

WEST NORTHUMBERLAND COMMUNITY BUILDINGS CONSORTIUM

(A Self Help Group Run By Members For Members)

MEMBERS NEWSLETTER No.15. FEBRUARY 2013

Web Site - www.westnorthumberlandcbc.org.uk

Energy Club – Low Electricity and Gas Prices

Since the Consortium negotiated an arrangement with LSI Utility Brokers in 2011 and launched the NORTHUMBERLAND ENERGY CLUB, 34 contracts for electricity and some gas have been arranged by LSI for members of the Club. However, only 14 of the 34 are for members of the Consortium. This means that are almost 50 members of the Consortium that have not used the CLUB and MAY NOT BE GETTING THE LOWEST PRICES. Remember, you can get a quote from LSI on a 'no obligation' basis. Come on, get a quote and compare it to what you are paying now. **To get a quotation, go to the Consortium Web Site (address above) and click on 'Getting a Quotation' under the heading Northumberland Energy Club, then follow the procedure. Remember it is 'no obligation'.** If you decide to accept the quotation your Hall or Community Building automatically becomes a member of the Northumberland Energy Club. Membership is totally free. Please also encourage other charities and businesses such as the local pub, church and shops to obtain a quotation.

Fire Extinguisher Servicing Quotation

The company Northfire of Acomb near Hexham has given a quotation for the annual maintenance of fire extinguishers and the sale of new extinguishers. The quotation, which is strictly for members of the Consortium, is as follows:

Annual Service Call £15.00 plus 2 x basic extinguishers serviced free.

Basic Fire Extinguisher Service £2.50 each.

Extended 5 Yearly Service (DTR) £8.00 each.

All extinguishers are serviced in accordance with British Standards 5306 Part 3:2009.

Your Hall will be handed a Fire Extinguisher Certificate after all services have been completed in accordance with BS5306.

Plus an extra 10% off any replacement Fire Extinguishers bought new.

Northfire is already used by a number of our members.

To request Service:- Call 0845 6193619

If members know of other companies that would like to give a quotation for members, we can create a panel and publicise them on the web site.

Safeguarding for Children and Vulnerable Adults in Village/Community Halls

Voices of Northumberland are offering a **FREE** resource pack to help keep everyone safe in community activities and ensure appropriate safeguarding procedures are in place for children and vulnerable adults. The pack is suitable for Village Hall and Community Centres.

They are also holding an information session on Wednesday 20th March 2013 from 1100 to 1200 at the Newton and Bywell Community Hall.

To request the resource pack or book to attend the Information session contact Lynne on 01661 713109 or email contact@voices-northumberland.org.uk.

See also the advert on the back sheet.

Portable Appliance Testing Programme

The portable appliance testing programme is going well and we are about half way through. There have been some delays due to the weather and other things but we are reasonably confident of catching up and doing members testing in accord with the timetable shown on the web site. The Volunteer Testers are doing a great job!

If you would like to look at the timetable and the PAT Testing database log on to the web site (www.westnorthumberlandcbc.org.uk) and click on the appropriate heading on the left under the heading 'Appliance Testing'. You will then be requested to input a password which is PAT-TESTING-1 .

If you have any queries please contact the PAT Testing Co-ordinator Matthew Singleton on email matt.cathy@talktalk.net or Adrian Hinchcliffe on adrian.hinchcliffe@btopenworld.com

Volunteer Testers Needed

One of our eight volunteers who does Portable Appliance Testing is to retire for health reasons. So we are looking for two or possibly three volunteers to join the scheme.

If you are retired or have time available and looking for a way in which you can benefit the community, this is a worthy opportunity. You will be trained to use the testing machines and shown how to go about the task. Travelling expenses are paid when you are travelling to member halls to do testing. If you are interested or would like more information please get in touch with the Secretary Adrian Hinchcliffe on 01661 843896 or email adrian.hinchcliffe@btopenworld.com

Consortium Management Committee

Members Sought.

The Management Committee of the Consortium is the group that drives forward the Consortium to meet the needs of the members. The Committee meets about five or six times each year. At present there are eight members of the committee and with the exception of two, all have been on from the inception of the Consortium in 2008. At least one member intends to step down this year and we are looking for a small number of new recruits to freshen up the working of the Consortium and continue the good work.

Are you interested? Again, it is a good way of giving service to the community. If you would like to volunteer or would like more information please contact the Secretary Adrian Hinchcliffe on 01661 843896 or email adrian.hinchcliffe@btopenworld.com .

Consortium Web Site

(www.westnorthumberlandcbc.org.uk)

The web site is the Consortium's on-line library. Without it our services to members would not work. Members can access a wide range of information and advice on a wide range of topics all about running a village or community Hall. It also enables each member to advertise their Hall.

The section on Membership includes a password protected section giving the Insurance Panel and how to obtain quotations. The password is WNCBC2010 . Use this section to obtain competitive quotes for your insurance – make sure the companies know you are a member to get the discount. The section also has a 'for sale and wanted' section in which members can advertise items for sale or set out your needs – all free of charge.

Then there is the section on Portable Appliance Testing which includes all the information about the testing scheme and programme. You will need a password to access some of the items and it is PAT-TESTING-1 .

The Northumberland Energy Club is the next section followed by Advice and Information. This latter section contains a wealth of information that Hall Chairs and Secretaries need from time to time. IT IS THERE FOR MEMBERS TO USE.

Discretionary Rates Relief

This is of high importance. On 30 November 2012 Northumberland County Council send out application forms for discretionary rates relief to all charities. Of 520 sent out they have only received 302 back. Those returned have been assessed and the outcome of the applications were issued to individual halls on 4 February 2013.

If your Hall has not received a letter then you should immediately get in touch with Dale Kirk, the Business Rates Team Leader on 01670 624312 or email dale.kirk@northumberland.gov.uk

If you are in this position you need to get it sorted out otherwise you will receive a business rates bill with an amount to pay.

Level 2 Award in Food Safety in Catering – Training Course

Although the qualification is not mandatory, the need for appropriate training is, and having this certificate is recommended as 'good practice' for Halls that prepare and serve food in all circumstances. Some members may already hold the certificate but if it is more than three years since it was acquired it has to be renewed.

Community Action Northumberland is going to put on a training course for the qualification provided

there is sufficient demand. The course would run as a one day (6hr) course with a multiple choice test at the end. It is an excellent introduction to basic food safety and is relevant to anyone involved with food handling in their village hall/community building. The course offers guidance on all aspects of food safety and would cover issues such as premises and equipment, prevention of contamination, bacteriology, food poisoning, personal hygiene, pest control, cleaning and disinfection and legislation.

For those who already hold the qualification an opportunity will be given to take an alternative Level 2 course to enable them to build their knowledge. This is in the HACCP course which is the approach to ensuring food safety, which all producers must follow.

The courses are likely to take place in April/May 2013 provided there is sufficient demand. The price per person will be £20.

If you are interested in sending a representative or representatives of your Hall/Community Building to one of these courses will you please contact Louise Currie of Community Action Northumberland by email on louisecurrie@ca-north.org.uk

VAT on Electricity, Gas and Oil

A query has arisen on this recently. The correct rate of VAT on electricity, gas and oil bills for Village/Community Halls, which are charities, is 5%. However, there are circumstances in which Halls could incur the full rate of 20% - these are:

- Where electricity is used at a rate of 1,000kw per month or more.
- Where piped gas is used at a rate of 150therms per month (4,397kwh hrs) or more.
- Supplies of fuel oil, gas oil or kerosene of 2,300 litres or more.

Your Hall can avoid the higher rate in the above circumstances by ensuring that your usage is lower than the levels specified.

WHAT ARE YOUR TRAINING NEEDS?

The Management Committee of the Consortium is very much aware that one of their roles is to identify the training needs of members and facilitate the organisation of appropriate training courses. At the last Management Committee meeting there was also a discussion about how the Consortium could use some of its financial resources to subsidise training. To move this forward we need all members to set out their thoughts on the type of training that their committees would benefit from. Would you please drop a short email to Secretary Adrian Hinchcliffe setting out the types of training that your Hall would like. Email adrian.hinchcliffe@btopenworld.com

BULK ORDERING OF HEATING OIL

Age UK are working on a campaign to address fuel poverty in rural areas by encouraging people to join Oil Buying Clubs. In the next eight weeks they have set a target of signing up 200 people to such clubs in Northumberland. For those signing up they are offering:

- Payment of any joining fee for the club for the first 12 months.
- Arrange a full benefit check
- Arrange a home energy check, if required.

Community Action Northumberland (CAN) has been engaged by Age UK to pursue this campaign and Julia Plinston of CAN is available to come to any meeting to explain the offer. If you would like to take this forward please contact Julia on tel. 01434 607871 Email juliaplinston@ca-north.org.uk

WARPIT

WARPIT is a redistribution network based in Morpeth. One of WARPit's objectives is to help support charitable activities. Organisations often have surplus resources (eg furniture, tables etc) which they no longer need but are in good condition. WARPit was created to make sure these items can be passed to organisations carrying out charitable activities in a safe and legal manner.

WARPit is free (YES FREE) to all charities, not for profit's, social enterprises, community groups and groups which are not commercial but have a social service.

Charities can sign up and by linking up with local organisations, receive notifications of surplus items in their area

Charitable groups can benefit from WARPit in a number of ways.

1. Get access to surplus resources in your area and nationally. This will save you money so you can spend it on your charitable activities.
2. Collaborate and make connections with other organisations in your area-as well as sharing surplus resources this can bring many benefits.
3. Furniture and bulky waste charities can distribute their own goods on WARPit for other charities, individuals or organisations to claim.
4. Transport charities can advertise their services for the transfer of goods from one organisation to another.
5. National charities can use the system to advertise their resources around their own networks.
6. Furniture refurbishment charities can advertise their services to members.
7. Furniture and bulky waste charities can advertise their services to members
8. See www.warp-it.co.uk

small actions matter

small
Safe in our Communities



Do you run a Community Venue?

By community venues we mean, village halls, community centres, church halls, sports clubs with facilities, working men's clubs etc.

Would you like a **FREE** resource pack to help you keep everyone safe in community activities and ensure appropriate safeguarding procedures are in place?

The pack includes all you need to get started and covers the areas of;

- The Venue,
- Safeguarding & Child Protection
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults
- Code of Conduct
- Speaking Up
- Health & Safety
- Recruitment and Data Protection

IT'S THE SMALL ACTIONS THAT WE TAKE THAT MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

If you would like to find out more, we are holding an information session on Wednesday 20th March 2013 from 1100-1200 at Newton & Bywell Community Hall. To book for this event, please contact Lynne on 01665 713109 or email contact@voices-northumberland.org.uk



Voices

Northumberland's VCS improving outcomes for children & young people