



Banbury District Housing Coalition

of Churches and World Faith Groups

Registered Charity No. 1067726

January '06 Update

The Beacon Day Centre

The Beacon is flourishing thanks to donations from churches, businesses and individuals, the continuing financial support from Cherwell District and Banbury Town Council and the work of many able Volunteers led by Nigel Deakin. Co-operation received from DISH and SMART is greatly appreciated. Several regular Visitors enjoyed a successful day out to Bournemouth in July and a new pool table has been unveiled at St.Mary's Centre. The annual Carol Service and party was well attended and as usual the Centre remained open on Bank Holidays and Christmas Day. The yield from the summer Street Collection was the best yet and the Treasure Hunt, a new fundraising venture, attracted good support.

The Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme

The importance of this Scheme was again recognised when in August the Big Lottery awarded a substantial sum to the Coalition to partfund the employment of a specialist case worker for three more years. Other funding comes from Cherwell District Council and from Banbury Homes which manages the operation. The Scheme gives additional assurance to Private Landlords and Letting Agents who might otherwise be chary about accepting tenants in receipt of Housing Benefit. The Lottery requires a monthly return giving the ethnic mix of tenants and in this connection it is good to report that Sikh and Muslim representatives have recently joined the Coalition's Executive. This is very much in line with BDHC thinking as the title on our letterhead makes clear.

Country Homes

Two speakers at the 2005 A.G.M. focussed on the way villages in the District can help to stem the rising tide of homelessness. The Coalition's Country Homes group seeks to address some misconceptions on this sensitive subject. There are villages where the average age of residents has risen to such an extent that it is impossible to find new people prepared to serve, for example, on a Flower Show Committee. Contrary to myth, "affordable" does not mean "cheap-looking" and a few affordable homes occupied by tenants with pre-existing village connections can bring fresh life to a community. The properties tend to change hands every few years as families grow up and move on so it is also an investment for the future. A new leaflet is in preparation on this subject.

Grateful Thanks

Apart from Council support and the exceptional Lottery Grant mentioned above the Coalition receives no statutory funding and depends on the continued generosity of its benefactors to survive. A Happy New Year to you all! Our Treasurer, c/o Phipps, Henson, McAllister, 1-2 St. John's Place, BANBURY OX16 5JP is always pleased to hear from you!