

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

**Minutes of the Management Committee Meeting held 5<sup>th</sup> February 2013 at the  
Newbrough Town Hall.**

- 1 Present**  
Mike Wood (Chair), Michael Elphick, Adrian Hinchcliffe, Norman Hooks, Liz Stewart, Keith Robson.
- 2 Apologies for Absence**  
Margaret Weatherley, Pat Johnston and Julia Plinston (CAN)
- 3 Minutes of the Meeting Held 6<sup>th</sup> November 2012.**  
These were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.
- 4 Minutes of the AGM held 6<sup>th</sup> November 2012.**  
The minutes were noted.
- 5 Matters Arising from the Minutes**  
**(a) Love Northumberland Awards – progress to be reported by Pat Johnston at a future meeting.**
- 6 Portable Appliance Testing Scheme**  
Mike Wood has now completed his round and Liz Stewart hopes to finish hers before the end of the month. Denis Peel is about to commence his round. It was noted that one member had gone ahead and had their appliances tested externally due to the delay.  
There had been a query on whether the microwave tester had been certified. Mike Wood said it had. Denis Peel had suggested we ought to have one additional testing set. It was agreed to leave this for consideration at the end of this round of testing. Mike Wood said he will not be able to do some of the testing next year and it was agreed that we should try to recruit some additional testers. A distance learning package was mentioned as being available for training (cost £90.00)  
It was noted that Acomb VH and Haltwhistle Leisure Centre had not paid their invoice for 2011/12. The Secretary would contact them.  
It was agreed that the scheme would be reviewed once the current round of testing is over. Adrian to contact Matt Singleton to determine a time of day when he is available. Probably go for sometime in June.  
Liz Stewart said she had only received one claim from the Volunteer Testers for expenses.
- 7 The Northumberland Energy Club – Progress Report**  
A payment of commission of £130.16 had been notified from LSI for the October to December quarter. From this commission a payment of £27.66 was due to the North Northumberland Village Halls Consortium.  
The Secretary read out all the village halls and other organisations that have taken out contracts – 34 in total. It was agreed that we should publicise the Energy Club in the next Newsletter.  
Mike Wood referred to a circular from LSI advertising their services for competition in water. The Secretary agreed to request more information on this.
- 8 Web Site Operations**  
Michael Elphick reported 100 page visits each day. There was a discussion on the whether a password is required for some sections of the PAT testing part of the web site. It was agreed that we should continue using them. It was noted that the domain name charge has been paid and secured for 12 months.
- 9 Membership Update**  
The Treasurer reported that 36 members had paid their annual subscription. The Secretary would follow up on those who had not paid. Hexham Masonic Hall had contacted the Secretary to say they would be discontinuing their membership. No reasons had been given.

- 10 Treasurers Report**  
The Treasurer said that the accounts for 2011/12 had been finalised and checked by Margaret Weatherly. They showed an opening balance of £1,036.83 and a closing balance of £2,254.31. A surplus of £1,217.48 had been achieved. Of this £161.25 had been received from LSI and the PAT Testing activity had produced a surplus of £600.26 although some of this is for future replacements. Subscriptions brought in £630.  
The current balance will be around £2,500.
- 11 Meeting with the NCC 12.12.12.**  
Mike Wood had attended the meeting which had been called by the NCC with the objectives of getting all Village Halls registered with the NCC as an approved supplier. NCC were also thinking of setting up a web site of village Halls but it was pointed out to them that we already have one which holds details of each member hall. Hyperlinks could be set up if the NCC wish to develop a web site.  
At the meeting WARPIT was mentioned. This is the 'Waste Action Reuse Portal. It is a re-cycling scheme for furniture and lots of other items. Items can be acquired at no cost. Norman Hooks said that the Stocksfield Community Centre had used the service to acquire office tables. It was agreed to bring this service to the attention of members.
- 12 Succession Planning**  
Agreed that we need to have a succession plan rather than just leaving things until the AGM. Six members of the Management Committee had been on since its inception. Two have indicated that they wish to step down soon. We also need new PAT Testers. It was agreed to feature these needs in the Newsletter.  
Georgia Shorrocks of Gilsland VH had enquired about joining the Committee but could not attend meetings on Tuesdays. It was agreed to change the day of the meetings to Thursday to enable Georgia to attend.
- 13 New Initiatives for Members**  
Northfire of Acomb had given the Consortium a quotation for the annual maintenance of fire appliances. It looked very attractive. It was agreed that we should establish a panel for this type of work. North Fire quote would be publicised to members in the Newsletter. Adrian would co-ordinate with Michael to set up a panel on the web site.  
  
In the discussion an issue was identified concerning the annual maintenance of fire alarm systems. Some clarification to be sought on whether this is a statutory requirement.
- 14 C4C**  
The Secretary had attended a meeting of the Voluntary and Community Sector Assembly being set up by C4C. There is still doubt whether the Assembly is to be more than a talking shop. Adrian's thoughts on the current situation were stated as follows:  
The Voluntary and Community Sector in Northumberland is wide and dispersed. It means different things to different persons/organisations. The Assembly is an attempt to bring the whole sector together to identify benefits and improvements for all. C4C have started off the process and has established a web site and periodic E newsletters which are definitely improving communications. However, there is a long way to go and due to it taking place over such a long period of time interest may be diminishing. A number of people present at the meeting said that it needs to be more than a talking shop otherwise there is no point – and the Assembly needs to focus on outcomes and things that it can achieve to illustrate to the VCS sector that it is worth working together and committing the time. The difficulty is that the process of setting up the Assembly is time consuming and bureaucratic and perhaps the shadow Action Group feel that they do not have the authority to move things on without democratic backing. Democratic backing will only come if members of the VCS Sector consider it is going to be worthwhile and there is something in it for each of them.
- 15 Spring Meeting**  
It was suggested that the Spring Meeting should take place on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2013 at the Stocksfield Community Centre (subject to confirmation) commencing at 7.00pm. The programme to consist of the following:  
Remote Controlled Heating System.  
Fire Alarm Systems  
Web Site  
Northumberland Energy Club  
PAT Testing

- 16 Community Action Northumberland (CAN)**  
 There was a discussion about the difficult financial circumstances of CAN. It needs to generate revenue. There was a consensus that the services offered by CAN should not be free. A membership fee should also be considered.
- 17 Revenue Grants**  
 Reference was made to an article in the Newcastle Journal in which it was stated that County Durham may be stopping giving revenue grants to village halls where the Hall has substantial reserves. Although this may not be applicable to our members, it was thought that some guidance should be compiled to justify the reason for reserves.
- 18 Snow Action Plan**  
 Reference was made to a bulletin issued by ACRE encouraging Village Halls to clear their car parks of snow in snowy conditions.
- 19 VAT on Energy**  
 It had come to light that a member had been paying 20% VAT on their fuel bills. The correct level is 5% provided the quantity purchased does to exceed certain levels. This will be put in a Newsletter to members.
- 20 Discretionary Council Tax Relief**  
 The County Council was to continue giving discretionary council tax relief for members. Letters are due out any day.
- 21 CAN Food Safety Training**  
 It was suggested that the Consortium should use some of its cash as a contribution to the cost of the Food Safety Courses being put on by CAN. It was agreed that we would give £10.00 for representatives of each member attending the courses. It was also thought that we should ask the members what training needs they have with view to having a programme of financial support for training.
- 22 Next Meeting**  
 The next meeting of the Management Committee will be held before the Spring Meeting commencing at 5.00pm.

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