

ANNAN INITIATIVE CHAIRPERSONS REPORT

FOR

2009/2010

The 2008/2009 AGM, felt like the time your parents were reading a disappointing end of term school report with “could do better”. And believe me I had more than one of those during my time at school!

However, that was last year and things have moved on.

Much of the improvement is due to the sterling work of Robert Mitchell on the accounts – excuse the pun! Assisted very ably at the beginning of the year, by Ruth. So many thanks to you both.

In October, Annan Initiative nearly missed the deadline for submitting the annual funding application for 2010/2011, due to my ill health. Fortunately, Peter Davis came to the rescue and we made it by the skin of our teeth. However, when the response letter finally popped through the letter box, AI was not awarded any funding. This came as a shock. Then came along our knight in shining armour, Robert, who boldly went ahead and put a budget together that would see us through the by the skin of our teeth! This is very much a sign of things to come, given the current economic climate.

We recently received a much reduced sum of just over £1600, .via the Area Committee. As Chair, my reaction to this is simple, the work carried out by AI is cost effective and value for money – represented by people giving time for free. Like so many voluntary organisations: we are dedicated, hard working, committed to working for and in the community and AI demonstrate that on a regular basis: THI – Economic Regeneration – Pipe Band Championship – Annan Master Plan consultation process are examples.

Annan Initiative in the Community

The Annandale Way - AI has been the custodian of the £10,000 grant for a number of years and in 2009 the walk officially opened and the grant signed over.

Townscape Heritage Initiative – Uptake has been good. Bridge House is finally sold to a local businessman and work is under the way. With the offer of a Community Room, so the town can celebrate its links with the past – Carlyle and Irving.

Web-Site – Working with Saskia to update and change the web pages on a regular basis, as this moves it up the net. We have sponsored a banner publicising the Farmers Market and the British Pipe Band Championship. We introduced a new function button to the Home Page; every time it is pressed a small fee is raised for AI. So please, please use it as many times as you can.

British Pipe Band Championship - After 15 months of planning the championship is almost here. 131 bands are booked. AI took part in the process. The plans are in place. If anyone has time to spare on Friday, Saturday or on the big clear up on Sunday please contact Julie Douglas at Annan Town Hall – Stuart Thompson or Neil McIntyre.

Notice Boards – Tesco’s representative was true to their word, as in the foyer are Notice Boards for community use.

Farmers Market – This has been a slow burner. Held on the fourth Saturday of the month, between April and November. The Farmers Market Group has put effort into sustaining the market at The Bruce. Building relationships with the Stallholders, both

inside and out. Publicising the event each month. That is, until recently, when the rug was pulled out from under us and the owner of The Bruce with the changes to the licensing laws. A market/event can not be held on licensed premises if it is not part of the Operating Plan. For any changes, the licensee has to apply for a variation but there is a cost for this, based on the business rates. For the sole trader/ small business this can be prohibitive. I understand the requirement for regulation, I was a licensee myself, but restrictive regulation such as this hampers business. In D & G, for example, most businesses are S.M.E.'s.

Homecoming 2009 - AI's contribution to the 250th celebration of the life and times of Robert Burns was to present Annan Museum with a framed copy of the poem associating Burns with the town – “the die’ls awa with the excise man” A permanent reminder of the celebratory year.

The Office – At last it is up and running within the ClipIct building and “staffed” one day a week on a Thursday. The next stage is to open the office to the public for two hours on that day. This does depend, however, on volunteers coming forward to assist. This is a community resource, a focal point, an information centre.

Business Forum – Unfortunately, this has not come to fruition. The plan was to set up either a Business Forum or a Branch of the Chamber of Commerce - a voice for the town's businesses and also be part of the Economic Regeneration Steering Group.

Regeneration Steering Group – The natural successor to the THI. Several companies tendered for the opportunity to develop a plan for the future of the town, post Chapelcross. Turley Associates were charged with consultation, identifying possibilities and developing a Master Plan for the next 15-20 years – see the Annan website for details.

Last but by no means Least – Working with Councillor Brodie and local artist, Jack O'Hara, funding was won to provide a mural on a wall at the Port. The paintings depict scenes of local interest. The second stage depends on finding a funding source.

Sharon Ledger

Chair

Annan Initiative 2009/2010

June 10th 2010