



To develop, empower and transform  
Protestant, Unionist and Loyalist Communities

North Belfast  
A Community Convention  
12th October 2006



## 12th OCTOBER 2006 - HAVE YOU GOT IT IN YOUR DIARY?

### What are the aims of a Community Convention?

- To encourage and reinforce individual and community confidence
- To improve relationships within Protestant communities and with Government
- To develop a positive vision for Protestant communities
- To identify areas for action - e.g. funding, education, community facilities
- To lobby for new and more effective government policies which meet the needs of Protestant communities



### Where will the Conventions be held?

They are taking place all over Northern Ireland, but the good news is that there is one happening right here. It is on 12th October in the Indian Community Centre from 10am until 2pm and 7pm until 9pm. Please feel free to join us for some food and refreshments at 6pm.



### Who will be at it?

Everybody who's anybody! There will be community groups, church leaders, politicians, government departments, statutory agencies and funders.



### Will there be an opportunity to tell people about my organisation?

Absolutely! This is a day for you to meet new people, get information on

funding opportunities and find out what other groups in the area are doing. You can have your own display stand and showcase the good work you are doing!

### Will it cost me anything?

This is the best part- it's absolutely free! We will even help you financially to put together publicity material for your display stand.

### How do I find out more?

Easy! Contact Dawn on 028 9033 1461.

*Community Conventions, here to help develop, empower and transform Protestant communities.*

### Origins

In March 2003, an ad-hoc group of politicians and community leaders (known as The Think Tank) met informally to discuss the state and future of local Protestant/ Unionist/Loyalist communities (PUL).

After a few months of discussion it was agreed it was imperative that a programme to 'Transform Loyalist Communities' should be developed. The analysis was based on the strong belief that while many issues of deprivation are common to disadvantaged communities across Northern Ireland, there were issues, experiences and dynamics that are particular and distinct to PUL communities.

The Think Tank believed mainstream Government programmes were failing to effectively address PUL community problems and if transformation was to be achieved it would require a particular focus and special programmes. These issues express themselves, for example, around levels of educational underachievement, population decline/imbalance, paramilitarism, physical degeneration, alienation and stigmatisation governed by a sense of loss.

### The Convention Model

A number of the Think Tank members had been involved with the first Shankill Convention, a community based response to the devastating paramilitary feud.

The Greater Shankill Community Convention, held in May/June 2002, was organised around a two-day exhibition emphasising community achievements, involving over eighty local interests, followed by two days of discussions around key local issues facing the community. The agenda was set by the community itself which reflected local ownership of the Convention.

The Shankill Convention succeeded in establishing a new community sense of confidence, unity of purpose and a resolve to work together. It became a mechanism which the community could use to come together to address strategic issues e.g. housing.

### The Work Begins

The Think Tank believed the process of transformation could be enhanced, in the first instance, by using the Convention model in other PUL communities and they successfully lobbied government for funding to run four pilot conventions across Northern Ireland, the first of which was a



successful follow-up Convention held on the Shankill in September 2004. Also that month, the Community Convention and Development Company was formally established with a board representative of the different interests of the PUL community. A staff team and base were established in January 2005.



## Interested in finding out more?

If you are interested in finding out more or wish to attend the Community Convention please contact:

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