



Press Statement

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Community Conventions Company Launch

Community Conventions is a community development organisation which was established in 2005 to work in Protestant, Unionist and Loyalists areas of Northern Ireland. Mid and South Armagh is one of the four areas the company is working in and Tuesday 27th June marked the launch of the work of the company in this area. The launch also coincided with a focus group established to examine the issues of leadership in a modern society.

In setting the context for the evening, Dawn Shackels, Development Officer stated:

“since September 2005 Community Conventions has been actively working in Mid and South Armagh through a number of organisations, including PUL Networking. “ Tonight she added, “is the final in a series of focus groups which the Company has delivered in this area. The findings and recommendations of each of the focus groups, details of which are available on our website, will feed into a major Convention for Mid and South Armagh being held on the 12th September 2006 in Armagh City Hotel.”

To commence the evening’s discussion, Dawn introduced the **Reverend Mervyn Gibson, Chairperson of the Company** who gave a brief presentation on those whom the PUL community have traditionally looked to in order to provide leadership - the Churches, Loyal Orders and Communities. He went on to say that in terms of moving forward and creating and developing innovative leaders for the future “people need to take calculated risks” and that “leadership as we know it today has been stifled because people can’t or don’t take risks.”

In posing three questions to the assembled group of community, voluntary, private and statutory sectors, Rev Gibson added that the time is ripe for the PUL community to develop, empower and transform itself to address the issues that come with living in a modern society and to that end he encouraged everyone to attend the Community Convention on 12th September 2006.

Rev Gibson finished by adding:

"When all the pilot conventions are complete, there is a commitment from government to discuss any policy issues which the community conventions raise. The Company and your Convention on 12th September 2006 is a clear opportunity for the voice of Protestant Unionist and Loyalist communities to be heard."

Ends

Notes for editors

1. The CC&DC Ltd was established in September 2004 by community activists from across Northern Ireland. They wished to transform Protestant/Unionist/Loyalist (PUL) communities by addressing the problems and difficulties of PUL social capital and improve the relationship with government agencies. The Company were successful in securing funding from the Department for Social Development for a two year pilot phase with conventions to be held in different PUL communities across Northern Ireland.
2. The Company has received funding to establish the organisation and to deliver four pilot conventions.
3. The Company offices are at the Spectrum Centre, Belfast, Victoria Street Armagh and The Old Courthouse, Markethill.
4. The Convention will be held on 12th September 2006 in the Armagh City Hotel. The event will run from 10 am until 10 pm.
5. The Company's website address is www.comcon.org.uk