

SLALEY COMMUNITY TRUST

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2005-2006

Slaley Community Trust (technically an association) was formed as a consequence of the Slaley Parish Plan. It is worth remembering the key messages of the Parish Plan Action Plan which were:

1. Valuing services and facilities but needing more
2. Improving opportunities for young people and families to live and work here
3. Maintaining and strengthening our community
4. Communications and meeting together
5. Protecting and improving the environment we live in
6. Protecting the wider environment around us
7. Slaley is special but can't stand still.

Over the past year the Community Trust Committee and its members have continuously worked towards achieving its central objectives of re-opening the First School field to the community's children. A trial opening of the First School field is now underway and we hope this will lead to a permanent arrangement. We would like to express our thanks to everyone involved who worked so hard to achieve this, particularly the School Field Group, composed of Community Trust members and led by Nigel Sanger, a Trust Committee member.

Alongside our efforts to have the First School field re-opened the Community Trust Committee has tried to identify how it can help fulfil the remaining objectives set out in the Slaley Parish Plan (Action Plan) 2003. The Parish Council has achieved the vast majority of the objectives and the Community Trust hoped to play a role in helping them to achieve some of the few remaining objectives. However, it became apparent throughout the year that the best efforts of the Parish to resolve some matters, particularly actions against speeding, are very complex indeed.

On the other hand members of the Community Trust have been able to provide some assistance to the Parish Council to help them make progress on affordable housing in Slaley Parish. The Parish Council has taken a prominent role in this and we are full of admiration for their leadership on the matter. We hope to assist the Parish Council further with the scheme.

Apart from these successes the Community Trust has had a mixed year. We set off, perhaps naively, with the hope that we could achieve a great deal. The reality proved to be tougher than expected.

Active Committee members have also dwindled not through lack of interest or commitment but rather increasing business commitments and other voluntary work. By February this year the Committee reached the conclusion that we needed to consider how to continue. In March we therefore held a meeting to

which we invited all Community Trust members and the Parish Council. The meeting at the Methodist Chapel updated people on the Trust and asked for their help to carry out certain projects, one of the projects being to develop a sign to places of local interest. This is a project that the Parish Council has funding for and which it asked the Trust to fulfil. Unfortunately there were no volunteers forthcoming. A request for volunteers, which appeared in the Parish Magazine and Slaley Notes, has so far failed to attract people. This project is still outstanding.

Going back to the meeting we held in March we were fortunate to have Lesley Allen from the Bellingham Trust who gave an inspiring talk on how their Trust has achieved outstanding success. It has taken them a long time to do this but their example proves it can be done.

Interestingly, as in Slaley, the Bellingham Trust came into being following a Parish Plan. Several years after the Parish Plan at a point when most objectives had been achieved the Bellingham Trust went back to the community to obtain their views on what needed to be done in future. This helped revitalise the Trust. Perhaps there are lessons here for us?

The outgoing Community Trust Committee and the members involved in the School Field Group remain committed to the idea that a Community Trust could bring useful benefits to Slaley and to keep the community looking to the future.

The Trust can continue to help deliver benefits for the community in the future but to do so help is needed.

Our future, as the Parish Plan states, is in our hands.

MOYRA RISEBOROUGH
CHAIR OF SLALEY COMMUNITY TRUST