

# WEST NORTHUMBERLAND COMMUNITY BUILDINGS CONSORTIUM

## MINUTES OF MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD WEDNESDAY 10 NOVEMBER 2010 AT THE GREENHEAD VILLAGE HALL.

- 1 **Present** Mike Wood , Chairman; Malcolm Caisley, Michael Elphick, Adrian Hinchcliffe, Norman Hooks, Keith Robson, Liz Stewart (Part), Margaret Weatherley.
- 2 **Apologies for Absence** Pat Johnston.
- 3 **Minutes of the Meeting held 7 September 2010.**  
These were approved.
- 4 **Matters Arising from the minutes**
  - (a) **Safeguarding Policy.** Mike Wood has forwarded a copy of the Greenhead Village Hall policy to the Secretary. Still to take forward.
  - (b) **Street Trading policy.** The Secretary had written a letter of objection.
  - (c) **Legal Requirements Checklist.** Mike Wood had compiled a spreadsheet containing several events. It had been discussed with Jackie Scowther. It was in a form that was suitable to be circulated to members and placed on the web-site. Mike asked for Committee members to send him any events or dates that he may have missed.
  - (d) **VAT on the Refurbishment of Village Halls.** The Secretary had written to Nick Herd MP.
- 5 **Review of the Annual General Meeting held 20.10.10**
  - (a) **Minutes**  
The draft minutes were reviewed and found to be accurate.
  - (b) **Views of Members**  
The Secretary had received a small number of emails from members saying what a good meeting it had been and that the content had been very good. Committee members also thought it had been a successful meeting.
  - (c) **Appointment of Pam Pryor**  
The Secretary had emailed Pam but had not yet received a reply.
  - (d) **BOSS Package**  
A number of names had now come forward but the package and course had not been advertised to members. It was the Secretary's intention to issue a Newsletter to all members after this meeting. This will give those who were not members an opportunity to put their name forward. It was agreed that this was the best way forward.
  - (e) **Photovoltaic Panels**  
There was clear interest in the use of photovoltaic panels and the feed-in tariff. The presentation had been worthwhile and provoked some members into considering the options available. Stocksfield Community Centre had obtained a quote from Simon Madden and were deliberating whether to go ahead and if so how to finance the project (use of capital, borrowing or grants). There were many queries and questions that need answering by someone who is independent rather than the company that has an interest in creating a sale. Mike Wood said that his County Councillor (Alan Sharpe) had suggested that it is better to go to a firm of architects for the design and development of these projects. Adrian Hinchcliffe mentioned that the Architect (Newton Architects of Ryton) who had designed the Newton and Bywell Community Hall and Whitfield School is a specialist in sustainable solutions and renewable energy. He may be willing to give advice to the Consortium independent of any particular product or company. Developments at Ingram village Hall were also mentioned as an exemplar. It was agreed that Mike Wood would find out more about the advice from Alan Sharpe and Adrian Hinchcliffe would approach Newton Architects. Keith Robson stated that a colleague of his does not speak highly of the quality and efficiency of the panels. It was suggested that Keith should find out more about these views and whether it would be better to wait until more efficient panels are available.

#### **(f) The Welcoming aspect of the AGM**

Malcolm Caisley brought up the subject of how we welcome members to the general meetings. He felt that we should do more to enable members to feel welcome and part of the consortium. Apart from Committee members no one knows who people are and it does not help for networking or simply meeting other people. There was agreement with what Malcolm had said and that we should do a number of things to make the meetings more friendly, starting from the May meeting. The suggestions to be considered are as follows:

- Each person to wear a name badge – made out when they sign in on entry.
- Ask each person to say who they are which Hall they represent.
- Identify a small number of representatives who could say a few things about their Halls.
- Split into workshop sessions which enable people to get to know each other better
- Have a more detailed presentation from those Halls that have done something or achieved something which is of interest to all.

### **6 Web – Site Operations**

#### **(a) Restricted Access**

It was agreed that the restricted access section should only be used for information that is restricted to members such as discount information. The method of distributing the password was discussed. It was decided that it would be better for the Secretary to send out the password to members. A common password is to be used. Michael Elphick confirmed that he is still to remove an error that is stopping access to the restricted information.

#### **(b) Editors**

It was agreed that Adrian Hinchcliffe and Mike Wood would be set up as Editors. Adrian asked for some training associated with the function.

#### **(c) Form for input of Information on Member Halls**

Members can access a form on the web-site that enables them to input information on their own Halls. It was agreed that all Committee members would arrange for this to be done with their own Halls and the Secretary would encourage all members to do this in the Newsletter.

#### **(d) Web – Site Address**

The address is [www.westnorthumberlandcbc.org.uk](http://www.westnorthumberlandcbc.org.uk)

This address would be publicised on all documents and emails.

#### **(e) Links**

It was suggested that a link to the Charity Commission web – site should be included.

#### **(f) Technical information and policies.**

It was agreed that these items (such as the policy statement on Safeguarding and electrical tests) should be included under a section which has open access. There will be many more such statements and access to these will be an important use for members.

### **7 Membership**

The Treasurer reported that she had received thirty renewals.

The Secretary mentioned recent contact with Catton village hall and Malcolm Caisley reported on the situation at Great Whittington Village Hall.

### **8 PAT Testing Scheme**

The Secretary reported that he now had six names and one possibly coming Newbrough Town Hall. These were as follows:-

Greenhead – Liz Stewart and Mike Wood.

Gilsland - Melvyn Whatmough.

Stocksfield - ?

Wylam – Denis Peel

Ovingham Reading Room – Pat Teddy

Once the seven names were secured he would contact Mike Gowland to arrange the training. It was noted that a Co-ordinator would need to be appointed.

### **9 Energy and Telecommunications Broker**

The Secretary described the two companies that he had been having discussions with about being appointed as the broker to the Consortium. Both were more mature and secure companies that

Kashaf Bashir. Both had agreed that members would be able to negotiate with another company if they could find a better deal. Both seemed to operate on a similar basis. Of the two the Secretary thought that LSI had been in existence longer and appeared to be the more mature company. It was agreed that the Secretary should continue to negotiate with LSI with view to appointing them as broker.

**10 Treasurer's Report**

Liz reported that the Consortium now had £1,034.92.

There was a discussion on whether we should be asking Halls who host the meetings to do so without charge. It was felt that now the Consortium has sufficient funds, the Halls that host the meetings should be paid a normal meeting fee. This was agreed as a principle.

**11 Change of Status to Company Limited by Guarantee**

Norman Hooks reported that the Stocksfield Community Centre were now close to changing status to a Company Limited by Guarantee. One of the main reasons for this was the risks associated with employing people. The Trustees would become Directors and their liability would be limited to £1. Norman also understood that at least one other Hall was considering this change. They had received advice from Social Enterprise Northumberland (part of the County Council) free of charge.

It was agreed that a change in status of this sort would be of general interest to most Halls and should therefore be considered as part of the programme for the Spring General Meeting.

**12 Trustees Indemnity**

Margaret Weatherly raised the issue of 'Trustees Indemnity' as part of the insurance taken out by Halls. Their insurer was offering this cover at a relatively small cost. The question is whether it is worth taking out. Members discussed this as a mechanism for protecting Trustees in circumstances where they make an error. However, more aspects of this needs to be understood and it was agreed that a further discussion would take place at the next meeting.

**13 BT Infinity Scheme**

Malcolm Caisley made reference to the BT Infinity Scheme. BT were offering to install superfast Broadband in rural areas where 75% of those connected sign up. In other areas the number has to be 1,000 signing up. Malcolm raised this point because it may be worth Halls promoting the scheme if it results in a better service for the Hall and neighbourhood.

**14 The Use of Grid References for locating properties in emergencies.**

In rural areas the use of postcodes may not allow for the identification of properties due to each postcode covering a wide area. The emergency services have got around this problem by enabling their navigation equipment to use a grid reference. Grid references are very specific and can identify each property. In some locations where this problem exists the Parish Councils are handing out cards to each household containing their unique grid reference. There is a web-site that can be used to establish a grid reference for each property. Ordnance Survey maps can also be used for the same purpose. Malcolm raised this as potentially useful information for members

**15 Date of the Next Meeting**

**18<sup>th</sup> January 2011 at the Whitley Chapel Parish Hall commencing at 9.30am.**

**16 Members thanked Mike Wood for the hospitality received that morning.**