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## Minutes of the WNCBC Management Committee Meeting 2pm Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> February 2021 (Meeting held online – via Zoom)

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Present: Sarah Hallberg, Mike Barlow, David Blackett, Louise Currie, David Easby, Neville Gray, Sarah Hallberg, Vicky Herod, Roly Taylor.

- 1) **Election of meeting chair:** David Easby
- 2) **Apologies:** Jill Bungay
- 3) **Minutes of previous meeting** (5<sup>th</sup> February 2020): Accepted as a true record. It was unanimously agreed that SH would sign and date the minutes on behalf of the meeting Chair, David Easby.
- 4) **Matters Arising** – none
- 5) **Secretarial update** (LC and SH)
  - a. **Website Portal update.** SH reported that the ‘soft launch’ of the Portal, which was planned to coincide with #VillageHallsWeek had gone well, with excellent attendance (over 80 people) at the online launch session. Very good interest in the project and lots of enquiries coming in, with positive feedback from both Consortia received. Carrie Brooks will be doing the bulk of the admin, with support as required from SH. The portal is the first such website to be offered in the country, and as such, is a unique and different offering.
  - b. **Membership Renewal update** – renewals for 2020/21 completed and all have now paid.
  - c. **#VillageHallsWeek** (Louise) – various planned activities for Summer 2020 did not happen due to COVID restrictions. National Lottery Community Fund monies had been awarded to support the project, but funding has been deferred, so #VillageHallsWeek 2022 will be paid for with this.
  - d. **WNCBC Summer Gathering** – forced to postpone due to COVID restrictions. However, the proposed plans (visits to Community projects in Humshaugh and info/presentation from Slaley) were thought to be of sufficient interest that we will re-schedule when we are able to (not sure if that will be this year or next year as yet) and retain the same theme.
  - e. **Heritage Project** – on hold due to COVID restrictions currently, but with the proposed easing of restrictions, it may be possible to get the project up and running again sooner rather than later. Funding has been secured and permission has been granted for the funds to be deferred.
  - f. **Newsletter** – with things at last settling and restrictions planned to relax somewhat over the Spring and Sumer, it is at last feasible to put together a full newsletter. SH and LC will work on it over the next couple of months.
  - g. **First Aid Kits** – formal thanks were given to David Blackett, Neville Gray, David Easby, and Julia Plinston, as well as to those halls who had agreed to act as distribution centres. A fair amount of work had gone into organising the kits and then putting

them together once the component parts had arrived – it had taken 6-8 hours to put together the packs so they were ready to distribute. George Courtice had organised distribution of kits in the North of the County. David Blackett had been the main driver of the project and it had been deeply appreciated by all members in both Consortia. DB had already submitted an article for the newsletter but will update it and send additional photos of the production line.

- h. **£10k Grant** – circa 138 halls in Northumberland had successfully applied for the grant. Halls should try to spend it on what it was originally intended for (in general, to ‘keep the show on the road’). Church halls are not rateable, so weren’t eligible initially. However, LC had worked with the Local Authority and had managed to secure grants for those that are clearly offering community/village hall activities (e.g. Featherstone). RT had asked about the applications for 6<sup>th</sup> Jan and LC agreed to check Ts and Cs. VH had also agreed to go through it with RT and try to find more info. DB also offered to help. LC has details.
- i. **RCEF** – Rural Design Centre had submitted application and Josh Sawyer had confirmed that the application had been received and the decision was due sometime around the 8<sup>th</sup> March.
- j. **WNCBC AGM** – had been due in November 2021 but tight COVID restrictions meant it could not be held. The choices are therefore to: a) Postpone until we can meet physically or b) hold the AGM online (via Zoom). The committee voted unanimously to hold the meeting via Zoom. LC and SH to arrange.

## 6) Financial Report

- a. NG had issued the Annual Accounts and they have been independently examined. Approved unanimously by all present. It was noted that the original predictions had assumed PAT income, which hasn’t happened due to COVID. We are therefore OK through this year and next year, but if PAT doesn’t resume, we need to look at other sources of income or raise the fees.
- b. Balance at 4/2/21: Cash at bank £7193.56. Cheque has been issued to CAN for £3,200 to cover Admin fees, so actual balance is £3993.56
- c. NG had contacted our insurers to see if there was any discount available. We currently have cover for both Professional Indemnity (£448 p.a.) and Employers’ Liability (£1890.02 p.a.) for the PAT service, to protect the volunteers, our equipment and to guarantee the work that has been done. It appears that if we cancel the policies, our previous PAT guarantees cease to exist, so it was decided to keep both policies going. NG was thanked for his hard work and diligence.
- d. PRS/PPL – a number of halls, with very good reason, had complained about charges being levied for the year halls have been forced to close and for whom the licenses were therefore inappropriate. ACRE are currently querying this with PRS/PPL and LC may therefore receive a briefing in the next few weeks to confirm the situation.
- e. EnergyCAN – commissions to WNCBC are falling at the moment – probably partly to do with the COVID restrictions and partly to do with the fact that LSI has been taken over and there appears to be some confusion about the situation. Adrian H will keep SH informed and there will be an update (either on the website or in the newsletter) once we know what’s happening. Again, this is income stream for WNCBC so will have to be factored into future calculations.

- 7) **PAT Report** – There has been no possibility of running the PAT service under current restrictions and given that the restrictions won't be fully lifted until the end of June/beginning of July, and since the PAT year runs from September, it was decided to resume the service from September 2021 (assuming we are permitted to do so). We will therefore get the equipment tested and ready to use for September.
- 8) **WNCBC Website** – SH has not made any updates to the website (other than news items/bulletins and some relevant content/links) as she has been waiting for the portal website to become active so she can delete all the out-of-date individual pages for halls that we currently have. Now the portal is active, SH will remove all the out-of-date hall pages and start linking halls through to their portal or external websites. Once that is done, she will look at updating the appearance of the website.
- 9) **AOB** – None
- 10) **Date & Time of next meeting:** AGM and OM prior to AGM. 6-8 weeks' time approx. Date to be confirmed.

Minutes Compiled by:  
Sarah Hallberg (Secretary, WNCBC) and Louise Currie (CAN)

Signed as a true record: .....

Date: .....