

The Chairman's report, writing this is never the easiest task, by the very nature of what we try to achieve the report year on year can often look very similar. Even calling it a chairman's report is a little disingenuous, it is a chairman's report by virtue of the fact that it is the Chairman who writes it, but it is more a reflection on the wonderful volunteer trustees and the tireless work they carry out.

As always it has been a demanding year, Funding continues to be difficult to source and where available tends to be project based with clear and quantifiable criteria for delivery and monitoring.

This year, with careful management, we have managed to put ourselves on a stable footing, both financially and by attracting some "new blood" to the trustees, this has allowed us to begin to look at new projects , both to bolster the sustainability of the partnership and to achieve our community remit.

To continue working to support both older residents and young people.

To find ways of supporting local businesses

And finally,

to continue to focus on sustainability for the Partnership through self-funding, this will allow the partnership to continue to have a real impact within the community in the coming years.

So what have we been up to ?

As in previous years, we have continued to provide transport and outings, for our older residents, to places not easily reached by public transport and several outings have been enjoyed by local residents over the year. Once again we have had to continue to consider the cost, especially as there has been no grant funding available. We have every intention to continue with these trips over the coming years and, where we can, we will continue to offer these free of charge, however for some trips it may be necessary to ask for a small contribution towards expenses. We are however actively seeking new grant funding to enable us to carry on providing these very popular trips free of charge, now and into the future.

One of our longest running projects has been to provide a safe place for youngsters to meet, The youth club drop in centre and The Cadet Force still have a venue at the Rede hall, while the Cadet force is as successful as ever, the youth club had lost its youth worker, due to local council cuts back, and has not run for a significant part of the year. The Partnership receives little or no funding for this project and fund it solely from income earned by the partnership. There has always been a risk that we would no longer be able to fund this project and over the last year we have been looking for ways to keep this project on a secure footing. The Reed hall trustees continue to offer a home for the Drop-in centre and the Cadet Force and this is greatly appreciated by the Partnership and more importantly facilitates our ongoing support. As they say "every cloud has a silver lining" and the loss of the youth worker meant we had to look at other possibilities

for providing support for the youth club. After a lot of head scratching and research we found that the OTC in Otterburn had been hosting a youth club, after similar council cuts, and had found funding for a fully qualified youth worker who, as she was under utilised, was looking to establish another local youth club, so, to cut a long story short, by working with the OTC and assisting with venue and costs we now have a youth worker, a venue and a youth club again. This combining of resources under one youth worker will open up opportunities for many joint activities between several youth groups, and we have already had interest in hosting these activities from Calvert trust, Hawkhurst activity centre and Northumberland National park. We are very excited about this development and we are looking forward to the future for this group and believe that Both groups should now be secure in the new venue and with the new structure for many years to come and we look forward to supporting them into the future.

Once again, and with the support of Bellingham Golf Club, we held the annual Christmas Lunch, for local residents. This has been the fifth year that we provided a full Christmas lunch with entertainment. A good time was had by all. My thanks go to The Bellingham Golf club for their very kind support and to the many local businesses that supported this event with donations of food and services, as well as the many community volunteers who gave their time and expertise to make this event such a success.

Once again, as well as the projects listed above we have also been pleased to work with Charlotte Loyd on the production and printing of the Churches Together "directory of business services in the Bellingham area", and once again we were able to provide production and printing of the booklets free of charge, enabling a wide circulation of this useful guide which is available to both locals and tourists alike.

Sustainability

As discussed last year and every year, as public funding streams continue to be harder and harder to source the only way for the Partnership to secure its future is for us to be completely self-reliant, so any grant funding purely provides "the icing on the cake". This has not changed. Over the last twelve months we have proved that we can survive on the income we have, however survival is not the aim, the aim is to be able to assist and enhance the local community and for this we will still need funds. Grant funding is still both difficult to find and only ever a temporary solution. We aim to get back to a position where the office is, once again, regularly open to give the community more access to subsidised printing facilities and have someone available to assist any members of the community with computer services such as registering for unemployment benefits and the various web based services many people now need to be able to access. Partnership, another small but important step towards true sustainability.

This is where I can hint at an exciting new project, in fact two projects, All I can say at the moment is that we are looking to combine two of our fundamental aims into one, to both assist local business and to improve our own sustainability, For several years we have known that there is a need within the area for short and long term subsidised office space for both new start up businesses and for home

workers who may need regular but not necessarily frequent access to office space and services. After several months of research we believe we may be able to move forward with a project that can achieve the above aims and needs, Obviously , as always with these things, we need to secure significant funding, we already have some tenants eager to come on board, and initial responses to grant applications are , so far, positive. Hopefully, in the not to distant future, I can fill in all the blanks and formally announce exactly what we are planning and how we will achieve it.

At this point I would like to thank all of our Trustees for their time and commitment to the Partnership and its aims, Especially Neil Denham for his knowledge and continued help with social media, Christine Bragg and Frank Mattinson for their continued and invaluable support, Christine Bragg, once more, for stepping in as secretary, general coordinator and driving force over this last year, and, as always, a special thank you to Terry Bragg for all his behind the scenes efforts without which, amongst many other things, boilers would cease to function, pipes would continue to leak many other problems would not be resolved.

Last year I asked the question “please think about what you could offer, we have lost several trustees over the last couple of years and really do need new people to replace them, and It is my great pleasure to report that three people did exactly that, We are extremely pleased to have Mr Ken Little, Mr. Mike Blackith, and Ms. Margaret Wilson join us Thank you for giving up your time to help the community,

I would also like to express our thanks to the partner organisations we have worked with throughout the year, especially The Federation of Northumberland Development Trusts. The Forestry Commission and Chris Gillie from Tyne Rede Accountancy for auditing our accounts and giving sound advice throughout the year.

Finally and as always our thanks go to you, the community. I feel very proud to have worked with and for such a great bunch of people, as you finish reading this I make no apology for saying, once again, please think about what you could offer, we still have vacancies for trustees and really do need new people to add to the expertise of the existing trustees, “many hands make light work” and I am sure every one of you could bring something to the board that could help the local community, Please take this opportunity to consider whether you could find time to join us.

why not come and have a chat about becoming a trustee.

Chairman, North Tyne and Redesdale Community Partnership