

Annual General Meeting

Thursday 23rd November 06

•Contents:

- Forum Committee Members
- Forum Staff Members
- Chairpersons Report
- Forum Development Managers Report
- Community Training & Education Co-ordinators Report
- Physical Regeneration Officers Report
- South Belfast Sure Start Report
- South Belfast Highway to Health Report

Forum Committee Members

•Office Bearers

- Mr Terry Watson Chairperson
- Mr Harry Todd Treasurer
- Mrs Anne McAllister Secretary

•Members

- Cllr Michael McGimpsey MLA
- Brian Beattie
- Paul McCloud
- June Dougan
- Pastor Paul Dunn
- Debbie McCurrie
- Leeanne Mills
- Jean Todd
- Matt Hill
- Thomas Spence
- Joe McClelland
- Joan Mercer

Forum Staff Members:

- Elaine Mansfield Forum Development Manager
- Alan Jones Physical Regeneration Officer
- Lyudmyla Ostanina Finance officer
- Ken Orr Community Training & Education Co-ordinator
- Helen Killen Assistant Training Officer

Chairman's Report

Welcome to this years Annual Report and Annual General Meeting. It seems like I have been writing this foreword for far too long but I must say that it has been an honour to serve my community in any way I can and being Chairperson of this Forum for so long has been a very challenging and rewarding experience. This has been my last year as Chairperson and I wish to encourage new people to engage in the role of leading the organisation to new and greater heights.

Once again Donegall Pass Community Forum has battled against the, at times, overwhelming odds to deliver a much needed service to its member groups, individual users and community. The credit for most of this goes to our dedicated staff team and our host of volunteers. We have provided a much needed service to our stakeholders and will continue to do so in the years to come. Evidence of our performances can be seen through the many accredited courses our training personnel have designed and delivered. Local people are developing greater skills and levels of competency. The staff team have given selfishly of their time and experience to ensure the professional delivery of our service.

Our work is not only about delivering a service which builds the capacity of the community and its groups but we are also endeavouring to engage with the multi national private developers in order to ensure the existence of our community. Many social issues need to be addressed, the lack of affordable social housing, anti-social behaviour, interface tension, the lack of local amenities, the Political situation, parking problems are to name but a few. We, Donegall Pass Community Forum cannot address these issues alone we depend upon the community to support us and work with us.

Finally, I would like to thank all of those Forum members who have shown support to me over the past years because without them we would never have been in the position we are today. I look forward to the election of a new Chairperson and I will continue to support the work of this person and the Forum.

Regards
Terry Watson
Chairperson

Forum Development Managers Report

I look up the post in February 06 at Donegall Pass Community Forum, previously I had worked for Ballynafeigh Community Development Association, in fact I have spend some 25 years now working in the training and community sector so I figured that The Pass would be wee buns for me!! Boy did I get that wrong!! Seriously though, one could never say that working in the Forum is boring as each day presents new challenges.

It did not take me long at all to discover that the inner city Donegall Pass community, although small in numbers, faces enormous pressures such as developers moving into the area, lack of youth facilities, their streets being used as a public car parking area, inadequate and unaffordable child care provision for women wanting to return to work, the fear that residents have of being swallowed up by the city centre and also the fear of losing their own identity. The added pressure of discovering that a hostel housing serious sex offenders is operating within yards of their homes made the community more aware for the need to be pro-active in addressing the problems they face.

I feel that the key role of the Forum has been to address these problems and to assist, support and empower the community in moving forward and work towards a more positive future by creating a better place to live in, this is being achieved through the Forum working together and in partnership with members and groups in the community, also voluntary and statutory organisations.

Over the first few months I found myself either chasing or begging funders to release money, preparing reports for funders and trying to source funds to sustain the work of the Forum. I looked at various ways to enhance the efficiency in this area and then set about implementing new finance and administration procedures that would ensure claims be processed more quickly and provide up to date information on demand - thus increasing efficiency. The other part of my work has included maintaining partnerships and networking with other groups in the community development sector such as:

- South Belfast Partnership Board
- South Belfast Sure Start
- Highway to Health
- South Belfast Roundtable on Racism,
- South Belfast Youth Area Project

- Donegall Pass Community Centre
- Gems South Belfast Employment Forum

The Forum has also been involved in facilitating and helping members of the community to action and address their concerns over a number of issues including:

ACTIONS

- Work being carried out through the Housing Executive and current demands for housing in the area – facilitated and participated in meetings with various representatives from the Housing Exec, community and service providers.
- Car Parking in the area – through meetings with residents and the DOE
- Outside play park and facilities – submitting ideas and plans to representative of Belfast City Council
- Environmental and Road Safety issues – Attended meetings with neighbouring groups in Market area and Lower Ormeau through which ideas and action plans have been drawn up.
- Youth and child care provisions –Representing Donegall Pass Community Forum at Belfast Education & Library Board targeted area group meetings that resulted in securing places for young people to attend residential training in a youth mentoring programme.
- Vandalism and anti-social behaviour in the area – Supported local residents in addressing the problem which involved discussions with BELB, schools and local community representatives.
- Sex offenders being housed in Ventry Lane Hostel – Organised the setting up of a Womens Action Group and assisted in drawing up a strategic action plan to lobby various governmental departments.

The Forum also acts as an umbrella organisation for a number of groups with whom regular meetings are attended and facilitated these include:

- Residents Steering Group

- Women's Action Group

- Young Men's Football Team

- Pensions Group

- Volunteers Youth Group

- Somme Association

- Rangers Supporters Group

- Environmental Group

- Bonfire

Builders

Group

New faces to appear in the Forum from the last AGM are:

Helen Killen – Assistant Training Officer

Helen replaced Hazel in the Forums Training and Education Project and took up post last year she is responsible for advising and enrolling people on the various courses that best suit their needs. She also gets help on a one to one basis for those who need assistance with job search skills. Helen also carries out the administrative duties for the training project.

Lyudmyla Ostanina – Finance Officer

Lyudmyla replaced Yvonne Pollock as the Forums Finance Officer in January 06, she is responsible for keeping records of all income and expenditure, budget control and payments of goods & services. She also prepares and submits expenditure claims to funders and calculates staff wages.

Leeanne Mills – Health Development Worker

Leeanne replaced Christine Sherlock as outreach worker for Highway to Health in June 06, her role is to identify the health and well being needs of the community and to tailor focused action plans to meet their needs.

Marie McCallin - Advice Worker

Marie is the Advice outreach worker whose responsibility it is to afford access to a professional quality service which is free at the point of need and delivered in a caring, informal and friendly matter.

Taking the Pass into the Future was the biggest training initiative ever to run in Donegall Pass Community Forum, this project ended in June 06 following a two year life span.

This year one of the high points for the Forum was the Celebration of Awards evening which was held in the Holiday Inn on Thursday 24th August 06 to mark the completion of the training project and the Forums 10th Year Anniversary. A total of 281 certificates were handed out to people who had attended various training courses including Computer classes, Basic Food Hygiene, Fork Lift training and many others.

The event was extremely well attended by local participants of the training project. Mr Harry Todd acted as Master of ceremonies and Belfast Lord Mayor Pat McCarthy presented certificates, also in attendance was Councillor Michael McGimpsey MLA, both offered their congratulations to everyone on their achievements and also to the Forum for their hard work and dedication.

It's not very often that the Forum receives much recognition for the good work it carries out, therefore it was most welcome to receive an e-mail from Frank Murphy of BLSP following the awards ceremony which reads:

“Congratulations to all at Donegall Pass Community Forum for a marvellous event on Thursday last. The enthusiasm shown by all the participants is a credit to all, as was the apparent cohesion of the group as a whole – staff and management at the Forum. The number of unsolicited messages of support I received from trainees regarding the content, delivery and style of the training was a testament to the hard work during the project. The age range and differing backgrounds of those taking part was also noteworthy.”

The Blsp funding which the forum received for two years not only provided the funds for the training courses provided but also staff salaries for two full time and two part time posts, also substantial capital and running costs. This funding finished at the end of June and Belfast Regeneration Office agreed to take over payment of those salaries until September 06, however an extension of this funding is being put in place which will take us up to the end of August 07. The Forum are currently looking to source and secure future funding to further develop their training initiative for after August 07.

Finally, on a positive note, Donegall Pass Community Forum remains committed to providing ongoing training and services to the community to enhance its wealth, lifestyle, wellbeing, and environment.

The efforts and dedication of all of the staff in the Forum must be commended as although they often face personal difficulties in making future plans given the fact that none of their jobs or salaries have pension rights or are based on long term contracts, they remain extremely dedicated, carry out their work to a very high professional standard and endeavour to meet the needs of all the community.

It is vital for the community in the Pass that this work continues in order to provide the prosperity and environment that will benefit both present and future generations.

Alan Jones

PHYSICAL REGENERATION OFFICER'S REPORT

Working in Partnership with the Contested Cities – Urban Universities research team (CU2) from Queens University Belfast, Donegall Pass Community Forum and the CU2 team are about to publish two reports on Donegall Pass. The first report, produced by Masters Students has been published. Special thanks should be sent to Ciara Moynes who produced an excellent piece of work on the redevelopment of the exterior of the Community Centre. The second academic report should be completed in the near future. Both these reports will benefit the Forum and the Community in a number of positive ways. Specifically in regards to the Physical Regeneration Officer's matters they will help support the Communities arguments for Community Led Regeneration Projects on the Posnett Street site and the BELB building

The Space Shuttle project was an innovative way of combining art and regeneration. The Donegall Pass Space Shuttle project was part funded by Belfast City Council, 'Celebrate Belfast 2006.' The project ran for one week. One event of note was the 'Model Pass' day, which allowed for participants to feed back their views on the Posnett Street site.

I am currently working with South Belfast Partnership Board, the Economic and Development Departments of Belfast City Council on a proposal concerning the existing and proposed business Community of Donegall Pass. I have secured funding via Social Economy Belfast for a short Consultation report on the regeneration of the Commercial frontage. I would like to use this initial report as a means to secure funding for further research, capital funding for identified projects and given the Pass location Social Economy enterprises.

Ken Orr, Community Training & Education Co-ordinator

Since I last reported on Training and Education in Donegall Pass, it's been a 'white knuckles' roller-coaster ride during which we attempted to deliver 'capacity-building' to participants – against a Peace 2 funding environment obsessed, as ever, with procedural protocols - and bedevilled with bureaucratic constipation and prevarication. Far too often, the requirements of benighted 'bean-counters' are placed above and before those in need and the overall aims and objectives of projects.

The report by Brian Harvey, "Review of the EU Peace II Programme – Northern Ireland and Border Counties of Ireland Programme" - commissioned by the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust, which, in summary, found that "the administrative arrangements are onerous and burdensome"... "Some funding bodies handling Peace II money won't provide information on how they are spending it, despite a requirement for transparency. This may bring the programme into disrepute"... "Most funding bodies can't or won't explain how they are ensuring that their grants meet the EU requirement that funding should be distinctively linked to the Troubles and their legacy, and should actively promote reconciliation."... "The level of frustration remains high and there seems to be a strong case for further efforts to reduce the administrative burden."... "These difficulties have been compounded by the inflexible application of the requirements of the European Social Fund, apparently at the expense of relevant peace-building and appropriate training activities."... "The Special EU Programmes Body should establish a task force, bringing together the implementing bodies, expert departments, user bodies and Commission officials to ascertain exactly what minimum level of information, auditing, accounting and reporting is necessary. Its task would be to ensure, quickly, a significant reduction in the volume of paperwork."

This report was launched at the Linenhall Library, Belfast on 3rd July 2003. No *effective* response to its observations or recommendations has since been apparent.

It is also instructive to read comments in the House of Commons Northern Ireland Affairs Committee's "Peace II Seventh Report of Session 2002-03, Volume 1", for example, page 34:

“Audit and accountability

86. Another aspect of the funding process which has caused both funders and recipients real difficulty is the requirement for organisations to account for their efficiency and expenditure. In raising this issue we should stress that the importance of accountability was universally understood and accepted. That being said, the audit requirements of PEACE II appear to us, and to the vast majority of those with whom we have discussed the subject, to be over-rigorous to the point where they have become detrimental to the programme’s success.

Quality audits

87. Audits are not solely concerned with financial data but with the quality and effectiveness of the projects funded. It was reported to us that bodies have been required to answer detailed questions about the effectiveness of their activity. While this is in principle reasonable, we were told that the questions often seemed to miss the point of the project or to be more concerned with administrative exactitude than with the project’s, and programme’s, objectives.”

The driving lessons programme, ‘funded’ by the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland, ground to an ignominious halt. The reasons for this are illuminated in the above reports. Who did our community blame? – the Forum, of course!

Efforts by Cllr Michael McGimpsey MLA’s office and that of Dr Alisdair McDonnell MP may yet yield some results in the form of the release of unconscionably long-overdue cash to the Forum. Perhaps we might then be able to finally deliver on the promises made to our community.

The “Taking The Pass Into The Future” Project, funded by Belfast Local Strategy Partnership, has fared significantly better – despite a truncated timetable caused by a host of problems associated with the Forum’s move to Grove House. Due to sterling efforts by students, tutors and remaining and new staff – the project targeted outcomes, viz., 140 accreditations and 150 individual participants, were handsomely exceeded. The accreditation target of 140 was exceeded by **100.71%** (281 accreditations achieved) and the individual participant target of 150 was exceeded by **5.33%** (158 individual participants). Additionally, 52 ‘in-house’ certificates were earned.

This is, indeed, an achievement that the beleaguered Donegall Pass

Community and, in particular, the project participants can be very proud of. Well done the Pass!

The achievement was crowned by an Awards Celebration evening at the Holiday Inn Hotel, Ormeau Avenue, on Thursday 24th August 2006.

“Taking The Pass Into The Future” Achievement Record:

Information Technology:

Level 1 Certificate for IT Users (New CLAiT) – 03550: 33 Unit
Accreditations

Level 1 Certificate/Diploma for IT Users (New CLAiT) – 05538:
103 Unit Accreditations
Certificate: 11
Diploma: 2

Level 2 Certificate/Diploma for IT Users (CLAiT Plus) – 05539:
31 Unit Accreditations
Certificate: 5
Diploma: 1

Text Processing:

Unit 1 - 04411 - Text Production (Basic) Level 1: 3
Unit 8 - 04418 - Word Processing (Basic) Level 1: 3
OCR Level 1 Certificate in Text Processing: 2
Unit 1 - 04421 - Text Production (Intermediate) Level 2: 2
Unit 13 - 03713 - Word Processing (Intermediate) Level 2: 4
OCR Level 2 Certificate in Text Processing - 03715: 2
OCR Level 3 Certificate in Text Production - 04431: 1
OCR Level 3 Certificate in Word Processing - 04437: 1

Other than Information Technology:

Foundation Certificate in Food Hygiene: 15
Principled Negotiation Skills: 24
AITT-ITSSAR Fork Lift Truck Counterbalance: 13
AITT-ITSSAR Fork Lift Truck Reach: 7
Construction Skills Register: 18

“In-House” Certificates: 52
(including English for Speakers of Other Languages and Guitar Lessons).

With the addition of ‘in-house’ certificates, the total amounts to **333**

So, given the funds, the Pass can do the job!

Many will recall, not so long ago, the attempt to traduce the community of Donegall Pass by portraying it as a “racist cesspit” – so, it is interesting to note that almost 27% of participants were ‘non-indigenous’, viz., had differing ethnicities to that of the ‘host’ community and/or had different nationalities. I strongly doubt that this fact will be acknowledged by media ‘hacks’ or discussed by the ‘do nothing, know nothing’ chattering classes.

Currently, in partnership with the Ulster People’s College, B.I.F.H.E., the Workers’ Educational Association, TWN and others, we have made arrangements to provide training and educational courses in the locality – details of which have been delivered to all households. Classes so far underway include English and Web Creation and Design.

Naturally, we are considering opportunities for future funding and, to date, have made an application to the Northern Bank Community Grants 2006 programme. If (and it’s a big if) successful, this will fund a 21 weeks programme for I.T. and E.S.O.L

Other options include the BIG LOTTERY and arrangements to put together a viable and deliverable package have been put in place.

I fervently hope that we can (to plagiarise Churchill), in the future, “move forward into broad, sunlit uplands” without creativity, risk-taking and innovation being stultified by the dead hand of wasteful and expensive, rigid and ossified, blinkered, timid and self-serving bureaucracy. Noting *en passant* that for 12 years in a row the European Court of Auditors has refused to sign off the EU accounts, stating that they cannot verify the location of 65% of EU funds – it is my personal inclination to studiously avoid, unless absolutely necessary, applying for financial support of programmes from that quarter; and certainly not under the current system. Rather, I feel that we should look to more enlightened sources who are more interested in quality outcomes and not infatuated by sclerotic processes.

Finally, I should like to pay tribute to my colleague, Helen Killen, for her indefatigable efforts in recruiting participants for, principally, the non-I.T. elements of the “Taking The Pass Into The Future” programme and her determination to follow up every avenue with providers and beneficiaries. The project would not have achieved its final outcomes without her commitment.

South Belfast Surestart

Joan Mercer is the Key Worker for the Sure Start project based in the Donegall Pass Community Centre. The Services/Programmes that were delivered from July – September 2006 include:

- Home visits
- Parent & Toddler Sessions
- Parents Courses
- Information events
- Trips and outings
- Crèche sessions

Outings and trips were provided to Newcastle, Tanaghmore Farm, Adventure Land, Carnfunnock and Bangor.

The forum was involved in negotiating with the management of the Porter Memorial Building to secure more space to enable the provision for 2 year olds to be provided for.

Joan will be delivering a Baby Massage course on an ongoing basis on Friday mornings from 3rd November. Pregnant women and mother of babies up to 6 months are able to join the course.

**Leeanne Mills – Health Development Worker
South Belfast Highway to Health**

I commenced employment with Highway to Health on 26th June 2006, my job involves identifying community health needs and tailoring focused action plans to meet these needs.

Highway to Health provides a weekly healthy fruit break for Grove House and for Surestart, enough fruit is provided for children for the week. We also provide the fruit break for Botanic Primary School, and this is for the P.1 and P.2 classes, twice weekly. I am currently working with the school too see how this can be extended to cover all classes.

Since the summer I have been working closely with Donegall Pass oung Men's Football Club, and this has involved helping them with funding applications, funding their training facility through my budget and offering training: such as IFA Grassroots Soccer Coaching.

I was involved in organising a Women's Health Event in September, and also a Senior Citizen's Health Day in October. Both of which were held in the Community Centre.

I have established two dancing classes for girls under 16, these take place on a Wednesday and Friday night in the Community Centre, one is for disco dancing and the other night for Cheerleading.

In Botanic Primary School I am delivering a Healthy Eating Programme throughout the school, this will be finished by Christmas.

I am also working with the Young Men and Women's Group on Team Building activities, this will cease in January and the group will be offered the chance to attend the gym for 8 weeks.

The Parent and Toddler Group availed of training in Basic First Aid, this was delivered by the British Red Cross, and is accredited.

We have recently established a Healthy Lunch Club for Senior Citizen's on a Thursday in the Community Centre, this will be run as a pilot for 6 weeks and will then be evaluated.

At present there is a programme of Alternative Therapies being offered in the Community Centre on a Tuesday, there is no charge for this service. Each participant has to attend for 6 weeks and a range of complimentary

therapies such as Hopi Ear Candles, Body Massage and Reflexology are available. The programme will run as a pilot for 18 weeks and will then be evaluated by Highway to Health.

Throughout the recent months I have been on a number of different training courses, ranging from Walk Leader to Weight Management to Computer Training. All of which will enhance the service I can offer to the local community.

