

WEST NORTHUMBERLAND COMMUNITY BUILDINGS CONSORTIUM

MEMBERS NEWSLETTER Number 8 - NOVEMBER 2010

See Our New Web Site www.westnorthumberlandcbc.org.uk

Simple Bookkeeping and Accounting Package for Village and Community Halls –FREE!

At the Annual General Meeting of the Consortium on 20 October 2010, Peter Bryan of the BOSS PROJECT, gave a talk on a computer based package that he and the project have developed for bookkeeping and accounting for Village and Community Halls and other voluntary organisations. The package has been designed to simplify and standardise the approach to keeping accounting records and the production of accounts. It also meets all the compliance requirements for the Charities Commission. What is even more surprising is that it is free – YES, FREE!! However a half day's training is necessary to ensure that it is suitable for the way in which each Hall does its accounts and there is a nominal charge of £10 for this. Several members at the AGM immediately expressed an interest in attending the training. If you are interested in using this package the training will be held on Wednesday 8 December 2010 at the Newton and Bywell Community Hall, Newton Village from 10.30am to 12.30pm. Names please to the Consortium Secretary Adrian Hinchcliffe (adrian.hinchcliffe@bopenworld.com) who will forward to you an enrolment form. A minimum number of ten is required but if there are more a second session may be possible in the afternoon. This is a wonderful opportunity to improve your bookkeeping and accounting procedures – please grasp it.

Annual General Meeting

An impressive 25 representatives of member Community Buildings were present at the AGM held at Stocksfield Community Centre on 20 October. In addition Louise Currie of Community Action-Northumberland was present.

Members received a packed programme of speakers. The Consortium Chairman Mike Wood welcomed everyone and Adrian Hinchcliffe presented the Annual Report and Accounts which had been circulated prior to the meeting. It was then the time to elect the officials and Management Committee members for the next year and those elected are given below. Following the elections Peter Bryan of the Boss Project gave a presentation of the bookkeeping and accounting package that is reported above.

Photovoltaic Panels and the new feed-in tariff was the next presentation by Simon Maden of Maden Design and Build Ltd. (See adjacent column for a report on this item). Finally Michael Elphick gave a presentation of the Consortium's new web-site which is again reported in this Newsletter.

Officials elected:

Chairman – Mike Wood.

Secretary – Adrian Hinchcliffe

Treasurer – Liz Stewart

Committee Members – Malcolm Caisley, Michael Elphick, Norman Hooks, Pat Johnston, Pam Pryor, Keith Robson, Margaret Weatherly.

The Chairman expressed thanks to the Stocksfield Community Centre for hosting the meeting.

Photovoltaic Panels and the New Feed-in Tariff – Simon Maden

On the 1st April 2010 the Government introduced new regulations to encourage organisations and individuals to generate electricity for their own use and feed in to the national grid. Electricity exported into the National Grid will be priced at 41.3p per kilowatt hour which is sufficient to make an investment worthwhile in the necessary equipment. Simon Maden presented the use of photovoltaic panels to generate electricity. These panels can be erected on the roof of a building or stand alone at ground level. The equipment is expensive but the cost is depending upon the number of panels chosen. Grants are available but if they are taken the price of the feed – in tariff drops. Simon gave a general example of an investment of £10,000 which should generate a return of £1,000 per annum, a ten year pay back. The panels are designed to last 25 years although it is accepted that they may become less efficient as they get older. The feed in tariff is available to organisations and individuals. Simons

company designs and installs such systems and they are willing to give advice and quotations, Contact Simon on simon@madendesignandbuild.co.uk

Consortium web-site

www.westnorthumberlandbc.org.uk

The Consortium's new web-site was launched at the AGM. We have Committee member Michael Elphick to thank for putting this together which he has done over several months. The web site will enable the Consortium to move to an improved level of operation and vastly improve communications with members. Apart from access to minutes and other routine things you will be able to access technical papers that we have researched and there is a 'members only section' in which members can find details of the discounts that are available to them. This section is only accessible by password and the Secretary will be sending out the password to all members.

There is also a section on members Halls. This section enables each member to advertise their own Hall and put in information such as room sizes, facilities, hire charges, contact details etc. If your Hall has its own web site you can also put in a link to that address.

Over time we are expecting the web site to be used more and more not only by members but by potential hirers. So it is in your interests to set up details of your Hall.

Please have a look at the web site and see what a wide range of information you can already obtain.

Portable Appliance Testing Scheme

The Portable Appliance Testing Scheme is almost ready to roll out. The next step is to find a volunteer co-ordinator for our area. So far the following Halls have put forward volunteers to do the testing:

Greenhead – Mike Wood and Liz Stewart

Wylam – Denis Peel

Gilsland – Melvyn Whatmough

Falstone – Johnny Carse

Ovingham – Pat Teddy

Stocksfield – A nomination made.

We need someone to act as Co-ordinator for the west- **any offers please.** Once this scheme is operating each Hall will make considerable savings by not having to pay for PAT testing to be done by professionals.

Any offers or enquiries to Adrian Hinchcliffe please. adrian.hinchcliffe@btopenworld.com

Public Sector Cuts

The scale of public sector cuts that are coming are going to affect village/community halls and other community buildings. Hall management committees need to work out where they are likely to be affected. If your Hall is dependent on grants from your Parish Council or other sources you need to be thinking what you can do if those grants are reduced or stopped. It may be that you need to increase the usage of your Hall and generate more income from

hire. The Consortium Management Committee are concerned about this situation for all Halls in the Consortium. **We would like to hear from any Hall that believes its revenue grants may be in jeopardy. Please contact the Secretary with any information which will be kept confidential.** adrian.hinchcliffe@btopenworld.com

Energy and Telecommunications Broker

The Management Committee has been negotiating with two national brokers with view to appointing one as the Broker to the Consortium. A decision was taken at the last meeting earlier this month and the Secretary is now doing the final negotiations. Once these are complete and the appointment made, all members will be notified of the Broker along with contact details. This information will also go in the web-site – (Information for Members Section).

Membership Fees

The annual membership fee of £10 was due on 1 October 2010 apart from those members who joined subsequent to 1 April 2010. Many thanks to those Halls that have already renewed their membership. If you have misplaced the renewal form you can download one from the web-site (Renew Your Membership Section under Members Halls), or request one from the Secretary.

The Welcome at the General Meetings

At the last meeting the Management Committee discussed the welcome that members are given at the General Meetings. One committee member thought we have been very poor at letting members know who we are and encouraging networking. The Committee agreed that this is a valid point and one that does get lost in the hurly burly of running the evenings to time and not wanting to waste members time. **If you have a view on this topic we would like to hear it.** The Management Committee has resolved to do better in future. We are considering name badges and asking a small number of individual Halls to say a few things about their own Hall and the issues that they are faced with.

Music licensing in Community Buildings

The Secretary issued some information recently about a deal that the Government has brokered between charities and music creators. Up to now there has been two licences required by most Village/Community Halls the PRS licence and the PPL license (sorry for the jargon). The deal is to merge the two licences into one. The Government press release is upbeat about the impact on Village and Community Halls but until we see the detail it is hard to tell. **Watch this space.**

Officials of the Consortium

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