

# WEST NORTHUMBERLAND COMMUNITY BUILDINGS CONSORTIUM

## MINUTES OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 12 JUNE 2008 AT NEWBROUGH TOWN HALL.

**1 Present.**

**Committee Members - Mike Wood (Chairman), Mike Elphick, Norman Hooks, Adrian Hinchcliffe, Pam Pryor (Part), Elizabeth Stewart (Treasurer)(Part). Representatives of Community Action – Northumberland – Louise Currie, Jane Hart and Alan Hedley.**

**2 Apologies for Absence – Malcolm Caisley and Bill Grigg.**

**3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

This was the first meeting of the Management Committee so there were no previous minutes.

**4 Formation of the Management Committee**

It was noted that at the inaugural meeting held on 14 May 2008 Mike Wood had been elected as Chair and Elizabeth Stewart had been elected as Treasurer but it had not been possible to elect a Secretary and this had been left to this meeting. Mike Wood asked Adrian Hinchcliffe if he would consider standing as Secretary. Adrian responded that he would stand as Secretary but in view of the restricted time that he has available he would prefer if there was an agreement that most communications are done electronically to avoid the time consuming tasks of handling paper based communications and envelopes. It was noted that whilst electronic communications may be possible for Management Committee members, not many Hall Secretaries have email facilities and there will be no alternative when communicating with them than using the post. Jane Hart said Community Action – Northumberland as part of their support for the new Consortium would be willing to provide a service for the posting of communications where email was not possible. The Committee accepted this generous offer on the basis that the Consortium would pay the cost of the postage. Arrangements to use this facility would be made by the Secretary.

**5 Formalising of Membership and the Annual Subscription.**

In discussion of this item it was recognised that the annual subscription would be linked to the Consortium's year of working. It was therefore decided that the working year would be from 1 October to 30 September, but the inaugural year would run from 14 May 2008 to 30 September 2009.

Having made this decision, it was agreed that the annual subscription would be £10 per community Building and this would apply to the whole of the inaugural year.

It was agreed that we should write to all Community Buildings to invite their membership and for this purpose a form would be used. Jane Hart confirmed that Community Action had a suitable form and she would send it to the Secretary. It was agreed that a list of members would be held. It was also noted that the membership form would contain suitable wording to cover the data protection issues of having a published list of members.

**6 Constitution**

The constitution of the Consortium had been adopted at the Inaugural meeting. Some details were now confirmed such as the working year and it was noted that the first Annual General Meeting would have to be held before 14 November 2009. The Chair and members of the Management Committee signed the constitution. Other members of the Management Committee will have to sign the constitution. For this reason it was agreed that the document would be held by Community Action-Northumberland at their Hexham office as a central place for members to attend.

It was noted that the Consortium is now classed as a charity but that there is no need to register with the Charity Commission until the turnover is £5,000 or above.

**7 Bank Account**

It was agreed that the Consortium would bank with the HSBC. The Treasurer had obtained a mandate and she was authorised to complete it. It was agreed that the signatories would be Mike Wood, Elizabeth Stewart, Pam Prior, Norman Hooks and Adrian Hinchcliffe. It was noted that the Treasurer would need the minutes of this meeting before the account could be opened.

**8 Press Release**

Members noted the press reports that had been in the Journal and the Hexham Courant on the formation of the Consortium. Alan Hedley said that the same report would appear in the next issue of Community Action – Northumberland's Community News. More publicity will be sought in the future.

**9 Progress with Insurance**

Adrian Hinchcliffe reported on the progress that he was making with the insurance companies. He had written to five companies informing them of the formation of the Consortium and asking them to confirm their offer of discount for members of the Consortium and whether they require an exclusive deal with the Consortium. So far only one company had responded confirming a ten percent discount which could be offered without an exclusive deal.

It was agreed that in view of the interest being shown by the companies the Consortium would be better not having an exclusive deal with any one company. This would give members a better choice and the ability to obtain competitive quotes. Adrian would progress on this basis.

**10 Communications**

(a) Web Site It was agreed that the Committee need to compile and consider a specification for a web-site before one is developed. Simon Bland may be able to develop one for the Consortium free of charge. This needs investigation. Members agreed to look at the web-site of Teesdale Village Halls Consortium which is highly developed. This item to be considered at the next meeting.

**11 Other significant issues facing Community Buildings**

(a) Water Charges. The introduction of surface water charges was resulting in potentially large increases in charges for some Hall. This does need investigation by the Consortium and advice given to members.

(b) Utility Bills. Utility bills are set to increase significantly. The ideas mentioned by Simon Bland at the inaugural meeting need to be followed up.

(c) Energy Saving Trust. Jane Hart mentioned that free training for networks is being offered by the Energy Saving Trust aimed at reducing running costs and the carbon footprint. The minimum will be eight people to receive training.

**12 Next General Meeting**

Alan Hedley suggested that at the next meeting of the Management Committee the date of the next general meeting should be fixed and a speaker engaged.

**13 Support for the Consortium from Community Action-Northumberland.**

Alan Hedley said that Community Action Northumberland will continue to support the Consortium until it becomes established but their representation at the meetings will be reduced. The Chairman expressed thanks to CA-N for the enormous support received so far.

**14 Hallmark Scheme for Community Buildings**

Louise Currie said that CAN were getting ready to launch the assessment programme for Hallmark Level 1. She stated that the obtaining of this standard may contribute to lower insurance charges.

**15 Discretionary Council Tax reductions for Charities**

Adrian Hinchcliffe drew attention to the notices issued by Tynedale District Council withdrawing the 20% discretionary Council Tax reductions for charities such as Village and Community Hall with effect from the 31 March 2009. This is because the District Council will no longer exist and it will be the responsibility of the new Unitary authority. Adrian said that it would be a major issue if Community Building lost this concession. He suggested that we write to the Leader of the County Council and to Gill Dixon to ensure that this is picked up and dealt with for the year commencing 1 April 2009. This was agreed.

**16 Location of Meetings**

It was agreed that the meetings would move around the area covered by the Consortium.

**17 Date and location of the next Management Meeting**

It was agreed that this would be held on Thursday 17 July 2008 commencing at 10.30am at the Stocksfield Institute and Community Association Hall, Stocksfield.