**DELPH COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION**

**Chair’s Report to the AGM September 2016**

Delph Community Association (DCA) has focussed on two main areas this year: supporting Delph Library and maintaining and improving Chapel Garden.

**Delph Library**

The Library continues to be staffed by volunteers working in partnership with Oldham Libraries. It is open for 20 hours each week. A Library Assistant works alongside volunteers during opening hours. DCA is responsible for the running costs of the library.

There were 3764 visits to the library in the year July 1st 2015 – June 30th 2016. Four class visits from Delph School took place during the year. It was great to welcome Year 3 for the first time. The Rhyme Time sessions for under 5’s which take place on Friday mornings have been really successful and have attracted on average 7 adults and 14 children per session. The Library Reading Group meets in the library on the third Thursday of the month between 6.00 and 7.00pm.Readers who would like to try books outside their normal comfort zone are particularly welcome.

There are at present 29 volunteers who help to staff the library. The optimum number is about 35. Anyone interested in volunteering should leave their name and contact number with the Library Assistant.

**Chapel Garden**

For the past few years DCA has been responsible for the maintenance of Chapel Garden. A number of volunteers have worked hard to do his. However it has become clear that using volunteers alone is unsustainable. Therefore in May we put on an event to encourage local people to become Friends of Chapel Garden. With the money pledged we are now able to employ a gardener to do most of the maintenance work. We are very grateful to those who have become Friends and plan to hold another similar event in May 2017.

**Fund Raising**

1. **Scarecrow Trail**

This year’s theme was Animals in Fiction. There was a wonderful variety of animals from Puss in Boots and Puff the Magic Dragon to Kaa from the Jungle Book and Joey from Warhorse!

A great number of people followed the trail over the duration of two weeks which this year started with Whit Friday and continued over the Half Term holiday.

The winner of the draw for the first prize was Molly Hirst of Delph who with her family won a £50 voucher for a meal at the Old Bell Inn Restaurant. Prizes were also donated by the Bay Leaf restaurant, the Swan Inn, Shear Perfection, Saddleworth Players and Di Gaunt.

The People’s Choice Favourite Scarecrow prize once again went to the Old Bell Inn with their wonderful creation of the Owl and the Pussycat. The DCA Artistic and Creative Merit award was given to Jill Davis and members of the Methodist Church for Toto from the Wizard of Oz.

The sum of money raised this year (£750) was the highest so far in the nine years of the trail and this was the result of changing the printer with David Cummins’ help and raising the price of the trail guide to £2.

Many thanks are due to all who took part, particularly the 23 Scarecrow makers and the generous prize givers. Special thanks to Di Gaunt for composing the clues and to Jake Geen for completing the art work and layout of the trail guide. Most of all thanks are due to Sue Lund who organised the whole venture.

1. **Theatre Evening**

Saddleworth Players generously donated half of the tickets for the Sunday performance of the play ‘The Handyman’ to DCA in April. The evening was a success and well attended despite being held during the Easter Holidays. Once again we served a meal before the show and this seemed to be a popular choice. Thanks to all who generously contributed food for the meal and helped with the setting up and serving on the occasion. The event raised over £600.

1. **The Co-op Local Community Fund**

We have been selected to receive funding from the Co-op Local Community Fund. This means that for the next 6 months we will be getting a contribution from the local Co-op to help maintain and improve Chapel Garden. Co-op members can choose to support Delph Community Association. If they do, every time they buy something at Delph Co-op, DCA will get 1% of the value.

**Santa’s Grotto**

This was a new venture and was held in the Millgate Theatre on the afternoon of Saturday December 12th. Keith Begley and his helpers worked very hard to make and erect the grotto and the enchanted forest on the stage. Graham Griffiths was a convincing Santa and Tracey and children from her dance class entertained those waiting to see Santa. It was an enjoyable afternoon. Many thanks to all those who contributed.

**Beautiful Delph**

Jo Green organised two hanging basket planting sessions this spring. The first one was outside The Swan. The result was a great floral display along King St. The second was outside The Old Bell Inn and contributed to the flowers in New Delph. Thanks to her and all who took part. Earlier in the year she organised a ‘Clean for the Queen’ session. It snowed on the appointed day, so a band of intrepid volunteers cleared the snow from the pavements as well as removing rubbish.

**Litter Picking**

Eight Delphers take it in turns to litter pick in Chapel Garden, the car park behind the Methodist Church and the Swan Meadow Play Area for a week at a time. Thanks to them these areas are kept clean. More volunteers would be welcome.

**Whit Friday Sports**

 These were held on Delph School Playing Field on Whit Friday afternoon. Children ranging from preschool to first year secondary came with their families and had a good time. Thanks to all the volunteers who helped to make it a fun afternoon and to Delph School for allowing us to use their field and equipment.

**Conservation Area Signs**

The idea to have road signs marking the Delph Village Conservation Area was introduced by Keith Begley some years ago. The idea was to draw motorists’ attention to the attractive buildings in the village and so slow them down. Geoff Bayley eventually obtained planning permission and Cllr Nikki Kirkham arranged some funding. The signs were erected at the beginning of September. Thanks to all those who persevered with this plan.

**Defibrillator**

There is now a defibrillator for public use on the wall of Delph Library between the window and the door. Thanks are due to Alan Roughley for the idea that each village in Saddleworth should have a defibrillator and to the North West Ambulance Service for providing the equipment. Thanks are also due to Millgate Arts Centre for encouraging the siting of the defibrillator and to Peter Whiffin for installing it. DCA are responsible for carrying out weekly checks to ensure that the equipment is in good order.

**Saddleworth School Pupil Community Involvement Day**

A group of 12 Year 9 pupils from Saddleworth School and a teacher spent a couple of hours in the pouring rain pulling up Himalayan Balsam in Pingle Glade as their contribution to the local community. Keith Begley met them on arrival in Delph, took them to Pingle Glade and instructed them about Himalayan Balsam and how to pull it up. He reported that the pupils seemed to enjoy the experience.

**Thanks** to all those who have attended our meetings and those who have taken part in our activities. This includes special thanks to all the Library Volunteers. Thanks also to the Millgate Arts Centre and Delph Library for allowing us to meet in their buildings. Particular thanks go to Gill Clark, Mike Clegg, Keith Begley, Sue Lund, Tony Stell, Pat Howard, Jo Green and Geoff Bayley.

Phillida Shipp

September 2016