

# WEST NORTHUMBERLAND COMMUNITY BUILDINGS CONSORTIUM

*(A Self Help Group Run By Members For Members)*

**MEMBERS NEWSLETTER No.14. NOVEMBER 2012**

Web Site - [www.westnorthumberlandcbc.org.uk](http://www.westnorthumberlandcbc.org.uk)

## Report of the Annual Meeting

The Annual meeting of the Consortium took place on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> November 2012 at the Riding Mill Millennium Hall. This Newsletter focusses on the issues arising from the meeting and the presentations that were made. The Annual Report for 2011/12 was presented and it is being circulated separately to all members. Fifteen member Halls were represented at the meeting out of a membership of 62 which is just short of one quarter – but it does mean that almost three quarters of the membership did not have an opportunity to have their say or be involved with the presentations. Here is a resume of the meeting.

### Election of Officials

The same officers as last year were re-elected as follows:

The Management Committee is as follows:

Chairman – Mike Wood

Email [Michaelwood111@btinternet.com](mailto:Michaelwood111@btinternet.com)

Tel. 016977 47025

Secretary – Adrian Hinchcliffe

Email [adrian.hinchcliffe@btopenworld.com](mailto:adrian.hinchcliffe@btopenworld.com)

Tel 01661 843896.

Treasurer – Liz Stewart

Email - [walltown@lineone.net](mailto:walltown@lineone.net)

Tel. - 01434 320481

Michael Elphick

Email - [michael@elphicks.plus.com](mailto:michael@elphicks.plus.com)

Pat Johnston

Email - [treasurer@newbroughtownhall.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@newbroughtownhall.org.uk)

Keith Robson

Email - [keith.townhead@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:keith.townhead@tiscali.co.uk)

Margaret Weatherley

Email - [meg495@btinternet.com](mailto:meg495@btinternet.com)

Norman Hooks

Email - [njchooks21@talktalk.net](mailto:njchooks21@talktalk.net)

### Need for More Volunteers to Join the Management Committee

The Consortium is very grateful to the individuals who stood for re-election but it needs to be noted that six of them have held office or have been on the Management Committee for five years. We may see

some retirements next year. If so, it is essential that we have more people on the Committee so that the good work of the Consortium can be continued. Right now we have vacancies for up to seven committee members on the Management Committee. Could we please have nominations for people who are willing to stand so that they can be co-opted. The commitment is to attend around five or six meetings each year and deal with some communications by email. It is not very demanding but the benefits that can arise to our membership are significant and it is always good to have fresh people involved. If you are not sure or would like to talk it over please contact either the Chair or Secretary who are very willing to help.

### Health and Safety Policy

A number of members have asked questions on the subject of health and safety in our Halls. Some wanted guidance on an appropriate policy and how to go about setting it up. In response to this the Secretary has worked for several months on compiling a guide to the Health and Safety in Village and Community Halls and this was sent out to all members recently.

At the AGM the Secretary gave a follow up presentation on the policy setting out how it can be used and developed by member Halls so that they have a document which is can be regarded as their own.

It was recommended that all Halls should have a policy. Management committees have a duty of care for the safety of all users, employees, volunteers and contractors who enter the premises or work on it. There are legal requirements that have to be met but it is also a protection for the Trustees from claims of negligence.

The policy document circulated contains a model policy which can be developed by each Hall. It is recommended that the Management Committee, or at least a sub group, go through the policy and populate the model. This achieves buy in from all involved and an understanding of the issues relating to health and safety.

The policy also covers the arrangements and procedures for accidents, the recording and reporting of accidents and the provision of First Aid. A preliminary to this is the carrying out of risk assessments to recognise what can go wrong and to put in place arrangements to lessen or avoid hazards turning into accidents.

The link between the conditions of hire and the Hall's safety rules and policy are absolutely critical. The latter should be contained in the hire agreement and all hire agreements should be signed by the users in accepting the rules and conditions of hire.

Management Committee cannot totally protect against accidents but it is essential to assess risks and take avoidance measures. Taking reasonably practical steps and recording the actions is what is required and if this approach is taken there will be benefits all round to all people who enter the Hall, and it will be recognised by Insurance companies in case of claims.

### Risk Assessment

Liz Stewart gave a good informative talk on what is a risk assessment and how to go about it. Liz tried to take the mystique out of the subject by saying it is common sense and used the example of crossing a road (look right, look left and look right again) which we all do most days. Liz got the audience involved in identifying hazards in the room where the meeting took place, whether they were significant or insignificant and how the risk of accidents could be eliminated or reduced. This exercise demonstrated how risk assessment is the application of common sense rather than rocket science.

### Rainwater Recycling – The Pitfalls

In an age when we are being encouraged to re-use everything, Adrian Hinchcliffe gave a short talk on the rain water recycling scheme that had been incorporated into the newly built Newton and Bywell Community Hall in 2007.

Adrian described how the scheme worked and how the Hall depended upon it working to do a simple thing like flushing the toilet. Over the last five years a number of operational difficulties had arisen and it became clear that the design was not right due to its dependence on mains electricity for pumping water when a toilet is flushed. In 2011 the underground tank, which holds 5,000 litres, developed algae which caused the water to have a vile smell just like sewage. In May 2012 the underground pump stopped working which meant that all the toilets in the Hall could not be flushed. Quick decisions had to be made on the future of the rainwater system and it was decided to change the toilets over to flushing with mains water. In view of a new pump costing £350 the Trustees have taken the view that, at the moment, it is not economic to recycle rainwater. Not a good story – beware!

### Subscriptions for 2012/13 are NOW DUE

Members are reminded that your subscription to the Consortium of £10.00 is now due. This is for the year 01.10.12 to 30.09.13. The Secretary will shortly be sending out a renewal form but the form is also available on the web site and can be down loaded (under Membership – renew your Membership).

### Portable Appliance Testing

Testing has already started for the 2012/13 programme. At the moment the volunteer testers are working in the extreme west of the area but will be handing over their testing sets to the next two volunteers within days. Matt Singleton has taken over from Denis Peel as Coordinator of the scheme. If you wish to see the timetable look on the web site. Also, the contact details for all the Volunteers are on the web site.

### Northumberland Energy Club

There are now twenty eight energy contracts which have been taken out through LSI Energy Brokers by using the Northumberland Energy Club. We keep receiving accolades on how easy the system is to obtain a quotation and how efficient LSI are. Why not follow the trend and ask for a no obligation quotation. Click on 'Join the Energy Club' on the web site.

### Insurance Panel

If your Hall insurance is coming up for renewal why not get some competitive quotes from the Consortium's Panel. You can access the panel on the web site by clicking on 'Insurance Discounts ' under Membership. Make sure the insurers know you are a member of the Consortium to get maximum discounts. If you have lost the password email the Secretary and he will send it to you.