

Merthyr Town Heritage Day Project

Aim

The aim of the project was to re-engage the club with a community which it had been away from for the last twelve months; by reminding them of the status that the club once held in Merthyr: as a hub of community life.



Introduction

The project was based around a Mobile Museum, currently housed at Penydarren Park but with the capacity to be moved elsewhere.

Ten head height panels document the history of football in Merthyr, from the formation of the club in 1908, through to the present day.

As well as the panels, the exhibition includes club memorabilia, photos, programmes, a trophy, as well as a replica shirt made by Toffs (a vintage football shirt company).

Heritage Day project outline

- Over a period of around twelve months, four members of the Trust (including two historians) compiled material for the panels.
- The material was compiled through a combination of archived photos, newspaper reports, team photos, etc, as well as secondary sources taken from previous histories of the club, written by Trust members/friends of the Trust. There were also some items which were donated or lent.
- The panels and other exhibits were housed in the Candac Suite at Penydarren Park, and Philip Sweet (one of the historians mentioned above) provided a presentation on the managers who led the club during the early part of its history.
- Following the initial exhibition, the Mobile Museum went on the road for the summer.
- The initial plan was to move the panels to the local library. There are also a number of schools interested in using the panels as part of the historical curriculum.

- The project was a large part of the planned Merthyr history event in August.

Benefits

- Allows the club to re-engage with the community to which it is returning.
- Places the Trust at the centre of a project that utilises the history and brand of the football club in order to benefit the local educational sector.
- Good PR – projects an image of the Trust/Club as a positive contributor to local life.
- Establishes links with local schools which can be extended and diversified in the future.
- Meets the community objectives of your supporters' trust, creates tangible community benefit, and increases the club/Trust's Social Value.

Cost/Funding

- The costs of this project were entirely covered by a grant of £3400 from the Communities First Trust Fund.
- This grant covered renovations to exhibits, construction, printing etc. of panels, Welsh translation – all costs, essentially. This figure provides a template for Trusts who may not be able to secure funding.
- With the museum going on the road transport costs are likely going forward, but these will be minimal as there will not be a great deal of long-distance driving involved.

Risks

- The CFTF funding provided a safety net in the case of Merthyr, however other Trusts face the possibility of waiting for a long-term return having laid out initial costs.
- Potential time constraints of those involved can slow down development of the project, particularly in the early stages, which will likely be taken up by the research and compilation of material.

Roles and Responsibilities

- The project can potentially be planned and executed with a small dedicated team (in the case of Merthyr, four people were involved).
- Ideally, one of the people involved should have experience and/or contacts in the educational, local authority and local media sectors, to act as a point of contact once the project goes on the road.

- Somebody with a close knowledge of the club's history (perhaps someone who has written books or articles on the club in the past) would speed up the process more.
- A Trust or Club presence at school events would be desirable – they would have to have a CRB check.

Outline of steps

- The required skills (and the Trust members best placed to use them) should be identified, and a plan of action established.
- When considering the educational aspect, it should be noted that schools plan one term in advance, whilst local authorities also plan their various projects in advance.
- The process of research and compilation of material can run concurrent with the aspects mentioned above, and may well take a little longer, depending on resources and time constraints.
- Once the material has been compiled, an initial venue has been secured and there are local stakeholders willing to receive the exhibition in the future, confirm the dates and run the event(s).