



West Northumberland  
Community Buildings Consortium

# WNCBC NEWSLETTER

## SPRING 2018

### AGM Highlights

Held on 9th November 2017, the AGM was very well attended - doubtless a reflection of the appreciation of our members for the fact that we were, sadly, saying goodbye to three long-standing members of the outgoing committee: Adrian Hinchcliffe, Mike Wood and Keith Robson, who left with huge thanks from the members present and the rest of the committee.

You will be pleased to note that I do not intend to go into detail about the usual business of the AGM, other than to say that copies of the Draft Minutes of the AGM, as well as the reports presented by the Chair, Secretary and Treasurer, are currently available on request via:

sarahwncbc@btinternet.com. The two talks given at the AGM, however, do deserve special mention (the content of both of these talks is dealt with in more detail in the Draft Minutes).

The first, by Andy Dean of CAN, dealt with the needs of rural areas within the county and the effect that living in rural communities has, both positively and negatively, on residents' health and wellbeing, and the role that CAN plays in helping to identify and deal with some of the challenges residents face in today's climate.

The second talk, by Sylvia Pringle of iNorthumberland, was a very interesting look at

the work iNorthumberland has done and continues to do in terms of making Broadband accessible across rural Northumberland – and this work is relevant for village halls and community buildings as well as to residents.

Once the WNCBC website is updated, copies of meeting minutes will be made available online for you to keep abreast of what WNCBC and CAN are doing on your behalf. Meanwhile, if you have any queries at all, please feel free to contact Sarah ([sarahwncbc@btinternet.com](mailto:sarahwncbc@btinternet.com)) or Louise ([louise.WNCBC@ca-north.org.uk](mailto:louise.WNCBC@ca-north.org.uk)), who will be happy to answer any questions you might have.

### Questionnaire

Recently, WNCBC has been discussing with CAN the idea of having a website 'portal' for use by its members. This portal would be able to give each member access to what would be, in effect, its own simple, good-looking and easy-to-use mini-website - without all the technical 'stuff' that surrounds setting up a full website from scratch. The portal would also, however, be able to link to both external websites and social media accounts, so if members do already have their own websites or Facebook pages, those can be easily accessed via the portal.

At the same time, WNCBC has been looking at its own website

with a view to working out how the website is being used currently (what our members are looking for online and what types of information they are searching for) and how it can be updated to cater for the increasing use of mobile and tablet devices. Having a separate membership portal could have a huge effect on the website in that WNCBC would be able to remove the membership section from its website and perhaps simplify the whole site - thus making it easier for its members to use the site and find the information they need to help run their halls and buildings.

Therefore, a questionnaire will be circulated in the next few weeks, to help us identify how WNCBC's members use the website currently, and what they would like, want and need to see from it in the future. We hope as many members as possible will complete the questionnaire as the answers we get back will be used to help shape the content and feel of the website in the future. The questionnaire will be electronic, so if you have difficulty accessing online forms, please let Louise or Sarah know when it is circulated, and we will do our best to help.

# THANK YOU!

### Payment of fees and updated contact details

By Louise Currie

I would like to thank all our members for such a swift response, completing the Consortium Membership Form and paying your annual fees in October/November last year. I am delighted to report that we have 63 Members, from all over the West of the county. You will have noticed the boxes that were on the rear of the form (which all member halls have ticked) to give the consortium permission to keep you up to date with information and services. It also allows me (in my CAN role) to provide you with information about our Village Halls work, and other general work you might be interested in. We will not pass your information on to any other organisations or individuals.

It is therefore really important that you [contact us](#) if there are any changes in your organisation – such as new trustees – particularly the person that you chose as your 'Main Contact' on the form, because all correspondence is sent to that individual. We would not want you to miss out on information, updates, bulletins or these newsletters. Please feel free to contact us if you want us to circulate anything to the other members – such as sales or swaps, or recommendations for equipment or furniture – we will happily circulate it amongst the members. A final 'thank you' to the people who recently volunteered to train as PATesters. This really helps the PAT scheme, managed by Roly Taylor, to run smoothly.



# Village Halls Week

In January, our County's communities celebrated the very first, national #VillageHallsWeek which applauded the vital role that village halls play in sustaining rural communities.

The week-long celebration, organised by ACRE Network, (England's largest network of rural community support organisations) expressed a collective "thank you" to all trustees, who work tirelessly to keep community buildings and village halls open for the benefit of local people.

As you well know, village halls, church halls and other community buildings remain a vital resource at the heart of many rural communities acting as a hub for multiple local services. Halls host not only the regular events and activities, but many run community enterprises such as post offices, community shops, coffee shops, libraries, cinemas, farmers' markets and pop-up-pubs. Nearly a quarter of halls nationally, were built before World War I, while an estimated 600 were built to commemorate the war, or the individuals who perished during that conflict. Northumberland boasts World War halls, 'Reading Rooms' (established to

'educate the workers'), Mechanics Institutes and Memorial halls and some of the oldest halls in the county date back to the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

In Northumberland we have up to 240 halls sprinkled right across the county and on hearing about the national celebration, many rose to the challenge and a wide range of events were organised, to celebrate the week. These ranged from fundraising coffee mornings, an energy saving roadshow, a job fair helping local people get back into work, celebrations of refurbishment projects, Burns Night suppers and a 'Winter Warmer' energy event.

Louise Currie wrote:

*"We were delighted to celebrate the tireless work carried out by the amazing volunteers running community buildings in our county. Without their dedication, skills and expertise, these vital facilities would be lost to the communities they serve. We proudly supported #VillageHallsWeek so we could celebrate the network of halls we have locally, champion the services they offer to their communities and say a big thank you to the volunteers at the heart of it all."*

With the first national celebration now under our belt, we are confident that next year's #VillageHallsWeek will be bigger and better.

Ian McMillan wrote a poem, especially for the week: "Teapot as Big as the Moon"



Here is the centre and here is the hub  
Here is community held in a room,  
Here's the big gig and the loud Zumba Club  
And here is a teapot as big as the moon  
Here is a teapot as big as the moon!

Here is a place at the heart of the map  
Here is a song with a crowd-friendly tune  
Here's a child's bonnet, a pensioner's cap  
And here is a teapot as big as the moon  
Here is a teapot as big as the moon!

Here is the village: its hopes and its dreams  
Here's a bright light that pierces the gloom  
Here is a space that's much more than it seems  
And here is a teapot as big as the moon  
Here is a teapot as big as the moon!

Here is the future in these tightened times  
Here is a voice that says 'come back, and soon'  
Here is a noticeboard brimming with signs  
And here is a teapot as big as the moon  
Here is a teapot as big as the moon!

This is the village hall, open the doors!  
This is the root and the sap and the bloom!  
This is utopia with cutlery drawers!  
And this is the teapot as big as the moon  
This is the teapot as big as the moon!

By Ian McMillan

## #VillageHallsWeek

This poem has been written for #VillageHallsWeek 2018 by Ian McMillan.  
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# Looking back over the first ten years of the Consortium...

By Adrian Hinchcliffe

Sarah asked me to write a short article for the Consortium Newsletter looking back on my time on the Committee and what has been achieved.

First and foremost, I am extremely proud to have been part of the WNCBC Committee and I look back with huge pride at what was achieved over the ten year period 2007 to 2017.

The Consortium Committee provided a service to the 64 members in West Northumberland and I know it was appreciated from the occasional comments and ratings that we received.

Village Halls and Community buildings are at the very heart of their communities and they contribute enormously to village life especially in a rural area like West Northumberland. They can bring communities together, create cohesion, offer social, sport and educational opportunities. They are so important to life as we know it. If the Consortium has been responsible for Village Halls fulfilling this purpose, even in small way, this then that is an enormous achievement.

Village Hall management committees have to ensure that these places

are safe for all users, that they comply with all the safety, licensing and legal requirements and that they are pleasant welcoming places for their communities. This is an enormous task often exacerbated by new legislation and the changeover of officials with new people taking up office with little knowledge of what is required in running their Halls.

I had experienced this when I became Secretary of the Newton and Bywell Community Hall in 2003 and learned enormously about running a village hall in the succeeding years. It was therefore not surprising that I fully agreed with the concept of the Consortium and volunteered to use my knowledge for the benefit of all other Halls in West Northumberland.

But, what has been achieved is not about me, it is about a number of like-minded people coming together and joining forces to help others. We do say that the Consortium is 'A self-help group run by members for members'. The Committee has had stability over the ten years which has helped enormously. We all got on well together and understood our roles

whether it be Chair, Secretary, Treasurer or Committee member and the invention that was added by people like Mike Wood, Michael Elphick, Keith Robson, Liz Stewart, Andy Pryor, Pam Pryor, Georgia Shorrocks, Roly Taylor, Malcolm Caisley, Margaret Wetherly, Norman Hooks, David Easby and Neville Gray was absolutely enormous.

All Consortium Committee members were representatives of their own halls, so they understood the need for good insurance deals, the lowest possible gas and electricity prices, a PAT Testing service, an information service to flag up changes and identify best practice, training needs and to be responsive to the needs of members. I admire everyone involved in providing the PAT testing service. A thousand thanks to Roly Taylor and the team of voluntary testers.

So, I look back with pride but at the same time situations change and people change and I would like to sincerely wish the new Consortium Committee all the very best in moving things forward and taking on the challenges of the future.

## HALLMARK

Many of you by now, will be familiar with the Hallmark Scheme. This national 'quality standard' scheme, run by ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England) and in Northumberland, is managed by CAN.

- It encourages, establishes and rewards good practice
- It encourages improvement in established management customs and procedures
- It helps halls obtain recognition from other bodies, of a standard of management of community facilities

Currently, thirteen halls in Northumberland have achieved and retained Hallmark 1 – which principally assesses whether the hall is complying with the requirements of its charitable status. Five of those halls are in the West of the county. Several more halls are due to renew the award – which lasts for three years.

Five halls have gone a step further and achieved Hallmark 2 – which assesses compliance with legislative issues, such as health & safety, security and licensing. Two of these halls are in the West of the county and they are Stocksfield Community Association and Wylam Institute. One of the main questions I get asked, is "Why would Hallmark be useful for our hall to achieve?" I think that the very best reason, is receiving acknowledgment of 'good practice' and being able to demonstrate to your users, funders and other bodies, that your hall has reached a good standard of management.

Another, more 'mercenary' reason, is that many of the insurance companies 'reward' halls that have achieved the Hallmark standard, by reducing their premium – it's obvious really, because good management reduces risk. Every little helps!!

So, if your hall is interested in finding out more about Hallmark, please call Louise on 01670 517178 or by e-mail [louise.WNCBC@ca-north.org.uk](mailto:louise.WNCBC@ca-north.org.uk)



## NEXT ISSUE

We know our members have some amazing halls and buildings and we think it would be nice to show them off a little - not least because we all do some very different things! If you would like your hall or building to be featured in our '**Spotlight on...**' section, please do let us know. Photographs of your halls and/or committees would also be welcome. Of course, if you're all too shy to contact us, we may contact you directly to see if you would like to be featured.

## GDPR and the ICO

As mentioned in the article on the following page, you can now get some further information about the new GDPR legislation via the ICO (<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/>).

They have now produced a dedicated resource page specifically for charities (<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/charity/>) as well as a helpline. The page also includes guidance from the Institute of Fundraising and the Fundraising Regulator.

## Spotlight on...

# Tarset Village Hall

By Sheila Brodie (Treasurer TVH)

Tarset Village Hall is one of the main hubs of the small rural community of Lanehead, Tarset and the surrounding area. It is run by a management committee of nine and supported by four Holding Trustees. The building is of a wooden construction with metal roof and double-glazed windows, and the walls and roof have recently been fully insulated with sheep's wool. It has oil fired central heating to radiators, limited off road parking and disabled parking space and ramp. There is a large meeting hall with a stage, a small meeting room, a fully fitted kitchen, a storage room and a fitted, fully-integrated sound and projection system with a retractable projection screen.

The current Hall was rebuilt after the old hall was completely destroyed by fire in 1930. The new hall was used by many associations and committees during WWII. Following the donation of a small piece of adjoining land, a garden space was created, and the hall was refurbished and extended in 2006. Funding for the total scheme came from community fund raising events and grants.



The hall has a permanent alcohol license and bar (which contributes significantly towards the hall's finances and means that the hall can break even without having to significantly raise its rental costs every year). Last year, high-speed Broadband was installed for users of the hall, and the committee are now starting to work towards achieving Hallmark standard for the hall.

The committee works hard to maintain the hall - manning the bar, and organising the many and varied classes, social events and local group meetings. Many local groups and organisations use the hall currently (including the

Parish Council, Women's Institute, Leek Show, 'Song Reivers' Community Choir, Tarset Ceilidh Band, 'Sharp Cards' card group, Yoga Classes, 'Wool Gathering' spinning and weaving group, Scottish Country Dancing, Bellingham and District Dramatic Society, Tarset Archive Group, Tarset 2050CIC, First Thursday Films (monthly film nights), Coffee Mornings, Bellingham All Acoustic Club (live music)) and it has even been used to offer Buddhist retreats.

In addition to the regular classes, 'Friends of Greenhaugh School' have held fund raising Curry Nights and Film Nights at the hall, and recently Bellingham North Tynies pre-school group needed to find a temporary home whilst repairs to their usual building were undertaken, and hired the hall for three days. The Hall is also used by groups from outside the area - such as NNPA, Community Foundation, the Forestry Commission, Northumberland County Council (the hall is used as a polling station for local and National elections), and VARC (Visual Artists in Rural Communities) as well as the Northumberland Wildlife Trust who held their updates on the 'Restoring Ratty' project at the hall. More controversially, it has also hosted a meeting about the proposed re-introduction of Lynx to Kielder Forest. It has also hosted Wedding receptions, Christening parties, Anniversary and Birthday Parties as well as Humanist Funeral Services.

The latest items of discussion are a programme of taster days for people to experience various new crafts, joining the Highlights programme, and a 'Taste Tarset 4' (TT4) competition is being organised for next year. TT1 compared the community's pie-making skills - with Si King of 'Hairy Bikers' fame being dragooned into judging the 'Roadkill Pie' section (the only rule being that there must be no rare or endangered species in the pie filling); TT2 tested people on their themed cakes (one entry re-creating the hall in gingerbread form, while another produced a supremely tasty carrot-cake rendition of 'a sheep sheltering from the snow behind a dry stone wall'); TT3 was the great soup and bread challenge while this year's competition may be less 'Taste Tarset' and more 'Drink and Nibble Tarset' - with homemade drinks (both alcoholic and non-alcoholic) and canapés amongst the entry categories.

# Data Protection regulations

By Louise Currie

## MEMBERSHIP OF WNCBC

You are likely to already know, that there are new data protection regulations coming into force from May 25<sup>th</sup> 2018. These regulations will replace the current EU Data Protection Directive, EU member states regulations and the UK data Protection Act of 1998. This means that there will be more stringent penalties than existing DP Regulations and they will apply to all organisations that process personal data of individuals.

How will it affect halls? People managing halls are defined under the legislation as 'Data Controllers' and therefore will need to be aware of how the legislation applies to them. Trustees will need to carefully consider how they handle personal data: how they collect it, store it, use it and how long they keep it.

For most village halls, the risk of breach is low, *providing* that any personal data is held securely, is only used for the legitimate purpose for which it was collected and is disposed of when it is no longer required.

You will need to consider the following information:  
Any recorded information about hirers and trustees

- Circulation lists for newsletters
- Information about tickets for events
- Fundraising/ raffles/ supporters

- Reclaiming Gift Aid on donations
- Members in 'membership' organisations
- Contracts of employment
- Shareholders
- Accident books, insurance claims, CC return, etc.

After May 25<sup>th</sup>, I will draft a more detailed bulletin and circulate it to member halls. This will detail what information is classed as 'personal data', how to map data, how to process it and what data you can/cannot use. Importantly, how to hold data securely. This will help to ensure you avoid a data breach.

ACRE has produced a *preliminary* Information Sheet on Data Protection for Village Halls – so if you want a copy, please feel free to contact Louise and she will e-mail a copy to you. Please note that the sheet is likely to be amended once the regulations come into force – but it gives some helpful 'general' advice if you want to start to prepare. In the meantime, if you want to explore it further, the following Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) website might be helpful: [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk). The ICO Helpline for small organisations is: 0303 123 1113 (select option 4) to be diverted to staff who can offer support.

## Your Benefits

The Consortium was created by members for the benefit of members. Here are the benefits of membership:

- Access to discounts on insurance.
- The PAT Testing Service that offers a testing service that is around one third of commercial rates.
- Access to EnergyCAN with low value electricity and gas contracts and benefits from collective purchasing.
- Access to an Information Service that offers information on a full range of topics relating to running a Community Building, including funding.
- Guidance on constitutional issues and charity matters.
- Information on licensing and the regulations that relate to community buildings.
- Newsletters and Bulletins updating members on current news and issues.
- A louder voice on issues by enabling the Consortium to speak on behalf of all its members.
- Access to training courses and discounts offered to CAN to members.
- Access to a network of members for sales, purchases and information.
- Membership of a network of similar type organisations in West Northumberland.
- Access to other discounts organised by the Consortium.
- Guidance on best practice.

## FEEDBACK

We would very much welcome your feedback on this newsletter and on the information it contains.

Please feel free to contact us via email:

[sarahwncbc@btinternet.com](mailto:sarahwncbc@btinternet.com)

or

[Louise.WNCBC@ca-north.org.uk](mailto:Louise.WNCBC@ca-north.org.uk)

Louise and Sarah will be happy to answer any queries you might have. We would also be interested to know if there are any topics you would like to see covered in the next newsletter (which will be in Autumn/Winter 2018).

## CHARITY COMMISSION AND GDPR

The latest advice from the Charity Commission is to make sure your details with the Charity Commission are up to date before the new GDPR legislation comes into force.

You can check that the correct details for your charity, including the names of your current trustees and their contact details (including email addresses), are listed on the Charity Commission website .

# Village Halls in Emergencies

By Nigel Fisher, Civil Contingencies Officer  
Northumberland County Council

Following on from the recent celebration of Village Halls in the community we would like to add our thanks to the service many village halls now play, in supporting the response to emergencies.

Back in 2015 the County Council's Civil Contingencies Team, in partnership with CAN, put out an invitation for Village Halls to consider becoming part of our plans for responding to emergencies by becoming Reception / Rest Centres.

Reception / Rest Centres are required to shelter evacuees from emergencies such as flooding / severe weather / gas explosion or other threat to their safety. The basic requirement is somewhere safe and warm away from the site of the emergency where people can be sheltered and cared for until the Emergency Services and Council can deal with the emergency and return them to their homes; or find alternative accommodation if return home is not possible.

Thankfully the need for Reception / Rest Centres is infrequent but, when they are needed, it's reassuring to know that a local facility can be provided where people can be quickly taken and cared for during, what for them, is a traumatic experience.

A recent case where a Village hall provided this support was in Whalton in August 2017 when sulphur bombs were uncovered during building works at a house in the centre of the Village. The incident required that several nearby houses were evacuated and, after initial arrangements were made to use the local school, due to renovations within the schools, it became necessary to ask the Village hall to open to receive the evacuees. Without hesitation the key holder and other community members rallied round to open and care for the affected residents. The incident was not cleared until late evening but the community looked after their neighbours until they could return home. On this occasion, unfortunately, further bombs were unearthed the next day and the process had to be repeated, but again the Village hall and community were there to help. This support was reassuring to the residents affected as they didn't have to be moved away from the village and were able to return to normality very quickly.

The role of the Village hall is always a key focus for communities and we are grateful to those which have signed up to be on our list of potential Centres. You don't have to have special facilities or make any alterations to your building to be listed as a Rest Centre. The only requirement is that you are willing to potentially open at short notice, possibly during the night, to support an emergency response in your area. All we ask for is minimum two or three Key holder contacts who can be called on to open the Hall if needed.

If you'd like more information or feel able to offer the services of your Village Hall please contact the Civil Contingencies Team on 01670 621208 or 621207 or e-mail [eplan@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:eplan@northumberland.gov.uk) and we'll provide the necessary information and forms for you to consider. We're also happy to come and talk to you and your Committee members about the implications, before you commit. Alternatively, contact Louise Currie on 01670 517178 who will give you any additional information, or link you with the Civil Contingencies Team.