

Item 15 (6)

FAO The Town Clerk
The Community Council of Abertillery and Llanhilleth,
Council Offices,
Mitre Street
Abertillery. NP13 1AE.

18th July 2018

Dear Mr Gwinnell,

Beatrice Green of Abertillery

We are writing to your Community Council in the hope we can win its support, and some financial sponsorship, for a public meeting celebrating the life of Beatrice Green, to be held on 20th October 2018 at the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Park Place, Abertillery.

Beatrice Green nee Dykes was born in Abertillery in 1895. She was one of seven children born to William Dykes, a miner, and his wife Mary Ann. Beatrice was educated locally. Firstly, at the Central School, and then Abertillery County School. As a child Beatrice was taken to Ebenezer Church and so began a life-long affiliation with Ebenezer and Christianity. Beatrice taught 'Intermediate Grade' at Sunday School, and was a founder of the church's successful 'Girls Own Club'. Before her marriage to Ron Green, a miner, in 1916, Beatrice taught in several local schools but as a woman she was prohibited from teaching on marriage. Beatrice was chiefly concerned with the health, welfare, and education of the working class. She took an active interest in Abertillery District Hospital and from its inauguration in August 1922 worked tirelessly as the secretary of the hospitals' 'Linen League'. Beatrice also became a close friend and supporter of Marie Stopes who set up the first 'official', birth control clinic in Britain, at Abertillery hospital in 1925.

It is not exactly known when Beatrice began her affiliation with the 'Women's Section' of the Labour Party, but her focus remained health, welfare and education, particularly for women and children. She rose to prominence in the Labour movement and became president of the 'Women's Advisory Committee' for Monmouthshire. Yet it was during the Miners Lockout in 1926 that Beatrice rose to national prominence and, 'was marked out as a great leader for her sisters in the coalfield'. Beatrice was active in 'The Committee for the Relief of Miners Wives' and Children', and the Maternity Relief Committee; and was one of three miners wives from South Wales who travelled to London and elsewhere to speak of the distress in Welsh mining communities. It was because of this work she was selected to join the Miners Federation of Great Britain trip to Russia in the summer of 1926 to thank Russian workers for their financial support. Six women went, each representing a different coalfield. Beatrice spoke on behalf of the 'Miners Wives' and Children' of Wales. She was regarded a capable and gifted speaker. Beatrice was nominated by the other miner's wives to write up their experiences in Russia for 'Labour Woman' and 'Collier's Weekly'. She was not uncritical of what she saw. Beatrice wrote many other published articles during 1926/27 on health, childcare and the family etc.

Sadly, Beatrice died on 19th October 1927 aged 32 years. She left behind a husband and two young sons. Beatrice was a remarkable woman who drove herself beyond reasonable limits for the things she cared so passionately about. It cost her life. Beatrice remains an inspiring woman, yet history has largely forgotten her. The above is but a glimpse of her life. One related point of interest is that her cousin Tom Dykes was a member of the famous Abertillery RFC team that drew 3-3 with the touring Australians in 1908.

We have explained a little about Beatrice, so it is appropriate now we give some detail of the planned public meeting. The keynote speaker will be the academic and writer Lowri Newman of Glamorgan University. Other speakers will represent Beatrice's family, Ebenezer Church, and local women. The local MP has been asked to preside. The meeting (arrangements and speakers) has the approval of Beatrice's family (her granddaughter Margaret Bailey), who will be present; and the active support of the minister, and deacon (Eryl Dykes a relation to Beatrice through marriage), of Ebenezer Church. Abertillery Orpheus Male Choir has agreed to sing at the event (William Dykes, Beatrice's father was a member of the choir, as was her husband Ron Green). Our intention is that this will be a community-based event open to all persuasions. It is also our intention to form an ad-hoc final arrangements group in early September and we cordially invite the Community Council to send a representative to this body.

The day before the meeting, the 19th October, there will be a wreath laying ceremony at Blaenau Gwent Baptist Church Yard where Beatrice is buried. We are also engaging a sign-writer for an unused plaque in Ebenezer Church that will be dedicated to Beatrice; and putting together a celebration programme for the event.

We are seeking support for the above and financial sponsorship as previously mentioned. Some of the items we are raising funds for include the following.

Food & Refreshment	£200
Sign Writer	£200 (estimate at this point)
Celebration Programmes	£100

We hope this is of interest to the Community Council, and if required we can attend any meeting with you to clarify any matter.

Kind Regards

Teresa & Michael Bishop

 