

WEST NORTHUMBERLAND COMMUNITY BUILDINGS CONSORTIUM

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE PERIOD TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2009.

1 **Inaugural Meeting**

The Consortium was created at the Inaugural meeting held 14 May 2008. The meeting elected a Management Committee, as set out below, to take forward the organisation.
Chair, Mike Wood; Secretary, Adrian Hinchcliffe; Treasurer, Liz Stewart; Management Committee members, Malcolm Caisley, Mike Elphick, Bill Grigg, Norman Hooks, Pam Niven, Pam Pryor and Keith Robson.

2 **Meetings of the Management Committee**

The Management Committee has met on ten occasions. With regret, Bill Grigg resigned from the Committee in September 2008 due to not being able to get to the meetings. The Management Committee wish to acknowledge the invaluable support received from Alan Hedley, Louise Currie and Jane Hart of Community Action-Northumberland. Good relations have been established with the North Northumberland Village Halls Consortium which has similar aims. Copies of the Management Committee minutes are available on the web-site.

3 **Aims of the Consortium**

In taking forward the organisation the Management Committee has established the following aims for the Consortium:

- Derive financial benefits by using the bulk purchasing power of the Consortium.
- Derive financial benefits by joint purchasing.
- Offering an information service and resolving issues on matters relating to community buildings.
- Joint training for members.
- Lobbying on behalf of members.
- Providing a forum for members to exchange views, ideas and best practice.
- Enabling Community buildings to have a higher profile in the community.

4 **Membership**

The Management Committee are delighted that 47 community buildings have joined the Consortium. We know that there are at least another 13 in West Northumberland that are not members and we would like to see them join and enjoy the benefits of membership.

5 **Communications with Members**

It is the belief of the Management Committee that an effective Consortium must have good communications with its members. To achieve this, the following communication methods are in use:

- Periodic Newsletters (five have been issued so far)
- Emailing of information and other snippets
- At least two General Meetings each year
- A web-site with a confidential area for members
- The mailing of confidential information on member discounts etc

Electronic communications (emailing or internet) are the preferred method of communications for it cuts down the administration for the officers. Of the 47 members, only five do we not hold an email address. These members are getting less than a full service and the benefits of membership. We would encourage these members to find a way of giving the Consortium an email address. The Consortium also relies upon the recipient of emails to distribute them around their committee

The web-site (www.westnorthumberlandcbc.org.uk) is a self build using a 'Rural Click tool kit'. It will become increasingly important as the Consortium grows and increases the number of products for members along with sources of information and the opportunity to market member Halls and Community Buildings.

6 **Negotiation of Members Benefits**

So far the Consortium has been successful in negotiating significant discounts on insurance charges for Community Buildings and has appointed a Broker who will obtain the lowest possible electricity, gas and telecommunication prices using the buying power of the Consortium as a lever. On Insurance it is known that some members have benefited by several hundreds of pounds in discounts whilst the norm is around a reduction of ten percent. On energy we are beginning to see the reductions coming through and some are spectacular. For a ten pound annual membership fee of the Consortium this must be a good deal.

7 **Other Benefits Being Negotiated**

The Management Committee are currently in negotiations for discounts on the following services:

- Electrical Installation Testing
- Portable Appliance Testing
- Emergency Lighting and Fire Alarm System Testing.
- Fire Extinguisher Testing

8 **Lobbying and Other Member Services**

During the period being reported the Management Committee has lobbied on behalf of members and offered the following information services:

Lobbying and Advice

- Discretionary Council Tax Relief for charities
- Surface Water Charges
- The National Lottery
- Licensing of Music in Community Buildings

Information Services

- Resolving technical and semi-technical issues
- Members information requests and relaying news and announcements
- Trustees Indemnity
- Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)

9 Special General Meeting

A special general meeting was held on 14 May 2009 and was attended by 22 members.

Arthur Scott of National Energy Action gave a general presentation on how energy costs can be saved and how village/community Halls and other community buildings should be exemplars in the use of energy. Arthur went on to talk about renewable energy technologies and how to carry out an energy audit. Colin Earnshaw, Community Enterprise Officer of the Northumberland National Park also spoke about a number of successful renewable energy projects that were up and running in and around the National Park. Richard Austin, Funding Officer with the Northumberland National Park also spoke about the sources of funding that are available for energy schemes of all types.

As a result of this meeting, enquiries were made about energy control systems in village halls and other community buildings and a project to install a system is underway at the Newton and Bywell Community Hall. Once the results of this are known they will be circulated to Consortium members.

10 Direction of the Consortium

The Management Committee has spent some time discussing the direction in which the Consortium should develop over the next few years. Community Buildings are very important and the hub of rural communities especially in rural areas. Social, business, health, educational and sporting activities take place in these buildings and they are an enabler to sustainability. On this basis it is argued that the buildings themselves should be exemplars in their own right. Places that have high standards and quality and lead on things like energy efficiency and the use of renewable resources and ICT, and places that local people are proud of. This is the vision for the future but we do not know where we are today and what issues we face in bringing about this vision. The Management Committee therefore suggest that the Consortium should carry out a survey of member Community Buildings to ascertain the state of the buildings, their usage, support, financial health. By carrying out such a survey the Consortium will then become aware of the needs of members and can organise to assist in providing those needs and priorities.

It was agreed that the views of members on this suggestion would be sought at the 2009 AGM.

11 Accounts for the Period to 30 September 2009.

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNTS FOR THE PERIOD MAY 2008 TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2009.

RECEIPTS	£	PAYMENTS	£
Members Subscriptions (47 at £10)	470.00	Secretary's Expenses (postage & copying)	99.17
		Treasurer's Expenses (Postage)	5.87
		Community Action Northumberland (postage)	14.40
		Domain Name for Web-site	6.88
		Cakes for General Meeting Mat 2009.	6.00
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Sub Total	470.00	Sub Total	132.32
Opening Balance	-	Closing Balance at Bank	337.68
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Total	<u>470.00</u>	Total	<u>470.00</u>

Liz Stewart Treasurer
Margaret Weatherley, Auditor