

# Community Action Northumberland



Annual Report 2009-10

**Community Action Northumberland** (CAN), previously known as the Community Council of Northumberland, is an unincorporated voluntary association, established for general charitable purposes in 1951. It is a registered charity, no.224798 which serves as a voluntary and community sector infrastructure body to support and develop community groups, charities and voluntary bodies throughout the County of Northumberland.

Community Action is both a Rural Community Council and a Council of Voluntary Service. Constitutionally, Community Action is a body whose members are drawn from the major local voluntary and statutory organisations, the chief officers of public bodies, and individual Associate Members. The full Council meets twice a year and elects, on a 3 year rolling basis, an Executive Committee of 15 members, who are the charity's trustees.

Community Action owns one piece of property: Tower Buildings in Morpeth, of which the holding trustee is the Official Custodian for Charities. Other properties are occupied on leases or licences.

In accordance with our Performance Management system, we review our Business Plan every year, on a rolling 3-year basis. It defines our governance, roles, strategic priorities, and the broad deployment of our resources. Greater detail of our activities and intended outcomes are specified in our annual Action Plan which accompanies the Business Plan. The current business plan covers the 3-year period April 2010 to March 2013

For reasons of brevity, this annual report contains only a financial summary. These summarised accounts may not contain sufficient information to allow for a full understanding of the financial affairs of the charity. For further information, the Trustees' Annual Report and Financial Statements and the Independent Auditor's report to the Trustees on the financial statements should be consulted. Copies of the Trustees' Annual Report and Financial Statements are available from our Morpeth Office, on request.

All group photographs are of those who have been supported by CAN at some time during the year of the report.





**2009-2010**

Honorary officers and trustees as at 31 MARCH 2010:

**PRESIDENT**

His Grace the Duke of Northumberland

**VICE PRESIDENTS**

Rt Hon Sir Alan Beith MP	Sir John Riddell CVO
Mrs S E Black MBE	Lady Sutherland
Rev Canon R Burston	Mr J A Trotter OBE
Lt Col H Crossman DL	Rt.Hon Lord Vinson LVO DL
Mr W H Foakes DL	Mrs S Walker

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

**CHAIRMAN**

Mr G Scott

**VICE-CHAIRMEN**

Mr N Dunn (retired February 2010)

Mrs S Richardson

Mrs S Ashmore

Cllr R Arckless	Mr R Poppleton
Mrs S Bailes	Ven R Langley
Mr A Gooding	Ms H Talbot
Mrs A James	Ven P Robinson
Mr A C Kerr (retired November 2009)	Cllr R Styring

**HONORARY TREASURER**

S P Mason FCCA

**ASSISTANT HON TREASURER**

Miss B McKie



## Organisation Chart

as at 31 March 2010



**David Francis**  
*Director*





George Scott  
(Chairman)

The annual report is an opportunity for all the friends and supporters of CAN to see what has been achieved in the year 2009-2010. A lot of hard work has gone into all of our activities, not only from staff and trustees, but also from many of our partners throughout the sector. The things that you read about here reflect that. Those who attended the Spring Meeting will know of the excellent forward thinking projects on the greening of communities and village halls being done throughout Northumberland. The success of CAN e-news has meant that our ability to communicate instantly with our partners has been considerably enhanced. The buzz of activity at the Meet the Funders sessions and the help given by our community development officers to all sorts of organisations, particularly with grant applications such as Comma, has meant that in quite difficult circumstances money has continued to flow into local organisations.

CAN itself has continued the work of influencing and working with other partners such as the NSP and RuCANNE, of working with local councils and encouraging and developing partnership. The development of our Western and Northern Area groups and the partnership with the Village Halls consortiums on these groups has helped us to keep our ear to the ground. The partnership with the voluntary sector through our hosting of the VCS Consortium via George Courtice is an important part of our work too, as is the hosting of development workers for NALC and the recent appointment of Norman Dunn to help both NALC and CAN develop their systems.

However, you do not have to be a genius to realise that organisations like CAN are facing many challenges in the world of reducing funding and policy uncertainty. The relationships between the voluntary and community sector and the County Council are developing but are not yet clear. The Coalition Government has sincerely warm words for community action, but has not yet worked out how it will be delivered. I hope that this annual report will show to those partners that much worthwhile work is being done and that success will come by working with local organisations such as CAN with roots in their communities and a firm and sound knowledge of what is happening in their area.

*Enjoy this report and please give us your feedback about the issues in it.*

# Executive Committee Members



*Robert Arkless*



*Sue Ashmore  
(Vice Chair)*



*Sonja Bailes*



*Norman Dunn  
(Vice Chair)*



*Andrew Gooding*



*Anne James*



*Alex Kerr*



*Ven. Bob Langley*



*Richard Poppleton*



*Sue Richardson  
(Vice Chair)*



*Ven. Peter Robinson*



*George Scott  
(Chairman)*



*Roger Styring*



*Hilary Talbot*



**Our strategy, and the way we operate, is inspired by our vision and core values, guided by our mission and delivered through our roles.**

## **Vision and core values**

CAN's vision is of communities in Northumberland that are vibrant, inclusive, confident, effective and capable of sustaining themselves.

CAN's core values are based on a commitment to:

- Enabling local communities to shape their own future
- Ensuring that all sections of society have an opportunity to be involved in decision affecting their lives
- Giving special attention to those most disadvantaged, either as a result of material circumstances and/or through exclusion from the opportunities enjoyed by the wider population

## **Mission**

Our mission is to work in partnership to support communities in Northumberland, through influencing decision-makers, promoting collaboration and networking and local community development.

## **Roles**

Our key roles as a support organisation to new and existing community and voluntary sector organisations in Northumberland are:

- **Seeking to influence and work with decision-makers.**  
To provide, with partners, conduits for the diverse views of the local voluntary and community sector to be voiced and heard within the decision making structures, regionally and nationally
- **Promoting collaboration and networking.**  
To work in partnership to facilitate the development of new, and to support existing networks of, local voluntary and community groups, in order to enable them to be a mechanism for developing collaborative work across the sector
- **Local community development.**  
To develop the capacity of local voluntary and community groups to identify unmet need and to work with others to build up the necessary skills base to address that need.



## The new shape of local government

April 2009 saw the creation of a new 'unitary' principal authority for Northumberland County, from the merger of the six district and one county councils. In the 18 months run-up to this change, we played a very active part in helping to provide the groundwork for the new authority's relationship with the voluntary sector and with local (ie parish and town) councils.

LGR (local government reorganisation) provided an opportunity to transform the organisation of major public services in our area and to build on the best practices of the seven various predecessor authorities.

A key goal for CAN was to help the emerging new council to 'get the relationship and context right', by ensuring that the structures, the policies and the procedures were appropriate to the voluntary sector and to local communities. Regrettably, the reality proved to be more mundane, due to a combination of unclear leadership, delays in appointing staff, a 'silo mentality' of some departments, and growing financial stringency, exacerbated late in the year by further disruption arising from a second senior management restructure.

We contributed to what began as a review of the authority's relationship with the voluntary sector, but which regrettably became an exercise in reducing significantly the grant-aid which voluntary organisations receive. Much more productively, we worked with the Revenues and Benefits Service on the development and implementation of a rating relief policy for charitable property, and with the Waste Management Service on a policy for waste collection from community buildings. We also contributed to the new Council's policy on community asset transfers, contracting-out of services, the budget process and a variety of other issues, and we assisted in publicising and

distributing a range of Northumberland County Council (NCC) material and consultations to voluntary bodies and community groups.

We can see that we still have some way to go, to help the new authority develop the relationships with local communities and voluntary organisations which we hoped would result from the LGR process.

## Rural Issues

As one of 38 Rural Community Councils (RCCs) in England, CAN has a key role in monitoring and addressing issues which impact on rural communities. Since the mid-1980s, we had pursued this within Northumberland via a partnership or network of like-minded organisations with an interest in rural affairs: the NSP (Northumberland Strategic Partnership) Rural Group, formerly the Northumberland Rural Development Programme. Throughout its life, this partnership had been a means of sharing good-practice and of seeking to influence policies, as well as managing and deploying a variety of funding investment streams for community and housing projects.

As a result of the LGR in Northumberland, and a decision by regional development agency One North-East to remove its support from the NSP and its equivalents, the new County Council decided to withdraw its professional and administrative support from the NSP Rural Group, with effect from April 2009. A number of strategic rural activities therefore ceased:

- The systematic scrutiny and 'rural-proofing' of a range of programmes and areas of activity, such as business support, tourism development, health and social care etc
- Monitoring, and attempting to anticipate, changes in the provision of village services such as shops, pubs and bus services
- Sharing and initiating good-practice
- The operation of the Market Towns Initiative



investment programme, Rural Voices and other opportunities.

Initially, CAN explored with its neighbouring RCCs in the region, the possibility of developing a region-wide rural communities' network, to pick up and develop some of the former NSP activity. However, a bid for support from the ONE Third Sector Capacity Fund was unsuccessful, and so we resolved to focus our efforts on Northumberland. By the end of the year, we were in discussions with local colleagues about the formation of a Northumberland rural network, which would develop a way of working to fit the modest resources which each partner can contribute.

## Rural Housing

The availability of appropriate and affordable housing is one of the key elements of a sustainable community, and this is as true in rural Northumberland as it is elsewhere in the country, where open-market house prices are high, and where planning controls restrict the provision of sufficient housing to meet all needs. For a number of decades, we made available to local communities the expert support of a Rural Housing Officer, who helped to develop evidence of local needs, and who worked with land-owners, local authorities, funders and other interests to develop new provision, whether through new-build or by the conversion of redundant properties. Regrettably, this work ended in 2004, with the cessation of financial support from the-then Countryside Agency.

Last year, we participated in two conference-type seminars, which had been organised by the Northern Rural Network to explore the rural housing scene in the North-East. A committee of inquiry under the chairmanship of MP Matthew Taylor had been commissioned by the government to investigate and unblock the variety of policy and financial hurdles which were

impeding the provision of housing in rural areas. The report on the Review of Rural Economy and Affordable Housing was published in 2008, and the Government responded in 2009, accepting almost every recommendation which had been made by the review.

It was clear that community-focussed 'rural housing enabling' would need to be introduced in Northumberland, and that this was best addressed from an independent standpoint, to allow an 'honest-broker' approach between the various interests. We were therefore pleased to be approached by the regional staff of both the National Housing Federation and the Homes and Communities Agency, to plan the provision of three new rural housing enablers (one for each of the RCCs in the region). Progress on these developments is now awaiting the new (post May 2010) Government's programmes and priorities for addressing social housing provision across the country.

## What is the Compact?

The Compact is an agreement between the public sector and the voluntary & community sector (VCS) in Northumberland. It sets out commitments on both sides to improve the way in which the public sector and the VCS work together for the benefit of communities and citizens.

In 2009 consultation was undertaken to refresh the National Compact. This document was launched in December 2009. The Northumberland Compact was reviewed using the National code as framework.

The shared principles of the Compact are:

**Respect:** The public sector and the VCS are accountable in different ways, but both need to act with transparency and integrity. Effective partnerships are built on mutual understanding



and an appreciation of the differences between partners of the Compact.

**Honesty:** It is only through open communication that strong partnerships can be built and maintained. Full and frank discussions should be the basis for resolving difficulties.

**Independence:** The independence of the VCS is recognised and supported. This includes its right within the law to campaign, to comment on and to challenge policy (whatever funding or other relationship may exist with the public sector) and to determine and manage its own affairs.

**Diversity:** The public sector and the VCS value a thriving civil society, which brings innovation and choice through a multitude of voices.

**Equality:** Fairness for everyone, regardless of their background, is a fundamental goal, and government and the third sector will work together to achieve this.

**Citizen empowerment:** By working together, the public sector and the VCS can deliver change that is built around communities and people, meeting their needs and reflecting their choices.

**Volunteering:** The energy and commitment of people giving their time for the public good contributes to a vibrant society, and should be recognised and appreciated.

The public sector and the VCS are committed to these principles. All information can be accessed via <http://www.northumberlandvcs.org.uk/pages/compact.php>



### Joint working

Although CAN operates throughout Northumberland, in the 1970s and 80s we supported the creation of CVS' (Councils of Voluntary Service) in the Wansbeck and Blyth Valley areas in order to provide a greater focus for supporting and developing the voluntary and community sector in those areas. As a result, we tended to stand-back from active involvement there, other than with the provision of our specialist services, for example regarding community buildings and parish councils.

However, in recent years we have tended to collaborate more closely, and the recent LGR (local government reorganisation) provided an additional impetus for more-formal collaboration. During the year we began the following collaborative activities:

- A joint approach to 'Meet the Funders'- type events
- Joint promotion/marketing of our services
- Co-operation over databases, funding directories and newsletters
- Sharing of staff specialisms
- Joint offering of our services to help the new County Council.

Late in the year, we were deeply saddened by the untimely death of Wansbeck CVS' chief Officer, Sheila McGuckin: a long-time colleague, and a key leader of this joint working.

Across the region, we worked with our fellow RCCs (rural community councils) to develop and deliver the BOSS (back office services) initiative, funded by the Big Lottery Fund, providing advice and training to community buildings committees and related bodies on activities such as financial management and ICT applications. We also continued our support for and involvement with FINE – Funding Information North East – a long-standing collaborative initiative, established in

1985, to research and provide intelligence on sources of funding (especially from charitable trusts) within the region.

### Working with local councils

CAN has a long-standing relationship both with individual parish and town councils and also with their own representative body, the Northumberland Association of Local Councils (NALC). We have always held the view that local councils are key community organisations, which need and deserve our support in much the same way that we support village hall management committees or development trusts, for example. NALC operates on a relative shoestring, with staff and premises supplied by CAN, via a Memorandum of Understanding arrangement.

During the year, NALC took steps to broaden the representative basis of its County Committee, by designating places as-of-right for people from every part of the county. In addition, it conducted a questionnaire survey of all local councils, to gain a better picture of councils' organisational capacity, their use of ICT, their willingness to take-on greater responsibilities, their willingness to collaborate with neighbouring councils, and so-on.

NALC was also busy in assisting with the implementation of the new Northumberland Charter for Local Councils: a set of commitments to clarify the respective roles of the two 'tiers' of local government, and to develop the relationship between them. Delays in the formation of the new County Council's staff teams meant that much of the work on implementing the Charter began far too late in the year, with the result that many local councils felt they were being pushed into accepting responsibilities and liabilities which would have benefited from a longer lead-in time. It was also disappointing that many of the commitments concerning 'closer working' and



'better communication' did not fully permeate the culture of the new County Council.

This lack of clarity in practice of the respective roles of local councils, community forums and other partnership structures, as a voice for local opinion and concerns also created tension and uncertainty, which has continued to affect local perceptions of the new authority.

More positively, CAN took a significant role in nurturing the creation of eight new, mainly large, local councils in the former Blyth Valley and Wansbeck areas of South-East Northumberland. This included the provision of a town clerk service, co-operating with the new unitary authority over property transfers and civic functions, the provision of induction and training, assisting with staff recruitment, and a range of other opportunities. By late Autumn 2009, we had helped each new local council to appoint its own clerk, which enabled us to step back and take a less 'hands-on', but still supportive role.

## Certificate in Local Council Administration

CiLCA



CiLCA is a personal qualification for parish and town council clerks. The qualification is gained by completion of a portfolio of evidence of competence, to gain credit as a qualified clerk. It is also a requirement if a council wishes to meet the criteria to gain Quality Parish Status. Some of the clerks from the 147 parish and town councils in Northumberland have expressed interest in undertaking CiLCA, which is home-based learning – so many of them have welcomed the opportunity to meet together in an informal way through support groups offered by CAN.

There are two or three groups running, with clerks at different stages of completion of their portfolios. Topics are chosen in advance of each session and support and advice is offered to help them to complete each section. Clerks that have already qualified have been helpful by bringing their completed files for members to see the 'finished product'.

The benefit of meeting together to discuss content, annotation, word counts and presentation of work has proved to be immensely useful to members of the various groups and we have seen a rise in the number of clerks wanting to undertake the qualification. We have been encouraged by this willingness to improve standards of good practice and professionalism amongst the clerks in the county.

*"Taking part in the Cilca group was invaluable to me. The group was small and everyone was in the same situation, juggling their jobs with the need to pass the qualification. I found everyone very supportive and I felt that it gave me the impetus to get my portfolio finished. The level of training was excellent with different topics being covered in depth at each session as well as advice being available by phone or e mail when required. I personally feel that the qualification is a 'must' for anyone working within Parish and Town Councils, and I would recommend anyone taking Cilca to attend the training groups".*

'(Kath Mavin – Ponteland Town Council)'

Local councils throughout Northumberland have continued to be as active as ever: starting new recreational facilities, promoting renewable energy and 'low carbon' initiatives, facilitating community-led parish plans, organising festivals and celebrations, 'hosting' volunteering initiatives, grant-aiding youth work, and so on. It is also encouraging to see the growing number that are



expanding the opportunities for public involvement and engagement: through public participation sessions, councillor surgeries, parish newsletters, consultation surveys and a range of other ways. We in CAN have been happy to advise on and otherwise support these initiatives, alongside the legal, procedural and managerial topics on which NALC provides the support.

## **Community Forums**

The idea of community forums emerged from the NSP's Natural Communities initiative, which recognised the value of developing partnership working (between communities, specialist voluntary bodies, public service providers etc) at a territorial level which covered a number of parishes or neighbourhoods. CAN has supported this initiative from the start, and assisted communities to help define the geography of what the County Council now calls 'Localities', formerly Belonging Communities.

During the year, the development of community forums was a mixed picture. Some did not develop at all; some are little more than residents' groups; some are little more than a forum of parish councils; but some are more-inclusive, and have developed both a forward-looking agenda, and a role which is complementary to that of individual local councils. CAN has provided advice and encouragement to a number of these community forums, but the lack of political consensus about their purpose and worth could serve to undermine some of them in the future.

## **Parish Councils and Clustering Research**

In February 2009, CAN entered into an agreement with Carnegie UK Trust to undertake research to examine whether a system of clustering of parish and town councils can enhance their ability to effectively represent the interests of local people and shape the strategic plans of a range of

public bodies and the unitary authority, while not losing the individual identity of the local council or surrendering its autonomy.

Northumberland was chosen because it is England's most sparsely-populated county, covering some 2000 square miles, and a population of approximately 310,000. The 145 local (i.e. parish and town) councils cover 97 percent of the land-area, but only 56 percent of the population, because, at that time, there were no local councils in the more-densely populated South East corner. Most of the local councils are small, covering populations of only several hundred people, with budgets typically of under £300 to £1000, and served by a very part-time (and often inexperienced) clerk. There are significant issues concerned with the capacity of individual local councils.

At the same time, the expectations for local councils to have an enhanced role as a representative voice of their whole community were growing. Northumberland was one of a small handful of English shire county areas where the county and district councils were being reorganised to form a single Unitary Authority (UA). A significant feature of Northumberland's LGR proposal was to develop a bigger voice for local councils: both individually and collectively across wider localities which were originally termed 'Belonging Communities'.

This project charted the development and implementation of the concept of the 'Belonging Communities' idea, within the Northumberland 'natural communities' model. It described how the idea was subsequently adopted as part of the process of reorganising the six district councils and the county council in Northumberland, to form a single, county-wide unitary authority. During the course of this action-research project, the entire programme of developing Belonging Communities in Northumberland slowed down, then stalled, and then re-emerged in a different



form, within a different framework. Although this meant that the clustering had not progressed as far as had originally been anticipated within the lifetime of this project, the report, produced in December 2009, has nevertheless produced conclusions and reflections on good-practice in relation to local councils clustering.

The choice of clusters was limited, in the main, to those in existence before the creation of the unitary authority. Care was taken to choose those that gave a geographical spread and included a range of more rural and less rural. 50% each came from the unitary authorities new West and North areas. Parishes did not come into existence in South East Northumberland until April 2009 and so did not form part of this research.

Respondents were offered a series of options as to the motivation for involvement in a cluster and could list as many as they wished. The highest scores were for a "Stronger voice for the area" (92.9%), followed by "Make a difference to the community" (78.6%) and "More protection (by) working together" (71.4%).

Also, in the course of carrying out this project, the Commission for Rural Communities (CRC) embarked on a very similar enquiry into 'clustering arrangements as a means of securing effective engagement with the new unitary authorities that have resulted from local government reorganisation'. The CRC report was able to draw significantly upon the Northumberland experience and on the work that was being supported by the Carnegie Rural Action Research Programme (RARP).

## Northumberland's Voluntary and Community Sector Consortium



The voice of the voluntary and community sector

Support to the Northumberland VCS Consortium continues to be an important component of CAN's work. Improving relations within the voluntary and community sector and between it and public bodies, in order to enhance the performance of the sector as a whole, has always been the shared ambition of CAN and the countywide Consortium since its inception five years ago.

2009-10 has however been disappointing. The County Council review of relations with the sector concluded with a very substantial withdrawal of grant resources to the sector (16% reduction on 2008-09). The sector recognised that future public spending was likely to be cut but this decision compared very unfavourably to the county's overall spending reduction of 6%. On the positive side we are now talking to the Council's Executive on a regular basis over matters of mutual concern and the grant settlement is for a two year period which offers a degree of greater financial security. There are a number of lessons to be learnt from this. It is important that elected members and senior officers are fully aware of the value of the sector and the impact it makes on the lives of Northumbrians; that the lines of communication are always open and that we can clearly demonstrate the differences we make.

The Consortium continues to play an important role in acting for the sector by providing appropriate voices for a number of specialist and area based partnerships. These include the six Thematic and Affiliated partnerships as well as the three Area Partnerships. 2009 also saw the Consortium,



for the first time, appointing three members to the NSP Board and electing three members to the NSP Executive. On each occasion a wide range of organisations and groups were invited to nominate candidates. With Bob Langley now being a member of both the CAN Executive and the NSP Board, CAN's governance arrangements are now better defined.

The Consortium was also able to reach an agreement over the division of the reduced allocation awarded by the County Council to support bodies. Eight generic or specialist infrastructure organisations/services benefited from this.

One innovative programme, managed by the Consortium, aimed to encourage voluntary organisations to consider the benefits of collaborating more with their fellow organisations. Fourteen bursaries, each worth £1000, were made available by Capacitybuilders to enable organisations to receive two days specialist advice. Following on from this, 11 of the beneficiaries were awarded further support worth in total £100,000 to contribute to the costs of mergers and greater collaborations. This clearly demonstrated an appetite from the sector in the county for this type of approach towards potential efficiency savings. The take-up in Northumberland was 2.5 times higher than that of the North East region as a whole. During the course of the year a start was made to review the Consortium's membership and its objectives. It was agreed that, whenever possible, thematic and area based VCS networks should be encouraged to become active members. In this respect the emergence of the Northumberland Disability and Deaf Network has meant that this target group will now be better served.

The Consortium's aim is to ensure that the valued services provided by voluntary and

community organisations throughout the county will not be threatened. Over the next few years the finances of the sector will undoubtedly be tested to the full. When money is tight, working together to achieve collective benefits is often the time when it is most challenging. CAN is fully committed to the future of Consortium working and will work closely with its fellow organisations to secure its future.

### **Berwick and Alnwick Networks**

The Berwick Network is run by Berwick Voluntary Forum but has been supported by CAN over the years in helping them to secure funding to administer the network, help in running the meetings and encouraging people to attend.

In 2009/10 the network held four meetings in June 2009, September 2009, November 2009 and March 2010, these meetings were successful and although the attendance varied considerably members are able to submit information by email which is read out at the meeting and goes into a newsletter produced soon after each network meeting.

During the year there has been much discussion about the future of the network and with the arrival of the North Area VCS Network if there was still a need for a network for organisations based in the far north of the County. The geographic isolation of Berwick was an important factor in this decision as some groups may find it difficult to travel to other networking events.

The members of the Berwick Network were keen to continue with the network meetings, which attracts members from the former Borough of Berwick-upon-Tweed and beyond and includes both VCS and statutory organisations.

In contrast to Berwick, Alnwick Network have struggled to hold regular meetings and in 2009/10 only one meeting was held. The



attendance at this meeting was not good and attempts to revive the network in its current form have not been successful.

The network members held discussions about the future of the network via email and only a small number of people were keen to continue with the meetings. Some members would like to explore the possibility of having a virtual network by using emails or through a website such as Rural Voices, CAN will look to support this process.

This should not necessarily be seen as a negative outcome for a network which has been running for a long time. There are other places for people to get together such as the North Area VCS Network, VCS Consortium and Community Forums so the need for a specific network in the Alnwick area may not be as important as it once was.

If there is a move to revive the Alnwick Network, CAN will provide support and advice to enable this to happen.

## **West Northumberland Community Development Network**



For more than 10 years, the Community Development Network has provided a support for community development workers in west Northumberland by promoting:

- the co-ordination of community development work in west Northumberland
- the sharing of experiences and good practice

- the dissemination of information
- joint working
- the sharing of resources
- the co-ordination and provision of training and development

CAN's appointment of a further Community Development Officer for the west in August 2009 allowed the continuation of secretariat, facilitation and hosting services for the Network but also enabled a more active role to promote and encourage membership of the Network and to strengthen its information dissemination role. There are now some 70 individual members representing about 50 organisations. The Network has always been inclusive and includes public sector and social enterprise bodies. The wide membership is important in maximising cross-sector working relationships. Bi monthly meetings give opportunities for effective local networking and organisational/project updates and developments but some members only use the information dissemination service.

One of the major considerations that the Network had to tackle during 2009/10 was the impact of local government re-organisation with the transition to a single unitary authority and the disappearance of the former district of Tynedale. To reflect this, the members took the decision to change the name of the Network from "Tynedale" to 'West Northumberland'. How the Network would feed into the wider VCS sector and the new local strategic partnership structure was the subject of considerable thought and discussion. The willingness of member organisations to become the "lead body" in order to access funding or to provide secretarial and other support, has allowed the Network to retain the flexibility which is valued by many of its members. CAN fulfils this role at present. On the other hand it was also felt important that the group had the structure and mechanisms in place to act as an effective and

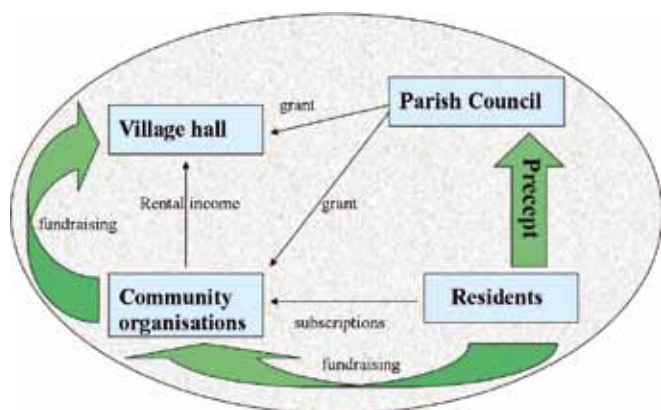


authoritative ‘voice’ for the Network in influencing regional policy and strategy. Negotiations with Northumberland VCS Consortium and with the unitary authority have meant that no fundamental change in structure is required at present. Consideration of the future structure of the Network will be reconsidered in light of ongoing re-organisation with the County Council.

### Developing Parish Partnerships

CAN was successful in becoming one of five pilot areas in Action with Communities in Rural England’s (ACRE) strand of the Collaboration Benefits Programme, a national initiative funded by Capacity Builders and DEFRA. The aim of the programme is to help communities, termed “clusters”, to see the benefits of collaborative work and to help them to develop that collaboration. Because of the importance of parish councils in rural areas, ACRE’s part of the initiative is based on the idea of Parish Partnerships.

The programme was for three years and is due to finish in March 2011. The aim is two fold: to cascade training to Rural Community Council (RCC) and other community development staff in techniques to support communities in working together and to undertake a series of interventions to try out the process and learn from the experience. Jane Hart has worked with five colleagues from RCCs across the country to produce a two-day training course. The course was offered twice, in October/November 2009 and in February/March 2010. The area covered ran from Northumberland down to the Humber.



Rural communities benefit from existing local structures which can be harnessed to deliver these aspirations, but only if the role and potential of parish and town councils are recognised and included in any formal definition of community anchor organisations. ACRE and NALC are advocating for a model of parish partnerships to recognise the unique strengths of parish councils and their relationships with local community organisations in parished areas.



Picture reproduced with permission of Morpeth Herald

### **Parish Plans – Make a difference**

Community Action Northumberland supported Widdrington Station and Stobswood with the production of their parish plan. The funding to help the parish plan to be developed came from a grant through CAN and funding from the Parish Council.

During the planning process it became clear that the People's Park is one of the most important facilities in the Parish but it could do with some clearing-up. The community decided that an afternoon of work in the park would make it much more inviting and so organised a volunteering day for local people to take action in improving their own locality. Julia Plinston, CAN's community development officer, helped with the organisation of the day. The event was advertised through the local press and information sent out to residents living near the park, parents of children at the first school and community groups.

More than 40 people turned up on the day and picked up 30 bags of litter and weeds, planted 50kg of daffodils and 5 trees, this work was supervised by members of staff from the environmental charity Groundwork. Northumberland County Council provided the litter pickers, bin bags and picked up the bags and some larger items of rubbish at the end of the day.

After the work was completed the volunteers went back to Area Training & Activity Centre (ATAC) for well deserved refreshments, all the young people were given goody bags and certificates to thank them for their hard work.

The event shows how a community working together with the relevant agencies and organisations can make a real difference to their community.



## Grassroots – individual investors

82 community groups in Northumberland have benefitted from £144,655 of funding through Grassroots Grants in 2009/10.

A partnership approach between Community Action Northumberland, Community & Voluntary Action Blyth Valley, Wansbeck Centre for Voluntary Services and the Community Foundation has been crucial to ensure groups in all areas of the county have been able to benefit.

Grassroots Grants is funded by the Office of the Third Sector and delivered in Northumberland and Tyne and Wear by the Community Foundation, the grants are intended to benefit the community and can be very wide ranging, including the purchase of equipment, a local community event, training and staffing costs, local community activities and rent costs.

Elsdon Village Hall received £5,000 to renovate their kitchen.



Ellingham Village Hall received £700 to put in a new door frame and two new windows to improve the energy efficiency and comfort of users in the hall.

Grassroots Grants are not the only part of this programme, the Community Foundation also run the Grassroots Endowment Challenge which provides match funding from the government for donors setting up new funds. The Grassroots Endowment Challenge has proved very popular with donors in Northumberland, and there is no

doubt that the match funding opportunity, on a £1 for £1 basis, has been a real incentive.

During the second year of the challenge 2009/10, all match funding for Northumberland (£156,000) was taken up, creating a Grassroots Foundation Endowment Fund of at least £312,000 for Northumberland. This will provide long term funding for grassroots community groups in Northumberland.

A few examples of the groups starting to benefit from the funding being made available through the endowment challenge include Corbridge Youth initiative and Corbridge Pre-School, who received funding from the Winter Family Grassroots Fund. Both of these groups were supported in their applications to the Community Foundation by CAN.

## Hexham East Residents Association,

comprising local residents, local councillors, the Police, the First School, the Sure Start Children's Centre and Milecastle Housing, is a project of Hexham Community Partnership. The Association engages with the local community to improve the quality of life for local residents where, in contrast to its location within an attractive and popular market town, there are proven high levels of deprivation. The Association aims to overcome the common perception that the area has a poor living environment with poor quality housing design; has high rates of worklessness; suffers from high levels of child poverty and crime, and has little green open space.

Building on the success of various neighbourhood projects, the Association was awarded a Grassroots grant of £2750 in November 2009 to develop a community garden that was created by - and lies in the shared grounds of - Hexham East First School and Hexham Sure Start Children's Centre.



## COMMA

CAN has played a crucial role in ensuring the Community Aggregates (COMMA) Fund is delivered in Northumberland. This has included promotion of the fund, assisting applicants and organising an independent short-listing panel. The COMMA Fund is funded by DEFRA with funds drawn down from the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund. The COMMA fund focuses on supporting community projects in settlements affected by aggregates quarrying.

The garden project aims to promote local food growing and highlight the link between healthy food and healthy living.

As initial activities had mostly been limited to the First School children and their families, the Residents Association wanted to significantly expand and develop the space so that the wider local community could become involved and learn skills that could be transferred to the management and development of their own gardens.

With the grant the Association will create an additional area, adjacent to the existing space, in which local community residents can grow their own produce. Seating will be installed and additional tools – and a shed for safe storage - will be purchased to allow the residents to have the proper equipment for this and future gardening projects within the Hexham East area

To equip local residents with wider skills and knowledge the grant will part fund various gardening workshops covering topics ranging from pruning to composting. The long-term ambition is to encourage the local community to take ownership of the project so it becomes sustainable.

Two applicants were successful in securing funding in 2009/10, these were Howick Church and Ingram Village Hall. Howick Church received £11,045 to refurbish the church as part of a wider project to involve the community.

Ingram Village Hall received £7,475 to undertake vital repairs to the structure of the building. Iain Hedley from the Northumberland National Park Authority and Marc Johnson from CAN worked in partnership with the committee to help them develop a business plan and apply for funding but no one could have anticipated the unexpected turn the project would take.

The funding from COMMA was a good starting point for the project and would enable the hall to carry out the urgent repairs but in reality the hall needed more money than COMMA could provide to bring it up to an acceptable standard.

As often happens in community projects the first piece of funding can be difficult to secure but once other funders can see the project has secured some support they are more likely to provide support themselves. Following from the COMMA award Northumberland National Park Authority provided £20,000 from the Sustainable Development Fund and County Councillor Anthony Murray provided £1,000 from his capital funding programme. The Ingram Show Committee made a fantastic donation of £4,000



and members of the community volunteered to provide some of the manual labour in order to keep costs down. This clearly shows that Ingram Village Hall is a valued asset within the community.



If that were not success enough, the Committee then went on to win the regional final of the British Gas Green Streets programme, one of only 14 successful projects in the country. This will net the community further funding to enable the hall roof to be restructured, insulated and photovoltaic tiles to be installed allowing the Committee to generate their own electricity to power the heat pumps, and sell the surplus back to the Grid.

In addition to the improvements to the hall, 20 households will receive a green make-over and the whole community project will be monitored for a year to assess the impact. All 14 regional winners are competing to make the most impact and be crowned Green Streets national champion. Who would bet against Ingram?

There is no doubt that because of the energy and enthusiasm of the committee and local community the hall would have eventually been refurbished but the COMMA Fund provided the first success that got the project moving.

## Meet the Funders - spot the difference.



The top photo was taken at the 'Meet The Funders' event at Corbridge in autumn 2009 ... and the second photo was taken at Tynedale Mart in November 2008.



The difference is ....

Well, actually there are several differences..... and they're not obvious from the photos !!

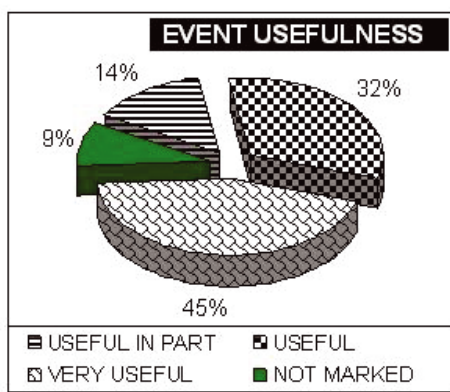
Our Meet the Funders events - open to all voluntary and community groups, parish and town councils across the county - have always been popular and well received but our first event in summer 2009 at Stannington was so well attended that we had to introduce crowd control measures ! The first took the form of a project summary form on which groups could give details of their organisation and project and then hand these round to each funder they met. This helped to cut down on the amount of time that groups spent in dialogue with each funder; avoided needless repetition; gave more time for funders to give advice and information directly



relevant to the project concerned; and reduced queuing. As a result of feedback from this event we continued to use the forms for both the autumn events – in Corbridge and Alnwick.

Another difference that we introduced for autumn 2009 was a 'block-booking' system where groups were asked to select a time slot (over a half hour period) when they wished to arrive. At the same time, they were encouraged not to opt automatically for the first period, which was likely to be very popular. This system worked very well with numbers spread very evenly across all the time slots and was a vital tool in reduce waiting and queuing times still further.

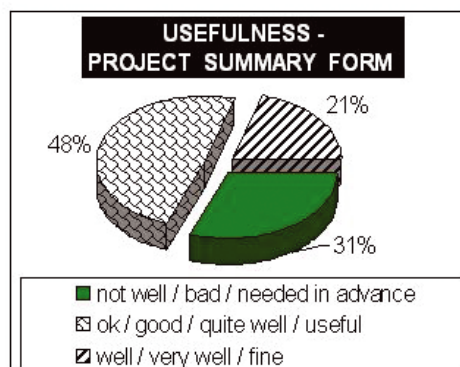
We also piloted a new timing for the three events – from daytime to late afternoon / early evening - which had been a key part of the feedback received from the 2008 Meet The Funders events and which proved very popular with the majority of groups attending the 2009 events.



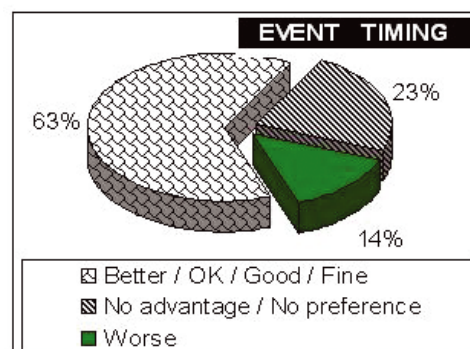
A total of 182 organisations/groups booked for the three events with 150 actually attending - represented by 209 people.

Evaluation forms were issued to all groups - with 99 being returned – a rate of 66%. Of those attending the three events 77% found the event useful or very useful. An assessment of the success of the newly-introduced Project Summary Forms showed that 69% of groups found the form either useful or that it worked very

well. However this varied widely between the two venues: whilst 77% in the west had a positive experience, only 59% of groups at Alnwick felt that it had been successful.



In relation to the new early afternoon/early evening timing of the three events, over 63% found the change to be more convenient; 23% commented that this made no difference to their ability to attend; whilst 14% of groups felt that the timing was either worse or inconvenient.



The vast majority of groups very much appreciated meeting funders face-to-face – and all in one place – which gave them the opportunity to discuss their projects in detail as well as being made more aware of particular funders' criteria and the elements of a good / successful application. As a result groups felt more confident about their ability to gain funding as well as getting ideas for future projects. Many groups also appreciated the range and quality of funding information that CAN provided at a dedicated 'site' within the Hall as well as having one-to-one contact with staff at the autumn events.



**THE FUNDERS** attending one or more of the three events were:

- Big Lottery
- Community Foundation
- Co-operative Group
- Durham Community Foundation - ESH Charitable Trust and Banks Community Fund
- Greggs Trust
- Northumberland National Park
- Northumberland Uplands LEADER
- Northumberland Coastal and Lowlands LEADER
- North Pennines Dales LEADER
- Northumberland Coast AONB
- Sir James Knott Trust
- Joicey Trust
- Unity Trust Bank

81% of funders found the 2009 events either worthwhile or very worthwhile and had very positive comments about the format, and the revised timing. The project summary forms, introduced at Stannington, were also mostly well-received whilst the staggered block-booking system, used for the first time at the autumn events, seemed to be very popular with - and worked well for - most funders.

The events were generously supported by Unity Trust Bank.



**If the question is... ‘do we need to put our public liability insurance on public display in the village hall?’ ... what is the answer ?**



Not as simple as you might think !  
 The ‘border’ village of Gilsland is a bit of a geographical jigsaw puzzle. Not only does it ‘fit’ into Northumberland county as well as Cumbria but cross-border allegiances are stretched even further as three separate parishes lay claim to the 400 or so residents -Thirlwall, Waterhead and Upper Denton. So village life is, therefore, not a simple matter. This proved to be the case when a Gilsland Village Hall Committee member rang CAN with an ostensibly simple query about Public Liability Insurance. The answer turned out to be more complex as the conversation took a meandering country lane turn and suddenly issues about a Premises Licence, Temporary Events Notices, Designated Premises Supervisor, Personal Licences, Authorised Signatories, AGMs and Management Committee membership got added to the list. And so CAN’s Community Development Officer (West) began a programme of lengthy, intense – but ultimately fruitful and successful - support to the Management Committee.

The process was made easier – and the working relationship more effective -by the Trustees’ united vision of seeking to develop their community asset in order to encourage greater and wider



use by the whole community. This is never a simple aim to achieve for any community: there is always a compromise to be made between traditional views and modern approaches.

The Trustees also found themselves in a 'catch 22' situation – as until the 116 year old cold building could be made more welcoming, comfortable and warmer, then increased use was unlikely. However in order to get funding to improve and refurbish the Hall funders need to see evidence of comprehensive community use !! A dilemma. However, the Trustees showed themselves more than willing and able to overcome any potential hurdles and work towards realising their collective ambition, even taking advantage of new opportunities for development as they arose.

The optimum way of solving many of the queries and issues that the Trustees raised was to take them through ACRE's 'Village Hall Management Health Check' which is a key tool in ensuring that the management and governance of the charity – and the way it operates the Village Hall – is in tip-top condition. Each and every aspect of legal matters; constitutional issues; managing meetings; staff and volunteers; Financial Planning; premises management; and managing activities and services was covered in detail. Very soon the Committee's membership increased and widened to encompass a better cross section of the community and meetings were – and remain – extremely well attended.

During this period the Village Hall became a hosted outreach service point for the Post Office after the closure of the main counter service in the village shop. Furthermore, with CAN advice and support, they adopted and implemented a formal Hire Agreement; a Safeguarding (Child Protection and Vulnerable Persons) Policy and Safeguarding Procedures; successfully obtained a Premises Licence under the new regulations; began the process of vesting the land in with the Official Custodian and registering the land

with the Land Registry; had an Energy Audit carried out and an Energy Report produced and subsequently carried out a range of energy efficiency/conservation measures and devised an Action Plan for the development of the Hall and in particular the possibility for implementing renewable energy measures.

So from a starting point of considering whether a Public Liability Insurance certificate needs to be displayed to a whole raft of measures encompassing the development of the Hall and its proper governance and management .... great things have been achieved.

And ... just in case you're still wondering about the answer to the original question ... it is NO – a Village Hall does not have to put its Public Liability Insurance certificate on public display (but it is a legal requirement to do so for Employers Liability Insurance) – but we recommend that it is good practice to do this.

## **Energy Efficiency Community Buildings Project**

Supported by

**Northumberland National Park**



On 28th January 2010, Community Action Northumberland launched its new 'Energy Efficient Community Buildings Project' by hosting a course provided by Green Communities.

Community Action supports communities, and voluntary groups throughout rural Northumberland on a wide range of issues that are important to them. This small scale project with community buildings is part of our wider 'Going for Green' campaign supporting local people to make a difference on climate change.

The project is funded through Northumberland National Park's area fund and aims to support



the community buildings within the National Park's Coquetdale and Glendale action areas to reduce their carbon footprint and reduce their running costs. We hope to demonstrate that taking action on climate change doesn't necessarily mean installing expensive renewable technologies. Every building can make a difference by taking simple affordable measures.



The Green Communities course 'Energy Efficiency for Your Community Building' proved to be a great start. The course takes a practical, down to earth approach, focusing on simple steps that can be taken, including choosing the most appropriate energy tariff, monitoring usage, carrying out energy audits, thinking about users' behaviour and day to day management of the hall and installing measures such as energy saving light bulbs, thermostatic controls and draught proofing. 22 delegates attended, including representatives from 12 community buildings and CAN and National Park staff. The feedback was excellent and everyone appreciated the straight forward approach.

After the course CAN staff continued to work with 8 Community Buildings to undertake Energy Audits of their Buildings. We then allocated the National Park Area Fund grant of £6,000 (an average of £750 per building) to implement our findings. Every Hall identified its own priorities. Some of the more imaginative measures included the purchase of 'chimney balloons,' a device for preventing heat loss in

disused chimneys, motion sensors to ensure lights are switched off when no-one is in a room, and door closers to prevent unnecessary heat loss through open doors.



The project has proved very successful. Many of the halls taking part are planning further initiatives such as upgrading the insulation of the building, considering renewable energy options and hosting energy saving events for their whole community.

Perhaps most exciting is the potential to influence the wider communities around the building, most of which do not have access to mains gas, and are ideally located to benefit from community wide renewable energy projects capitalising on the widely available natural resources all around them.

CAN is seeking further funding to continue working with these communities and to extend the project into other areas of rural Northumberland.



Following our AGM in November 2009, we saw some changes on our Executive Committee. Alex Kerr stood down, after nine very active years during which he represented the County Council, he contributed significantly to our thinking re community forums, and he was a keen advocate on rural services issues.



In February, so too did NALC representative Cllr Norman Dunn: a talented and exceptionally hard-working volunteer who had contributed rigour to our financial governance, risk-management, quality management and ICT arrangements, who set new standards in what we might expect of our trustees!

We were joined during the year by County Councillors Roger Styring and Robert Arckless, both of whom were already familiar to our sector through their active involvement in their parish councils and a variety of voluntary organisations.

Among our staff, we were pleased to welcome, for a short-term piece of work, Sue Finch who assisted David Francis as the first town clerk of the eight new local councils which were created on 1 April 2009 for South-East Northumberland. Her prior experience of town council clerking and committee administration in Berwick, were invaluable in getting these new councils off to a good start. Mike Slaughter, followed by Robin Francis, helped us to undertake a county-wide questionnaire survey of the activities, organisational capacity, and outlook of town and parish councils. The findings have helped NALC plan its support-services for local

councils, as well as feeding in to discussions with the County Council.

At the end of the year, we said our thanks and farewells to Lynda Watson and Julia Plinston. Lynda had been our Compact and Contracts Officer, supporting a range of voluntary organisations in the world of competitive tendering and contracting, and also organising partnerships working related to the VCS Compact. Julia had been our Community Development Officer based in Alnwick, serving community initiatives in the area including Upper Coquetdale, Alnwick, Amble and the Druridge Bay area.

During the year we continued to operate our performance management system; updating the three-year rolling Business Plan; preparing the annual Action Plan; monitoring our work and its effectiveness; reviewing our governance and our risk-management; maintaining our financial controls' holding our regular committee meetings and team meetings, and operating our ACRE Quality Standards system.

We also kept under review the possibility of transforming into CIO status (Charitable Incorporated Organisation): a prospective 'legal structure' which was heralded by the Charities Act 2006, but which is still to be finalised by the Charity Commission.

### **Website, e:bulletin & CAN News**

A survey, put on the website, and also mailed out at the beginning of 2009, invited Community Action News readers to make comment on how best we could improve our services and adapt to the changing needs of those we are trying to help. Invitations were also extended for readers to be included on an electronic mailing list, which subsequently grew steadily.

As a consequence of the results of this survey, and the work of a Task and Finish group which involved trustees and staff, a new system of communication



was set in motion. It was agreed that the change in timescale would begin after the December 2009 issue of CAN News.

For CAN News an A4 template was introduced, produced in full colour and on a quarterly basis. Changes included using a larger font, making the content more reader-friendly, incorporating a contents section and including more photographs, together with appropriate website links.

In conjunction with the change from a bi-monthly newsletter, electronic bulletins were set up to inform of time-specific events between hard-copy issues of CAN News. This brought its own problems regarding sending bulk emails but a suitable programme was sourced and set up, and January 2010 saw the first electronic bulletin being distributed.

The electronic bulletin was originally named CAN e:news but is now more familiarly known as 'CANNY News' and comments received from a variety of organisations have shown that it has evolved into a very useful source of information. The success of CANNY News can be seen by the increase in the number of hits on CAN's website. The average number of hits in the week before the second bulletin was sent out was 12 per day, in the week after it was distributed this was up to 33 hits per day.

The website [www.ca-north.org.uk](http://www.ca-north.org.uk) has continued to be developed over the year and is now easier to navigate with new menus added. The home page is more dynamic with news stories and relevant information added on a regular basis. Analysis script, which records the number of visitors, was added to the website in July 2009. From July 14 2009 to the end of March 2010 we had over 3,800 visits from nearly 2,500 separate visitors.



## Support Team

The work outlined in this report is credited to our development team and specialist staff. However that work is supported by a small, dedicated team of administration and finance staff based at CAN's headquarters in Morpeth. Linda Frater (Finance Officer), together with Sue Andrew (Office Administrator), Carol Megson (Assistant Finance Officer) and Margaret Tweddell (Assistant Finance Officer) make sure that all the "background" operations which are essential to CAN's function are carried out. The tasks are many and varied:

- ensuring our accounting processes run smoothly
- handling all financial issues including investments
- preparing final accounts, grant claims, budgetary control, payroll, devolved grants schemes, and preparation of management reports
- secretarial, telephonist and reception duties
- photocopying, purchasing, photography, website and database updates
- CAN News and its electronic alternative Canny News
- booking venues and catering
- arranging advertising
- dealing with applicants for vacancies
- producing artwork and flyers
- collating information received from surveys, questionnaires and events
- coping with post received and sending out "mail shots."
- and last, but not least, attending sub committee meetings to assist the trustees in carrying out the responsibilities of ensuring that the charity is solvent and well run, and delivering the charitable outcomes for which CAN was set up.

The support team is the first line of contact for anyone contacting our Morpeth office. They are still well known to many of our regular users, though those users may not have known the full extent of the range of duties carried out by them and the part they play in the operation of Community Action Northumberland.

Lastly, but as important a part of the staff at Tower Buildings as anyone else, is Ann Sage, who keeps Tower Buildings clean and welcoming for everyone.



## Format of the Accounts

The financial statements published in this annual report are a summary extract from the full set of annual accounts and presented in our traditional style.

The format of the full version of the financial statements and accounts reflect latest accounting practice and have been prepared in accordance with Part VI of the 1993 Charities Act and the recommendations of the 1995 "Statement of Recommended Practice for Charity Accounts", as revised in March 2005. These statements were approved by the Executive Committee on the 17th September 2010, and are available on request from Tower Buildings in Morpeth, and will be sent to the Charity Commission.

## Results for the Year

The overall financial result for 2009/10 is a reduction in total funds of £119,939 which includes pension deficit increase of £152,000 and results in a net liability on the balance sheet of £262,714.

- The actuary has calculated the net pension deficit due from Community Action Northumberland as at 31 March 2010 as £666,000. This compares with the previous year's figure of £514,000. The increase in the net pension deficit reflects a significant increase in the present value of the future pension liabilities, partially offset by an increase in the notional value of the assets attributable to Community Action Northumberland. The increase in the present value of the future pension liabilities is due to a significant change in the discount factor used by the actuary in calculating the amount, reflecting long-term market expectations of higher inflation and lower gilt yields compared to the previous year. Action was taken in 2008/09 to cap the pension deficit by closing entry to this pension scheme to new employees. In addition, the employer contributions have been increasing over the last decade or so, with changes occurring following each triennial actuarial valuation. The 1st Pension Fund valuation took place as at 31st March 2007 and brought in an increased

employer contribution rate for the three years commencing 1 April 2008. Community Action Northumberland should consider providing for additional contributions in advance of the next actuarial review.

- The restricted funds, balances of funding held by Community Action Northumberland as at 31st March in respect of identified projects, remained at £39 and will be carried forward for use in the following year.
- The unrestricted designated funds, held to minimise risk associated with unforeseen and/or relatively large funding requirements, increased by the sum of £9,327. This included and increase in the Projects Fund, £19,139 was used from it to fund planned maintenance during the year, taking it to £23,820. The total remaining balance on unrestricted designated funds is £53,247.
- The general reserve was increased by £22,734 to £1000,000 in line with the reserves policy. This increase compares to a marginal increase of £90 reported for 2008/09.

Compared with 2008/09, total income reduced by 13%. In approximate figures:

- Funding from NSP ceased, a reduction of £120,000; but;
- Northumberland County Council increased its funding by £53,000;
- Big Lottery Fund Grant of £82,000 was obtained;
- Funding from DEFRA reduced by £24,000; and
- Various other changes in funding streams resulted in reduced income of £73,000, bringing the total reduction to £82,000.

The general reserve and unrestricted designated funds are now standing at £153,247 which, relative to financial turnover, is considered reasonable in aiming to provide Community Action Northumberland with the prospect of continuing financial stability in the medium term. With continuing uncertainty relating to future streams, the position is being closely monitored and relevant action plans are in place should funding not materialise.

# Independent Auditor's Statement to the Trustees of Community Action Northumberland



We have examined the summary financial statement set out on pages 30 to 31.

## **Respective responsibilities of trustees and auditors**

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the summary financial statement in accordance with United Kingdom law.

Our responsibility is to report to you our opinion on the consistency of the summary financial statement within the Annual Report with the full annual financial statements, and its compliance with applicable requirements.

We also read the other information contained in the Annual Report and consider the implications for our report if we become aware of any apparent misstatements or material inconsistencies with the summary financial statement.

## **Basis of opinion**

We conducted our work in accordance with Bulletin 1999/6 'The auditor's statement on the summary financial statement' issued by the Auditing Practices Board. Our report on the organisation's full annual financial statements describes the basis of our audit opinion on those financial statements.

## **Opinion**

In our opinion the summary financial statement is consistent with the full annual financial statements of Community Action Northumberland for the year ended 31st March 2010 and complies with applicable requirements.

Read Milburn & Co.  
Chartered Accountants &  
Registered Auditors

71 Howard Street  
North Shields  
Tyne and Wear  
NE30 1AF



# Balance Sheet as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009



	2009/10	2008/09
<b>Fixed Assets</b>		
Tangible Assets	250,985	251,970
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Debtors	13,673	31,086
Short term deposits		
Cash at bank and in hand	<u>173,837</u>	<u>109,341</u>
	187,510	140,427
Deduct Creditors :		
amounts falling due within one year	<u>35,209</u>	<u>21,172</u>
Net current assets	152,301	119,255
Provision for liabilities and charges	(666,000)	(514,000)
Total assets less liabilities	<u>(262,714)</u>	<u>(142,775)</u>
Represented By :		
<b>Income Funds</b>		
Restricted funds	39	39
Unrestricted funds :		
Designated funds	53,247	43,920
General reserve	<u>100,000</u>	<u>77,266</u>
Unrestricted funds excluding pension liability	153,247	121,186
Pension Reserve	(666,000)	(514,000)
Net Unrestricted Funds	(512,713)	(392,814)
Capital funds		
Premises	250,000	250,000
Total funds	<u>(262,714)</u>	<u>(142,775)</u>

Prepared by the Honorary Treasurer - Mr S Mason FCCA

signed Steve P Mason Date 13/9/10

Approved by the Board of Trustees on the 17/9/10  
and signed on its behalf by George Scott Trustee and Chairman

## Groups Assisted



1st Flodden Baden Powell Scouts  
Acomb Play Area Group  
Alnmouth Arts Festival  
Alnwick Network  
Alnwick Play House  
Amble Anchor Housing  
Antiphon  
Area Partnership - Access to Services Group  
Ashington Town Council  
Athol House Residents Association (Ponteland)  
Bamburgh Research Project  
Bamburgh WI  
Bardon Mill & Henshaw Community Development group  
Barrasford Village Hall  
Beadnell Parish Council  
Belford and Seahouses Community Forum  
Berwick Events Group  
Berwick Food Festival  
Berwick Older Persons' Drop-in  
Berwick Swan & Wildlife Trust  
Berwick Voluntary Forum  
Blyth Town Council  
Breamish Hall  
Broomley & Stocksfield Parish Council  
Coastwatch  
COMMA Fund  
Community Foundation Bellingham Fund Panel  
Contagious  
Corbridge Heritage Trail  
Corbridge Parish Council  
Corbridge Pre-School  
Corbridge Youth Initiative  
Core Music  
Corsenside Parish Hall  
Cramlington Town Council  
Cresswell Boatclub  
Cresswell Village Hall  
Crookham Village Hall  
Dinnington Village Social Welfare Hall  
East Bedlington Parish Council  
East Chevington Parish Planning Group  
East Chevington PC  
East Tynedale Community Forum  
Ellington Library  
Elsdon & East Chevington parish plans  
Embleton Church Hall  
Etal Church  
Far West Community Forum  
Federation of Northumberland Community Development Trusts  
Forest Schools initiative at QEHS in Hexham  
Freeflow (Bellingham)  
Gallery Youth Project, Alnwick  
Gateway Into The Community  
Gilsland Village Hall  
Glendale Alive Partnership  
Glendale Community Forum  
Glendale Community Forum – Community Plan Sub-Group  
Glendale Sports & Leisure Association  
Great Whittington Village Hall  
Hadston House  
Haltwhistle Parish Council  
Headway, Blyth  
Heddon Village Hall  
Henshaw Pre-School  
Hexham & Tynedale Community Trust  
Hexham East Out Of School Club  
Hexham East Regeneration  
Hexham Farmers Market  
Hexham Youth Initiative  
Hirst Welfare, Ashington  
Holy Cross Church – Haltwhistle  
Howick Church  
Howick Village Hall  
Humshaugh Parish Council  
Humshaugh Parish Plan Group  
Ingram Village Hall  
Kielder Parish Council  
Kirkwhelpington Parish Council  
Knaresdale & Kirkhaugh - (Slaggyford) Community Hall  
Lesbury Parish Plan  
Lesbury Tennis Club  
Matfen Parish Church  
Merton Hall Recreation Centre  
Mid Tyne Community Forum




Minerva  
Mitford Community Association  
Morpeth Flood Group  
Morpeth Town Hall  
Music & Movement  
National Autistic Society  
Netherton Parish Plan  
Netherwitton Village Hall  
Newbiggin Town Council  
Newton on the Moor & Swarland Parish Planning Group  
Norham & Islandshire Community Forum  
North Area Partnership  
North Area VCS Network  
North Bedlington Parish Council  
North Country Leisure  
Northumberland County Flooding Partnership  
North Northumberland Village Halls Consortium  
Northumberland Scouts  
Ovingham & District Under 5s Club  
Ovington Parish Council  
Ovington Village Hall project  
Pegswood Parish Plan Group  
Ponteland Junior Rugby Club  
Prudhoe East Nursery.  
Red Row Sports Club  
Redburn Play Park Committee  
Redefest  
Rothbury & Coquetdale Youth Project  
RSPCA Northumberland West Branch  
Seaton Valley Community Council  
Selefest  
Shotley Low Quarter Parish Plan  
SixtyEightyThirty  
South Charlton Village Hall.  
South Tyne Railway Preservation Society  
Stobhill Community Forum  
Stocksfield Institute Community Association  
Stocksfield Methodist Church  
Swarland Preschool  
Think Make Grow  
Three Fields Residents' Association  
Togston PC  
Transport Link  
Tyne Rivers Trust  
Tynedale Community Radio  
Tynedale Womens' Training Group  
Tynedale Youth Forum  
Upper Coquetdale Community Transport  
Useful Vision  
Wall Parish Plan  
Wark Town Hall  
West Area Partnership  
West Bedlington Town Council  
West End Residents' Association  
West Northumberland Community Buildings Consortium  
West Northumberland Community Development Network  
West Wylam Community Association  
Whittingham, Alnham & Callally  
Whittington Parish Council  
Widdrington Station & Stobswood PC  
Widdrington Station and Stobswood Forum  
Wooler Accordion & Fiddle Club  
Wooler Garden Project  
Wooler Parish Council  
Wooler Youth Drop-in  
Young Rangers project in Seahouses.

## Members of Council Appointed by Authorities and Organisations March 2010



### (a) Schedule A, Representatives

Northumberland County Council	Cllr A Murray, Cllr R Arckless, Cllr R Styring + 3others
Age Concern Northumberland	Mr G Brown
Association of Northumberland Local History Societies	Dr E Ashton
Business & Professional Women	Mrs S Ashmore
Campaign to Protect Rural England	Mr B Harwood
Church of England	Ven P Robinson
Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation	Mr V B Clements
Community Foundation	Mr R Williamson
Community and Voluntary Action Blyth Valley	Mr T Bradley
Country Land & Business Association	Mr A Collingwood-Cameron
Development Trusts Association	Mr A Gooding
Forestry Commission	Mr J G S Gill
Learning & Skills Council	Vacancy
National Farmers Union	Vacancy
National Trust Northumbria Region	Mr T Crump
Newcastle District of the Methodist Church	Rev L Mann
Northumberland Association of Clubs for Young People	Mr N G Voules
Northumberland Association of Local Councils	Cllr Mrs V Seddon, Cllr N Dunn, Mr J Rudd, Cllr D Woodard
Northumberland Business Service Ltd	Ms B Fairbairn
Northumberland Care Trust	Mr C Reed
Northumberland CAB	Mr P Rickard
Northumberland College	Ms R Ellis-Jones
Northumberland Community Forums	3 member vacancies
Northumberland disability organisations	Vacancy
Northumberland Federation of Women's Institutes	Mrs J Arthur
Northumberland Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs	Mrs C Watson
Northumberland, Tyne & Wear NHS Trust	Mrs C Pannell
Northumberland National Park Authority	Mr S Evans
Northumberland & Newcastle Society	Mrs R Hall
Northumberland Playing Fields Association	Mr I Kingsland
Northumberland Pre School Learning Alliance	Mrs S Hillan
Northumberland Strategic Partnership	Ms S Bevan
Northumberland Village Halls	Vacancy
Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust	Ms J Christer
Roman Catholic Diocese of Hexham & Newcastle	Rev D Tanner
Transport & General Workers' Union, Agricultural National Trade Group	Mr N Halton
United Reformed Church	Miss J Turner
University of Newcastle upon Tyne	Dr H Talbot
University of Northumbria	Mrs H Manns



Voluntary Organisations' Network North East  
Wansbeck Centre for Voluntary Service  
Workers Educational Association (NE District)

Mrs J Curry  
Mrs S McGuckin  
Mrs D Dobbinson

**(b) Schedule B, Ex Officio Members of Council**

Chief Executive, Northumberland County Council  
Chief Fire Officer  
Executive Director of Adult Services  
Executive Director People  
Executive Director Performance  
Executive Director Place  
Director of Public Health, Northumberland Care Trust  
Chief Executive, Northumberland Care Trust

Mr S Stewart  
Mr B Hesler  
Mrs D Lally  
Mr T Doughty  
Ms J Dixon  
Mr R Robson  
Dr S Milner  
Mr C Reed

## Associate members and other contributors



Acklington Parish Council  
ACRE  
Allendale Parish Council  
Alnmouth Parish Council  
Alnwick District Council  
Alnwick Town Council  
Alwinton Parish Council  
Amble Town Council  
Ancroft Memorial Hall  
Ancroft Parish Council  
Aon Ltd  
Bamburgh Pavilion Association  
Beadnell Parish Council  
Beadnell Women's Institute  
Bellingham Parish Council  
Berwick upon Tweed Borough Council  
Blakelaw & North Fenham Parish Council  
Blanchland Parish Council  
Branxton Village Hall  
Brinkburn & Hesleyhurst Parish Council  
Broomley & Stocksfield Parish Council  
Brunswick Parish Council  
Rev Canon R B S Burston  
Byrness Village Hall  
Bywell Parish Council  
Calor Gas Ltd  
Cambois Welfare Institute  
Capacity Builders  
Capheaton Parish Council  
Carnegie UK Trust  
Carr-Ellison Charitable Trust  
Cartington Parish Council  
Catton Village Hall  
Coanwood Parish Council  
Community Foundation  
Corbridge Parish Council  
Cornhill Parish Council  
Cornhill Village Hall  
Creighton Memorial Hall  
Cresswell Village Hall  
Denwick Village Hall  
Dept of Environment, Food & Rural Affairs  
East Chevington Parish Council  
Eglington Parish Council  
Ellingham Parish Council  
Ellington Social Welfare Centre  
Elsdon Parish Council  
Embleton Parish Council  
European Agriculture Guidance & Guarantee Fund  
Falstone Parish Council  
Featherstone Parish Council  
Featherstone Village Hall  
Felton Village Hall  
W H Foakes  
M Gibbs  
Mrs R Gibbs  
Glanton Parish Council  
Glanton Memorial Hall  
Government Office North East  
Greenhead Parish Council  
Haltwhistle Town Council  
Harbottle Village Hall  
Hartburn Parish Council  
Hartleyburn Parish Council  
Haydon Parish Council  
Healey Parish Council  
Heddon on the Wall Parish Council  
Hepple Parish Council  
Hepple Village Hall  
Hepscott Parish Hall  
Hexhamshire & District Parish Council  
Hindmarsh Village Hall  
HSBC  
Humshaugh Village Hall  
W D Johnson  
The Joicey Trust  
Jubilee Institute Rothbury  
Kirkwhelpington Parish Council  
Knaresdale & Kirkhaugh Parish Council  
Sir James Knott Trust  
Kylloe Parish Council  
Lambley Village Hall  
Langley Village Hall  
Lesbury Village Hall  
J F Lewis  
Longframlington Memorial Hall  
Longframlington Parish Council



Longhirst Parish Association  
Longhoughton Parish Council  
Lowick Parish Council  
Lynemouth Parish Council  
Lt Col C Matthews-Maxwell  
Meldon Parish Council  
Merton Hall  
Milfield Reading Room  
G E Miller  
Mitford Parish Council  
D H Morgan  
N Mundy  
Netherton & Biddlestone Parish Council  
Newbiggin by the Sea Women's Institute  
Newbrough Parish Council  
Newton & Bywell Community Hall  
Newton on the Moor & Swarland Parish Council  
North Sunderland Parish Council  
Northumberland County Council  
Northumberland Strategic Partnership  
One NorthEast  
Otterburn Parish Council  
Ovingham Parish Council  
Ovington Parish Council  
Pegswood Parish Council  
Ponteland Memorial Hall  
Ponteland Parish Council  
Rev Canon S V Prins  
Rennington Parish Council  
Viscount Ridley  
E M Robson  
Rochester Parish Council  
Rothbury Parish Council  
The Rothley Trust  
Shotley Low Quarter Parish Council  
Simonburn Parish Council  
Slaley Parish Council  
The Smith (Haltwhistle & District) Charitable-Trust  
South Charlton Village Hall  
Stamfordham Parish Council  
Stannington Village Hall  
Stocksfield Institute Community Association

Storey Park Community Centre  
Lady Sutherland  
Tarsset & Greystead Parish Council  
Tillmouth Village Hall  
Togston Parish Council  
Tynedale District Council  
Ulgham Women's Institute  
Lord Vinson  
VONNE  
Wall Parish Council  
Warden Parish Council  
Wark Parish Council  
Whittingham, Callaly & Alnham Parish Council  
Widdrington Station & Stobswood Parish Council  
Widdrington Village Parish Council  
Widdrington Women's Institute  
Wylam Parish Council

# Thanks and Acknowledgements



Local people, groups, trusts, businesses and parish councils make important contributions to us - whether in money, expertise or volunteer time – which adds to the substantial grant-aid which we receive from a number of public bodies. Almost all of the services which we offer to voluntary and community groups is available free-of-charge as a result, and it is particularly warming to note the donations which we receive from such a diversity of sources, even from some of the smallest and least-wealthy of groups. We also appreciate the help which comes from some large and strategic supporters, even though at time we are (constructively, we hope) challenging and seeking to change their policies and practices on behalf of communities and voluntary bodies.

Particular thanks are due to:

- Our major strategic funders, including the Big Lottery, the County Council, Capacity Builders, and DEFRA (via ACRE's Rural Community Action Network contract)
- The professional advisory services of the County Council, arranged through our Honorary Treasurer, Steven Mason, which include not only financial management advice but also personnel issues, property services, computer training and printing/purchasing
- Our members and trustees, who put in so much time for no recompense to the running of our organisation and activities
- Our 'specialist volunteers', including Norman Dunn (organisational systems) and John Nixon (surveyor, for community buildings)
- Those bodies who have given us the free use of premises for our events, including the County Council, Morpeth Town Council, Natural England and various village halls/ community buildings
- Grant-making bodies: not only those such as Carr-Ellison, Vinson, Rothley, Knott and Joicey which have supported us year after year, but also those which have made exceptional efforts to ensure the success of particular projects, such as the Community Foundation serving Tyne & Wear and Northumberland
- Our colleagues in ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England), the Rural Community Action Network and in neighbouring councils of voluntary service, who form part of our mutual support network
- The groups, voluntary bodies, public authorities and agencies who continue to respond to and co-operate enthusiastically in our activities and work.



## How you can help



Community Action Northumberland exists through the goodwill and participation of a large number of individuals, groups and organisations. We have a well-established reputation, which we have built over more than fifty years. If you are attracted by what we do, and would like to help us further, one or more of the following possibilities should be of interest:

- If you are an individual, you can apply to become an Associate Member. Associate Members receive our regular newsletter CAN News, participate in our periodic meetings and other activities, and keep us in touch with life around the county. Three places on our Executive Committee are reserved for Associate Members. There is no subscription fee. Instead, Associate Members are encouraged to make a personal contribution to CAN, if they so wish.
- If you are a group, agency or business, you can make a financial contribution. We are supported by hundreds of contributions each year. These donations not only contribute to our income: they also demonstrate to Government and other large funders the

strength of local support for our work. We are a registered charity, (no. 224798), and taxpaying businesses and individuals are able to make tax efficient donations to us.

- If you have other things which you can offer to community groups (eg a specialist skill, on a voluntary basis, or resources such as free or cheap materials or transport), please let us know so that we can pass this offer to groups for their benefit.

For more information, or to discuss the ways in which you would like to help, please contact us (by telephone, or writing to our offices):

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**Morpeth, Northumberland, NE61 1PY**  
**Tel: 01670 517178**  
**Fax: 01670 511400**  
**E-mail: [info@ca-north.org.uk](mailto:info@ca-north.org.uk)**  
**Website: [www.ca-north.org.uk](http://www.ca-north.org.uk)**  
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### **Berwick**

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*Email: [christinenicholls@ca-north.org.uk](mailto:christinenicholls@ca-north.org.uk)*

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**Registered Charity Number: 224798**

**A member of the Rural Community Action Network**

**Supporting voluntary action and communities  
throughout Northumberland**



**Community Action**  
**Northumberland**

