

WEST NORTHUMBERLAND COMMUNITY BUILDINGS CONSORTIUM
(A Self Help Group Run by Members for Members)

**Minutes of the Management Committee Meeting held 29 November 2011 held at
the Slaley Commemoration Hall.**

- 1 **Present**
Mike Wood (Chair), Michael Elphick, Adrian Hinchcliffe, Norman Hooks, Pat Johnston, Keith Robson, Liz Stewart, Margaret Weatherley.
- 2 **Apologies for Absence**
Louise Currie, Mel Hall.
- 3 **Minutes of the Meeting Held 27 September 2011.**
These were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.
- 4 **Matters Arising from the Minutes**
There were no matters arising.
- 5 **Minutes of the AGM held 17.10.11**
The minutes were noted without comment. They will go for approval to the AGM in 2012.
- 6 **Web Site Operations**
Michael Elphick reported that the web site was receiving 40 views per day. There are still 18 members that have not input details of their Halls/Community Buildings. 711 items of spam have hit the web site but prevented from harming it.
- 7 **PAT Testing Scheme**
The Secretary reported that 10 members had already been tested and much had been learned so far, especially from the 405 appliances that had been tested at the Hexham Community Centre. The procedures were holding up well and the web site was proving to be an essential communications tool.
Denis Peel was now co-ordinating the scheme and intervening where he considered the volunteer testers needed help. He had issued 10 invoices and processed claims for travel expenses from Volunteer Testers.
There had been a suggestion that the pricing structure agreed by the Management Committee in September be varied to give those Halls with only a small number of appliances a lower charge than the standard £26.00. All members of the Committee thought it was not the time to be considering a change in the pricing until the first round of testing is complete. The point was also made that those members who had accepted the service had done so knowing the price that was to be charged.

Mike Wood said that a number of suggestions for changes in the procedure had come out of the work done so far. These were:
 - ⌚ Contact telephone numbers are needed for all members taking the service and they need to be displayed on the web site.
 - ⌚ It should be a requirement of the members taking the service that they have the appliances identified and to hand to enable testing to be done efficiently. This needs emphasising in the instructions.
 - ⌚ That each member being tested nominates someone who is present throughout the testing and is able to guide the Volunteer Testers around the equipment. This needs emphasising in the instructions.
 - ⌚ The sheets used for recording the testing (Appliance Register and Testing Record) should be kept together in the case with the testing equipment – rather than the original suggestion of each Volunteer Tester retaining them.
 - ⌚ Where there is a large number of appliances to be tested, an appropriate number of Volunteer Testers are allocated to the task. The point was made that at the Hexham Community Centre a total of five Volunteer Testers had been involved rather than the two originally allocated.

The Management Committee accepted all these practical suggestions which would be put in place as quickly as possible.

8 Treasurers Report and Membership Update

Twenty eight members had renewed their subscription including the Haltwhistle Leisure Centre. The bank balance stood at £1,032 but the renewal cheques were still to be banked. There are some Volunteer Testing claims to pay.

9 The Northumberland Energy Club

The first return has been received from LSI. Twelve contracts went live prior to the 31.10.11 and for these the Consortium would receive commission of £111.25 immediately, £69.53 in 2012 and £6.27 in 2013. Other contracts were due to start after 01.11.11 and would be included in the statement for the period to 31.01.12. Two of the contracts were in respect of members of the North Northumberland Village Halls Consortium and fees would be due to them in accordance with the agreement. The Secretary did point out that he was waiting for the formal agreement with NNVHC to be returned.

The Secretary informed the Committee that he had been working with LSI on a mail shot to publicise the Northumberland Energy Club. This would be going out this week to all members who had not been in contact with LSI. LSI were also producing a brochure that would be available shortly. This followed the suggestion at the AGM that we needed a brochure.

It was confirmed that LSI will deal with telephone as well as electricity and gas.

10 Connect4Change

The Secretary reported on the meeting he had attended a further meeting on 25 November 2011 organised by the by the Voluntary and Community Sector. Representatives of C4C, the County Council and VCS members were also present.

C4C had awarded CAN a grant for the continuation of the service given to this Consortium and the NNVHC which is to last until 31.03.12. The position after 31.03.12 has not been decided. The Secretary had queried the way in which the funding decisions had been made and the visibility and openness.

The Secretary reported on the other topics that had been discussed at the meeting but drew the conclusion that the WNCBC and NNVHC were peripheral to voluntary sector which is dominated by organisations who need revenue grant funding for their existence. There are some aspects the work of the CVS Consortium that are of relevance and possible interest to WNCBC but these are not the main items for discussion at the VCS meeting.

It was agreed that the WNCBC would continue to attend the meetings of the VCS Consortium until the VCS Assembly was formed. We will then take a judgement of the benefit that we are likely to get by participating in the Assembly.

11 Bulk Purchase of Oil

The meeting discussed a scheme for the bulk purchase of heating oil that was being pursued in Slaley that is run by an Oxfordshire group. Michael Elphick wondered if we should be adopting this for the Consortium. There followed a discussion of a number of similar schemes that members were aware of and it was known that CAN were hoping to launch a scheme for Northumberland in 2012. It was agreed that at this stage the Consortium would not adopt the 'Slaley' scheme but would keep a watching brief on similar schemes that arise over the next few months.

12 Accounts for 2010/11

The treasurer produced an updated statement of accounts for 2010/11. She also asked Margaret Weatherley to do an audit of the statement.

13 Food Safety Course

It was noted that there are places available on a food safety course being promoted by the Ovingham Reading Room.

14 Hallmark

It was agreed that the Consortium should support and promote the Hallmark standard and encourage members to apply. The benefits are seen as:

- ⌚ **The process of preparing to achieve the standard which forces members to consider aspects of the organisation and adopt best practice.**
- ⌚ **The kudos of qualifying and how this can be used to promote the member Halls in their communities.**
- ⌚ **The insurance discounts that can be obtained by having the standard.**

It was agreed that the Consortium would promote the standard in the near future linking in to an information evening suggested by Louise Currie.

15 Date of Next Meeting of the Management Committee. Tuesday 7th February 2012 at the Newbrough Town Hall commencing at 9.30am.

Thanks were expressed to the representatives Slaley Commemorative Hall for enabling the meeting to take place and for the hospitality received.

Signed as a Correct record.....date.....