

A View from the Chairperson.

Dear Association Members,

Thanks to all who attended our AGM in late March, at which there was standing room only, with great discussion between the floor, the committee and public representatives about Bus Connects and Core Bus Corridor 12. We welcome Ursula Budd, Gareth Grehan, Paula Moore, Michael O'Brien and Peter O'Sullivan along with continuing members, Peter Doyle, Paddy Marron, Mary Brennan, Sue Miller, Marie O'Reilly and Katie Ryan onto the 2019/20 committee. With regret we said good bye to our planning officer Philip O'Reilly, who worked tirelessly to ensure that the constitutional aim of the RRA to protect and develop the amenity of Rathgar was respected within the planning office in DCC and we are very grateful that he placed his knowledge, commitment and expertise at the disposal of the RRA for so many years.

Local Elections 2019

Congratulations to Patrick Costello, Mary Freehill, Anne Feeney, Pat Dunne, Tara Deacy and Deirdre Conroy, all elected to DCC from Kimmage/Rathmines. We look forward to working with you all during this electoral term.

Core Bus Corridor 12 and Rathgar Village

The RRA Committee considers that the NTA Bus Connects Core Bus Corridors project does not attempt to solve the vehicular traffic congestion problem choking Dublin, rather we see it as a plan to facilitate vehicular traffic by widening prioritised routes into the city sacrificing historic urban villages and vibrant communities like Rathgar to the daily commute.

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Thanks to the fantastic work by the **Rathgar is a Community Not a Corridor** campaign, organised by Terenure Road East and Rathgar Road residents' groups, the impact Bus Connects CBC 12 will have on the village of Rathgar and surrounding conservation area has been documented by expert submission and is clearly visible along the proposed route. The RRA is very supportive of this work and to date has taken the following actions:

- Leaflet drop to all households within the RRA boundaries (many thanks to our dedicated road reps and volunteers).
- Made a submission to the Bus Connects public consultation (available on the RRA website).
- Engaged with local politicians on the issues arising for residents in relation to Bus Connects.
- Provided financial support to Rathgar Road Residents' Group.
- Created a Twitter account @rathgarresident & reactivated (in progress) the RRA Facebook account.

Alternatives to Core Bus Corridors

There are many alternative approaches to managing peak traffic flows that would provide alternatives to the CBCs and the expert submissions commissioned and submitted to Bus Connects outline these in detail but in addition the RRA intends to work with a wide network of residents' associations and other groups opposing the current designs for Bus Connects Core Bus Corridors to demand that the NTA consider *viable alternatives to CBCs for commuters and future transport needs* such as **Metro Dublin**.

Keeping up to date

*The threat to the area from CBC 12 has energised the local community and this is great to see. However, these volunteers need your voice and support to have even greater impact and if you can help please do get in touch. **To keep up to date on what is happening please follow us on social media or get in touch with your local road rep or with the committee via our email address or PO Box.***

With best wishes for Summer 2019

Sue Miller
Chairperson RRA

Environment

J McCarthy

We are now in Summer 2019 and the area of Rathgar is in a new electoral ward, that of Kimmage – Rathmines. Some of our former public representatives are still with us and in addition we have some new ones. But they are all here to represent us. It is planned to set up meetings with our councillors and agree a programme of action for our area.

It is clear that this area needs much investment as the environment problems that have long existed, persist still today. It is essential to get these on a clear cut agenda and plan, to be worked on over the coming months.

Here are some of the items for that agenda

Road repairs

Footpath repairs

Dog fouling

Graffiti

Street cleaning and park maintenance

You may ask is this not a rehash of an earlier list. The answer is Yes. But these problems require constant input from all to find a long term solution.

Road and footpath repair and maintenance are both expensive items. Repairs have been carried out on Highfield Road and Orwell Park to a good standard. It would be interesting to ascertain what funds have been allocated to carry out such works in the Rathgar area in the coming twelve months. It would be interesting also to know how far that would go to set right the many areas that are in a bad state of repairs.

Dog fouling and graffiti are two very annoying features of our area. Both occur because of a lack of a sense of good citizenship and a failure to understand what impact it makes on others. These are problems that we continually deal with as an Association. We welcome any suggestions on how to address these problems. Within Link you will find a list of all the contact details for the council, councillors and local gardai. Hopefully, the more we voice our concerns, the more likely a longterm effective solution can be found.

In relation to litter and discarded rubbish, there are newer rubbish bins available which have a solar panel to keep the battery within the bins topped up. The purpose of the battery is to operate a compactor within the bin resulting in a greater capacity. When the bin is full it sends out a signal to indicate it needs attention. These bins are particularly useful in areas of high footfall. We feel that Rathmines Road adjacent to the shopping centre and Rathgar village would benefit from these types of bins and we plan to propose to the Council that they should be fitted.

On the subject of littering and accumulating rubbish: why does Dublin City Council persist in using large trucks with industrial vacuums to clean our streets?. These may keep the centre of roads clean. But as most rubbish accumulates in the channels and gullies it is inaccessible by these road cleaners because of parked cars. The council need to adopt a different method and approach to this very basic service. This is something that we will be discussing with them.

Planning Report January 2019-June 2019

Paddy Marron

Your Association and its planning officer, as part of their remit, review on a weekly basis, planning applications made for the Rathgar area, approvals granted and also appeals to An Bord Pleanala. The Association is not opposed to change but rather would wish to encourage those who live in the area or who have come to live in the area, to manage any changes to their property in a sensitive way: respecting the architectural heritage of our area. Rathgar is one of those distinctive parts of Dublin which has an architectural heritage second to none. Some 70% of the area has streets of Victorian or Edwardian houses.

There were a number of applications, appeals and decisions during the period for noting.

The third application for a development at 15 Maxwell Road, on the corner of York Road, was submitted to Dublin City Council. A number of local residents have made submissions and were supported by the Association. A decision to grant with conditions, was made. This was appealed by 1st and 3rd party to ABP

88 Kenilworth Square, the end house of the eastern terrace had an application for the replacement of a two storey modern annex on its northern gable, approved. This has been appealed by a third party.

Orlando, a derelict house on Orwell Road in Rathgar village. Permission was refused by Dublin City Council for five 3 storey houses on a very confined site. This was appealed to An Bord Pleanala. ABP has.refused.

A further apartment development at Marianella was fast tracked to An Bord Pleanala. Approval was granted and work has commenced.

An intensive development on the site of Rathdown Motors in Terenure was refused by DCC but a first party appeal has gone to ABB

2 Temple Road, Dartry. An application for the demolition of a detached house and its replacement with a small apartment development is with DCC.

DCC have requested additional information in respect of a proposed development of housing at the old Highfield Nurseries off Highfield Road.

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Where to Local Government??

Mary Freehill Dublin City Councillor writes-

The systematic dismantling by central Government of spatial planning powers at City Council and Local Government powers in general is very worrying.

Because of consistent interference by Government, Ireland is the most centralised country in the EU; our system is now more akin to Russia. Even when the former Communists countries joined the EU they devolved and decentralised their system to regional and local level, but Ireland has a Parliament that continues to behave more like a Super County Council. I am a member of the European Committee of the Regions and see at first hand the huge difference in how the rest of Europe functions in comparison with Ireland, they also have Regional Governments and some like Austria have legislative powers at that level. Our Regional Assemblies only have the power to advise. An example of the futility of our function - I am a member of the Eastern Midland Regional Assembly, part of our role was to comment on the Regional Spatial and Economic Plan (prepared by Government), we unanimously recommended an underground metro from City Centre to Tallaght via Terenure. The NTA had the power to reject our Assembly's advice for this Regional Plan. This is remarkable on the 100th anniversary of the founding of our Irish State that a non elected Body on behalf of the Government has the power to override our democracy.

Interestingly, the dismantling started really in earnest when the dual mandate was lifted in 2000 (TDs could no longer be Councillors). Since 2005 we have lost

competences in Health, (demise of Health Boards), Tourism (Dublin Tourism abolished), Port & Docks (Minister removed Cllrs from Board), Water (centralised to National Body Irish Water), many aspects of Traffic (Bus Connects managed by NTA a Semi State Body which bypasses decision making powers of Dublin City Council) and now Ministers are dismantling our hard won City Development Plan. Planning decisions should be made by Local Government Officials and in accordance with Council developed policy.

While I support the concept of directly elected Mayors, I believe Leinster House would do greater service to democracy if local government powers were strengthened; establish a strong local democratic structure in the first instance and therefore have a mayor with real powers. In Ireland we spend 7.8% of GNP at Local Government level which compares sadly to Scandinavian countries where they spend at least 33%.

At City Council level we don't even have powers to make dog fouling an offence and must depend on the Dail to amend legislation. Isn't it time that Dail Eireann members behaved like Legislators and devolved powers to Local and Regional Government?

Diminished local government powers equals diminished citizens' democracy.

Support your Local Shops & Businesses

**They are part of the fabric and character
of Rathgar and an essential dynamic**

to ensure it will continue as a living community.

Buy locally whenever you can.

Some Notes and Comments

2019 AGM

The AGM of the Association took place on Thursday 28th March in St Patrick's Hall. There was an attendance of c70 members. The first part of the evening dealt with formal business of the meeting and a new Committee was appointed. The Chairperson expressed her appreciation of the stalwart work of our planning officer, Philip O Reilly who had decided to step down. Philip had for more than ten years year carried out this role. The chairperson also welcomed three new members to the Committee. A presentation on the Bus Connect proposals and its impact on the area was made by a new Committee member - Paula Moore.

The second part of the meeting was given over to questions from the floor. Local representatives were in attendance for this part. Mary Freehill, Anne Feeney, Patrick Costello, Jim O'Callaghan, Ruairi McGinley and representatives of Kate O'Connell, Eoin Murphy and Eamon Ryan.

The RRA Annual Garden Competition and Dixon Cup 2019

As in previous years' competitions, as well as the prime category of Best Garden, there will be a series of a further categories.

The winners will be announced and prize giving take place at the annual Rathgar Horticultural Society show on the 8 July 2019.

Who do you think you are?

If you want to trace your own ancestors then a recent tranche of Ireland's historical Registers of Births Marriages and Deaths have gone on line at irishgenealogy.ie Covered are Births from 1864 to 1918, Marriages from 1864 to 1943 and Deaths from 1878 to 1968

See how Rathgar has developed.

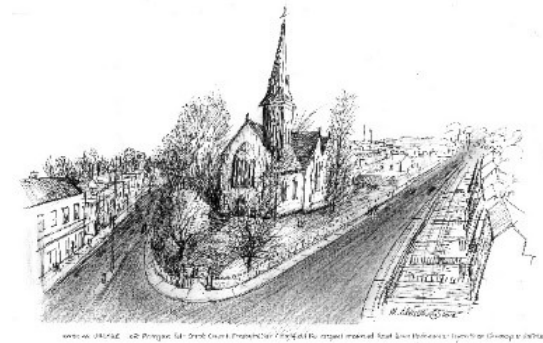
Do you want to look at old maps of Rathgar? Then go to mapgeohive.ie where you can look at ordinance survey maps from 1837/42, 1888/1913 and 2011/13 maps. By overlaying them you can see how Rathgar has developed over 170 years

Rathgar Bloomsday:

Rathgar Village proudly hosted a Bloomsday Festival on Saturday the 15th June to celebrate one of its most famous sons, James Joyce, who was born on 2nd February 1882, in 41 Brighton Square, Rathgar. As a Jazz Trio played and bunting cheerfully hung between the trees at Christ Church, local historian Ged Walsh enthralled both locals and tourists with stories of Joyce and historic Rathgar that formed the young James to become the literary genius that Dublin triumphantly celebrates today

Rathgar Images

The Village of Rathgar



When one thinks of Rathgar this is the quintessential view that comes to mind. Christ Church has looked over the community for over one hundred and fifty years. The first Presbyterian service was held here on the 28th July 1861.

The View from Christ Church



We see the shops that have served the community of Rathgar over the years. Many of our older residents will remember the shops that were there in the 60's and 70's, including the Post Office and Joe Cunningham Bookmaker. Tony Byrne continues the family butcher trade established in the 50's.

With thanks to Michael O'Brien and Ged Walsh for vignettes and text
© Michael O'Brien, from Ged Walsh's book *On the Banks of the Dodder: Rathgar and Churchtown, an Illustrated History*, to be published October 2019 by O'Brien Press.

Numerous actors, including Lesley Doherty, read passages from *Ulysses* at various locations around the village. Local restaurants and businesses provided refreshments as children were treated to face painting and balloon sculptures. Overall it was a celebration of two of the most wonderful aspects of Rathgar: History and Community.

Thanks to Ronan O Donnell and his team from Dublin City Council for their support

Keep abreast of their stalwart work in maintaining this wonderful amenity in our area.
Better still join the group and give your support.
For more information on this group go to www.dodderaction.com

Medieval Irish Pilgrims to Santiago de Compostella
Bernadette Cunningham. Four Courts Press 2018. €19.95

Pilgrimage is a popular topic in Irish archaeology and history at the moment and pilgrimage routes are seeing a rise in popularity for walkers and other travellers-even where it is not for specifically religious purposes.

Cunningham explores the origin of the Santiago pilgrimage. Irish interest in St James and the route to Compostella became known in the 12th Century.

Maurice Curtis. The History Press 2019. €19

Maurice Curtis has a long list of local Dublin histories to his name -Rathgar, Glasnevin, Portobello, Rathfarnham, The Liberties to name some. Rathmines is his

latest. In his very comprehensive study he covers topics such as the early history of Rathmines, its ascendancy connections and its development from an obscure village to a desirable suburb.

He recounts the coming of the barges and the trams. He describes the barracks, the generals and the Irish revolutionaries and the fate of pacifists. Schools, scholars and landladies' digs are recalled. Not to be forgotten, by all who live or pass through Rathmines, is the four faced liar.

It's well worth a read!

The Dodder: Enjoy your own guided tour

A guided walk along the Dodder for your smart phone can be downloaded from the App Store.

Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, 63 Merrion Square

Lectures, talks, outings and excursions continue in the Autumn. Details on their website or contact

Tel 6761749 or email:rsai@rsai.ie

The Rathmines, Ranelagh and Rathgar Historical Society Lecture Series

Rathmines, Ranelagh and Rathgar Historical Society was founded in 1996 and incorporates Harold's Cross, Leeson Street and Milltown. Talks and other events are regularly held in Rathmines Town Hall (Rathmines College)

Series of monthly meetings resumes in Autumn

Information: rathmineshistoricalsociety.com or
rathmineshistoricalsociety.ie

Herzog Park: Slow progress has been made on the refurbishment of the local park. Some changes have been made to the original plans and these have caused concern to local residents. In particular, the management of the multi-games area and a plan to use the public bring centre as a centre for the compacting of Autumn leaf fall adding considerably to vehicle traffic and noise for local residents

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The Secret Lives of Trees

Can we understand trees better? The answer is yes!

Some current scientific studies are beginning to show how trees are much more complex than we thought -for a start they live in a different time scale than us. One of the oldest trees on earth, a spruce in Sweden, is more than 9500 years old that's the equivalent of over 100 human lifetimes.

Trees communicate with each other and send signals to each other when danger is at hand. If a giraffe starts eating an African acacia tree the tree releases a chemical into the air that warn other trees that a threat is on hand. Other trees pick up this chemical and in turn release a toxic substance to deter the tree eating giraffe.

But perhaps the most amazing thing about trees is how social they are.

Research has shown that beneath every forest and wood there is a complex underground web of roots, fungi and bacteria helping to connect trees and plants to one another.

Trees secretly talk to each other underground. They pass information and resources to and from each other through a network of mycorrhizal fungi—a mat of long, thin filaments that connect an estimated 90% of land plants.

Scientists call the fungi the “Wood Wide Web” because ‘adult’ trees can share sugars to younger trees, sick trees can send their remaining resources back into the network for others, and they can communicate with each other about dangers like insect infestations.:

The relationship between these mycorrhizal fungi and the plants they connect is now known to stretch back for at least four hundred and fifty million years and is largely one of mutualism—a subset of symbiosis in which both organisms benefit from their association. In the case of the mycorrhizae, the fungi siphon off food from the trees, taking some of the carbon-rich sugar that they produce during photosynthesis. The plants, in turn, obtain nutrients such as phosphorus and nitrogen that the fungi have acquired from the soil, by means of enzymes that the trees do not possess...

The revelation of the “Wood Wide Web’s” existence, and the increased understanding of its functions, raises big questions—about where species begin and end; about whether a forest might be better imagined as a single superorganism, rather than a grouping of independent individualistic ones; and about what trading, sharing, or even friendship might mean among plants.

A recent international study has produced the first global map of the "mycorrhizal fungi networks" dominating this secret world (Details appear in Nature Journal).

Researchers from the Crowther Lab in Switzerland, and Stanford University in the US used the database of the Global Forest Initiative, which covers 1.2 million forest tree plots with 28,000 species, from more than 70 countries.

Using millions of direct observations of trees and their symbiotic associations on the ground, the researchers could build models from the bottom up to visualise these fungal networks for the first time.

The research reveals how important mycorrhizal networks are to limiting climate change - and how vulnerable they are to the effects of it.

Just like an MRI scan of the brain is an aid to understanding how the brain works, this global map of the fungi beneath the soil helps to understand how global ecosystems work.

There are two main groups of mycorrhizal fungi: AM fungi that penetrate the hosts's roots, and EM fungi which surround the tree's roots without penetrating them.

EM fungi, mostly present in temperate zones, help lock up more carbon from the atmosphere. They are more vulnerable to climate change and rising temperatures.

AM fungi, more dominant in the tropics, promote fast carbon cycling.

According to the research, 60% of trees are connected to EM fungi, but, as temperatures rise, these fungi - and their associated tree species - will decline and be replaced by AM fungi.

The types of fungi that support huge carbon stores in the soil are being lost and are being replaced by the ones that spew out carbon in to the atmosphere.

This could potentially accelerate climate change.

If there isn't a reduction in carbon emissions by 2100, there could be a 10% reduction in EM - and the trees that depend on them.

The results of this finding can now serve as a basis for restoration efforts such as the UN's trillion tree campaign by informing which types of tree species, depending on their associated mycorrhizal network, to plant in what particular area of the world.

Dr Martin Bidartondo, an honorary research associate with Kew Gardens, said: "Now for the first time, we have this large-scale dataset that tells us what is happening - across the globe.

"Through our daily activities we are very much counting on the carbon in the soil to stay there, and not only that, but to continue accumulating. If we create conditions through changing the type of fungi that are interacting with plants in the soil in which then those soils begin to stop accumulating carbon, or they start releasing it, then the rate at which we are seeing change will start accelerating even more."

Trees are important for our threatened environment.

The NTA must not cut them down

The Holy Wells of Dublin

St. John's Well, Kilmainham



St John's well flowed into a stone basin set in a wall until 1844

The following is an extract from

The Neighbourhood of Dublin. Its topography, Antiquities and Historical Associations. Weston St John Joyce. MH Gill&Son. First Published 1912

Near where O'Connell Road (formerly St. John's Road) crosses the railway, there stood until a few years ago, inside a niche in the wall on the western side of the road, the famous St. John's Well, a spring traditionally endowed with healing powers particularly salutary for diseases of the eye. The well was ruthlessly swept away during the alterations, consequent upon the building of St. John's Terrace. Its original position was, however, on the other side of the road, one hundred and twenty yards lower down the hill in the direction of the Phoenix Park. It is marked in that position on the Ordnance Survey Map of 1837, before the construction of the Great Southern and Western Railway (see also Dalton's History, p. 632), and the alteration in its position was probably due to the deep railway cutting here having intercepted its source, necessitating the opening of it higher up the hill, on the other side of the railway.

A pattern was formerly held here on St. John's Day (24th June), and to accommodate the votaries, a number of tents and booths used to be erected, giving the place the appearance of a fair. As might be expected, an institution of the kind so near a large city, attracted a mixed class of patrons, and the drunkenness and debauchery by which it in time became characterised, made it such a nuisance that efforts were made on several occasions, by the clergy and others, in the 18th and 19th centuries, to have it suppressed. The observances lingered on, however, to about 1835, on each anniversary there assembled in the fields adjoining the road, a number of country carts fashioned into improvised booths in the manner usual at the time, by blankets, patchwork quilts, etc., stretched on arched wattles, while in all directions might be seen turf. and bramble fires with pots swinging over them, containing legs of mutton, pigs' feet, bacon, potatoes, cabbage, and other appetising delicacies for the hungry multitude. Around the well collected the votaries with tumblers or horn goblets, mixing whiskey with its saintly waters, or sleeping off the effects of this irreverent

mixture. In 1538 Doctor Staples, Bishop of Meath, preached to the multitude assembled at St. John's Well against the celebrated Archbishop Browne, of Dublin, of which the latter bitterly complains in a letter preserved in the State Papers. In 1710, the proceedings at this well having attracted public attention, the Irish House of Commons passed a resolution declaring that the assemblages of devotees here were a menace and a danger to the public peace of the kingdom, and prescribed fines, whippings, and imprisonments as the penalties for these " dangerous, tumultuous, and unlawful assemblies," which, as Dalton quaintly remarks, was certainly a severer penance than those persons intended to inflict upon themselves.

Even up to the time of its disappearance, the well was not without a few old pilgrims on St. John's Day, some for devotional purposes, and others to procure some of the water, which on the anniversary was believed to possess a peculiar sanctity.

A flat slab of stone in the waste plot adjoining St. John's Terrace appears to mark the recent site of this ancient well, which it is presumed has met the ignoble fate of being drained into the street sewer

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From *Links* of the past December 1998
Gardening Queries: Beatrice Dixon

Q4 There seems to be more moss than grass in my front garden, particularly in the area sloping down to the lower windows. Is there any cure for this?

A: Is the Enquirer sure that the invader in the lawn is really moss and not helexine, a plant with tiny bright green leaves-no flower-which becomes so thick that one is mowing not grass but helexine. It is very prevalent in Rathgar. Moss is reasonably easy to control using a commercial moss-killer for use on lawns (one would use a different one for cement paths, patios etc). Spray on the grass or water on and when it appears dead it must be raked out with a wire lawn/leaf rake. Spike the ground at intervals with a sharp pronged fork (as you would sausages before frying) and give a regular application of a good general fertiliser. Location is the problem with moss/helexine; shade and a north facing situation will cause it to thrive. (If ever lost in a wood, you can face North/South by examining the tree trunks. Moss grows on the north-facing side of trees, but none on the south-facing.

Useful Contacts

City Councillors and local TDs

Councillors

Deirdre Conroy	N/A	deirdre.conroy@dublincity.ie
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Eoghan Murphy	01.618 3324	eoghan.murphy@oireachtas.ie
Jim O Callaghan	01 618 3134/01 475 8943	jim.ocallaghan@oireachtas.ie

Local Gardai: Rathmines tel 6666700, Terenure tel 6666400

Dublin City Council: problems with litter, potholes, grafitti, abandoned vehicles etc

Go to: Dublin City Council website and key in service request and follow instructions
 or Tel: (01) 222 2222 or Email customerservices@dublincity.ie

Keep up to date: The Association's website rathgarresidentsassociation.ie

Or facebook <https://m.facebook.com/RathgarResidentsAssociation/>

Contact the Association info@rathgarresidentsassociation.ie