

# WEST NORTHUMBERLAND COMMUNITY BUILDINGS CONSORTIUM

MEMBERS NEWSLETTER Number 7 – SEPTEMBER 2010

## CONSORTIUM ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING TO BE HELD WEDNESDAY 20 OCTOBER 2010

The second Annual General Meeting of the Consortium is to be held on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> October 2010 at Stocksfield Institute and Community Association commencing at 7.00pm. This is your opportunity to hear about the progress that has been achieved during the year and to have your say on the way in which the Consortium is developing. In addition there will be elections for Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and up to 12 Management Committee members. In addition there will be a very interesting programme of three speakers on topics of interest to all Halls. Management committee member Michael Elphick will launch and demonstrate the Consortiums new web site that has been developed over the last few months. Peter Bryan of the BOSS project will present and demonstrate a bookkeeping and Accounts package that has been specifically developed for village halls. Finally, Simon Maden will give a talk on the viability of Photovoltaic panels for village halls and the new pricing arrangements for feeding electricity into the national grid. Please try to ensure that your Hall is represented at this important meeting.

### Agenda and Annual Report for the AGM

The agenda, associated papers and the Annual Report will be sent out about a week before the meeting. By sending the Annual Report out in advance we are trying to save time at the meeting but Members will still have the opportunity to query and ask questions about the year's activities. The meeting is planned to last no longer than 2 hours and it is intended to devote most time to the three speakers. Refreshments will be available from 6.30pm.

### Nomination of Officials and Committee Members

The Consortium's constitution provides for officials to be nominated up to 14 days prior to the AGM which will be the 6<sup>th</sup> October 2010. It is very important that we have good officials and committee members so please nominate those who are willing before the deadline. Nominations will be accepted in writing or email and in view of the postal situation email is probably the better. Send to the Secretary Adrian Hinchcliffe on [adrian.hinchcliffe@btopenworld.com](mailto:adrian.hinchcliffe@btopenworld.com).

If there is more than one nomination for each of the posts of Chair, Secretary and Treasurer an election will be necessary and this will take place

at the AGM. There are 12 positions for Committee members.

### Please Consider Standing for the Management Committee

Most members of the Management Committee have been in post since the inaugural meeting and may be looking to step down at the AGM so it is important that we can find a number of keen enthusiastic members to replace them. Meetings are held approximately every two months so it is not a heavy commitment. Are you willing to stand or do you know someone who will.

### Energy and Telecommunications Broker

NUCB who was appointed in September 2009 as the Broker to the Consortium has stopped trading. So we are looking around to appoint another Broker and benefit from the clout of our considerable membership. NUCB did complete a small number of contracts for Consortium members which were of benefit to them. These contracts are still valid. We hope to have news about the appointment of a new broker by the AGM.

### Consortium Membership now 51

Rochester Village Hall is the latest Hall to join the Consortium and they are very welcome. It means they can now access discounts on insurance and obtain all the other benefits of membership.

### Membership Fees Due on 1 October 2010

The membership fee of £10 is due from all members on the 1 October 2010 with the exception of two Halls that joined as new members after 1 April 2010. A membership renewal form is being issued with this Newsletter. Please send your subscription of £10 to the Treasurer as shown on the form.

### PAT Testing Scheme Approved

This is great news. The scheme that has been designed and developed by Mike Gowland of the North Northumberland Village Halls Consortium has been approved and the funds for the purchase of the testing equipment and the training of volunteer testers has been obtained. This scheme is available to this Consortium and it will result in considerable cost savings for members.

SEVEN VOLUNTEERS AND A CO-ORDINATOR are sought to carry out testing at member Halls. Expenses will be paid for travel. All volunteers will have to undergo training in the use of the testing equipment and this is being arranged shortly. Please volunteer for this task. We already have three names so only four more are needed. Names please to the Secretary Adrian Hinchcliffe on 01661 843896 or email [adrian.hinchcliffe@btopenworld.com](mailto:adrian.hinchcliffe@btopenworld.com). Adrian will also be happy to answer any questions about the scheme.

### Consortium Web Site

Michael Elphick has developed a new web site for the Consortium and it will be launched at the AGM. The web-site is essential for the further development of the Consortium. The Management Committee want to hold the annual subscription at £10 which means that we have to avoid postage and paperwork. We also want members to be able to access information on the web-site and begin to build up an information resource on all sorts of topics relating to village halls and community buildings. There will also be a section for member to promote their own halls. The Management Committee are confident that this development will move the Consortium to an enhanced level of operation with far more benefits to members. The new web site will be demonstrated at the AGM but have a look at the Teesdale web-site [www.teesdalehalls.co.uk](http://www.teesdalehalls.co.uk) to see how this has been developed for the benefit of its members.

### Safeguarding Statement

The law on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults was the subject of a talk at the last general meeting in May. Many members present were left

confused and somewhat resentful that volunteers appear to be forced to go through criminal records clearance when as Trustees we hardly come into touch with children or vulnerable adults. In view of this the management Committee has worked with Community Action Northumberland to develop a simple statement that relates to our responsibilities under the law. The Secretary recently released this statement to members. It is likely that Halls and Community Buildings will need to have a policy on safeguarding and a reference to it in their hire agreement. We are now looking at this and hope to be able to issue some guidance in the near future. If you have mislaid the statement on Safeguarding, it can be requested from the Secretary.

### Lobbying on Behalf of Members

In recent months the Consortium has responded to a consultation on street trading which has considerable implications for all village halls. It has been circulated to members by email. If you wish to see the response please request from the Secretary.

We have also written to a Government Minister on the subject of VAT on the refurbishment of village halls and other community buildings. The anomaly is that VAT is chargeable on refurbishments but not on new build. This distorts the costings in favour of new build rather than the option to refurbish may be more sustainable .

### Suggestions by Members

A suggestion has been received from Ovingham Reading Room that the Consortium should develop a standard annual calendar incorporating important dates as a reminder to Management Committees on the things they have to do. This seems a very good idea. Some work is now being done on this.

### The Management Committee

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