

News from the Core Group held on Thursday the 15th January 2009.

Betty Walker

The Chairman opened the meeting by informing of the death of Core Group member, Betty Walker. Betty was elected to the Core Group in 2003 and had served ODEF ever since. Due to illness, Betty had been unable to attend any meeting since February 2008. She passed away on 20 December 2008.

St George's Day celebrations

The St George's Day celebrations will take place on 26 April 2009. The working group has been successful in obtaining £1,500 from the Grassroots Fund.

Local Development Framework

ODEF submitted comments to the Local Planning Authority on the new draft Local Development Framework as part of the consultation exercise.

Employment Support Service

The people visiting ODEF who are seeking work is continuing to increase in number. There has been no improvement in the number of vacancies in the job market and there were only 300 vacancies in the whole of Nottinghamshire in December 2008.

In order to improve the support on offer to those living in Clipstone, ODEF submitted a funding application to the County Council. However, this was turned down because the County Council is already providing its own support service at Clipstone Miners' Welfare as part of their Family Employment Initiative. The Core Group agreed, however, that there were sufficient numbers of people wanting help in Ollerton for ODEF to deal with at the present time.

Transport Action Team

The next meeting of the Transport Action Team will take place on 20 January 2009. The County Council is undertaking another feasibility study on the rail link this year. Trains are currently running on the tracks for testing and training purposes.

ODEF has recently been chairing the Transport To Health Working Group, which has been investigating issues affecting hospital and GP patients and the difficulties they face accessing transport. Other members of the working group were CVS, the District and County Councils, the Sherwood Forest Hospital Trust and a former GP. The group has produced the results from a survey they undertook covering the whole district. The key findings from the report were:

- (1) lack of information about available transport
- (2) the need for more flexibility on appointment times to fit with transport
- (3) improvements to public transport in isolated areas
- (4) improvements to car parking at GP's and hospitals
- (5) better training for front line health staff on transport availability.

The report has been widely distributed including to CEO's at the local hospitals.

Tourism Action Team

The Tourism Action Team met with the District Council on 12 November 2008 to discuss the "Story of the Sandlands" trail. The trail will follow the new footpath being created alongside the River Maun, which is due for completion in late 2009.

Newark and Sherwood LSP

ODEF attended the meeting of the LSP Economic Development Group on 3 December 2008. There were representatives at the meeting from the District Council, Connexions, Newark College and Jobcentre Plus. The meeting discussed the District Council's Economic Regeneration Strategy and the Local Area Agreement's outputs, which also form the target outputs for delivery by the LSP. The next meeting is scheduled for 24 February 2009.

The target outputs for the LSP Economic Regeneration Group were agreed as:

- (1) assist people into jobs (ODEF will take a joint lead on delivery of this output)
- (2) increase new business start-ups
- (3) improve access to public transport for work
- (4) increase skills for work
- (5) assist adults with disabilities into jobs.

Visitor Guide

The 2009/10 Visitor Guide is now at the printers and there will be a public launch event organised in the early spring.

Disability Action Team

The Disability Action Team has been pressing for disabled access to be installed at Boughton Post Office. The owners of the premises have been offered some funding from the Post Office to build a ramp but the sum offered is too small to carry out the work. On a different matter, the chair of the Disability Action Team said it was necessary for the County Council to undertake further work on the uneven pavements in the town centre, particularly those areas in front of the shops as these are causing hazardous conditions for both disabled and able-bodied pedestrians

Volunteering

ODEF has been successful in reaching the targets set for recruitment of volunteers in both ODEF and other community organisations. It was noted, however, that the community bus was finding difficulties in recruiting volunteer drivers and it was agreed that ODEF would focus on this in the future.

ODEF Forum Meetings

Following the feedback from ODEF members received at the last Forum Meeting, discussions have been taking place between the Dukeries College and ODEF concerning the future format of the meetings. It was clear that there was a great deal in common between the ODEF Forum Meetings and the Dukeries Community Lunch Meetings. There was a clear case for the two organisations to work together on the holding of members' meetings and the following proposal was drawn up to be placed before the respective management committees

For a trial period in 2009, there would be four meetings, one each quarter. Two of the meetings would be held in the evening and be organised by ODEF and two meetings would be held at lunchtime and, in effect, these would replace the Dukeries Community Lunch. The lunchtime meetings would be hosted by the Dukeries. Invitations to all meetings would be by joint letter using both the Dukeries and ODEF mailing lists.

The Core Group resolved to accept the proposal and agreed to the new format for the Forum meetings. The trial period will be for one year and a review will take place in January 2010.

Eco Shop

An application for funding has been submitted to the Alliance SSP. The funding will pay for Phase II of the Eco Shop project. This phase of the project will see an extension to the shop opening times and a stronger partnership with Feel Good Foods and the Dukeries College. There will also be funding to deliver eco-training and the purchase of capital equipment!

It was suggested that there should be some work done to try and persuade the major uses of plastic bags in the town, such as Tesco and Farm Foods, to stop giving their customers plastic bags.

Two volunteers are currently working on a regular basis in the Eco Shop.

Sherwood Forest Visitor Centre

There has been a report on local radio about the Sherwood Forest Visitor Centre. There is some support for the idea that the new centre should be built in Nottingham in order to replace the recently closed Tales of Robin Hood attraction. This is unlikely to happen because the County Council has now purchased land at Edwinstowe to build the visitor centre and planning permission is expected to be granted shortly.