

WEST NORTHUMBERLAND COMMUNITY BUILDINGS CONSORTIUM
(A Self Help Group Run by Members for Members)

**Minutes of the Management Committee Meeting held 4th July 2013 at Shepherd's
Dene Retreat Centre.**

The meeting was held at Shepherd's Dene by the kind invitation of Warden, George Hepburn. The meeting incorporated the annual review of the Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) Scheme.

1 Present

Management Committee - Mike Woods (Chair), Norman Hooks, Michael Elphick, Adrian Hinchcliffe, Liz Stewart, Keith Robson, Georgia Shorrocks.

PAT Testing Volunteer Testers: Matt Singleton (PAT Testing Co-ordinator), Alan Brewin, Pat Stott, Michael Stott

2 Apologies for Absence

Margaret Weatherley, Pat Johnston, Julia Plinston (CA-N), Denis Peel, Melvyn Whatmough

3 Portable Appliance Testing Scheme – Annual Review.

Matt Singleton started off the review by thanking all the Volunteer Testers for all the work they had put in over the last year in completing the second year of testing. He said the scheme had worked reasonably well but some issues had arisen on identifying the contact details for some Halls especially where there had been a change from the previous year. The Secretary said that he may be partly responsible for this and he accepted that communications to the Halls due to receive the service had not been as good as the first year.

Testing Procedure

There ensued a discussion on whether the PAT testing data base, which holds the contact details for each member, on the web site should be accessible without a password. The Secretary had evidence to show that members mislaid the password and therefore did not use the PAT testing information on the web site. It was considered that taking off the password was an option provided the Consortium was not breaking any data protection laws. **It was agreed to pursue this further and if necessary to ask the members for permission.**

Denis Peel had made the suggestion that the procedure could be improved if the Voluntary Testers issued an invoice at the time of doing the testing. **After discussion there was consensus that it would be better to continue with the Co-ordinator issue the invoices for this gave better control.**

The issue of Identity cards for the volunteer co-ordinators was raised. One volunteer tester had been asked for an 'ID' and he was not able to produce anything. **It was agreed that each volunteer testers should be provided with an identity card.**

It was also considered that each volunteer tester should be aware of the cost of the service to members. **This was agreed.**

A suggestion was made that the 'Appliance Register and Testing Record' should be a two part carbonised set so that one copy could be left with the member hall. Some members do request a copy and this has to be organised by photocopying by the volunteer tester. **It was agreed to investigate this change.**

Recalibration

It was agreed that Matt singleton would arrange for two testing sets to be sent to York for recalibration. The set purchased from Matt was recalibrated in May 2013 therefore did not need recertifying until May 2014.

Insurance

Mike Wood pointed out that now we have a third testing set, which means that we could have three people involved in testing simultaneously, there will be a need to upgrade the insurance to cover three testers. This would result in a higher premium.

Volunteer Testers

Two volunteer Testers Mike Wood and Melvyn Whatmough had stated that they would like to retire as volunteer testers. The other members indicated that they were willing to continue and Matt Singleton was willing to continue as the Scheme Co-ordinator but would like to do less testing. This meant that there was an urgent need to recruit new volunteers for testing. **It was agreed that the Secretary would approach each member to see if new volunteers can be found.**

Training for New Volunteer Testers

New volunteers will have to be trained and certified as competent before they can undertake testing. This is quite expensive with a number of options.

- a) Training at York - £99 plus VAT per person.
- b) Training at a location away from York - £129 plus VAT per person. But an individual course has to be for a minimum of 8 people ((£976 plus VAT).
- c) Distance Learning – by use of a DVD Rom, with certificate on completion - £60 plus VAT including one login per person. Additional persons would be charged at £30. Plus VAT

Of these options members considered (c) to be the most flexible but there was a question of the validity of the certification which needed to be queried and confirmed. Michael Stott also offered his services to act as mentor for any new volunteers. Alan Brewin also made the point that we should retain some of the ‘failed’ appliances for training purposes. It was further agreed that Mike Wood would look for any other training possibilities closer to home than York.

Re-fresher training for the Existing volunteer testers

All existing volunteer testers would need to undergo refresher training at the end of the third cycle. More information to be sought on what is necessary and the options for undertaking the training.

PAT Testing Co-ordinator to become a member of the Management Committee

It was suggested that the PAT Testing Scheme Co-ordinator should become a member of the Management Committee. This was agreed although it was recognised that Matt Singleton will probably not be able to attend the meeting due to work commitments but it would give him direct access to the committee.

Volunteer Testers Expenses

It was noted that some volunteers had not yet submitted their expense claims and they were urged to do so.

Financial Standing of the PAT Testing Scheme

The Treasurer presented an extract from the books of account for the PAT testing scheme and the Secretary had produced a financial model of the Scheme for the present year. The latter indicated that the scheme had produced a turnover of approximately £1,400 (42 members and 3 non members) and expenses came to around £850 giving a surplus of around £550. From the surplus the additional testing machine had been purchased at a cost of £250.

Charge for the PAT Testing Service for 2013/14

In assessing what the charge should be for the next round of testing it was noted that there would be increased charges for insurance, recalibration and training. **A charge of £30.00 was agreed for up to 50 appliances and 50p per appliance over 50.**

Third Testing Kit

It was agreed that the third testing kit should be held by the Scheme Co-ordinator and deployed as necessary to keep the programme up to timetable.

Thanks to Volunteers Testers

Sincere thanks were expressed to the Volunteer PAT testers for giving their time and carrying out this essential and vital service for members. They are:-

**Alan Brewin, Pat Johnston, Denis Peel, Matt Singleton, Liz Stewart,
Michael and Pat Stott, Melvyn Whatmough, Mike Wood.**

Next Steps

The Secretary will be contacting all members to see if they want to continue using the scheme in 2014 and at the same time to try and recruit new members for testing.

4 Minutes of the Management Committee Meeting held 7 May 2013

These were approved and signed by the Chair.

5 Matters Arising from the Minutes

There were none.

6 Review of the Spring Meeting held 07.05.13

The Committee noted that there were only two members present apart from the committee. For this number it is not worth putting on these meetings. Any issues that need communicating to members can be done through the web site or sent direct to members by email. It was therefore agreed that the Spring Meeting would be dropped from the annual calendar which would leave the Annual General Meeting as the one formal meeting each year. **It was agreed to report this to members.** If there is a burning topic that needs a one –off meeting this can always be called by the committee.

7 Northumberland Energy Club

Nothing to report.

8 Web site Operations

Michael Elphick reported that usage of the web site was continuing as in previous months. Some changes had been made to the front page.

9 Membership Update

The Secretary had emailed those members that had not paid the 201/13 subscription. This had resulted in three members paying their subscription. This left the following members who would be followed up by letter:

Corsenside Parish Hall

Stonehaugh Community Hall

Great Whittington Village Hall

Minsteracres Retreat Centre

Haltwhistle Community Centre

10 Treasurers Report

The Treasurer produced a summarised statement of account and stated that the bank balance at the day of the meeting was £3,347.92.

11 Annual General Meeting

It was agreed that the AGM shall be held on Wednesday 6th November 2013 commencing at 7.00pm. The following locations to be considered: Ovingham Reading Room, Hexham Community Centre or Newton and Bywell Community Hall. **Subsequently confirmed that the Ovingham Reading Room is not available.**

Suggested topics for discussion at the meeting are (two to be selected) :

Fire Brigade – Fire Risk Assessment

Village Halls as ‘Emergency Centres’ in times of community emergencies.

Environment Agency Flood Plans

12 Hand Held Infra- Red Cameras

The Secretary had received a suggestion from Denis Peel that the Consortium should purchase or hire a hand-held infra-red camera which members could use to identify the areas where their halls are losing heat and areas of dampness. The camera could be passed from Hall to Hall and whilst in each village it could be used to assess other community buildings.

The committee thought that this was a very good idea and requested that we find out the cost of such a camera or the hire charges.

13 Next Committee Meeting

The next Management committee meeting will be held on Thursday 19 September 2013 at Gilsland Village Hall commencing at 9.30am.

Following the closure of the meeting members enjoyed lunch provided by Shepherd's Dene as a thank you for the PAT testing service. Thanks were expressed to George Hepburn for their generosity.

Signed as a Correct record.....date.....