

WEST NORTHUMBERLAND COMMUNITY BUILDINGS CONSORTIUM

(A Self Help Group Run by Members for Members)

ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE 12 MONTHS TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2011.

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, Michael Elphick, Norman Hooks, Pat Johnson

Pam Pryor, Keith Robson, Margaret Weatherley.

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 six occasions during the year hosted by member Halls at Greenhead, Whitley Chapel, Newbrough, Newton, Stocksfield and Slaley. A Special Spring meeting was held on 17 May at the Wark Town Hall.

(c) Death of Malcolm Caisley

Malcolm died unexpectedly on 2 March 2011. He was a member of the Consortium Management Committee and Chairman of the Whitley Chapel Parish Hall. He will be sadly missed by everyone and our deep sympathy has been sent to his wife and family. We are thankful for the four years of service Malcolm gave to the Consortium.

(c) Assistance from Community Action Northumberland

The Management Committee wish to acknowledge the invaluable support received from Louise Currie 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 55 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

The web site (www.westnorthumberlandcbc.org.uk) was launched at the Annual General Meeting last year. Since then it has become an essential tool of communications for the Consortium and we would like to thank Michael Elphick for designing and launching the web site and for continuing to manage it. We are gradually increasing the content of the web site to include many guides to different aspects of managing a community building. It is accessible to all Members and only two sections are restricted by password to Members only. There is a complete list of Members on the web site and each Community Building is given the opportunity to give a full description of its location and facilities with view to attracting bookings.

(b) Newsletters

Three Newsletters were issued during the year in May, September and October 2011.

(c) Emailing of Information and requests

All but one member is 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 is being enhanced by placing important items on the web site.

5 Northumberland Energy Club

In May 2011 the Consortium launched the Northumberland Energy Club. We have joined forces with LSI, a leading utilities broker, to bring savings to its members and other organisations such as businesses, churches, sports clubs, shops and pubs throughout Northumberland. The idea is a simple one, combining the buying power for small businesses and organisations to enable cheaper prices for electricity, gas and telephone to be negotiated. Membership of the Club is free and the savings could be huge, as all the members work towards a common renewal date.

The Club has been promoted to Members and throughout Northumberland. The North Northumberland Village Halls Consortium has agreed to use the scheme for their members.

6 Scheme for Portable Appliance Testing

In September the Consortium launched its own testing scheme for portable appliances used in Members Buildings. Eight volunteers have been trained and certified to undertake PAT testing and are to offer this service on an annual basis to Members. The volunteers to whom we are very grateful are:

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

Denis Peel has volunteered to act as Coordinator of the scheme and at 08.10.11 34 members had decided to take part in the scheme. Testing will take place from September 2011 through to May 2012. Two sets of testing equipment are to be used and the scheme is intended to be operated on a non profit making basis. The scheme will offer the same quality of service and guarantees that are given by professional companies who offer this service.

The idea for this scheme came from Mike Gowland of the North Northumberland Village Halls Consortium who successfully obtained a grant to purchase the equipment and launch the scheme. We are very grateful to Mike for his efforts which have also benefited this consortium.

7 Negotiation of Members Benefits

Now that we have the web site we are hoping to increase the services and information available to Members. The Management Committee has decided to compile a list of suitable professionals that will be held on the web site. We have asked Members to help to compile this list by recommending organisations that your Hall or Community Building has used in the following categories:

- ⌚ Architectural Practices
- ⌚ Building Surveyors
- ⌚ Electrical Contractors
- ⌚ Builders
- ⌚ Fire Appliance Maintenance

We continue to have a panel of five insurance businesses that will quote and arrange for insurance for Community Buildings. All companies on the panel offer discounts to members and some Members have considerably reduced their premiums by taking quotes from more than one insurer.

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:

(a) Lobbying

- ⌚ Payment for the collection of waste from Community Buildings.
- ⌚ Street Trading Policy
- ⌚ VAT on refurbishment of village halls /community buildings.
- ⌚ The threat to Community Action Northumberland resulting from the appointment of connect4change.

(b) Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults

The Consortium has put together guidance for members which can be found on the web site. The intention was to develop a policy document for adoption by Members but the national requirements is changing so it was decided to place a hold on further work until the national requirements become clearer.

(c) Advice

A number of documents giving information and advice have been placed on the web site for Members use. These are listed below:

- ⌚ ACRE Village Information Sheets - listing & how to obtain.
- ⌚ Village Hall Management Check List
- ⌚ Safeguarding policies
- ⌚ Insurance Guidance for Village Halls.
- ⌚ Electrical Safety Testing.
- ⌚ Guidance on Hiring out Equipment
- ⌚ Renewable Technologies for Village Halls
- ⌚ Charitable Incorporated Organisations

(d) Training

In conjunction with Community Action Northumberland, training was organised for twelve members on the BOSS Accounting Package. This was a very successful event.

(e) Booking Forms

Four members ordered pads of booking forms which were obtained through Community Action Northumberland.

(f) Finance Survey

During the year the Management Committee conducted a financial survey through the web site to learn more about the financial standing of Members and their dependence on grants for running costs. Only ten members responded to the survey, nevertheless it produced some interesting results that are to be circulated to Members.

9

Special General Meeting

A special general meeting was held on 17 May 2011 at the Wark Town Hall. The following presentations were given:

- ⌚ Charitable Incorporated Organisations – David Francis, Community Action Northumberland
- ⌚ Renewable Energy Products and their Suitability for Community Buildings – Garry Jenkins, North Energy Associates.
- ⌚ Northumberland Energy Club – Adrian Hinchcliffe