

DELPH COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

(Registered Charity No. 1115315)

Report to the Annual General Meeting 7th July 2009

It only seems five minutes since the last annual general meeting for Delph Community Association and it appears as though we have had a relatively quiet year with few dramatic events occurring locally to capture the headlines.

Looking below the surface however what may not have looked to be an action filled year has contained a great deal of activity. The strength and variety of the Delph Community Association's work pays tribute to the quiet efficiency of those who often unseen and unsung simply work for the benefit of the community as a whole. To everyone who fulfilled a wide variety of roles we offer our grateful thanks.

The strength of any community is hard to measure but if the work of the Community Association didn't take place our lives in Delph would be considerably poorer and the possibilities and networks available would be considerably reduced.

As in 2007/8 during 2008/9 we have focussed on two key areas. Firstly supporting the operation of the library within the Millgate Arts Centre and secondly representing the community on wider issues.

So to the last year

Delph Library

The library continues to operate with volunteers and with DCA raising funds for the running costs. Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council provide new books to the value of about £4,000 each year, and their Community Librarian for Saddleworth and Lees meets with the volunteer librarian and coordinator every 6 weeks.

There were 3,879 visits to the library in the year 1st April 08 – 31st March 09. A total of 1,132 children's books and 3,960 adult's books were borrowed. The computer was used for approximately 124 hours during that period.

Five class visits from Delph School occurred during the year and two children's book sales were held. A coffee morning for Macmillan Cancer Care also took place.

A reading group is held in the library on the second Wednesday of each month at 7.00pm. Anyone wishing to join should phone 875742.

The library also provides experience of voluntary work for students taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme and work experience for students from Oldham College.

Volunteers have run bookstalls at Delph School Christmas Fair and Summer Fete, and at the Delph Street Fair. The funds raised have helped to pay for the running costs of the library. The library is keen to receive donations of recently published books that are in good condition, either to put on the library shelves or to sell for funds.

At the beginning of August 2008 OMBC gave £750 to Delph Library as compensation for maladministration over the closure of the library. Our thanks go to Ken Hulme for pursuing the matter with the Local Government Ombudsman.

In August 2008 Oldham Council decided that some work should be undertaken to start bringing Delph Library back into the Oldham Libraries network.

It was agreed that a self-service machine and two new computers would be installed in the library. This would mean that borrowers would use Oldham Library tickets again and details of book issues and returns would be recorded centrally. The self-service machine has now been installed and it is hoped it will be operational by the beginning of August 2009.

In return it was agreed to increase the opening hours so since October 2008 the library has been opening on Wednesdays from 2.00 – 7.00pm in addition to the previous regular opening times.

Thanks to a grant of £2,000 from Saddleworth and Lees Area Committee the toilet in the library has been refurbished.

The Citizens Advice Bureau information kiosk remains in the library and continues to be very valuable. The most popular subjects remain money advice, health and employment rights.

There are at present 40 active volunteers. Ideas for new services and activities are appreciated and can be discussed with the volunteers when the library is open.

Thanks to the volunteers, visitors to the library continue to find the books on the shelves are in good condition and up to date.

Chapel Gardens

During the year the Saddleworth Trust has consulted the local community about the possible design of the garden layout. Maps and artist's impressions were displayed at a public meeting in the Methodist Church and then in the library. Views have been fed back to the Saddleworth Trust and revised plans will be produced in due course. Then fundraising will be needed to raise the finance for any plans agreed. The volunteer group continue to do an excellent job in keeping the area free from litter and debris. Our thanks go to all of them once again.

Finance and Fundraising

Joanne Leighton has continued to serve as our treasurer but gives notice that in 2010 she will retire from the role. We will need to search for someone to train as treasurer ready to take over.

Once again our thanks go to Joanne for keeping the accounts in order and dealing with all matters so efficiently. The accounts are to be presented in Joanne's absence and will be sent to the Charities Commission to keep them informed of our activities.

Fundraising has played a slightly reduced place in our activities this year but has still been an important part of the year. We were slow to get organised this year but we hope that the Delph Scarecrow trail with its educational and fun element will run again next year. Again the Theatre event was our biggest fundraiser of the year. Regular book fairs and sales have also contributed to the funds. Alongside these the contributions from the friends of the library have again provided an important base for our operation. We also

received a grant from Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council towards the renovation of the toilets in the Library.

Our thanks go to all who have contributed in their different ways.

The budget for 2009/10 – Joanne estimates that we need £3,150 to cover the expenses for next year. This assumes a 5% increase on 2008/09 costs.

Millgate Centre

It should be noted that the Saddleworth Players celebrate their seventy-fifth anniversary this year. We extend our warmest congratulations. Keith Begley has kindly represented us on the Committee for the last year and we hope he will be able to continue in the role.

Although the building has not yet received the large grant needed to undertake the major work planned, over the next year there will be various changes and improvements to the building.

Communication

During the year Mark Burgin continued to be involved in the website but due to other pressures has handed day to day responsibility for the web site to Mike Clegg who has kindly agreed to support our work. Mark will be taking a lower profile role. We also say good-bye to Sandra Risby who has fulfilled a number of important roles on the committee and committed her time to the community. She 'retires' from a role on the committee.

Both Sandra and Mark are thanked for all their work as members of the Executive. We hope that they will still be able to be involved in the general work of the Association. Of course once again our thanks go to Gill, her assistant Joan and their team for all the efforts to keeping the Association in touch with the village. Gill faced numerous computer problems during the year but is again on line for the year ahead.

Wider Consultations and developments

Youth Club: In the last few months the Executive met with the new area youth worker, Jeanette Booth, for Saddleworth/Lees. Jeannette is part of the OMBC People, Communities & Society Integrated Youth Services. She has promised to keep us all informed of events for young people and communities. As she settles in she hopes to get involved with events in the village.

Although the youth club building on Gartside Street has closed and there will no longer be the two evenings building based provision weekly, there will be provision on one of the youth buses one evening a week. We were pleased with the meeting and will keep close liaison with the service in the future. We hope that provision will once be restored to two evenings a week.

Playground: Jenny Dennis (Service Manager for Integrated Children's Centres) will attend AGM to provide us with information on the refurbishment of the playground near Swan Meadow. We hope to make a positive contribution to the discussions.

Whit Friday Sports: Traditionally the Whit Friday Sports have been organised by the local churches. This year the DCA took responsibility and for two hours of children's sports you would be surprised at the red tape involved in organising the event. We had to get insurance, CRB checks, a first aider on site, etc. All this done we had a happy time on Delph School playing field with Athletes from four years to thirteen years all joining in the fun. Their chests were covered in prize stars!!

We had a wonderful athletic team of helpers – thanks.

Saddleworth Voices: Another project in hand is Saddleworth Voices. Martin Plant has inspired a group of fellow enthusiasts to tape the voices of local people telling their memories of early life in Delph alongside other interesting recollections.

The recordings will be stored in the library and the National Archives Centre in Clitheroe. Everyone will be able to obtain his or her own copy.

Delph School: United Utilities will be carrying out work close to the river in the next few months. The School will monitor the effect on their playground and car park as access is via their grounds.

We continue to welcome contact with the School through the library, community events and other links. It is to be hoped that the promised 20mph zone past the School is resolved in the near future.

General: We have fed back to OMBC items related to the roads following the resurfacing and other work recently undertaken. We have also fed back issues related to speed on the local trunk roads and drainage. We will continue to liaise with OMBC on any issues concerning the community that affects the village and surrounding area. It is noted that not all these items are resolved but we will continue to liaise, consult and argue for the needs of the local community.

Joint meeting with other local community associations/groups

The annual meeting with other community associations in the area is expected to take place shortly. At these meetings topics of shared interest across the community are discussed.

Thanks

Thanks go to all those who have regularly attended our meetings and worked to further the aims of the Association. Thanks are also due to the Millgate Centre for allowing us to meet in the building. Particular thanks go once again to Phillida Shipp, Gill Clark, Sandra Risby, Joanne Leighton, Mark Burgin, Joan Lally, Sue Lund, and Ken Hulme for their support.

We wish the new committee all the best for 2009/10.

Graham Griffiths
Chair on behalf of the Executive, Delph Community Association
July 2009