

WEST NORTHUMBERLAND COMMUNITY BUILDINGS CONSORTIUM

MEMBERS NEWSLETTER Number 11. SEPTEMBER 2011

Web Site - www.westnorthumberlandcbc.org.uk

Portable Appliance Testing Scheme To Start In September.

At last the start is in sight for the Consortium's own Portable Appliance Testing Scheme (PAT Testing). Members have been asking for this scheme to start to reduce the annual costs of having PAT testing done. Eight volunteers have been trained and certified to carry out testing and the Consortium has purchased a testing machine. The service has been offered to every member and we are hoping for a high response. The more members that use the service the lower will be the charge. This is not a profit making venture but one to offer a professional service to members and cover the costs involved. The Consortium will be taking out insurance so that the guarantees in doing the work are exactly the same as any professional electrical company.

PAT Testing is a health and safety measure. It is best practice and many insurance companies require it. Members should consider it for these reasons and for the protection of your trustees.

The Consortium wants to finalise the arrangements for the service and would urge members to confirm their acceptance to Secretary Adrian Hinchcliffe on 01661 843896 or email adrian.hinchcliffe@btopenworld.com

We are thankful to the following volunteers who have been trained to do the PAT Testing:

Alan Brewin Pat Johnston Denis Peel Matthew Singleton Liz Stewart Michael Stott
Melvyn Whatmough Mike Wood

Northumberland Energy Club

A number of members and non members have already signed up to take electricity and or gas through the Northumberland Energy Club scheme. This means that they will be enjoying the lowest prices possible and in 2013 they will all go to the market together to bulk purchase. The result of this should be even lower prices well beyond the reach of an individual member.

It is not too late to consider a quote under the Northumberland Energy Club. Go to the Consortium web site www.westnorthumberlandcbc.org.uk and click on 'Northumberland Energy Club'. Then follow the procedure set out. If in doubt please contact the Secretary Adrian Hinchcliffe.

Consortium Membership

The Consortium now has 56 members and the list is still growing. This number includes two members who are yet to renew for 2010/11. There are still a number of halls and community buildings who have not joined the Consortium and we would urge them to do so. The annual fee is only £10 and there are lots of potential benefits from discounts, information, networking and simply being a member of a wide network of similar organisations. Soon, one of the benefits of membership will be PAT testing at prices lower than can be obtained anywhere.

If you know of a hall or community building in your area that is not a member will you please make them aware of the Consortium and urge them to become a member. Get them to look at

the web site or contact the Secretary, Adrian Hinchcliffe.

What is the Consortium

Effectively the Consortium is a self help group run by volunteers to help and assist all community buildings (village halls, community halls and other buildings) in West Northumberland. It is run by a Management Committee who are the Trustees of the Consortium. All members of the Committee give their time free of charge and no one receives expenses of any sort.

The driving force behind what the Committee does is to help and assist all members to run their Halls and to generate benefits by bulk purchasing, discounts or by being a source of good information. We have a vision of all halls and community buildings being exceptional places, well used within their communities and exemplars of sustainable living.

Formed only three years ago, the Consortium has made good progress. Examples are the Insurance Panel offering discounts to members, the development of the web site (www.westnorthumberlandcbc.org.uk), the information services, the Northumberland Energy Club, the twice annual meetings and, soon, the PAT Testing Scheme.

The Consortium works exclusively for the benefit of its members.

The Consortium Web Site

(www.westnorthumberlandcbc.org.uk)

The Consortium web site has been developed over the last year (thanks to Michael Elphick) and is now our primary means of communication and a store of information for all members. It contains the following:

- ⌚ Consortium Constitution
- ⌚ Newsletters
- ⌚ Membership of the Management Committee
- ⌚ Committee Meeting dates
- ⌚ Minutes of meetings
- ⌚ Calendar of events
- ⌚ Membership list.
- ⌚ Details of members Halls and facilities.
- ⌚ Insurance discounts for members
- ⌚ Northumberland Energy Club
- ⌚ ACRE Village Hall Information Sheets
- ⌚ Management Check List
- ⌚ Safeguarding policies
- ⌚ Electrical safety testing
- ⌚ Guidance on equipment hire
- ⌚ Renewable Technologies for Comm. Buildings
- ⌚ Charitable Incorporated Organisation
- ⌚ Links to other related organisations

In addition to the above we will shortly be adding some information on insurance issues and PAT Testing.

Guidance for Members – Help Needed

From time to time the Secretary is asked for information on a wide range of topics. Recent requests include guidance on energy audits, the effectiveness of storage heaters, the valuation of community buildings and carrying out a

structural survey. Many of these topics require professional input and so the Management Committee has decided to compile a list of suitable professionals that will be held on the web site. So, we need your help to compile this list. Can you please recommend organisations that your Hall has used in the following categories:

- ⌚ Architectural Practices
- ⌚ Building Surveyors
- ⌚ Electrical Contractors
- ⌚ Builders
- ⌚ Fire Appliance Maintenance

Please email this information to Adrian Hinchcliffe on adrian.hinchcliffe@btopenworld.com .

Autumn General Meeting

The Autumn General Meeting will be held on Wednesday 19th October 2011 at the Haydon Bridge Community Association, Haydon Bridge, commencing at 7.00pm. The meeting will include the Annual General Meeting of the Consortium.

The Annual Report of the Consortium will be presented and there will be at least two other items of interest to members. An agenda will be issued nearer the time. If any member would like to discuss an issue or to make a presentation, this would be very welcome. Please contact Secretary Adrian Hinchcliffe adrian.hinchcliffe@btopenworld.com .

Community Action Northumberland – UNDER THREAT

This Consortium receives substantial professional help from Community Action Northumberland (CAN) in running the Consortium especially with the provision of information. CAN is also our link to ACRE the national body that looks after our interests. The County Council has recently awarded a commission to a new organisation by the name of Connect4change to carry out much of the work that has been traditionally done by CAN. Some of this work includes the service that is received by this Consortium.

The changeover is scheduled to take place on 1 October 2011 and we are very concerned for the continuity of the service that we currently receive.

The Management Committee

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Michael Elphick
Norman Hooks
Pat Johnson
Pam Prior
Keith Robson
Margaret Weatherley