

WEST NORTHUMBERLAND COMMUNITY BUILDINGS CONSORTIUM

MEMBERS NEWSLETTER – JANUARY 2009

ADDITIONAL BENEFITS FOR MEMBERS BEING PURSUED

The Management Committee are investigating further benefits for Members which should result in reductions in the costs of running Halls and Community Buildings. These include the costs of maintaining fire alarms and emergency lighting, fire extinguishers, periodic costs associated with testing and certifying electrical installations, the testing of small appliances and the cost of electricity. In all of these items it is thought that the Consortium should be able to negotiate discounts with the size of membership that it now has. However, it would help if we had a better understanding of Members existing needs and for this purpose a questionnaire is being sent out separate to this Newsletter for Members to complete and return to the Secretary.

Membership now 34

The Consortium now has 34 members which are listed below. It is known that there are many more Halls and Community Buildings in West Northumberland that would derive significant benefits from joining the Consortium. If you know of any will you please urge them to join. The annual membership fee is only £10.

Colwell Village Hall Committee
Greenhead Village Hall
Bellingham Youth Education Centre
Prudhoe Parish Hall
Newton and Bywell Community Hall Trust
Byrness Village Hall
Minsteracres Retreat Centre.
Stocksfield Institute & Community Association
Whitley Chapel Parish Hall
Humshaugh Village Hall
Newbrough Town Hall
Riding Mill Village Hall Trust
Slaggyford Women's Institute
Slaley Commemoration Hall
Hexham & Tynedale Community Trust
Haltwhistle Social Welfare Centre
Matfen Village Hall
Corbridge Parish Hall
Acomb Village Hall
Dalton Village Hall
Ovingham Reading Room
Wark Town Hall & Mechanics Institute
Allendale Village Hall & Recreation Ground
Falstone Village Hall
Haydon Bridge Community Association
Simonburn Village Hall
Allenheads Trust Ltd
High Forest Community Association
St John of Beverley Catholic Church Hall
Featherstone Village Hall
Wall Village Hall
Gilsland Village Hall
Wylam Institute Community Association
Newton Hall Men's Club

Members Gain Substantially From Insurance Discounts

Members continue to report significant gains when renewing their building and public liability insurance with the Consortium's Panel of Insurers. These gains are arising from the discounts which the Consortium has negotiated for Members and as a result of competition between the companies.

Spring Meeting Planned for all Members

The Management Committee is proposing to hold a general meeting of all Members in the Spring or early Summer. The main topic suggested for discussion is energy efficiency in Community Buildings including the use of renewable energy. If there are other topics which Members would like to see on the agenda, please advise the Secretary, Adrian Hinchcliffe.

Can You Help

Ovingham Goose Fair Committee has asked if any Member of the Consortium can help them with a problem in organising this year's Goose Fair which is on the third Saturday in June. The Committee need to borrow or hire a Public Address system. **Can anyone help with this need? Does anyone have one or know of where one can be hired? Jackie Scrowther will be very pleased to hear from you if you have any suggestions. Contact Jackie on jackiescrowther1@yahoo.co.uk .**

Alan Hedley, Community Action- Northumberland

The Management Committee would like to publicly thank Alan Hedley for the role he took in creating this Consortium during 2007 and 2008. Alan left Community Action – Northumberland last November on redundancy. Alan was immensely knowledgeable about village/community halls and community

buildings and he will be a great loss to us and Community Action-Northumberland.

Discretionary Council Tax Relief for Charities

Following significant lobbying by the Management Committee and some Members, it appears that the County Council is planning to grant discretionary Council Tax relief to Community Buildings that are charities. A letter from the Chief Executive of the Council has indicated this (circulated to Members by email) although there may be a need for each Community Building Committee to complete an application form to apply for the relief. We should hear more about this shortly.

National Lottery Consultation of Funding

Many Members will be aware that the National Lottery has had a funding programme to award capital funds for the building and refurbishment of Village /Community Halls and other Community Buildings. This has been in existence for around two years and several Halls in Northumberland have been awarded substantial grants towards their building projects.

The National Lottery are conducting a consultation on what people think should be their priorities in future funding programmes. **With funding becoming very scarce, there is significant concern that funding for Village/Community Halls and other Buildings will be withdrawn. It is essential that many organisations and individuals respond to this consultation and support the continuation of the existing funding programme. Please respond and have your say on www.big-thinking.org.uk**

Your Management Committee

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**Malcolm Caisley
Michael Elphick
Norman Hooks
Pam Niven
Pam Prior
Keith Robson**

Management Committee Meetings

The next meeting of the Management Committee is to be held on Wednesday 21 January 2009 commencing at 9.30am at the Slaley Commemoration Hall. Members wishing to attend will be very welcome. Also, if any Member has an issue or question which they would like to be discussed, please contact Secretary Adrian Hinchcliffe.

Communications within the Consortium

The Management Committee are very keen to have good communications within the Consortium. This is one reason why this Newsletter has been launched to keep Members aware of what is going on. We are also working on the development of a web-site which will be a source of information and hopefully have an interactive section (chat room) where Members can ask questions or exchange views and ideas.

We are in the very early days of development of the Consortium and we do want to be sure that we are doing the right thing. We would welcome any views, questions or observations from Members on what is being developed. Please contact either Mike Wood or Adrian Hinchcliffe.

If any Member wishes to publish comments, views or a letter in the next Newsletter please contact Adrian Hinchcliffe. All views will be published irrespective of what they say provided they are legal and respectful.

Licensing of Music in Community Buildings

Possible changes are to take place in the licensing arrangements for the playing and recording of music in Community Buildings. A consultation was held last autumn on a number of alternatives which were being considered. This Consortium responded in conjunction with the North Northumberland Village Halls Consortium. We await the outcome of the consultation and any changes.

Advertise Your Courses to make them more Sustainable

The Consortium is aware that many Halls and Community Buildings arrange essential courses on such topics as food hygiene, health and safety, first aid, fire safety and risk assessment. We will be only too pleased to advertise these courses in this Newsletter (and the web-site when it becomes available) so that more people may be able to attend, and perhaps, make the course more sustainable. Again, please contact Adrian Hinchcliffe.

Join the Electronic Age

Communications between members is infinitely quicker and easier via the internet. Most Member Halls and Community Buildings have officials who are connected to the internet. However, there are a small number of Members for whom the Consortium does not hold an email address. **It would really help if those members could find someone on their committee who has access to the internet who would be prepared to receive Newsletters and other communications from the Consortium. Please contact Adrian Hinchcliffe.**

Support

The Management Committee would like to thank Community Action-Northumberland for their support for the Consortium which is given through the officers of Jane Hart and Louise Currie. Their help is much appreciated.