

Dukinfield Autumn Fair 2017

Yesterday we held our annual Autumn Fair at Chapel, and despite Storm Brian doing his worst we had a really successful afternoon. A fair of this size doesn't happen overnight. It took weeks of planning and preparation, and there are some who feel that perhaps it's all a bit too much for the financial return we get. But being in our Hall yesterday gave me a warm glow. We saw different members of Chapel taking part in so many different roles. People came to help out who we don't usually see at fund raising efforts. Gents with their Marigolds on washing up in the kitchen, ladies sitting on stalls that wouldn't normally take such a visible role. It showed our Chapel Community at its best. We call ourselves a Chapel family, and we have our arguments and disagreements just like families do, but we pull together too. When things are tough we join together to make quite a formidable force. We are a very real community. It is this sense of community that I think is the most successful part of our Fair. It brings us together, helping one another for a purpose that is important for many not just a few. Yes we want to make money to keep our building going, but more than that we want to be there to provide a space for us to be together as a community. And our community is open to all – as proof of this we have ladies who are members of the Church of England congregation in our town who come regularly to our fund-raising efforts because they enjoy the company and community the efforts provide.

When we were growing up our town had lots of back to back houses, two up two down as they used to call them. Doors were never locked and when tea was on the table, if there was another child at the table it got fed just the same. It didn't matter whose child it was. And if you were in trouble at school on your way home you were told off by all the mums that happen to be at their front doors even before you got home. But when trouble hit a household, people helped one another out. We lived so close together that neighbour and community were things that were part of the towns life blood.

Today our life is so different – we live so much in our own little world's. Isolation is a real problem, and as people are living longer, keeping in touch with others is for some getting harder. Looking round our Hall during our Autumn fair, the ages of those that were there were – well how can I say delicately – well they were not so young shall we say. But they all enjoyed that sense of community that the fair provided.

In the Bible we have a quote from Hebrews 10:24-25

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

May we continue to encourage one another in our groups and communities, whatever and wherever they may be. May love and good deeds be at the forefront of our being together.