



PRESS RELEASE – COVENTRY PEACE ORCHARD PLANNED FOR COUNDON

The dream of Coventry D-Day veteran, 94 year old Dennis Davison, has finally come to fruition. For many years he has wanted to see an apple orchard planted in Coventry as a legacy to the apple orchards of Normandy where he and many others fought for peace in 1944 as part of the D-Day Campaign.

The charity he founded in 2010, Normandy Day UK, has secured funding from the people's Postcode Lottery and Big Lottery for a Peace orchard on a site in Coundon Hall Park. Before Work starts in November – to coincide with National Tree Week and the Coventry Peace Festival - those interested are invited to a **Community Information Evening at 6.00-7.30 p.m. on Thursday 2nd November in Pope Francis Hall, Cardinal Newman School**, where project organisers will involve local schools and residents in developing an online resource and planning events and activities. Dennis will also share some of his experiences of the D-Day Landings.

Over the next year, Cardinal Newman and Coundon Court Schools will work with experts to research the significance of events in 1944, the importance of Coventry's role as the city of Peace and Reconciliation, local history and the techniques of managing an apple orchard.

Last year Dennis was awarded the Legion D'Honneur by the French government for his contribution to Normandy Campaign and the British Empire Medal. He said, "For me, this is not a memorial. It's a practical expression of what unites us. It's a way of learning how to build peace, learn from the past and create something worthwhile. If the community get behind it, the orchard could produce an apple crop for hundreds of years and delight young people as their trees grow and produce fruit. It's already a beautiful site. We would like it become a haven of peace that people will want to visit long after I've gone."

Marina Kelly, Head Teacher of Cardinal Newman Catholic School said, "We have known Dennis for several years. He is living history and inspires our students when he speaks to them about his D-Day experiences. Last year Cardinal Newman became the UK's first designated Peace School and we are delighted to be working with Normandy Day UK on this project, which will further deepen our students' understanding of the past and how to live together peacefully."

Project Manager, Andy Duncan, said, "This is a long term project. The first apples may not be harvested for two years, but there are many ways to get involved, depending on your interests – researching local history or the techniques of apple growing, organising events, caring for the site, adopting a tree and planning for the harvest, when it comes."



A Community Planting Day will also be held at the site on Saturday 18th November

Further information:

To register for the Community Information Evening, go to the Normandy Day UK Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/NormandyDayUK/>

The site is located just off Tamworth Road near the junction with Long Lane. Planting days for schools and local people will be arranged to coincide with National Tree Week which starts on Monday 6th November, the week before Remembrance Day (12th November).

Postcode Local Trust and Big Lottery have each awarded nearly £10,000. The Tree Council has awarded £500 and the Woodland Trust has donated wild hedge species. Coventry City Council's Park Rangers will supervise the planting and help with site care. Specialist advice will be provided by The Apple Man, who runs an apple tree nursery in Oswestry. Specialist peace education advice will be provided by Balbir Sohal Associates and project management by AJD Regeneration.



Dennis Davison, Legion D'Honor, BEM,
Chair & Founder, Normandy Day UK charity