

Minutes of the WNCBC Annual General Meeting 7pm Thursday 10th June 2021 (Meeting held online – via Zoom)

Meeting chaired by: Louise Currie

Present (in alphabetical order): Mike Barlow, Barbara Braysher, Carrie Brookes, Jill Bungay, Louise Currie, Rosaleen Doonan, David Easby, Carol Ferguson, John Foreman, Avril Forster, Janet Gordon, Neville Gray, Bill Grigg, Sarah Hallberg, Charlotte Hancock, Vicky Herod, Phil Hinchcliffe, Barbara Hinchcliffe, Austin Illiffe, Diana Linnett, David Pearson, Robert Philipson, Julia Plinston, Mandy Senior, Roly Taylor, Richard Virden, Caroline Warburton, Judith Wilthew, Emma Young.

- 1) **Welcome:** LC Welcomed everyone
- 2) **Apologies** received from: David Blackett, Michael Elphick and Debbie Reed
- 3) **Carrie Brookes (CAN):**
 - a. NVH Portal – organised and maintained by CAN with help from WNCBC and NNVHC. Designed to be a public-facing portal, providing one place for people to find info on all Village Halls in Northumberland and on which they can make bookings (or be transferred to VH own websites). Because it is a trial, membership is free for the first year (until April 2022) Carrie gave a quick online tour of the portal, provided attendees with the Portal website address and asked the members present to contact her directly with any queries.
 - b. Heritage Project – CAN, in conjunction with Northumberland Archives, and supported by Heritage Lottery funding. The project had been on hold because of the pandemic but is now ready to re-start. The mission is to record, preserve and share the heritage of Northumberland’s Village Halls. We will know by the end of July where we are with the halls who originally signed up for inclusion in the project (of which there were 15 in year 1 and 15 in year 2). Partnered with Northumberland Archives, the aim is to produce an exhibition, book, dedicated website, and also to provide halls with the resources they need to collect and record their heritage effectively. Carrie has set up a Facebook group (www.facebook.com/groups/villagehallsheritage) for halls involved in the project and once underway, this will be a good way of making sure all halls involved are kept informed. There will also be a project page on the CAN website with details of the project and ideas for halls to run events to help promote the project within their communities. Carrie presented slides (copies to be circulated for reference). Julia confirmed that she, Carrie and Louise would be starting to contact the halls who had already signed up to see if they were still interested in going ahead with the project. Charlotte Hancock (Stamfordham) asked whether people who are not already on the list can be included? Answer: Potentially yes – Julia will contact Charlotte to discuss.

- 4) **Approval of Minutes of last AGM (Weds 7th November 2019):** Accepted unanimously. Proposed by Mike Barlow (Dalton VH); Seconded by Janet Gordon (Gilsland)
- 5) **Matters Arising:** None
- 6) **Annual Report**
- a. Circulated to all members and approved by the Management Committee prior to the AGM. Title should be 2019-2021 rather than 2020-21. SH to amend (see attached report with relevant amendments made).
 - b. Other than the above amendment, report agreed and accepted, without further alteration, by all present.
 - c. Ros Doonan had questioned the viability of the PAT service and asked if it was likely to close? Roly Taylor confirmed we are desperate for more volunteers, particularly as some had retired recently and the average age of the volunteers who are carrying out the service is approx. 80. New volunteers are being sought. Roly and the other PAT Volunteers, particularly those who had been forced to retire, were formally thanked in the report.
- 7) **Financial Report**
- a. The Annual Financial Report for year ending September 2020 (copy attached) had been audited and approved by the Management Committee. It was presented to members and was accepted, without alteration, by the floor.
 - b. Neville was thanked for his time and commitment to WNCBC
 - c. Pertinent points in the report
 - i. Due to COVID, we had only partially managed to complete the PAT programme for 2019/20, so we lost approx. £600 in revenue.
 - ii. WNCBC had applied to the Sir James Knott Trust for £2k as partial funding for the CAN/WNCBC NVH Portal Project. This money had now been forwarded to CAN.
 - iii. Last year's cash surplus had been £790
 - iv. We have been able to keep the fee at £35 for or members this year and will review at the end of the financial year for 2021
- 8) **Election of Management Committee**
- a. All current committee members had expressed a willingness to stand again.
 - b. Two additional members had expressed a willingness to stand.
 - c. Additional nominations were invited from the floor – no further nominations were received
 - d. Therefore, the committee for the coming year including the new nominations was agreed and unanimously accepted by the floor. In alphabetical order, the incoming committee is as follows: Mike Barlow, David Blackett, Jill Bungay, David Easby, Neville Gray, Sarah Hallberg, Vicky Herod, Austin Illiffe, Diana Linnett and Roly Taylor.

9) Election of Officers

- a. Chair, Secretary, Treasurer
 - i. Chair: WNCBC has not had a named Chair since November 2017 and has been working with the role of chair being selected on a rotating basis at each meeting from amongst the Management Committee members. With no specific nominations for chair being received, it was decided to carry on with this arrangement, as it had been working well.
 - ii. Secretary: SH was re-elected as Secretary,
 - iii. Treasurer: NG was re-elected as Treasurer
- b. Other positions
 - i. PAT Coordinator: Roly Taylor had expressed a wish to stand down as PAT Coordinator, so this is a position we will need to fill as soon as possible. There were no volunteers from the floor. David Blackett had been approached and had expressed a willingness to help, but this will need to be confirmed and that he is happy to take over the role.
 - ii. Website Manager: In the absence of any volunteers for the role, SH had agreed to continue maintaining the website and is working on a new appearance and functionality. Following the launch of the NVH website Portal, changes are also being made to the membership info held online by WNCBC and this is currently in the process of being updated.

10) Vote of thanks to the committee

- a. A vote of thanks to the outgoing committee was made
- b. Louise Currie made a formal vote of thanks, on behalf of WNCBC, to ACRE for its herculean efforts in supporting the Halls during the COVID 'lockdown' – not helped, at times, by the continually shifting goalposts placed by the Government.
- c. A formal vote of thanks to Louise Currie (CAN) from WNCBC for her role in providing administrative backup to WNCBC was also made, as Louise often goes above and beyond the call of duty to assist both the Consortium itself and its individual members.

11) Any Other Business

- a. (Ros Doonan) PAT Service: Testing and legal requirements. SH confirmed that the information was all current and on the WNCBC website. There is no legal requirement for halls to conduct PA Testing annually, BUT it is good practice and insurers quite often make it a stipulation of cover for halls. The government document which deals with PAT requirements can be linked to via the WNCBC website in its PAT pages.
- b. (Diana Linnett) Formal thanks to Louise Currie and to ACRE were offered from Humshaugh Village Hall for their efforts during the COVID restrictions
- c. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with CAN, in terms of providing Admin support for WNCBC, has been renewed for a further three-year period. The arrangements are working well and are benefitting both CAN and WNCBC.
- d. Digital Review update: CAN had conducted a Digital Review, towards which 6 halls had agreed to take part as case studies (2 halls with good connection, 2 halls with no

connection and 2 halls who have connection but do not use it to its full capability). The report has now been published and Louise Currie will provide copies on request.

- e. Rural Communities Energy Fund (RCEF). The Rural Design Centre (although it was initially set in motion by CAN) have been driving this initiative. A good number of halls and Churches have expressed an interest and there is a waiting list, which is encouraging. Expressions of interest are still being sought, so the true scale of interest can be gauged. There has been a lot of interest in the concept of battery storage and battery management to supplement alternative forms of solar energy generation, and the feasibility of forming a dedicated energy company is being explored.
- f. PRS/PPL – there have been large numbers of complaints about halls still being charged whilst they have been closed. ACRE have discussed the situation directly with PRS/PPL on behalf of the halls they represent and the upshot is that PRS/PPL have acknowledged the situation and have agreed that they will either waive fees where appropriate or will issue pro-rata refunds when approached by halls. There are new claim forms which are being made available by PRS/PPL. The advice, however, is to ask the person you are speaking to whether they are conversant with Community Building Tariffs and if not, to insist that you are put through to someone who is conversant with the tariffs and the refund system. Vicky Herod (Wark) confirmed that she had emailed PRS/PPL with all the relevant info about when the hall had closed and when it will re-start its subs from, and the refund/credit was issued very quickly.
- g. David Pearson (Kirkwhelpington) recorded thanks to Louise Currie and Sarah Hallberg for all the work they do.
- h. The WNCBC newsletter is imminent

12) **Next AGM date:** The feeling was that there was no point in holding two AGMs within 4 months of each other, and neither are we legally required to do so given the ‘lockdown’ situation we have been working under. Therefore it was proposed, and unanimously agreed, that the next AGM would be in November 2022, which brings the AGM back to the time of year within which it is usually held. The exact date/time/venue will be agreed nearer the time.

13) **Close of meeting:** Louise closed the meeting and thanked everyone for attending.

Minutes Compiled by
Sarah Hallberg (Secretary, WNCBC)

Signed as a true record:

Date: