

WEST NORTHUMBERLAND COMMUNITY BUILDINGS CONSORTIUM

MINUTES OF THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD THURSDAY 13 AUGUST 2009 AT THE NEWTON AND BYWELL COMMUNITY HALL.

- 1 **Present** Mike Wood (Chair), Malcolm Caisley, Adrian Hinchcliffe, Norman Hooks, Keith Robson.
- 2 **Apologies for Absence** Elizabeth Stewart, Mike Elphick, Jane Hart (CAN), Louise Currie (CAN).
- 3 **Minutes of the Meeting held 3 June 2009.** These were approved and signed by the Chair.
- 4 **Matters Arising from the Minutes**
 - (a) **Water Charges**

Louise Currie had forwarded comments to the Secretary. She said that Northumbrian Water is one of the Water Companies that has implemented 'Surface Water Charges' even though it is subject of a decision by OFWAT. ACRE is leading a national campaign against this and attempting to make a special case for rural and urban community halls. Louise asked that she be informed of any Hall that received a charge. Norman Hooks indicated that SICA may already have received a charge but he would check on this. **It was agreed that the Secretary would communicate this information to the Members.**
 - (b) **Discretionary rates Relief**

The Management Committee members were not aware of any notification setting out the outcome of the County Council evaluation of applications.
 - (c) **Emergency lighting**

It was reported that emergency lighting has to be switched on twenty four hours each day. Mike Wood is **investigating the statutory and technical requirements for emergency lighting.**
 - (d) **Refuse Collection**

The Newton and Bywell Community Hall has asked the County Council whether they could have wheelie bins and whether there would be any charge for the collection service or the provision of the bins. A response is awaited.
- 5 **Membership**

A membership total of 46 members was reported. It was agreed that the Consortium should push to get near the 100% membership level. **Members agreed to each make personal contact with a handful of potential members. The Secretary would supply them with the contact details.**
- 6 **The Development of the Consortium**

There was a lengthy discussion on a paper prepared by the Secretary and there was general agreement on its contents. It was agreed that it should form the basis of a paper to be considered at the Annual General Meeting. The general conclusion is that the Consortium should carry out a survey of members to establish their need and priorities. These would then establish the direction for the development of the Consortium over the next five years. Reference was made to the recent survey of village Halls by ACRE and whether we could utilise some of the questions. **Agreed that the Secretary would take this forward to the AGM.**
- 7 **Appointment of an Energy and Telecommunications Broker for the Forum.**

The Secretary reported on the work that he had done to authenticate Northern Utility Consulting and Brokerage. He had obtained reference for the company and had visited their offices in Newcastle. They had offered to deal direct with members in pursuing the best possible energy deals. This required giving them information on members and because of this a confidentiality agreement had been compiled. Also, a Commercial agreement had been put together. The Secretary recommended that the Consortium sign the Commercial and Confidentiality Agreements. **Subject to the correction of two typographical errors the Agreements were approved and the Secretary authorised to sign them on behalf of the Consortium.**
- 8 **Members Benefits Initiatives**
 - (a) **Electrical Installation Testing**
 - (b) **Testing of Emergency Lighting Systems**
 - (d) **Testing of Fire Alarm Systems**

The Secretary reported that he had been unable to move forward the negotiations with the companies who had responded to the letter sent in June. Now that the Energy/Telecommunications Broker had been appointed he would turn his attention to these negotiations.

(b) Portable Appliance Testing (PAT testing).

More information had been received from Mike Gowland of the North Northumberland Village Halls Consortium on a proposed scheme for PAT testing. This would involve training up a number of individuals to use the testing equipment which would be purchased by the two Consortia using grant funding. **Members were unable to fully understand how the scheme would work and asked the Secretary to go back to Mike to obtain the answer to the following questions:**

- **Where would the grants be obtained for the training?**
- **Where would the grants be obtained for the equipment?**
- **Who would own the equipment once purchased?**
- **What obligation would there be on the trained individuals?**
- **Who recruits the individuals for training?**
- **What commitments do the trainees have to the Halls and how is this legally based?**
- **Who fixes the charging structure**
- **Insurance?**

The Secretary referred to an email he had received from a company called 'Lectest UK' who were offering to do PAT testing. The Secretary had responded by requesting more information. This had been received which stated that the minimum charge per site is £65 plus VAT but this included a report, minor repairs and travelling expenses. The company state that they have several clients in Northumberland.

It was agreed that the Secretary would write to the company for further details of their customers in Northumberland and the location of their staff.

(c) Energy Control Systems

One of the Trustees at the Newton and Bywell Community Hall had carried out an investigation into energy control systems. The Trustees had selected the least sophisticated system which is to be installed. Two other more sophisticated and expensive systems had been rejected at this stage but the base system was capable if incremental development if desired. **The Secretary agreed to circulate details of the schemes investigated.**

9 Web Site Development

Mike Wood reported little progress due to the lack of information from members **and urged members present to send him details of their Halls.** Simon Bland had agreed that it is possible to install a link in our web-site which links the browser direct into other web sites which contain information on Community Buildings.

10 Treasurers Report.

Due to illness the Treasurer was not present. However, it was known that the position was not much different to her last report.

11 Annual General Meeting

A decision was needed on the main speaker for the AGM so that booking arrangements could be made. It was suggested that we investigate the following possibilities:-

- A talk on the Land Registry
- A talk on the Changes to the Licensing Act in respect of alcohol in Village Halls.
- A talk by the Energy/Telecommunications Broker.

The Secretary would investigate these possibilities and make the necessary bookings. It may be possible to have all three speakers depending upon the length and depth of the topic.

The Accounts would need to be prepared quickly after the 30 September 2009. It was agreed that they should be 'audited' and Keith Robson would ask Margaret Weatherley at Slaley. The SICA Treasurer would be held in reserve. It was agreed that the Management Committee will review the accounts at the next meeting.

The Secretary will check to see what, if anything, has to go off to the Charity Commission.

12 Any Other Business

The Chair is to forward an email to the Secretary for distribution to all Members.

13 Date of Next Management Committee Meeting

Tuesday 20 October 2009 at Stocksfield Institute and Community Association commencing at 9.30am.

Minutes Approved as Correct

Signed

Position

Date