

## **Chair's Report:** Fairfield Association – Chairman's Report 2010

Since we will be receiving additional reports this evening from the various projects that are underway it is my intention to keep this report brief and to the point.

This has been my first year as Chairman, and I am incredibly fortunate to have inherited the Chair of a well organised, well thought of and energetic Association. My thanks are extended to all the committee members and the previous Chairman Michael Sheppard for making the assumption of my new responsibilities as pain free as possible.

As the preceding meeting showed, we are currently engaged in two very large and significant projects to protect and enhance community and green spaces in Lancaster. Oliver Fulton has slaved tirelessly to make the Fairfield Association Urban Nature Area (FAUNA) a reality and this is the year that things have really come together. He has been successful in growing a seed of £5,000 from the Association into £100,000 to meet the costs of building the nature reserve. Our five was followed by fifteen from the County Council, thirty from the Lancashire Environment Fund and we are pretty hopeful of fifty from the National Lottery's Community Spaces fund. This demonstrates two things: firstly that Oliver and the people he has gathered to assist in bid drafting are amazingly effective, and secondly that the money we raise as an Association can be leveraged ingeniously. Every 50p piece that is dropped into the collecting bucket at an event is important.

This is worth bearing in mind when we consider our second large project, the appeal to raise enough money to buy the fields adjacent to FAUNA. This has been masterminded by Mick Short, but he is not alone and is making good use of recently recruited volunteers to make the fund raising process as effective as possible. The amount of pledges we have received so far is very impressive, but we can use every penny raised over the summer to increase our chances of success. Everyone here can get involved and feel part of the process. Donations of time, energy and organisational expertise are just as welcome, indeed without them we will not succeed.

The energy of Association members has delivered a full and varied calendar of community events this year. Since the last AGM we have organised, run and enjoyed no fewer than nine well attended events. In chronological order these were Fun Day, Apple Day, Carol Singing in town and on Christmas Eve, Wassailing, the Easter Egg Hunt, the Blossom Picnic, Go Wild Week and the recent Kwik Cricket match. Our thanks as an Association go out to everyone who organised, helped out at and attended these events. If anyone feels like they would like to be involved in the next year's calendar of events then please let me know.

We do not focus solely on events though – the Association provides facilities and services to the people of Lancaster throughout the year. The playground on Fairfield Green continues to be well used, and I would like to extend a special series of thanks to the fathers who assisted me with the removal of graffiti and the team who are preparing the plaques for installation. The Millennium Orchard is also a focus for daily activity, and a great deal of effort has been put in behind the scenes to ensure our Breathing Places grant was wisely spent. To those who spent countless hours planning and proof-reading the imminent information boards my heartfelt thanks. Anyone who can spot an errant comma when they are installed will win my children's pocket money for a week. The Bug Hotels have been opened for business, and local schools have been making good use of the Orchard

for educational visits. Volunteers continue in Stakhanovite fashion with their diligent maintenance of the trees, paths and flora. For their energy and engagement we are grateful.

There have been other successes this year, which demonstrate that we are an Association that continues to thrive. Our Secretary Hilary Short has demonstrated she is an alchemist when submitting grant applications, and has had grants for new signs for the apple trees, the installation of commemorative plaques and the Fun day marquee awarded. We have also built upon the sterling work of the previous Chairman and developed our links with the local media, appearing on BBC Radio Lancashire a handful of times and making the front page of the Lancaster Guardian with our fields appeal. Communications with members has also been ably managed by Ruth Haigh, who has kept a diligent eye on the membership database and coordinated the delivery of newsletters and fliers to the Fairfield area. Her ability to conjure suitable names from the ether when a particular task needs doing has been particularly effective this year, and we have managed to involve a number of new members in various projects. We are never short of jobs that need doing – so if you feel like you can get involved in any way then please let Ruth know. Whether your talent is baking cakes, digging holes or taking minutes, the Fairfield Association needs you.

Finally, I would like to thank the only Committee member I have not thanked so far, Jude Naish our Treasurer. She's hanging up her abacus this year, but we're truly grateful for her years of service. To show this gratitude we've bought her a bunch of flowers. Since she's standing down she doesn't need to worry about processing the receipt.