

WEST NORTHUMBERLAND COMMUNITY BUILDINGS CONSORTIUM

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

ANNUAL REPORT 2016/17

1 Management Committee.

The Management Committee had the following membership: Mike Wood (Chair) Greenhead; David Easby Wall VH (Membership Secretary); Michael Elphick, (Web Site), Slaley Commemoration Hall; Neville Gray, Ovingham Reading Room; Adrian Hinchcliffe (Secretary); Andy Pryor (Treasurer) Riding Mill VHS; Keith Robson, Slaley Commemoration Hall; Roly Taylor, Wall VH (PAT Co-ordinator); Sarah Poppleton -Hallberg, Tarsset (from July 2017).

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.

2 Membership

Membership stands at 64.

3 Sustainability of the Consortium

As a consequence of the Chair and Secretary and possibly several other Committee Members being due to step down at the 2017 AGM, the Committee has focused on the sustainability of the Consortium. The January Newsletter was issued appealing for volunteers to come forward but with no result.

Arrangements in other areas of England were considered where the Local Community Council offers a service to the Village Halls in its area and this led to discussion with Community Action Northumberland (CAN).

CAN made an offer to carry out some secretarial and other services for the Consortium and to assist the Consortium Committee with such things as the development of the web site, the membership data base and the production of a regular e newsletter. The Committee created a Sub-group to investigate this offer, to look at any constitutional issues, to assess the impact upon the membership fee and to finalise the negotiations so that a formal consultation could take place with the members. The Sub Group reported back to the full committee and the arrangements with CAN were finalised but subject to a consultation with members that went ahead at the end of April 2017. The proposal meant that the annual membership fee would have to rise from £10, which it had been since 2008, to £35.

41 members responded (64%) to the Consultation and all were in favour of accepting the arrangements with CAN and there were non against.

To formalise the agreement a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Consortium and CAN. This is intended to be a three year rolling agreement but there is a built in review in the second year of each three year period. The agreement started on 1st October 2017.

This arrangement will enable the Consortium to continue as an independent organisation whose purpose is to serve its members. CAN will assist the Management Committee but will not have any voting rights. CAN and the Consortium have always had a very close working relationship, indeed, CAN assisted in the set up of the Consortium in 2008 and has assisted members in many situations where help was needed. Through this agreement this relationship will continue and the Committee believe it should enable the Consortium to become refreshed to its purpose and continue to offer a first class service to members.

4 Communications with Members

Four Newsletters were issued during the year in January, February, August and October. 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.

5 Membership Secretary

David Easby took on the position of Membership Secretary and re-established the membership data base.

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. Pat Goodwin of Slaley again acted as a back up to Michael.

Michael has also been considering an update of the web site to enable better access for mobile phones and tablets. It is also intended to transfer the hosting to Tsohost who offer to do it free for charities.

7 EnergyCAN

Members were encouraged to request quotations through EnergyCAN and to take out contracts where the quotations represent best value. The Consortium continues to receive commission payments from EnergyCAN when Members take out contracts. During the year £249 of commission was received.

8 Portable Appliance Testing

The scheme again proved to be very popular with 54 members benefitting from it. The fees charged for the service brought in £2,146 and after expenses of £1,868 a surplus of £278 was achieved.

Roly Taylor took over the role of Coordinator of the scheme at the AGM in 2016 and has improved the scheme by improving the communications with the Volunteer testers and centralising many the responsibilities concerned with the scheme. Roly has also reviewed the ways of operating the scheme especially on the larger jobs where over 200 appliances can be tested. Additional volunteer testers have been recruited. Roly has also arranged for the testing equipment to be tested and maintained in good condition.

For 2017/18 the Committee has agreed to hold the scheme charge at the same level - £32 for the first 50 appliances and 50p per appliance over 50.

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); SALLY DANYS AND PAUL DENNIS (Birtley); RAY HAMILTON (Snods Edge); TRISH HARDY (Ponteland); CHRIS LINDSAY (Ovingham); DAVID PENTNEY (Rochester) ; DENIS PEEL (Wylam); JOHN SEAGER (Ponteland); MICHAEL STOTT (Ovingham); ROLY TAYLOR (Wall); RAY TILLEY (Allendale) MELVYN WHATMOUGH (Gilsland); DAVID WRIGHT (Slaley); MIKE WOOD (Greenhead); ANGEL AND DAVID WATSON (Wall).

David Wright and Mike Wood retired after the 2016/17 round of testing.

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

9 Training Courses

No training courses were supported by the Consortium during the year.

- 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 Shadow Committee and Appeal for a Chair and new Committee members**
Due to the new arrangement with Community Action Northumberland (CAN), described in para 3 above, coming in from 1st October 2017 and to be fully implemented from the AGM in 2017, the Committee considered that it should form a shadow committee to operate from the AGM but subject to election at the AGM. This showed up that the Committee may not have a Chair and there could be vacancies for nine Committee members. It was therefore decided to inform members of these vacancies to see if suitable recruits can be found.
- 12 Hall Insurance Panel**
The Consortium has continued to have four insurance companies on the panel.
- 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. At the 2017 AGM Sarah Hallberg and Louise Currie will lead a discussion on this topic.
- 17 Management Committee Leavers**
There are a number of officials and committee members leaving the Consortium at the AGM and they are sincerely thanked for the service they have given to the Consortium . They are:
Mike Wood - Mike has been Chair since the inception of the Consortium in 2008. Mike has also been a volunteer PAT Tester.
Adrian Hinchcliffe – Adrian has been the Secretary of the Consortium since its inception in 2008.
Keith Robson – Keith has been a Committee member since its inception in 2008.
- 18 Riding Mill Parish Hall**
The Committee would like to thank the Trustees of Riding Mill Parish Hall for providing a venue for its Committee meetings and Mrs Pam Pryor for providing very welcome hospitality.

Adrian Hinchcliffe
Secretary
30.10.17