

## **Shell Corner Partnership Annual General Meeting for the year 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011**

### **The report of the Chair**

It does not need me to tell you that the last year has been a very challenging one for us all as budget cuts at local and national level have made a real impact upon our community and the partnerships work. This has been most evident in the changing personnel and roles of some of the council departments that we have formerly dealt with. As a partnership we are sorry to have lost a number of friends and supporters, but nevertheless are grateful for their contributions made over the last few years. The partnership exists to serve and act as a voice for the interests of both residents and local businesses and in these hard pressed times it is perhaps even more important that the voice of our community is heard to ensure the needs of our community are not forgotten.

There have been three public meetings during the year and guest speakers have included Mr Peter Vangeersdaele who addressed a very lively December meeting on the subject of a traffic consultation and Mr Rupert Dugdale who addressed the March meeting on the subject of community regeneration. We are grateful to both speakers for the time they gave to the partnership and for bringing us up to date with current developments. We are grateful for the improvements that have been made to the area over the last year like for example the replanting of the raised garden beds on Long Lane which have made a real difference.

I am very grateful to a small number of partnership members who as part of the regeneration plan have produced a draft heritage board that tells the story of Shell Corner. We hope to have this situated at the junction of Long Lane and Maple Road by the end of the year.

An important objective for the partnership is the promotion of good relationships across our diverse community and to this end we have continued to work with Steve Sparrow and the Dudley Borough Interfaith Network. We are currently exploring the possibility of holding an autumn open day when local residents may be able to visit some of the different places of worship in our community.

During the year we continued to be active members of Dosti an organisation that works to empower the community and voluntary sector in the Borough of Dudley. We received funding, officer training and other support from Dosti and I would like to record my gratitude for their help and encouragement.

The partnership has also continued to support the Children's Centre and Extended School Partnership Board for Halesowen and the chair currently sits on that board as a community representative.

The partnership website at [www.shellcornerpartnership.co.uk](http://www.shellcornerpartnership.co.uk) has continued to develop and we are very grateful to Sean Kenyon for providing such a professional service which also now includes the option of advertisements by local small businesses.

Finally, I would like to record my thanks to all the partnership officers, Olive Hill Primary School, Black Country Housing Association and everyone else who have supported the work of the partnership over the last year.

Reverend Mike Sermon, Chair of the Shell Corner Partnership

## **Moving Forward 2011/2012**

As I mentioned in my annual review one of the strengths of Shell Corner Partnership is that it provides a platform and a voice for our local community.

In September we shall be pleased to welcome James Morris our local MP as guest speaker who has been invited to talk upon the subject of the 'Big Society'. The ten year community regeneration plan adopted by the council remains in force and it will be good to hear how that commitment and the work of the partnership fit into the concept of the 'Big Society' so that together we can work towards the local improvements that are still needed in this age of financial austerity.

During the next year the work of the Dudley Borough Interfaith Network will change shape as financial constraints continue to bite. In September the position of Inter Faith Adviser that Steve Sparrow will cease and as a partnership we will need to find new ways of contributing towards good community relationships or community cohesion as it is often referred to. As I stated last year good community relationships are vital for our overall well being. There is so much that as residents we hold in common as far as Shell Corner is concerned because the bottom line is that we all want decent community facilities, green spaces, successful schools, effective health care and equality of opportunity for everyone especially in employment. For these reasons this area will continue to be a priority for the partnership.

Over the last year the partnership has continued to deliver training to elected officers and one of the areas that emerged from this has been the need to look at developing our communication strategy. This is an important area for development as we have sometimes struggled to get our message out to the community and so have failed to encourage attendance at our public meetings. Another important strand to this is picking up current concerns in the community like for example the ongoing dissatisfaction with some of the parking restrictions that were recently introduced and following those through. We also recognise our need to better connect with young people in our community and would welcome suggestions about how this can be achieved. If anyone has expertise in the area of communication strategy and would be willing to help us improve then I would be delighted to hear from you.

I mentioned officer training and we remain committed to ongoing training for our elected officers to meet particular needs and it would be wonderful if one or two new people would be willing to offer themselves for election as officers tonight.

We are keen to continue the development of our website to tell the story of the local community, to advertise local businesses and to highlight forthcoming events and this remains our main method of communication with the wider community although we are

also exploring the possibility of delivering leaflet to local households to extend the reach of our news.

In previous years we have planted spring bulbs and undertaken the clean-up of litter and if there is sufficient support these activities could be repeated again over the next year. These small actions do have a positive effect upon our community, but the partnerships officers and I cannot do this alone and practical initiatives like this depend upon other people volunteering to assist so please if you can offer a little time then I would be delighted to hear from you.

Finally, my thanks go to everyone who is currently involved in supporting the work of the partnership and for anyone who is new to the area or now has some time available do please consider joining us. If you are not currently a member of Shell Corner Partnership but would like to join do visit our website or contact Jennie our secretary.

Reverend Mike Sermon, Chair of the Shell Corner Partnership