

WEST NORTHUMBERLAND COMMUNITY BUILDINGS CONSORTIUM

Registered Charity Number 1168006
(A Self Help Group Run by Members for Members)

ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16

1 Management Committee.

The Management Committee had the following membership: Mike Wood (Chair) Greenhead; Stuart Dearlove, Stocksfield Community Association (resigned 16.09.16); David Easby Wall VH; Michael Elphick, (Web Site), Slaley Memorial Hall; Neville Gray, Ovingham Reading Room; Adrian Hinchcliffe (Secretary); Pam Pryor Riding Mill VHs; Andy Pryor (Treasurer) Riding Mill VHs; Keith Robson, Slaley Memorial Hall; Georgia Shorrock (Membership Secretary), Gilsland VH; Matthew Singleton (PAT Testing Coordinator); Roly Taylor, Wall VH; Margaret Weatherly, Slaley Memorial Hall.

The Committee met on five occasions during the year.

Enormous thanks are expressed to the officials and committee for the service given during the year.

The following business has been dealt with by the Committee.

2 Registered Charity Status

The application to register the Consortium as a charity was made in January 2016. The Charity Commission produced a number of questions, queries and observations. All were ably dealt with by the Committee except the request to change the Objects. This needed approval by the Members at a General Meeting. A Special General Meeting was called on 9th June 2016 and the necessary changes to the Constitution were approved. With these changes implemented the Charity Commission approved the application and issued a confirmatory letter. The Registered Charity Number is 1168006.

3 Membership

Membership stands at 61. During the year Lambley Village Hall became a member and is warmly welcomed. Two members failed to pay their subscription on time, otherwise the number would be 63.

4 Communications with Members

A Newsletter was issued in February 2016. The web site www.westnorthumberlandcbc.org.uk continues to be the main method of making information and advice available to members. In addition numerous circular emails have been sent to members on a full range of topics. Individual email enquiries from members are answered as quickly as possible.

Changes in officials at some member Halls are not always notified to the Consortium which means that information and other emails are going to the wrong persons.

5 Membership Secretary

From the AGM in October 2015 Georgia Shorrock took on the newly created position of Membership Secretary. A new membership data base has been created which will be integrated with the web site to enable the officers to access the membership records. It would help the Consortium to provide an effective service if Members notified the Membership Secretary of any changes in the main officials and their contact details.

6 Web Site Operations

Michael Elphick has again managed the development and operations of the Consortium Web Site which is a vital communications tool for the Consortium. The usage of the web site continues to grow and it offers a service to all members to advertise their Halls. During the year Pat Goodwin of Slaley volunteered to act as a back up to Michael.

Michael also wishes to update the web site and has been searching for the right design. It is also intended to transfer the hosting to Tsohost who offer to do it free for charities. This will be done when the new web site is launched.

7 Northumberland Energy Club

This Club was owned by the Consortium and run in partnership with LSI Energy Brokers. Members and non members are able to obtain quotations for electricity or gas on a 'no obligation' basis. Where a contract is taken out the member is assured of very competitive energy prices and all contract renewal dates are brought together on a common date so that members can benefit from bulk purchasing.

Early in the year the Committee undertook a review of the Club and particularly our ability to market its products outside the Consortium. The view was taken that we are somewhat restricted in being able to market to non-members because the focus of our resources has to be on the Members. Discussion were held with Community Action Northumberland (CAN) which has a much better marketing base and is able to market to a much wider membership and non-members. Negotiations took place and the Scheme was transferred to CAN on 31.12.15. LSI will continue to be the energy broker. The basis of the agreement was that the Consortium would continue to receive the commission on all existing contract plus any renewals of the existing contracts. In addition the commission on any new contracts for Members of the Consortium will be shared with CAN.

At the 31st December 2015 there were 65 live contracts passed over to CAN. CAN has changed the name of the scheme and is marketing it under the title of EnergyCAN.

During the year the Consortium received £294 in commission from the Northumberland Energy Club and EnergyCAN.

8 Portable Appliance Testing

The scheme again proved to be very popular with 47 members benefitting from it. The fees charged for the service brought in £1,727.50 and after expenses of £953.90 (but not including insurance) a surplus of £773.60 was achieved. The fees for testing were held at £30 for up to 50 and 50p for each appliance over 50, although a small price increase has been made for 2016/17 moving to £32 for the first 50 appliances.

This scheme is only possible due to the volunteers who give their time to test appliances at member halls. Each gives three or four days each year and we are immensely grateful to them. They are:

MALCOLM BRODIE (Bellingham); ALAN BREWIN (Allendale); DAVID PENTNEY (Rochester) PAT JOHNSTON (Newbrough); DENIS PEEL (Wylam); MATTHEW SINGLETON (Prudhoe); MICHAEL STOTT (Ovingham); ROLY TAYLOR (Wall); ALAN THOMPSON (Riding Mill); MELVYN WHATMOUGH (Gilsland); DAVID WRIGHT (Slaley); MIKE WOOD (Greenhead).

Alan Brewin, Pat Johnston, Matthew Singleton and Alan Thompson retired after the 2015/16 round of testing. This left a huge gap in our resources. An appeal was made to all members to find new volunteers. This was very successful and we are delighted that the following people have volunteered for the 2016/17 round of testing and are currently undertaking training.

NIGEL DAVIDSON (Wall); SALLY DANYS AND PAUL DENNIS (Birtley); TRISH HARDY and JOHN SEAGER (Ponteland); CHRIS LINDSAY (Ovingham); RAY TILLEY (Allendale); ANGELA and DAVID WATSON (Wall). Ray Tilley and Angela Watson have both completed the on-line assessment and have passed the examination.

Roly Taylor has taken over as the Co-ordinator of the scheme on the retirement of Matt Singleton.

IT IS DIFFICULT TO FIND THE WORDS TO THANK ALL THE ABOVE FOR WHAT THEY DO. SINCERE THANKS TO YOU ALL.

Even more members have asked to join the scheme in 2016/17. Many thanks to Mike Wood who has sorted out the essential Professional Indemnity and Employer's Liability insurance.

9 Training Courses

The Consortium again organised training for members during the year. The Committee considers that this is an activity that can be successfully taken on by the Consortium. Community Action Northumberland (CAN) was asked to supply the tutors. Eleven courses were run over an eight week period in mid summer. Sixty eight members attended the courses. The training costs including accommodation was £3,494 and there was a net cost to the Consortium of £1,909.

The courses held, charges, costs and the location and the number of participants are set out below.

Training Course	Date	Number Paid	Income £	Cost of Course To CAN £
Trustees Responsibilities	08.06.16	10	200.00	260.00
Intro. to Social Media	13.06.16	4	140.00	305.00
Health & Safety in Comm. Bldgs.	15.06.16	6	120.00	240.00
Emergency First Aid	16.06.16	7	175.00	473.00
Food Safety in Catering	20.06.16	11	275.00	461.00
Looking After the Money	22.06.16	2	40.00	220.00
Social Media for Improvers	23.06.16	5	175.00	310.00
Understanding Your Governing Doc.	30.06.16	5	100.00	230.00
Generating Regular Income & Seeking Grants	05.07.16	5	100.00	270.00
Introduction to Hallmark	07.07.16	3	60.00	225.00
Risk Assessment & Insurance	13.07.16	11	220.00	260.00
Totals		69	1,605.00	3,254.00
Hire of Venues				
2 at £30.00			60.00	
9 at £20.00			<u>180.00</u>	
Total			240.00	240.00
TOTAL COSTS				3,494.00
LESS INCOME				1,605.00
NET COST TO THE CONSORTIUM				1,889.00

10 Northumberland Community Development Network (NCDN) – Lets Get Together Project.

The Consortium has been working with NCDN on their 'Lets Get Together' project in the south west corner of the County. Mike Wood has been our representative. NCDN were successful in obtaining funding for the project from Peoples Lottery. The project aims at assisting vulnerable adults who live in isolated rural areas and achieve social cohesion. The project is based in village halls and is currently running a number of courses and activities within the surrounding area.

11 Community Action Northumberland (CAN)

The Consortium has a close working relationship with CAN. CAN is one of the 38 Rural Community Councils in England and ACRE (Action for Communities in Rural England) is effectively their national body. ACRE and CAN receives some funding from the Government Department DEFRA. This funding enables ACRE to operate a Village Hall Information Service and for CAN to part employ one person, Louise Currie, to deal with questions and information requests from the Consortia and individual village halls. This relationship works very well and this Consortium is served well by CAN when we need their help and advice.

12 Hall Insurance Issues

The Consortium panel of insurers was reviewed during the year and reduced to three companies. However an additional new company 'Insure Your Village Hall' was added during the Summer. These companies specialise in insuring village halls and other community buildings. Details of the Insurers can be found on the web site www.westnorthumberlandcbc.org.uk under 'Insurance Discounts'.

The Consortium recommends obtaining a quote from at least two companies on the panel to ensure that your offer is competitive. All companies on the panel give a discount for being a member of the Consortium. Most companies also give discount for holding the 'Hallmark' award and some give an additional discount for locking in for three years.

It is essential that member committees review their insurance cover at least every two years.

All Companies on the Insurance Panel now operate a facility for members to obtain a valuation of their buildings for insurance purposes. It is essential to have your village hall or community building insured for an accurate value of what it would cost for re-building. Many management committees have not had their halls or community buildings re-valued for many years and they are exposed to the possibility of under insurance. If a claim is made and the Insurer finds that there is underinsurance, it can result in the claim not being fully met. This could result in the Trustees becoming personally liable for any deficit. To avoid under-insurance the companies on our panel have introduced their own arrangements for a village hall or a community building to be valued for rebuilding. The schemes are commended to members.

13 Safeguarding

Caroline Friend of Voices Northumberland attended the Special General Meeting on 09.06.16 and gave an update on the legal requirements for Safeguarding.

14 Unmetered Water Charges

Some Halls that are not on a metered water supply received significantly increased water charges from 1st April 2016. The guidance from the Consortium was to challenge the increase. This was done by at least one hall with the result that the increase was withdrawn.

15 Voting By Proxy

One Member suggested that the Consortium should have the facility for Members to appoint a proxy rather than having to attend a General Meeting. The Committee considered this suggestion but came to the view that voting by proxy should not be built in to the Constitution and Members should be encouraged to attend General Meetings.

16 Members Needs

The Committee is keen to hear of the needs of members. The Consortium can only respond to known needs, so members are encouraged to identify what they want from the Consortium.

Adrian Hinchcliffe
Secretary
19.10.16