

**WYKE BECK WAY COMMUNITY FORUM
ANNUAL REPORT 2008-2009**

1. The year in retrospect
 - 1.1 Since our last AGM in July '08, the Forum has continued to develop its ability to represent the 'green' community aspirations of the Valley. We have made major progress in this latter respect through our engagement with Aire Action Leeds who are sponsoring our Valley Master Plan proposal. Some five task groups with membership involvement are now engaged in a partnership dialogue that is enriching the process of community engagement and understanding of the Valley's 'green' potential.
 - 1.2 We have also made good progress convincing grant regime agencies of the merit of our strategy for the Valley which is beginning to release funds to undertake a range of schemes in the Valley. (*Subject to expected confirmation*) this new funding **will** give us the resources to run our first Conference in June '09 which will promote our role further.

2. Valley Master Plan
 - 2.1 Five Task Groups are now well established and have begun to develop information which will inform the Plan. The Task Groups cover Flood Alleviation, Access (Footpath & Cycle ways), Ecology, Education and Open Space/Heritage.
 - 2.2 **Flood Alleviation** plans being developed by the City Council and The Environment Agency have been discussed within the Flood Alleviation Task Group which has been attended by Environment Agency reps. Solutions appear to be moving towards primarily an engineered approach within the resident's garden area adjoining the beck as apposed to balancing ponds up the Valley. We anticipate further meetings of the group before this part of the brief can be clarified.
 - 2.3 **The Access Task Group** has had its first meeting in February and begun the process of defining the needs for additional footpath and cycle routes to be incorporated in the brief.
 - 2.4 **The Ecology Task Group** has met on three occasions throughout the year and organised a site visit. A draft brief has been drawn up; further meetings are planned to finalise this work.
 - 2.5 **The Education Task Group** is the Forums approach to finding ways for young people in the community to contribute to our objectives. The role of the Task Group has been strengthened by the active partnership we have formed with Groundwork Leeds, Viv Gibbons, Leeds Education . Parents Support Officer with local Primary Schools, and the continuation of our work with Leeds University Landscape Dept/Students. We are also building upon the links we first made with the David Young Community Academy last year in connection with the LMMU students Valley landscape project.
 - 2.6 **Open Space & Heritage Task Group** perspective is now being actively pursued thanks to new voluntary help. Helen Taylor who joined us late last year has participated in training with CABI Space - the national body which advises the government on Parks and Open Space policy and management. This training has equipped Helen to undertake community open space assessment work and a programme of meetings with communities in and close to the Valley is now being developed. This may lead to a further Workshop

day with the communities involved in the exercises later in the year and will provide the basis for developing the 'open space' brief for the Master Plan. We wish to place on record our appreciation to Helen for her enthusiasm for this work. We have yet to tap into community perspectives concerning the heritage of the Valley which, is rich in value and must form a key part of the Master Plan brief. We aim to make progress on this front in the following year.

- 2.7 The co-ordination of all this work rests with the Centre volunteers principally Eric Cowin Centre Manager (who attends Aire Action Leeds meetings and meets senior agency personnel to inform and involve them in key Master Plan issues) and David Conboy Project Manager who has given a strong lead on the Education Task Group and facilitated the meeting of the Access Task Group.
3. Accountability to Members - Organisational performance.
 - 3.1 Forum Board Meetings: -There were three Forum meetings during the last year (March, July and October) and four Board of Trustees meetings. Whilst there could have been a further Forum meeting at the beginning of this year, but the level of membership involvement in Task Group dialogue, was already proving an effective way to ensure most members were aware and able to participate.
 - 3.2 Following last years AGM to new members, John Cummins and Dave Davenport joined the Board and have played a full role in Trustees affairs. There has been an excellent attendance record by all Trustees. In Jan '09 we elected a further new Trustee, Anne German. creating a Board of 7 members, with strong ties to organisations firmly rooted in the Valley. All Trustees have indicated their willingness to stand for the following year although Roger Harrington who has been chair since our inception in 2005 plans to retire at the end of **this** year.
 - 3.3 Finance: -The Trustees continue to receive and accept reports on the financial affairs of the Forum. During the year progress was made in submitting grant applications to four bodies. Two of these are in partnerships - one with Groundwork Leeds and the other with Leeds City Council. These have given us £10900 to date with a likely further £4100 by the end of April '09. Longer term help to develop our work into the next three years will be assured if the Access to Nature bid (LCC Partnership) is successful. We are indebted to David Conboy, our Treasurer for this work in particular although we do place on record our appreciation to John Weaver of Groundwork Leeds and Lisa Thornton of Leeds City Council for their unstinting support **and** excellent contributions on this front too.
- 4 Finally, the Trustees wish record their thanks to the Centre Manager, Eric Cowin and again to David Conboy as Project Manager who covered the work of the Centre during absences by the Centre Manager last year due to illness and this year due to a long vacation. For a small voluntary organisation we do continue to succeed which can only be achieved by the co-operation of everyone including Trustees, Forum members and all those others among our valuable network of friends and supporters. We thank you all sincerely. We look forward to achieving even better results in the following year.