

# WEST NORTHUMBERLAND COMMUNITY BUILDINGS CONSORTIUM

*(A Self Help Group Run By Members For Members)*

**MEMBERS NEWSLETTER No.17. JUNE 2015**

**Web Site - [www.westnorthumberlandcbc.org.uk](http://www.westnorthumberlandcbc.org.uk)**

## Consortium Web Site – a Source of Information

The Consortium's web site [www.westnorthumberlandcbc.org.uk](http://www.westnorthumberlandcbc.org.uk) contains lots of information and guidance on all matters relating to managing and running a village hall or community building. The Committee tries to keep it up to date and we try to add information on topics and issues that we know are of interest to members and particularly Chairs, Secretaries and Treasurers. This Newsletter features some of the information that is within the web site but why not have a look for yourself.

### Liz Stewart Retires as Treasurer

Liz Stewart has stepped down as the Treasurer of the Consortium due to her retirement and move to Yorkshire. Liz has been the Treasurer since the formation of the Consortium in 2008 and has contributed much to the Management Committee over the years. Liz will be missed and it is very appropriate to thank her for what she has done and to wish her and her family a very happy retirement in Yorkshire.

Liz attended her last Committee meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2015 when she was presented with a gift in thanks for the voluntary service that she has given to the Consortium.

The Committee were looking to appoint a new Treasurer to follow Liz and I am very happy to report that Andy Pryor of Riding Mill volunteered to take on the post and was elected at the last committee meeting. Thank you Andy.

### The Consortium Committee

Members of the Consortium Management Committee are as follows:

Chair - Mike Wood (Greenhead Village Hall)

Secretary – Adrian Hinchcliffe

Treasurer – Andy Pryor (Riding Mill Village Halls)

Web Site – Michael Elphick (Slaley Comm.Hall)

Committee Members:

David Easby (Wall Village Hall)

Pam Pryor (Riding Mill Village Halls)

Keith Robson (Slaley Comm. Hall)

Georgia Shorrock (Gilsland Village Hall)

Roly Taylor (Wall Village Hall)

Margaret Weatherly (Slaley Comm. Hall)

### Are You Getting the Best Deal On Your Hall Insurance

The first thing the Consortium did in 2008 was to organise a panel of Insurance Companies who were willing to give a discount to members of the Consortium. We have a panel of five companies and all will give up to 10 percent for being a member. BUT it did not stop there for competition between the companies drove insurance prices down dramatically and some Halls reduced their annual bills by over a thousand pounds. Wow!

We still have the panel of companies and they are:

Allied Westminster

AON

Finance Re-Direct Ltd

Norris & Fisher

Village Hall Plus Group

We encourage you to get at least two quotes. Follow the procedure on the web site – Look down the left to the heading 'Membership' and click on 'Insurance Discounts'. You will be asked for a password which is 'WNCBC2010'. This will get you to the insurance documents – THEN click on 'this document' in the last sentence. Now read on and follow the procedure. Make sure that you complete the section of the application form to say you are a member of the Consortium.

After seven years we are going to review the companies on the panel. If any member knows of a company or companies that they believe should be on the panel, please let the Secretary know.

## **Consortium Membership at June 2015**

Acomb Village Hall  
Allendale Village Hall & Recreation Ground  
Allenheads Trust Ltd  
Bardon Mill & Henshaw Community Village Hall  
Barrasford Village Hall  
Bellingham Town Hall  
Bellingham Youth Education Centre  
Birtley Village Hall  
Blanchland Village Hall  
Byrness Village Hall  
Catton Village Hall  
Chollerton Benefice Churches and Com. Centre  
Colwell Village Hall Committee  
Corbridge Parish Hall  
Corsenside Parish Hall  
Dalton Village Hall  
Falstone Village Hall  
Featherstone Village Hall  
Gilsland Village Hall  
Great Whittington Village Hall  
Greenhead Village Hall  
Haltwhistle Social Welfare Centre  
Haydon Bridge Community Association  
Hearth Centre Horsley Ltd  
Heddon on the Wall WI  
Heddon Village Knott Memorial Hall  
Hexham & Tynedale Community Trust  
High Forest Community Association  
Horsley WI Village Hall  
Humshaugh Village Hall  
Kirkwhelpington Memorial Hall  
Knaresdale & Kirkhaugh Community Association  
Langley Village Hall  
Matfen Village Hall  
Merton Hall, Ponteland  
Minsteracres Retreat Centre.  
Newbrough Town Hall  
Newton and Bywell Community Hall Trust  
Newton Hall Men's Club  
Old School, Ovingham  
Otterburn War Memorial Hall  
Ovingham Reading Room  
Ponteland Memorial Hall  
Prudhoe Community Partnership  
Prudhoe Parish Hall & Church  
Riding Mill Village Hall Trust  
Rochester Village Hall  
RT Sports, Otterburn.  
Shepherds Dene  
Simonburn Village Hall  
Slaley Commemoration Hall  
Snods Edge Village Hall  
Stamfordham Playing Field and Village Hall  
Stocksfield Community Centre  
Stocksfield Tennis Club  
Stonehaugh Community Hall  
Tarsset Village Hall  
Wall Village Hall  
Wark Town Hall & Mechanics Institute  
Whalton Village Hall  
Whitfield Parish Hall  
Whitley Chapel Parish Hall  
Wylam Institute Community Association

The Secretary has recently written to a small number of members asking for their 2014/15 subscription of £10 to be paid. This would be appreciated.

### **Northumberland Energy Club**

#### **SAVE MONEY ON ELECTRICITY AND GAS**

In 2010 members of the Consortium asked the Committee to negotiate the best deals possible on electricity and gas. We did this by entering into an agreement with LSI Energy Brokers Ltd and by forming the Northumberland Energy Club which is owned by the Consortium.

The agreement with LSI Energy Brokers is that they will offer 'free no obligation quotations' to members and will use their expertise to identify the lowest possible prices for either electricity or gas or both.

The advantage is that if members accept a quotation LSI will bring the start and finish dates of their contract to be the same time as most other contracts they have negotiated. This enables LSI to search the energy market for the best prices using the buying power of a number of members.

Contracts are gradually increasing under the Northumberland Energy Club. We now have 54 live contracts that LSI have negotiated for the Club. Of those 36 are for members of the Consortium and 18 are non-members. On the 1<sup>st</sup> February this year LSI negotiated the renewal of 37 contracts at the same time – so those members were able to benefit from bulk purchasing.

However, there are still well over twenty members that are not using the Northumberland Energy Club and are probably paying far more for electricity and gas than they need to.

To get a free no obligation quotation from LSI go the Consortium web site and go down the left hand side to the heading 'Northumberland Energy Club', then click on 'Getting a Quotation'. Then read through the procedure and request a quotation by either email, fax or letter. It will be worth your time.

### **PORTABLE APPLIANCE TESTING**

#### **SAVE MONEY BY USING THE CONSORTIUM'S OWN TESTING SERVICE**

The Consortium runs its own Portable Appliance Testing Service which is available to members at about a third of the price charged by commercial organisations. The service started three years ago and we are indebted to the twelve volunteers who do the testing. They are :  
**Alan Brewin, Sinderhope**  
**Malcolm Brodie, Bellingham**

Pat Johnston, Fourstones  
Denis Peel, Wylam  
Matthew Singleton, Prudhoe  
Liz Stewart, Greenhead  
Michael & Pat Stott, Ovingham  
Roly Taylor, Wall  
Alan Thompson, Riding Mill  
Melvyn Whatmough, Gilsland.  
Mike Wood, Greenhead  
David Wright, Slaley  
Thanks are also due to Matthew Singleton who acts as the Coordinator of the scheme.

This year fifty of our members are taking the service by having their portable appliances tested and proved electrically safe. This is one of the checks that Trustees should make sure are done to ensure that your Hall is safe for hirers, cleaners, committee members and any other users.

The programme for 2014/15 is now coming to a close but the programme for 2015/16 will be starting in the autumn. The Secretary will shortly be email out about this.

#### **VOLUNTEER TESTER REQUIRED**

Now that Liz Stewart has left the area the Consortium is looking for a volunteer to take on portable appliance testing in the west of County. No previous experience is required and training will be given. Your commitment will be two or three days each year. Travelling expenses are paid. If you are interested or wish to ask questions please get in touch with Adrian Hinchcliffe on email [adrian.hinchcliffe@btopenworld.com](mailto:adrian.hinchcliffe@btopenworld.com) or phone 01665 572888.

#### **ADVERTISE YOUR HALL ON THE CONSORTIUM WEB SITE**

The Consortium has a facility for members to advertise their Hall on the web site. This brings in enquiries for hire. Please ensure that the entry for you Hall is up to date.

#### **INFORMATION AND ADVICE ON THE CONSORTIUM WEB SITE**

The Consortium Web Site contains lots of important and useful information for Hall officials and committee members. It is there for you to use. To access it go to the web site [www.westnorthumberlandcbc.org.uk](http://www.westnorthumberlandcbc.org.uk) Go down the left hand side until you see the heading 'Information and Advice'. Listed under this heading are ten topic. All you need to do is click on them and they will get you to the advice or information that you need. The headings are as follows:

*Acre Information Sheets* – This is a list in information guides published by ACRE. It is absolutely invaluable. You can request an electronic copy of any sheet from Louise Currie of CAN by emailing [louiseCurrie@ca-north.org.uk](mailto:louiseCurrie@ca-north.org.uk).

*Employment in Village Halls* – essential advice.

*Health and Safety Policy & Practice* – An essential topic that Hall committees should visit annually to ensure they have the health and safety policies in place.

*Management Check List* –This is a very useful checklist for Hall committees to work through to ensure that they have not forgotten anything important.

*Safeguarding Policies* – To be updated

*Insurance for Village Halls* – This is a guide to what is meant by the various terms in Hall insurance and it gives guidance on important points.

*Electrical Safety Testing* – Gives guidance on electrical testing in village halls and refers to the periodicity of various types of testing.

*Guidance on Equipment Hire* – If you hire out equipment there are certain obligations that you have to comply with and the possible need to take out insurance cover.

*Renewable Technologies in Village Halls* – Some Halls are exemplars in the use of new technologies. It is worth reading if you want to learn about others experience.

*Charitable Incorporated Organisation* – This is the new 'limited liability' status that is coming for charities.

All the above information is on the web site and there for members to use. If you wish to see information on other topics that are not mentioned it can be arranged. Just contact Adrian Hinchcliffe. It is also worth saying that if the Consortium cannot answer your queries or meet your information needs we would turn to Louise Currie of Community Action Northumberland. If in the exception situation that Louise cannot answer she will go to our national body – ACRE (Action for Communities in Rural England).

#### **VOLUNTEER SOUGHT TO BACK UP WEB SITE MANAGEMENT**

The Consortium is looking for a volunteer to give back up to the web site management that is carried out by Michael Elphick. Michael built the web site and has been managing it for seven years. He has expressed a desire to retire at some point therefore we are looking for someone who has the right skills to get involved.

This is not a huge task but one that is very important, for the web site is the Consortium's main vehicle for communications with members.

If you are interested and would like more information please get in touch with Michael by telephone on 01434 673443.

### TRAINING – FINAL REPORT

Members will recall the training that was put on by the Consortium between November 2014 and March 2015. The following table sets out the attendance for each course and the income and costs involved.

Course	Date	Location	Number Attending	Cost £	Training Fees £
Food Hygiene/Safety	14.11.14	Newton and Bywell Community Hall	18 of 20 places	715	180
Web Site Design	26.11.14	Stocksfield Community Centre	6 of 6 places	282	60
First Aid	05.12.14	Newton and Bywell Community Hall	11 of 12 places	696	110
Trustees Responsibilities	10.12.14	Corbridge Parish Hall	12	247	120
Social Media	14.01.15	Riding Mill Millennium Hall	6 of 6 places	282	60
Insurance	21.01.15	Wylam Institute	4	247	40
Risk Assessment	11.03.15	Riding Mill Village Hall	9	247	90
Health and Safety	11.02.15	Corbridge Parish Hall	9	247	90
<b>Total</b>				<b>2,963</b>	<b>750</b>
<b>Net Cost to the Consortium</b>				<b>£2,213</b>	

The overall the costs to the Consortium was £2,213.

Feedback received from those attending was very positive.

Sincere thanks are due to the Halls that hosted the training. Not only did most waive the hire fee, they provided refreshments as well. We would also like to thank Louise Currie of CAN and all the trainers.

#### Lessons Learned

- 1 In future hold the training over a Spring/Summer period. Many people are put off from travelling in winter and dark nights.
- 2 The media courses were restricted to a small number due to the number of PCs available and the need to have access to the internet.
- 3 Getting the money in advance and making it clear that once booked the fee has to be paid.
- 4 There was an issue with booking being on a first come first served basis but we think this is still the best way.

This is the first time that the Consortium has put on training for members. It is important to get things right for next time. **Views from members are welcome. Please contact the Secretary Adrian Hinchcliffe**

#### Hallmark Scheme

The Consortium supports the Hallmark Scheme and encourages members to consider being assessed. If you achieve Hallmark Level 1, some insurance companies will give an additional discount on renewing your policy. It is about good practice and it really is worthwhile taking the time to qualify. The Scheme is run by Community Action Northumberland and the contact is Louise Currie. Contact Louise on 01670 517178.

#### CONSORTIUM - CONTACT

If you have a query or need help please contact the Secretary Adrian Hinchcliffe. Adrian will help no matter what your query is or the help you need. Even the smallest issue can be a stumbling block so do not hesitate to make contact.

Email – [adrian.hinchcliffe@btopenworld.com](mailto:adrian.hinchcliffe@btopenworld.com)

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