

WEST NORTHUMBERLAND COMMUNITY BUILDINGS CONSORTIUM

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE 12 MONTHS TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2010.

1 Management Committee

(a) Membership

Chairman, Mike Wood. Tel 016977 47025 Email michaelwood111@btinternet.com

Secretary, Adrian Hinchcliffe. Tel 01661 843896. Email adrian.hinchcliffe@btopenworld.com

Treasurer, Liz Stewart. Tel. 01434 320481 Email walltown@lineone.net

Committee Members, Malcolm Caisley, Michael Elphick, Norman Hooks, Pat Johnson
Pam Pryor, Keith Robson.

All members of the Committee have acted in a voluntary capacity and do not receive any recompense for attending meetings.

(b) Meetings

The Management Committee met on four occasions during the year hosted by member Halls at Newbrough, Whitley Chapel, Riding Mill and Slaley. A Special meeting was held on 12 May at the Stocksfield Institute Community Association.

(c) Assistance from Community Action Northumberland

The Management Committee wish to acknowledge the invaluable support received from Louise Currie, Jane Hart and Melanie Hall of Community Action-Northumberland.

(d) Other Bodies

We have worked closely with the North Northumberland Village Halls Consortium.

2 Membership

The Management Committee are delighted that 51 community buildings have joined the Consortium. We know that there are a few other community buildings in West Northumberland that are not members and we would like to see them join to enjoy the benefits of membership.

3 Aims of the Consortium

In taking forward the organisation the Management Committee has established the following aims for the Consortium. These are included as a reminder to members.

- Derive financial benefits by using the bulk purchasing power of the Consortium.
- Derive financial benefits by joint purchasing.
- Offer an information service and resolving issues on matters relating to community buildings.
- Provide or initiate joint training for members.
- Lobby on behalf of members.
- Provide a forum for members to exchange views, ideas and best practice.
- Enable Community buildings to have a higher profile in the community.

4 Communications with Members

(a) Development of a new web-site

Early in the year the Management Committee recognised that it needed to improve communications with members and give members access to information which the Consortium holds on behalf of members. The only effective way of achieving this was considered to be the development of a new web-site to replace the existing 'Rural Click' web site that had limitations. A business specification was agreed, and following some investigations Michael Elphick offered to develop a web-site for the Forum using Wordpress, a free open-source system. The only additional cost will be for hosting the site, currently under £5 a month. The web site at (www.westnorthumberlandcbc.org.uk) is to be launched at the Annual General Meeting.

(b) Newsletters

Two Newsletters were issued during the year in January and September 2010.

(c) Emailing of Information and requests

All but four members are able to receive information by email. During the year the Secretary has circulated members with emails covering all sorts of topics including information and requests. Sometimes it is a matter of forwarding emails received from other bodies. This is considered to be a very important aspect of the service for members and one that will be enhanced when the web site is operational.

5 Negotiation of Members Benefits

No additional benefits have been concluded for members during the year. The completion of the web site has been seen as the enabler for a further search of the market for benefits falling in the following categories:

- Electrical Installation Testing
- Emergency Lighting and Fire Alarm System Testing.
- Fire Extinguisher Testing
- Security alarm testing

North Northumberland Village Halls Consortium (NNVHC) has taken the initiative in developing a scheme for portable appliance testing (PAT Testing). It has also made a funding application for funds to purchase the necessary testing equipment and the training of volunteers to do the PAT testing at member Halls. This application covered both the NNVHC and this Consortium. In August the NNVHC learned that the funding had been granted. NNVHC has asked this Consortium to provide seven volunteers for training and a co-ordinator. Once the volunteers have been trained the PAT testing scheme can commence and this will enable members to achieve a considerable saving. We are grateful to the NNVHC for taking this initiative and for including this consortium in the Scheme.

6 **Energy and Telecommunication Broker**

In Summer 2009 the Management Committee appointed the Northern Utility Consulting Brokerage (NUCB) as the broker to the Consortium for electricity, gas and telecommunications. A number of members used NUCB to identify the lowest priced contracts and entered into contracts direct with the suppliers. All members using the service were satisfied that they had achieved lower prices than they would have done by taking on this task themselves. In August 2010 the Consortium has been informed that NUCB has stopped trading. The Management Committee has initiated a process to identify an alternative broker to represent the Consortium.

7 **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:

(a) **Lobbying and Advice**

- Discretionary Council Tax Relief for charities
- Refuse collection from village halls
- Street Trading Policy
- VAT on refurbishment of village halls /community buildings.

(b) **Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults**

There was concern about how the law on the safeguarding of children and adults applied to the Trustees of village/community Halls and similar community buildings. A knowledgeable speaker was invited to speak at the Special meeting held in May 2010. The Management Committee still felt that it needed a straight forward statement that related to the responsibilities of Trustees. The Secretary drew up a statement with the help of Community Action Northumberland. The statement has issued to all members. The Committee are now working on a suggested policy document for members Halls.

8 **Special General Meeting**

A special general meeting was held on 12 May 2010 at the Stocksfield Institute Community Association. There were presentations on the Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults, the developing web site and the Portable Appliance Testing Scheme being developed by the North Northumberland Village Halls Consortium.

9 **Accounts for the Year to 30 September 2010.**

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNTS FOR THE PERIOD 1 October 2009 TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2010.

(NOT AUDITED)

| RECEIPTS | £ | PAYMENTS | £ |
|--|----------------------|---|----------------------|
| Opening Balance | 338.37 | | |
| Members Subscriptions (42 at £10) | 420.00 | Postage & Copying – Secretary | 34.75 |
| | | Postage - Treasurer | 3.91 |
| | | Web Site Hosting | 18.76 |
| | | Refreshments for General Meeting May 2010. | 3.98 |
| | ----- | | ----- |
| Sub Total | 758.37 | Sub Total | 61.40 |
| Opening Balance | - | Closing Balance at Bank | 696.97 |
| | ----- | | ----- |
| Total | <u>758.37</u> | Total | <u>758.37</u> |

Liz Stewart Treasurer