer, don't mow for a week following an application, then mowing should be carried out on a regular basis, at least once and often twice a week, as the summer progresses. Trim the edges. Remember, if the grass does not look tidy with a rich moss-free green, the garden won't look at its best. A lawn is the canvas backdrop to your garden; it can enhance or spoil it.

Also don't forget to deadhead your daffodils as their season ends in early May. This will ensure vigorous growth for the next season.

**Shrubs:** Spring flowering shrubs, such as Forsythia, Flowering Currant and Spring Spirea should be pruned as soon as the flowers fade, which ensures good flowering next Spring.

**Borders:** Tall plants need support now; the earlier this is carried out the better, so that the plants, as they grow, will quickly hide the support and give a natural look. **Clematis:** apart from the very vigorous varieties (Montana and Armandii), will become a bird's nest, unless teased out and trained up in a wigwam or obelisk shape. Keep an eye on tender new shoots and seedlings and guard them from slug attack. Lightly fork the soil and remove weeds.

**Containers:** Containers come into their own, at this time of year. They bring life to a patio area and are wonderful focal points. They look great at the edge of steps and are useful to disguise ugly pipes, drains etc. With a bit of imagination and flair, containers will add greatly to your garden and have the advantage that they may be moved around, giving you ample versatility to make instant changes with little or no disruption.

Plants suitable for containers, to name but a few, are – Petunias, Lobelia – Salvia – Marigolds – Begonias – Verbena – Ivies (of various varieties) – Artemisia – Helichrysum – Santolina – Patio Roses – Paris Daisies – Perlargoniums – Busy Lizzy. Pots planted with just one type of plant can look very effective, for example, try a container filled with deep blue Lobelia plants.



this can look stunning as a wonderful cloud of blue flowers, all Summer long. May I suggest a pair?

**Herbs and vegetables:** Containers such as window boxes are ideal for growing herbs. Low growing bushy herbs such as – Thyme – Sage – Chive – Parsley – Origano look good in a window box and needless to say, come in most useful. Some herbs also give off a nice aroma.

Basil can be grown from seed or bought in pots. Keep it in on a window ledge until all trace of frost and cold has gone. Maybe from mid June onwards put it outside. It will thrive there in a sunny, sheltered corner.

If you don't have an actual vegetable plot of your own, some vegetables can be planted in your flower beds and borders. Not only do they look very attractive but there is the pleasure of having your own home grown vegetables on your table.

Some vegetables are virtually trouble free: lettuces, rocket, radishes, spring onions and runner beans- trained on a tripod-courgettes (best picked when young and tender) Bush type tomatoes do well in pots and need little or no support and no tedious training is involved.

You don't necessarily have to grow these from seed. Small plants are readily available in your local garden centre from early May onwards.

Remember the rules for success with all container planting, are as follows:

- Fill the container with as many plants as possible
- Water all containers regularly – best in the evening time out of the direct sunlight. For small containers and hanging baskets, do it as much as once a day.
- Liquid feed once a week.
- Renew the potting compost once a year, save for permanent plants, such as Bay – Acers – Box etc. in which case these plants should be top dressed annually by removing four inches of soil from the top and replacing it with good potting compost, like “John Innes No 3” mixed in with a fistful of shrub fertilizer.

*Good luck and enjoy the fruits of your labour*

# The draft Dublin City Development Plan, 2011-2017

*by Cllr. Oisín Quinn, Chair of the Dublin South East Area Committee and a Cllr. representing the Pembroke Rathmines Electoral Area.*

**Introduction** I was delighted to be asked to write this article for the Rathgar Residents' Association. I live near Rathgar on Temple Villas and in my experience, especially since being elected in 2004, I am aware how much people care about this area, its history and its built heritage.

There is a deep passion for good planning and an equally deep frustration when it goes wrong. This area has some of the finest residential streets in Dublin, indeed probably in Europe. We can be proud of that and it didn't happen by accident. Good neighbourhoods and local villages work when they are planned sustainably. The village and surrounding residential roads that cater for families of all generations and provide for schools, shops and recreation spaces and facilities accessible to all is what good planning should aim to achieve – that is why I have fought so hard since joining the Council to protect our green spaces and what are called the 'Institutional Lands'.

**So What is the Development Plan and why is it important?** The Development Plan is the overall framework document that governs every individual planning application that is made in the City. It tells us what can be built on any piece of land by means of land use zonings; it sets standards for apartments; it contains guidelines for things like off-street parking and basement developments; it contains the list of which buildings are on the Record of Protected Structures. The Development Plan lasts for 6 years. The current Plan expires in January 2011 and we are currently preparing the 2011-2017 Plan. The 52 Councillors elected last June will ultimately vote on this new Plan. After that, it's the City planners and An Bord Pleanála who decide if individual planning applications are in accordance with the Plan.

**What is the process for making the Plan?** The process for making the Plan is regulated by the Planning & Development Act, 2000. There are a number of periods of public consultation – the most recent period has just ended. There will be a further 4-week period of consultation in August and September this year.

In theory this all sounds fine, but in practise the City Manager and his well-resourced team of professional planners play a hugely influential role in summarising submissions, making recommendations and drawing up the draft documents.

Residents, various interest groups and the 52 Councillors have to battle for their voice to be heard and one of the big tasks in my experience is to try to take a balanced and coherent view of all the different viewpoints being expressed! (I'm not a planner by day, but a lawyer who is used to just one client at a time ... but it is an exciting task to do one's best to improve the Plan so we keep our great City and let it grow sustainably without losing the valuable green spaces we have).

### **What are the next steps?**

**17th May** – The Manager will present his report on the 1,200 submissions;

**2nd July** – The Cllrs will file motions to amend the first draft Plan;

**26th-30th July** – The Cllrs will publicly debate these motions;

**16/20th August – 13/17th September** – There will be a further 4-week public consultation period;

**October & November** – The Manager will report on the further consultation & Cllrs will debate this and make final adjustments;

**December, 2010** – the Plan will be published & come into effect in January 2011.

**What to watch out for?** The debate on height and density is a big issue. Most are agreed we need much more clarity and that we need to concentrate new development in the core of the City and to try and balance that by respecting and protecting the historic Georgian core of Dublin – the devil may be in the detail!

For me, keeping our institutional lands is also a key issue. I have succeeded in the first phase in renaming these as Resource Lands for Education, Health, Recreation and Community use. There are plenty of these lands in the Rathgar area – they will still be needed in the future. If they can be preserved and made more accessible we can secure an even better sustainable local community in the future.

So, get involved by contacting the Residents Association or any of us as your local Councillors or go online to the dedicated website [www.dublincitydevelopmentplan.ie](http://www.dublincitydevelopmentplan.ie)