

RATHGAR

RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

LINK

•MAGAZINE•



RATHGAR VILLAGE. Left Rathgar Rd • Christ Church Presbyterian • Highfield Rd original medieval Road from Rathgarines • Five-House Churches in distance.

NO. 65 JAN 2020

- CHAIRMAN'S VIEW
- PLANNING ROUNDUP
- A WORD ON OUR ENVIRONMENT
- LOVE OUR VILLAGE – GET INVOLVED
- COMMUNITY POLICING AND NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH
- SPIDERS – FRIEND OR FOE
- GREEN ISSUES FROM OUR YOUNGER MEMBERS
- BEES – THE ENGINE ROOM OF OUR ENVIRONMENT
- USEFUL LOCAL CONTACTS

VIEW FROM CHAIRMAN

The challenges posed to our environment and community and the impact on our historic urban village and surrounding roads by government transport initiatives remain the most pressing concern of the RRA Committee. The RRA is sharing information with other neighbouring residents' associations and working with Rathgar Road and Terenure Road East residents to respond to these challenges.

Core Bus Corridor 12 proposals continue to provide for long term destruction of community and environment in the Rathgar area. Following the initial consultation period, the original proposals for CBC 12 have been amended to reduce impact for property owners on Rathgar Road, however road widening on Terenure Road East remains part of the proposal with properties at risk of loss of garden space. The committee is also very concerned that 24/7 traffic management proposals for CBC 12 will result in significant traffic volume increases on surrounding roads and provide many local access challenges for residents.

A second consultation phase for CBC 12 will open early in 2020 and it is really important that members engage so please look out for more information on our website and Facebook & Twitter accounts.

The Bus Connects Network Redesign proposals were published in the Autumn and the RRA Committee mailed members with a list of key concerns and the submission period closed in December. Again, the impact on Rathgar and surrounding roads will be very serious for residents. CBC 12 will carry 70 + buses per hour through Rathgar, Highfield Road is to be designated a bus route with 16 buses per hour. Traffic rerouting throughout the area to facilitate the network redesign will see one-way systems and local access restrictions introduced with a high risk of commuter traffic displacement onto local roads in the area.

Incredibly, despite all of the money to be spent on Bus Connects it seems that there will be no significant increase in seat capacity for commuters on CBC 12 meaning that residents will continue to find it difficult to get on buses at peak times and there is unlikely to be any significant reduction in traffic volumes seeking access to the city via Terenure & Rathgar. The RRA Committee believes that additional commuter capacity is essential to relieve congestion on the route and is supportive of the discussion around the extension of the Metro to the South West of the city. We urge all members to engage with local politicians on this issue during this election year. Please see our website for a full list of current representatives.

Best wishes to all for 2020

Sue Miller
Chairperson RRA

Planning Report

June 2019-December 2019

Paddy Marron

Your Association and its planning officers, 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 also advises and assists members who are having to deal with planning issues in their area. 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 Rathgar. 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.

In the last couple of years, the Minister and Department of Housing and Local Government have introduced ministerial orders which override local councils' Development Plans. Orders have been introduced relating to apartment sizes, shared living apartments, student accommodation, apartment developments exceeding 100 units, permitted development heights. All of these orders in the case of Dublin City Development Plan 2016-2022, mandated changes to that plan

There are 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 (DCC). A number of local residents 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 An Bord Pleanala . ABP granted permission.

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 was appealed by a third party.

ABP granted permission with some conditions.

Orlando, a derelict house on Orwell Road in Rathgar village. A second application has been made and was refused. This is currently under 1st party appeal to ABP
Marianella: An application by the developers for change of purpose for an approved creche to use as 7 apartments was refused by Dublin City Council.

An intensive development on the site of Rathdown Motors in Terenure was refused by DCC but a first party appeal went to ABP. This was refused.

2 Temple Road, Dartry. ABP approved the demolition of a detached house and its replacement with a small apartment development.

Highfield Road-derelict nurseries: Application to construct 14 houses was granted permission by DCC. On appeal it was refused by ABP on grounds unsafe access and insufficient density

3/5 Orwell Road. The Organic Store; Permission granted for change of use to coffee shop/restaurant

41 Grosvenor Road A development proposing an extension. Further information sought by DCC.

Queen of Peace Nursing Home, Garville Place: permission applied for to DCC for an additional storey to the existing Nursing Home

The weeks turn into months, the months into seasons and seasons into years. The years roll around and what progress have we seen. Unfortunately, I have to report that the same issues persist, with no end in sight.

- 1 Road and Footpath Repairs**
- 2 Dog Fouling**
- 3 Graffiti**
- 4 Street Cleaning**
- 5 Park Maintenance**

The RRA has persistently raised these issues over what is now a long number of years with the powers that be, but to no avail. Are the resources of the local authority so diminished that they can no longer maintain our roads and footpaths? We are paying property tax, car tax and parking charges, where is this money going? I am always intrigued by the very poor state of the neighbourhood and at the same time the announcement of seeming vanity projects such as the white-water rafting centre or the pedestrianisation of College Green. Why not get the fundamentals right first. Footpaths that are safe to walk on, roads that will not damage cars and public parks that we can go to and enjoy. Graffiti and dog fouling are a long-time problem and it is going to take a huge effort on behalf of the local authorities and residents to combat these nuisances.

If the BusConnect project ever comes to fruition, and I sincerely hope it doesn't, the chaos that will ensue (without providing the bus users of this area with a better service) is going to be immense. One of the aspects of this project that I had not previously given consideration to is air pollution. If this project were to go ahead in its current version, I believe there would be seventy busses an hour traveling Terenure Road East and Rathgar Road. It is essential that we determine the current level of pollution from traffic and to this end air pollution monitors should be placed on these roads immediately to perform these measurements. This can be used as a base level reference against which we can compare all future levels.

We the residents of Rathgar need to protect the environment we live in whether this be housing stock, street scape, trees or parks. To this end I urge you all to engage with whoever calls to your door during the current election campaign to let them know that we feel our community is under threat from various sources.

I am especially concerned by the attitude of the NTA who seem to believe that diesel busses and busses solely are going to resolve the transport chaos that exists in Dublin. Why not at least be willing to discuss other options? The construction of a proper underground system could provide a very long-term solution to the transport problems in Dublin.

Love our Village

A group of the Residents Association members have started clean ups of the village on a regular basis. Sign up to our facebook page to get updates about when the clean ups are happening (<https://m.facebook.com/RathgarResidentsAssociation>) or contact us at info@rathgarresidentsassociation.ie if you would like to get involved. We have the basic equipment from Dublin City Council, so if you want to tidy up a specific area or help with the wider clean up, we'd love to hear from you. All suggestions and help in the enhancement of our Village are welcome.

Community Policing and Neighbourhood Watch

John McCarthy

I was recently approached by the Gardai for a chat concerning the possibility of setting up a neighbourhood watch scheme on the road where I live. The two gardai were trying to establish whether or not there was a will to create such a scheme. I agreed to do whatever I could to determine what the attitude of the road residents was in respect of Neighbourhood Watch.

What exactly is Neighbourhood Watch?

Neighbour Watch is a scheme whereby neighbours watch out for each other in their local area in conjunction with the Community Garda unit. In the scheme I am involved in the plan is to set up a group alert system using WhatsApp smart phone application, text alert can also be used or when you simply bump into one of the neighbours let them know whatever is happening in the area. It is hopefully a way of getting to know your neighbours. If you come across something unusual or suspicious that is alarming you, inform the Gardai and send a WhatsApp message to all in the group regarding your suspicion, alerting all in the group to the possible danger.

As the first step the gardai supplied me with a questionnaire, which contained three questions

- Q1 Are you in favour of establishing a Neighbourhood Watch Scheme
- Q2 Would you become an active member of such a scheme
- Q3 Are you interested in organising/managing such a scheme.

Name/Address/Contact details. If desired

I went around the road, house to house with the questionnaire and after a week or so the response was so positive that the Gardai decided to go ahead with the Neighbourhood Watch scheme.

There have been a couple of meetings with the community garda group and the final details of the neighbourhood watch scheme are being worked out. The final meeting was held in a local hall, to put faces on names and to meet and say hello. More may join at a later stage; initial reluctance is understandable. This is not vigilantism, no patrolling up and down the street.

Terenure/Rathmines is District P in the Dublin Metropolitan Garda district. Terenure is the district headquarters and Rathmines is the sub district station. I recently attended a meeting in Terenure Garda station chaired by the local garda Superintendent, where all the local Neighbourhood Watch groups came together and spoke of their experience over the previous twelve months. The gardai said that they benefit from neighbourhood watch systems due to the information they receive and in turn it helps to make the neighbourhoods safer places to live. Why are community policing and neighbourhood watch schemes coming into prominence now? Community policing fell from prominence when there was fall in garda numbers. Budget cuts led to a no recruitment policy right across the civil service during the recession. Now there is an active recruitment programme, the number of gardai is increasing, and community policing is back on track. I believe that this is a very good method of getting to know your local gardai and likewise your neighbours. It is an important way of improving the quality of the neighbourhood and keeping crime at bay.

If this is of interest to you contact the following gardai

Garda Andy Dunne or Garda Martin O'Connell at (01) 6666735 Rathmines Gardai.

Meanwhile as the days are starting to get longer our thoughts are slowly turning to outside and getting our gardens going for the Spring, so..... Do spiders in your garden give you the jitters?

Well, when you realise how much they do in your garden it may allay your fears! Spiders are as much the gardeners' friend as the hedgehog or the thrush. They do a wonderful job for the environment controlling other pests that we are quick to moan about. When you see half a dozen insects wrapped up and mummified in a web, you realise they are an integral part of the ecosystem. Horticulturists don't normally come to rescue the good name of the spiders. Yes, you will find cuddly creatures like squirrels, birds and bees on their lists, but spiders are regarded as a bit creepy. But like it or not our gardens are full of spiders - maybe 100 out the 600 plus species can be found there. The spiders most commonly to be seen in your Autumn garden are the cobweb spiders including the common garden spider with its distinctive white cross but there are others including crab spiders that change colours to match the petals of the flowers as they lie in wait for prey and then there are the zebra spiders that jump long distances to pounce on their prey. So why do spiders make a sudden appearance in the Autumn. It is to do with their life cycle. Spiders are large and mature in the Autumn fattening up to lay their eggs which will hatch out in the spring to produce the next generation.

Accommodating spiders in your garden is easy. It is worth leaving spiders webs alone because they are helping to control less than welcome insects. They do get rid of the mosquito as well as winged aphids as they move from herbaceous plants to trees during the migration phase of their life cycle.

Spiders play another important role in the garden ecosystem, providing food for birds. Spiders disappear as winter comes, killed off by frosts and eaten by hungry birds. Sparrows and magpies climb on house walls and fences foraging for spiders hiding in the cracks.

And what of the much- feared false widow spider? It will only attack if it feels threatened. The worst it will do is to bite as any bee or wasp will do if it feels threatened. Its bite is no more harmful to us humans than a bee sting. So, the message is - love your spiders and the important role they play.

Fighting for space to be loved alongside the spiders are our bees!

Most of us are aware of the vital role that bees play in our increasingly under threat ecosystem and the current dangers to the humble honeybee - the world's most important pollinator. You can help to directly support the environment and

biodiversity by helping these tiny, yet industrious, creatures. The urban environment tends to be a less polluted environment from the bees' point of view as there are fewer pesticides used and we can all help by being conscious of the bees when planting our gardens/tubs. We can plant early and late sources of foraging to help them when there isn't much food around, so planting things like crocuses, snowdrops and mahonia is great for the Spring and then coming into the Autumn, Ivy is a really good source of pollen and nectar on sunny days. If you have space, you could leave a 'wild area' in your garden. It takes a long time to establish a true wildflower meadow but even in the first year when you let the weeds flourish, you will find that there are hundreds of little native flowers which the bees will really appreciate. If you plant flowers of one type together it enables the bees to find rich sources of pollen and nectar in one place. You can also achieve a long flowering period by removing the dead heads of the flowers which will encourage the plants to flower again.

Plant flowers with simpler forms and open faces, like daisies, rather than hybrid double forms. The hybrids usually lack pollen and nectar, and the double forms are very difficult for bees to forage. Avoid using garden chemicals if you can - Unfortunately many products sold for garden use are harmful to bees; even some which contain neonicotinoids (which are known to decrease bee populations!) are available. Similarly, many garden paints contain insecticides. Search out the ones which don't! If you can avoid it don't tidy too much! - old clumps of dead grass, the leaves at the bottom of the hedge, the compost heap - all provide excellent nesting sites for bumble bees. Enjoy the bees that visit your garden - they are not aggressive creatures. Although they can sting if you tread too near to their nests or hives, they are far too busy about their own business to bother you unless they are threatened. Respect them and see the good work which they do in the garden, providing pollination to your plants.

Thanks to the foraging efforts of Dublin's bees we can also enjoy the amazing tastes and health benefits of the honey they produce. Urban honey is actually highly prized for its flavour as the nectar is sourced from a significantly broader range of plants than its rural equivalent. Dublin's temperate climate and its citizens love of gardening, provides an amazing diversity of flora and nectar for bees to forage, therefore producing an amazing range of honey flavours. The bees can produce an early and a late season honey that are totally different colours with totally different flavour profiles. It's all to do with what's flowering and what nectar the bees are collecting. You could take a crop in one season and have chestnut and blackthorn and then in July it would be clover and lime and blackberry. In August, because the heather's in bloom, there can be a great crop of heather honey.

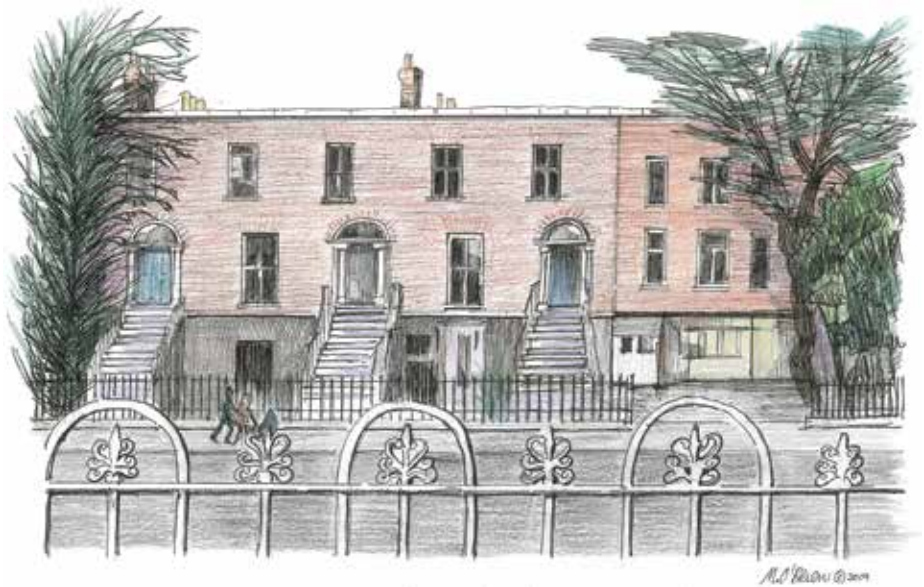
The great taste isn't the only thing that we can enjoy, with raw local honey containing over 60 known beneficial natural ingredients such as amino acids, proteins, enzymes and complex carbohydrates. Studies from Scotland discovered that heather honey was just as anti-bacterial as Mānuka honey. A lot of people find that local honey really helps with hay fever because by eating the honey containing pollen from your local trees and flowers, you're inoculating yourself against it.

So, be aware of the bees in your garden and reap the benefits yourself by enjoying honey!

Following the recent student day of action on climate change, we asked The High School Rathgar for their views and this is what they had to say;

A Call to Action.

The Green Schools Committee in The High School have been working diligently in the pursuit of action against climate change. We as a school community and as a generation are distinctly aware of the challenges facing us. Sometimes it can make us feel overwhelmed and that there is no action you can take which will positively affect the course of climate change. But on other days, the realisation can strike you that there are ways in which we can help. We as a school community are calling on you to do something positive. To positively affect the course of climate change you are not required to be a Greta Thunberg-like figure. You do not need to protest outside Leinster House every week. You do not need to write scathing letters to climate change deniers like President Trump. There are simple actions which you can take. Actions which are not difficult. Actions which are not costly. Actions which do not take a lot of time. Nevertheless, these actions are effective. You can buy a re-usable water bottle to replace bottled water. You can buy a re-usable coffee mug as opposed to getting your coffee in a disposable cup. You can buy your fruit and vegetables unpackaged. You can eat more meat-free meals. You can get public transport more. You can walk more. You can recycle responsibly. You can recycle your old clothes or give them to a thrift store. Perhaps you could buy less clothes or even buy more clothes second-hand in thrift stores or on apps such as Depop. The message is simple. Whatever you do, do it more sustainably. You do not need to do anything drastic or impossible. Do what you can but do it as often as you can. Change your habits. We are in the midst of a climate disaster. The time for action is now. You are enough. You can change the world. We are enough. We can change the world. Together.



This illustration by Michael O'Brien is taken from the recently published book 'On the banks of the Dodder' by Ged Walsh.

Rathgar is rich with beautiful well-maintained houses and this is a great example of

a Victorian Rathgar Road terrace. The front garden, trees and railings were under threat due to the proposed Bus corridor. Hopefully they are now spared.

As can be seen it has 3 storeys, two of brick over a ground floor of plastered stone. The granite steps leading up to pillared hall door are typical of the period. The ornate railings are a fine example of Victorian craftsmanship.

The book is On The Banks of the Dodder by Ged Walsh published in Rathgar by The O'Brien Press. It is available from them and the Bijou Restaurant.

Rathgar Residents Association is always on the lookout for people who have time, enthusiasm and/or expertise to join the committee and help to maintain Rathgar as a great place to live.

If you are not a member of the Association, you can join online or contact us at info@rathgarresidentsassociation.ie

Useful Contacts

City Councillors and local TDs

Councillors

Deirdre Conroy	N/A	deirdre.conroy@dublincity.ie
Patrick Costello	087 9431494	patrick.costello@dublincity.ie
Pat Dunne	0877764422	pat.dunne1@dublincity.ie
Tara Deacy		0879389904
Anne Feeney	0872955256	anne.feeney@dublincity.ie
Mary Freehill	0868126378	marycfreehill@gmail.com

TDs

Kate O Connell	0831653401/01.618 3286	kate.oconnell@oireachtas.ie
Eamon Ryan	01 618 3898	eamon.ryan@oireachtas.ie
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: 01 6666700, Terenure Tel: 01 6666400

Dublin City Council: problems with litter, potholes, graffiti, 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

Twitter: @RathgarResident; <https://twitter.com/RathgarResident>