

INSOLE COURT COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER SUCCESS

The Insole Court Trust and Cardiff Council have achieved successfully the first stage of the Community Asset Transfer of **Insole Court** from Cardiff Council to the Trust. The Trust is working towards a secure future for this fine Victorian mansion and gardens for the citizens of Llandaff and Cardiff.

The Friends of Insole Court recently announced the formation of the Insole Court Trust, to enable this transfer to happen. The founding Trustees have been drawn from many sectors of the community. They are: Sir Norman Lloyd-Edwards, Yvonne Apsitis, Elaine Davey, David Hamley and Dr Geoff Morgan.

It is hoped that, with the support of the Community Asset Transfer Fund and Cardiff Council, Insole Court will be restored to a standard befitting its position in the history of the capital city of Wales. The number of rooms currently available will be increased from four to 14. Accommodation will be available to hire for events, small community enterprises and workshops – as well as the continuation of adult education classes and heritage tours. A Tea House will be built in the gardens, and there are plans for child and adult services, and a shop in the newly-restored Stable Block.

Insole Court was built in 1855 by colliery owner, James Harvey Insole for his young family. The three-storey mansion boasts fine gothic masonry; a frieze by William Burges's assistant, Fred Weeks (as fine as any at Cardiff Castle); a Butler's Pantry; and a tower with views across the River Severn. A large Edwardian wing boasted the family's prosperity and place in society, before the house was subject to a compulsory purchase order in 1939. Western Avenue was then constructed through much of the Insole land.

It has had a succession of uses since 1939 - war time security, flats, community use, and was handed on through a succession of council changes. It has been deemed surplus to council requirement on several occasions, and saved by local action groups - most recently in 2008, when the Council refurbished the ground floor for community use and heritage interpretation. However, due to the popularity of the house, it has now outgrown the space available.

The rejuvenation of this fine Victorian Mansion, led by the Insole Court Trust and with the assistance of the Friends of Insole Court, the Insole Estate Residents Association and the Llandaff Society will provide the historic village city with a much-needed focal point.

For more information, see www.insolecourtrust.co.uk