

WEST NORTHUMBERLAND COMMUNITY BUILDINGS CONSORTIUM
(A Self Help Group Run by Members for Members)
Registered Charity - Number 1168006

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD 9th NOVEMBER 2017 IN
RIDING MILL PARISH HALL**

1. Present

Michael Elphick (Slaley CH); Adrian Hinchcliffe (outgoing Secretary); Norman Hooks (Stocksfield CC); Keith Robson (Slaley CH); Mike Wood (outgoing Chair Greenhead VH); Neville Gray (Ovingham RR); Kate Rutherford (Langley Village Hall); Pauline Wright (Heddon on the Wall WI); David Easby (Wall VH); David Greensitt (Heddon Knott Hall); Denis Peel (Wylam Institute); Michael Mckenroy (Acomb PC); Lorna Farr (Acomb PC/A4A); John Cook (Acomb PC/A4A); Jill Bungay, (Kirkwhelpington Mem Hall); Judith Wier (Wark Town hall); Vicky Herod (Wark Town Hall); Elizabeth Thompson (Heddon WI); Elizabeth Bramwell (Horsley WI/Village Hall); Ethel Coulthard, (Horsley WI/Village Hall); Carl Rawlings (Merton Hall Ponteland); Peter Softley (Byrness Village Hall); Colin Basey (Stocksfield CC); George B Shaw (Newbrough Town Hall); Dennis Bowman (Newbrough Town hall); Rose Ramsay (Ponteland Mem Hall); Doreen Elwell (Prudhoe Community Partnership); Sarah Hallberg (Tarset Village Hall).

In attendance

Andy Dean, (CEO Community Action Northumberland); Sylvia Pringle (NCC iNorthumberland); Julia Plinston (CDO Community Action Northumberland); Louise Currie (Village Hall Advisor, Community Action Northumberland)

2. Apologies for Absence

Roly Taylor (Wall Village Hall); Pam Pryor (Riding Mill PH); Andy Pryor (Riding Mill PH); Liz Treadway (Great Whittington VH); Louise Dawson (Great Whittington VH); Mike Barlow (Dalton Village Hall); Mike Bell (Byrness Village Hall); Bill Grigg (Acomb Village Hall); David Pearson (Kirkwhelpington Village Hall); Gordon Mitchell (Snods Edge); Geoff Robinson (Colwell Village Hall).

3. Approval of Minutes

AGM held 10-11-2016. The minutes were approved as an accurate record.

4. Matters Arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising.

5. Presentation of the Annual Report for the Year 2016/17

- The draft annual report had been circulated to members prior to the meeting (copy attached). No queries had been raised or amendments sought. WNCBC's continued thanks must go to Michael Elphick, who has worked hard (and continues to do so, with the assistance of Pat Goodwin) to create a comprehensive and extremely useful WNCBC website.
- The energy club (EnergyCAN) had resulted in £249 commission. LSI Energy give up part of the commission they receive as part of each new contract set-up to WNCBC and this helps to sustain WNCBC.
- The PATesting scheme now has take-up from 54 members out of a possible 64. It offers significant savings for members. The cost to members is £32 for up to 50 appliances (as opposed to, on average, £70 outside via the open market). All WNCBC volunteers are trained and certificated, and each volunteer agrees to provide between 2 and 3 days per annum. David Wright and Mike Wood are both

stepping down this year, and WNCBC would like to offer its official thanks to them for their time and commitment over the years. Roly Taylor reports that two new volunteers have been recruited to replace them.

- Encouragement was extended to welcome new members to the committee, and a suggestion was made by one member that the number of Committee meetings might be reduced from four per year to two, as it was felt that this might encourage more volunteers to become members. Following discussion, it was felt by the majority that this may prove counter-productive in terms of the effective running of WNCBC.
- A query was also raised about whether WNCBC might seek to set up a similar group to EnergyCAN for water suppliers. Adrian responded to say that although the matter had been explored some time ago and found not to be viable because of the tight controls on pricing, subsequent legislative changes may mean that it is worth looking at the idea again.
- Members also queried whether anything could be done about the new charging structure for Performing Rights (combined PRS and PPL) which is currently set at 2.2% of the venue's annual income. Because this has now been decided and has been in operation for some time, it was felt that this was something beyond the abilities of WNCBC to influence.
- Denis Peel gave a vote of thanks to Adrian for his efforts over the last 10 yrs. Thanks were also given to Pam and Andy Pryor for use of the Parish Hall for the meetings.

6 Presentation of the Annual Accounts for the Year ending 30.09.17

In the absence of the Treasurer Andy Pryor, the Secretary presented a statement of accounts for the year to 30 September 2016 (see copy attached). Accounts had been independently examined by Margaret Weatherly.

Income	£3054.13
Expenditure	£2151.59
Surplus of Income over Expenditure	£902.54
Reconciled opening A/C Balance at 1/10/16	£3974.06
Reconciled closing A/C Balance at 30/9/17	£4876.60

The accounts were unanimously approved and formal thanks given to Andy Pryor.

7 a) Election of Officers

- Chairman: There were no offers to take the role of Chair. It was agreed this would be discussed, and hopefully decided, at the first meeting of the new committee
- Election of Secretary: The outgoing Secretary, reported that Sarah Hallberg was willing to stand as Secretary if there were no other offers from the floor. Sarah was unanimously elected as Secretary.
- Election of Treasurer: Andy Pryor had indicated that he was prepared to stand for a further year and was unanimously elected. Neville Gray had offered to shadow Andy for the next year, with a view to taking over the role at the next AGM. This was also approved.

b) Other positions

- Web Site Manager: Michael Elphick had offered to continue in this role for the coming year, working with Julia Plinston (CAN) to develop the website. This was unanimously approved.
- PAT Testing Coordinator: Roly Taylor, though not present, had previously indicated his willingness to continue in the role and this was unanimously agreed.

c) Election of Additional Committee Members

- The chairman invited volunteers from those present to join the committee. Following general discussion, Vicky Herod (Wark Town Hall) and Jill Bungay (Kirkwhelpington Village Hall) both offered to join the committee. They were duly elected and thanked.
- Louise Currie reported that there was potential interest from two other trustees (not present at the meeting) and she agreed to discuss the role with them before they make their final decision.
- Prior to the meeting, Mike Barlow from Dalton Village Hall, had contacted Adrian Hinchcliffe by e-mail, offering to join the committee and this offer was also accepted.

8 Vote of Thanks and presentations

Neville Gray proposed a vote of thanks to those committee members who were retiring following this AGM. They are Keith Robson, Mike Wood, and Adrian Hinchcliffe. Neville outlined the significant contribution they had each made to the Consortium since its inception 10yrs ago and all that had been achieved. The Chairman, Mike Wood, was presented with an engraved pen and the Secretary Adrian Hinchcliffe received some garden ornaments. There was a vote of thanks from all present at the meeting.

9 Presentation – Andy Dean, CEO, CAN.

The presentation outlined the needs of rural areas within the county and the effect that living in rural communities has on health and wellbeing. Andy presented some interesting statistics about the challenges facing people living in rural areas, such as hidden and dispersed poverty, low pay, lack of affordable housing and child care. Issues linked to this were loneliness and fuel poverty. However, the strengths were also outlined: the beautiful environment, the resilience of people living in it and their passion and enterprising spirit. Andy ended his interesting talk, by highlighting national and local priorities – including CAN's priorities in helping to address these issues. These include assistance for village halls, including the warm hub scheme, support for parish and town councils, the employment hubs and housing and health. Andy was thanked for his presentation.

10 Presentation by Sylvia Pringle (iNorthumberland)

Sylvia gave a very interesting presentation about the role of iNorthumberland and its 'offer' to village halls, as well as residents. She reported that the majority of halls in the West are in villages/areas which already have access to Superfast broadband. She added that many halls with BB do not mention it on their website – which she feels would be an attractive selling point for hirers such as people hosting conferences or business meetings as well as farmers markets or craft fairs (where the option to pay by card is popular). Sylvia outlined the times when e-mail traffic is particularly high.

Sylvia is interested in halls willing to host IT sessions or training, such as digital skills and added that she is working with Gateshead College who can deliver these and other sessions, free of charge. Any interested halls are encouraged to contact her - or via Louise (Currie) or Sarah (Hallberg). This issue may be included in the proposed questionnaire (see agenda item 11) in order to gauge how much interest there might be from the member halls.

Sylvia pointed out some hints and tips and what needs to be considered if installing BB – such as online safety/protection. She described the 'future', including available funds and subsidies and ended her presentation with a plea for volunteer 'Digital Champions'. If anyone is interested in becoming a Digital Champion in their area, they are encouraged to contact Sylvia.

There were various questions raised from the floor which Sylvia addressed various questions from. Following the presentation, it was suggested that BT would be approached to ask if a discount could be agreed for Broadband, if sufficient halls signed

up. This approach to BT would need to be made by the Consortium and it was agreed that this would be discussed at the first meeting of the new committee.
Sylvia was thanked for her presentation

11 Members priorities for the Consortium Sarah Hallberg, Louise Currie and Julia Plinston

Sarah started the discussion by outlining the work being undertaken to update the database. She reported that all halls had received an invitation to renew their annual fee and to complete a contact details form. Members were informed that due to the new data protection laws soon to be introduced, consortium members will only be contacted via the *'Main Contact'* they have given us on their renewal form. It will be up to this person to cascade information to their own trustees. All names and details on old databases will be deleted.

Louise outlined the current consortium benefits to members – PATesting scheme, insurance deals, training, EnergyCAN, newsletters, advice and assistance. To help develop member's needs and wishes for the future, a questionnaire will be sent out in the New Year to gauge what members would like to see, or have provided by the consortium.

The newsletters will continue and new features were suggested, such as focus on a different hall in each issue – that perhaps has undergone a refurbishment, or undertaken a successful (or unsuccessful) project. Members were encouraged to forward any ideas they have to the secretary. Where necessary, 'Bulletins' may be sent out between newsletters, to inform members of urgent/important matters that could not wait for inclusion in the quarterly newsletters.

Julia reported the plan to work with Mike Elphick to further develop the website and if halls are interested, introduce a website portal for member halls (similar to the parish council portal, which has been very popular) This will assist halls with either no website of their own, or halls struggling to maintain their website. This will also be included in the questionnaire.

Sarah added that she is happy to assist interested halls in establishing a Facebook Page for their halls

12 Any Other business

- National Village Halls Week – week commencing 22nd January 2018. Louise reported on this brand new initiative, proposed by Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE). If any halls are interested in holding an event, activity, social or celebratory event, please contact Louise who will link it with the national network.
- 'Joe the Quilter' – Beamish Museum has contacted Louise to invite any quilting/craft groups to take part in making a quilt to hang on the wall in the cottage which has been built at the museum. Joe the Quilter lived in Warden and this is a new project at the museum. Any interested groups are encouraged to contact Louise.
- Free wine glasses Great Whittington Village Hall has 40/50 wine glasses to give away. Any hall interested, please contact Louise and she will pass the information to the trustees.

13 Close of the Meeting

The Chair thanked Andy Dean and Sylvia Pringle for their excellent presentations. He also expressed enormous thanks to the Committee of Riding Mill Parish Hall for the use of the Hall and for the hospitality that had been provided. The meeting closed at 9.35pm

Signed as a correct record.....

Date.....