

WEST NORTHUMBERLAND COMMUNITY BUILDINGS CONSORTIUM

MINUTES OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 3 MARCH 2009 AT THE WHITLEY CHAPEL VILLAGE HALL, WHITLEY CHAPEL.

- 1 **Members Present** Mike Wood (Chairman), Malcolm Caisley, Adrian Hinchcliffe, Keith Robson, Elizabeth Stewart.
Representative of Community Action-Northumberland – Sue Vaughan
- 2 **Apologies for Absence – Norman Hooks.**
- 3 **Minutes of the Meeting held 21 January 2009.**
The minutes were approved and signed by the Chair.
- 4 **Matters Arising**
 - (a) **Discretionary Council Tax reductions for Charities**

One Hall reported that it had submitted an application whilst others were still waiting for the applications to arrive. Mike Wood reported that a local District and County Councillor had informed him that the new assessment scheme would not be introduced until next year. It was agreed that the Secretary would clarify the position with the Council and inform all Members.

Action

 - 1 **The Secretary to check this out with Tynedale District Council/County Council and circulate information to Members.**
 - 2 **Sue Vaughan to check with George Curtoise/David Francis to see if they have any knowledge.**
 - (b) **Press release and CAN News**

It was noted that a press release had been issued after the last meeting and that a very good article on the Consortium had appeared in the CAN News.
 - (c) **Consortium Constitution**

It was noted that three minor omissions/errors had been identified in the production of the Constitution. The official copy signed by all members of the Management Committee was correct. All members had been issued with a copy of the Constitution on joining. These copies included the omissions/errors. It was agreed that this situation would be corrected by the issue of the corrected version by email and post. Later in the year all members would be given a corrected paper copy.

It was also noted that one of the omissions was the area of benefit, which is West Northumberland. This answers the query considered at the previous meeting in relation to the enquiry from Ryton Community Centre.

Action

 - 1 **The Secretary to issue by email the correct version to Members (by post to those not on email).**
 - 2 **A paper version to be circulated to all Members later in the year at an appropriate time.**
 - (d) **Renewal of Membership**

The Treasurer reported that the Bank had said that the Consortium could not use direct debit. Standing Orders were possible but this would require each Member to set them up at their own Bank. Having had this clarification it was decided that Members subscriptions would have to be requested by the Consortium and paid by cheque. This would not be necessary until 1 October 2009 when the subscription became due for those joining before 21 January 2009.

Action

 - 1 **The Secretary and Treasurer to prepare to issue subscription payment requests from 1 October 2009**
- 5 **Membership**

Members noted that the membership now stood at 38 with Blanchland Village Hall being the latest to join. Whilst this was very pleasing, the Committee noted that there are still a good number of active Halls that have not joined.

Action

- 1 **To seek more publicity on the benefits of membership and to use the Special Meeting for this purpose.**
- 2 **The Secretary to put together a short promotional statement for Sue Vaughan.**

6 Members Benefit Initiatives

Committee Members were given a summary of the 15 questionnaires that had been returned. Whilst much of the information was incomplete, it did give an indication of Members practices and the way they interpreted statutory requirements and the companies that they use. The summary is attached to these minutes.

There was discussion about the statutory requirements for a number of checks which are required at Village Halls and Community Buildings. The questionnaires indicate that Halls are interpreting the need for the checks quite differently. There also seemed to be conflicting guidance given by Tynedale District Council in the conditions attached to the Premises Licence for some Halls. It was agreed that there needs to be a clear statement of what the requirements are in terms of statutory requirements, Insurance Company requirements and Best Practice. The checks in question are as follows:

- The maintenance and certification of Emergency Lighting
- The maintenance and certification of Fire Alarms.
- The requirements for Fire Alarms to be fitted.
- The testing and certification of Internal Electrical Wiring
- The testing of Portable Appliances and the definition of a portable appliance
- The testing and certification of Fire Extinguishers

Louise Currie had forwarded to the Secretary an ACRE publication No 15 'Health and Safety Legislation and Village Halls'. The Secretary had yet to read this and agreed to circulate it to members of the Management Committee. Some of the answers we are looking for may be in this publication.

Until the above clarifications are obtained, it was thought that the Consortium should not be trying to create a Panel of suppliers/contractors although everyone agreed that we now have the information to do this. Therefore the Secretary will not progress this until the technical information is clear.

One other point was raised that it may be possible for some Halls to act as hubs in organising companies to do the electrical and other checks. Other establishments such as Churches, Clubs, pubs and Bed and Breakfast establishments also have to comply with some of these requirements. Whilst this was a good idea and could lead to some communities significantly benefiting from this, it was considered that the Consortium should, first of all, concentrate on getting these schemes in place and working.

Action

- 1 **The Secretary to work with CAN and others to produce a definitive statement of health and safety checks for Village Halls and Community Buildings.**
- 2 **Once the definitive listing is produced to write to a number of companies with the objective of creating a panel of suppliers for the Consortium with the offer of discounts for Members.**
- 3 **The Secretary to circulate to the Management Committee the ACRE publication No 15.**

Two other initiatives were discussed.

Electricity Supply – At this stage it was thought unwise to rush in to negotiate a bulk supply contract for Members. However, what we should be doing is to compile a procedural guide on how to deal with Supply contracts and when to obtain quotations from other suppliers. The Secretary undertook to do this and was given a press cutting from the Newcastle Journal to assist.

Action. The Secretary to compile the guidance

Toilet Rolls, Hand Towels and Cleaning Materials The information from the Questionnaires indicated the level of expenditure on these items which was quite modest apart from the very large Halls. It was agreed that this should not be pursued further at this time.

7 Consortium Web Site

Mike Wood reported on the progress he had achieved in developing the web site. The site was now set up in skeletal form and needed information and data to populate it. The domain name of www.westnorthumberlandcbc.org.uk had been purchased at a cost of £6.88. Mike had emailed all Management Committee members requesting comment on the prototype and information on each Hall to be set up initially as examples. Members agreed to send this information along with a photograph of their Hall to Mike by email.

Members thanked Mike for the good progress that had been achieved. It was agreed that the domain name could be issued to Members but with the comment that it was 'work in progress'.

Action – Management Committee Members to send details of their Halls to Mike Wood.

8 Arrangements for the Special General Meeting to be held 13 May 2009 at the Newton and Bywell Community Hall.

It was agreed that the meeting should start at 7.00pm and run for no longer than two hours. The first item would be a report from the Steering Committee on the progress achieved. The report had to be concise, professional and very informative. It was thought that this should be no longer than 10 minutes with the opportunity for questions and discussion. Total time no longer than 30 minutes. That would give up to 90 minutes for the main speaker Arthur Scott. Contact to be made with Arthur to determine the precise content of his talk and it was agreed that it should be titled appropriately to appeal to Members.

It was agreed that invites would be sent to all Members and non-members with a request for them to advise of the likely number of attendees.

It was agreed that we should attempt to provide some food for attendees on the basis that some may be coming direct from their employment. This to be available from 6.00pm. It was suggested that we look for sponsorship for this from Greggs the Bakers. Some members also offered to assist in producing sandwiches etc.

Slide projection also needs to be considered.

The Secretary reported a request from Mike Lawford of Norris and Fisher for them to attend an appropriate Consortium event to sell their goods and make Members aware of their products. It was decided that it would not be appropriate to invite Norris and Fisher (or any other company) to this meeting. It is the first full meeting of the Consortium and we do not want any distractions.

Actions Agreed

- 1 The Secretary to contact Arthur Scott and Norman Hooks to determine the precise content of his talk and his requirements.**
- 2 Mike Wood/ the Secretary to put together a Progress report from the Management Committee.**
- 3 Sue Vaughan to send the Secretary the email address for Karen Southwick of Greggs.**
- 4 The Secretary to approach Greggs for sponsorship of a light meal.**
- 5 The Secretary to prepare and issue invites and publicity through the CAN News.**
- 6 The Secretary to advise Norris and Fisher of the decision.**

9 Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer reported an income of £380. CAN had notified a cost of £14.40 for assistance in 2008 and the domain name had cost £6.88 for a period of two years. The Secretary advised that he would claim for postage and copying before the next meeting.

10 ACRE Briefing on Water Charges for Village Halls.

Sue Vaughan had passed this to the Secretary at then start of the meeting. He agreed to read it and circulate any points to Members.

Action – Secretary to read and circulate comments

11 Valuation of Village Halls for Insurance

Keith Robson stated that an application to one of the Insurance Companies for his Hall had stated a capital value of £400,000. The result was that the Insurance Company had requested a valuation of the Hall by a professional at the Company's cost. It was thought that any valuation over £400,000 with this particular company would trigger this requirement.

12 Date of the Next Meeting

Agreed for Tuesday 5 May 2009 at the Newton and Bywell Community Hall commencing at 9.30am.

Members expressed thanks to Malcolm Caisley and the Whitley Chapel Village Hall for allowing the meeting to be held and for their welcome and hospitality.

Signed as Correct

Chair

Date

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RESULTS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

- 1 **Responses** 14 Completed Questionnaires were received.

- 1 **Electricity Supply**
Amount spent per annum given as £2,000, £1,800, £1,400, £415, £310, £275, £2,100, £850, £4,390, £463, £732, £334, £600.
9 Halls said they are on Contract. 5 said no contract.
Supply Companies:- N Power (5), Scottish Power (1), British Gas (2), Atlantic (1)

- 2 **Emergency Lighting**
14 Halls said they have emergency lighting.
Annual Checks done by – Burncliffe Electrical (5), P D Kennedy (1), Crawford & Oliver (1), AAA Thompson (1) Bartram Walker (2), Local Electrician (1), The Hall themselves (1).

- 3 **Fire Alarm System**
5 Halls have a system Installed.
Annual cost of maintenance £200, £277, £200, £4,500.
3 Halls maintain every six months
2 Halls maintain annually.
Companies – Custom Electronics Fire & Security (1), ADT (1), Crawford & Oliver (1), AWSECON (1), Bartram Walker (1)

- 4 **Certification of Internal Electrical Wiring**
11 responded to this question.
Companies used:- Burncliffe Electrical (4), Local Qualified Volunteer (1), P D Kennedy (1), Crawford & Oliver (1), AAA Thompson (1), Bartram Walker (2), Local Electrician (1).

- 5 **Testing of Portable Appliances**
11 responded on this. 6 said certification done annually, 2 said every six months, 1 said every five years, One said they were not ware of the requirement.
Companies used:- Burncliffe Electrical (4), Local Qualified Volunteer (2), P D Kennedy (1), C N Electrical Testing Ltd (1), Crawford & Oliver (1), Bartram Walker (1).

- 6 **Testing and Certification of Fire Extinguishers**
14 Said they had their extinguishes tested.
Companies used:- Fire Point Services (5), North Fire (2), North East Fire (1), Cumbrian Extinguishers (1), ALN Fire Protection (1), MARBCO (1).

- 7 **Toilet Rolls & Hand Towels**
14 Responded. Annual expenditure £700, £5, £15, £6, NIL, £30, £1450, £45, £400, £100
Suppliers:- Thomas Owen, Tesco (3), Cash & Carry (4), Costco (2), Brytaflor & Dunston (1) Local Store (2).

- 8 **Cleaning Materials**
14 Responded. Spend - £60, £20, £30, £350, £10, £80, £25, £70.
Companies used; Locall Shop (3), TESCO (3), Cash & Carry (4) COSTCO (2). Brytaflor (1).