

# **WEST NORTHUMBERLAND COMMUNITY BUILDINGS CONSORTIUM**

**A registered Charity Number 1168006**

**MEMBERS NEWSLETTER No.22.OCTOBER 2017**

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

## **CONSORTIUM AGM COMING UP – MEMBERS NEEDED FOR THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

**T**he Consortium Annual General Meeting will take place on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> November 2017 at Riding Mill Parish Hall commencing at 7.00pm. The agenda is being sent out separately but this is an appeal to the 64 members of the Consortium to find people who are willing to be members of the Consortium Management Committee. Three long standing members of the Committee will step down at the AGM and there are vacancies for nine Committee Members and the Consortium needs a new Chair. **CAN YOUR COMMITTEE FIND SOMEONE TO STAND PLEASE.** There are only four Committee meetings each year so the role is not a huge burden. It is important that the Consortium has a good representation of Member organisations to ensure that it is operating in the interests of all Members. If anyone would like more information on what is involved in being a Management Committee member please contact the retiring Secretary, Adrian Hinchcliffe on 01665 572888.

### **AGM PROGRAMME**

Following the Annual Report and the election of officials and Committee Members, Andy Dean of CAN will talk about the CAN's activities and particularly those that support village halls and community buildings. Sylvia Pringle of the County Council will also talk about Broadband and WIFI in Village Halls and what the County Council is doing to enable this. Finally, Louise Currie of CAN and Sarah Hallberg-Poppleton (Secretary Designate) will conduct a discussion about Members Priorities for the Consortium to action.

### **NEW CONTACT FOR CONSORTIUM INFORMATION**

From 10.11.17 Louise Curry will be the main contact within the Consortium for information and advice. Louise will be available as follows:

Email [louise.wncbc@ca-north.org.uk](mailto:louise.wncbc@ca-north.org.uk)

Tel. 01670 517178

### **GOOD BYE AND ALL THE BEST FOR THE FUTURE**

At the AGM we will be leaving the Consortium Committee. We have each been involved with the Consortium since 2007 when there were several meetings to talk about forming a Consortium. The inaugural meeting took place on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2008 at Humshaugh Village Hall when representatives of

fourteen village halls elected Mike Wood as Chair and Elizabeth Stewart as Treasurer. The first Committee was also formed including Pam Pryor, Adrian Hinchcliffe, Keith Robson, Michael Elphick, Norman Hooks and Malcolm Caisley. At the first Committee meeting Adrian Hinchcliffe was elected as Secretary. During the period of formation and subsequently we received considerable help from Community Action Northumberland with Louise Currie being one of the main contributors.

The objectives of the Consortium were set out as:

- Derive financial savings for members
- Having a joint and stronger voice and lobbying
- Joint training
- Information and Peer support.

All the above objectives have driven the Committee over the last nine years and we hope that we have succeeded in making a difference for Members.

The first thing that the Committee organised was an Insurers panel. We advised Members to get more than one quote. It worked and many members achieved spectacular reductions in their premiums.

In the formative period we were helped by Mike Gowland who had been involved in setting up the North Northumberland Village Halls Consortium. Alas, Mike is no longer with us, but it was he that applied to

the County Council for a grant to start the Portable Appliance Testing Scheme on behalf of both Consortia. It was successful and this scheme has gone from strength to strength and now over 50 members take the service which is run entirely by volunteers with Roly Taylor at the helm.

The membership grew very quickly and today stands at 64 with only one recognised village hall in our area that is not a member.

Information and giving guidance is also at the heart of the Consortium. Exchanging notes on best practice: how to solve a particular problem or finding a buyer or seller for items that are needed or not wanted, is an important part of the service. Michael Elphick has valiantly established the Consortium Web site which is absolutely essential to our operations.

All Member Halls consume electricity and gas and so there was an obvious need to negotiate the best terms for members. In 2011 we set up the Northumberland Energy Club and members were able to lock into low cost electricity and gas and at the same time benefit from bulk purchasing negotiated by broker LSI. This scheme has continued but is now being marketed by Community Action Northumberland under the title EnergyCAN. This arrangement has brought in considerable income to the Consortium as it receives a percentage of the commission that the broker gets from the supplier. So it is a win win all round.

We could go on and on. Suffice it to say that we have fully enjoyed being on the Consortium Committee knowing that our efforts have benefitted all 64 members and indirectly all users of Member halls.

We wish you all the very best for the future and we hope that the Consortium continues to derive benefit for Members and all users of Member Halls.

**Adrian Hinchcliffe**  
**Keith Robson**  
**Michael Wood**

### **ENERGY SQUIRRELS – A CASE STUDY**

Stocksfield Community Centre has used 'Energy Squirrels' recently to improve the heating and comfort conditions in rooms that were difficult to heat. The 'Energy Squirrel' is a steel panel that fits onto an existing radiator to boost the temperature in the room. This is a low tech solution and may be suitable in rooms where the existing radiators are undersized and it is not worth fitting new larger size radiators.

The panels can be seen at [www.energysquirrel.co.uk](http://www.energysquirrel.co.uk). The manufacturer claims 'The Energy Squirrel is the

most advanced, solid-state, non-electric radiator booster for the home. It lets you warm your home more quickly, reduces your thermostat temperature, and instantly reduces your heating bills with zero running costs'.

The manufacturer is offering promotional discounts on the purchase of the panel until 31.12.17. Also, contact Beth Gascoigne at Stocksfield Community Centre (01661 842346) who has experience of using them.

### **CONSORTIUM SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE DUE**

All Members will have received a request for the annual subscription for the year 1<sup>st</sup> October 2017 to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2018. The new rate of £35 is what was accepted by members earlier in the year following consultation. The increase in rate follows the engagement of Community Action Northumberland to carry out a number of Secretarial and other tasks for the Consortium. Louise Currie of CAN will be the main contributor of CAN's staff but others will be involved with different activities. More details on this arrangement will be outlined at the AGM.

### **DATA PROTECTION CHANGES**

New legislation on Data Protection comes in on 25th May 2018. It applies throughout Europe and will include the Consortium and all Village Halls/Community Buildings.

The new regulations strengthen the rights of individuals to access and amend their personal data; places greater emphasis on an organisation's accountability; and introduces more serious consequences for non-compliance, including fines.

The Consortium has revised its Data Protection statement that is on the Membership Renewal Form to be in line with the new regulations. Members are being asked to OPT-IN to allowing Community Action Northumberland to use the Consortium Membership data base to send information out to Members on their services.

The Consortium will issue more information on how these regulation affect Village Halls and Community Buildings.

### **WHAT ARE YOUR PRIORITIES?**

The Consortium is always striving to ensure it is meeting the needs and priorities of members. After all, that is its purpose. In addition to the range of services that are already available we would like to better understand Members needs and priorities. CAN THE CONSORTIUM HELP YOUR HALL AND AT THE SAME TIME SOLVE ISSUES FOR OTHER HALLS? Sarah Hallberg and Louise Currie will lead a discussion on this at the AGM.

West Northumberland Community Buildings Consortium. Members Newsletter is compiled and issued by the Consortium Secretary and distributed to all Members.
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