



Community Action Northumberland NEWS

WINTER ISSUE - December 2011

CAN - supporting voluntary action and communities throughout Northumberland

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CAN offices will close at noon on 23rd December and will re-open at 9am on 3rd January.

60th birthday

'Uplifting', 'inspiring' and 'enjoyable' are words which are rarely used in descriptions of Annual General meetings, but CAN's AGM on 3 November produced just those reactions from participants. The AGM was something of a milestone, for several reasons. It marked and celebrated our 60th birthday, it created new governance provisions, and it signified a change in the long and symbiotic relationship with the County Council.

CAN was formed in the Autumn of 1951, at the initiative of a range of interested and committed bodies including the County Council, Kings' College (University of Newcastle's predecessor), the parish and district councils' associations, voluntary organisations, rural trades'-bodies, and significant support from the-then Northumberland and Tyneside Council of Social Service. Our AGM included an exhibition of 'then and now' comparisons and contrasts and a Northumberland quiz.

The formal business included George Scott's trademark witty and stimulating presentation of the annual report. The opportunity was also taken to alter CAN's governance arrangements, so that CAN is now governed by the new charitable company – also called CAN – rather than an Executive Committee of individual trustees. Our President, the Duke of Northumberland, and all of the vice Presidents, were 'transferred' to the company. The County Council's Director of Corporate Resources, Steven Mason, stood-down as our Honorary treasurer, and Linda Frater was appointed Honorary Treasurer of the company.

There followed a stirring and impassioned presentation by one of our vice-presidents, Canon Bob Burston, Rector of Wooler. Bob, a former chairman of CAN's trustees, is an inveterate rural advocate, and a strong voice on behalf of disadvantaged communities. He drew upon a number of prominent Northumbrians, including Earl Grey, Emily Davidson, Josephine Butler and William



Beveridge, as well as his own experiences of CAN, dating back to his early days as vicar of Alwinton, 30 years ago. There was a strong challenge to CAN to continue to support local communities, not least at a time when the state appears to have 'cast them adrift'.

The AGM finished with the cutting of a birthday cake, jointly by our President and by Sue Shaw, Chairman of the national rural communities' charity ACRE, and a close friend of CAN.

Extracts from our 60th birthday exhibition, and Bob Burston's presentation can be seen at www.ca-north.org.uk

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Call for Grants in the Alnwick Area

Applications to the Community Foundation from Alnwick and the immediate surrounding area have been very low and they are urging groups in this area to consider making an application. The Community Foundation has a number of donor funds around the Alnwick area, which are specifically set up to benefit groups locally.

The grants available are up to around £2,000 and are suitable for groups involved in the arts, sports or general community

projects. Any groups considering applying can contact Su Legg on 0191 222 0945 for more information, if you need any assistance with completing an application form please contact Marc Johnson on 01665 605540 or email marcjohanson@ca-north.org.uk

In the financial year to March 2011, the Community Foundation managed £47.4m on behalf of more than 250 donor funds and awarded more than £4.7m in grants to over 1,600 local groups and individuals.

A Broadband Plan for Northumberland

Our winter 2010 edition of CAN News had a particular focus on broadband. In this edition we are looking at the developments that have taken place over the last year in the quest to secure superfast broadband for Northumberland.

iNORTHUMBERLAND



Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) was created by the Government as a delivery vehicle for its broadband policies. It aims to increase access to broadband for households, businesses and communities in poorly served areas across the UK, including bringing connectivity to those without even a basic level of broadband access. It has a budget of £530 million for 2011-2015. The main driver for providing the funding is economic growth. A website has been set up by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DMS) to communicate information on rural broadband development: ["http://www.ruralbroadband.com"](http://www.ruralbroadband.com) www.ruralbroadband.com.

After initial allocations of funding in 2010 for pilot broadband projects, including our near neighbours Cumbria and North Yorkshire, BDUK invited funding bids from the rest of the country. Northumberland County Council submitted an expression of interest in April 2011 and the final bid, which comprises a broadband plan for the county is planned to be presented to

the county council for endorsement and submission to BDUK before Christmas. To help bidders set out their plans BDUK confirmed funding allocations in August to areas expressing an interest, including a sum of £7,030,000 to Northumberland which, it is hoped, will be matched by the county council.

It is clear from the analysis done to create the broadband plan that poor broadband connectivity is apparent anywhere and everywhere in Northumberland, and bringing an improved service to all parts of the county will be an enormous challenge beyond the scope of the financial resources currently available. Over 70% of premises in Northumberland are in "white areas" i.e. those where there is no choice of physical infrastructure and no wholesale marketplace, and over 60 of the county's 74 exchanges serve premises within the final 10% hardest to reach with fast broadband connectivity. Across the county there are substantial clusters of residential and business premises that lie out of range for delivery of high quality broadband

services from enabled exchanges. Furthermore, there is a significant problem of premises being connected directly to exchanges, rather than through intermediary cabinets, which adds substantially to the cost of improving the service.

The county council has created a brand to encapsulate all activity in Northumberland relating to improved broadband connections. With a daunting statistic that as many as one out of every five people in Northumberland has yet to go onto the internet, the brand has been created to focus on the benefits afforded from a connected community. For that reason, the brand visuals and identity purposefully omit the reference to any technology – with evidence showing that many people are alienated from technologically-focussed messaging.

In keeping with the principal behind the project, to develop an approach in Northumberland which is collaborative and brings together the various public, private and voluntary sector organisations across the county, the brand is essentially a white-label. This means that the County Council logo sits alongside those of the partners – such as the Chamber of Commerce, the National Parks and CAN – among many more.

A website called iNorthumberland "<http://www.inorthumberland.org.uk>" was used to launch the campaign - explaining how broadband can assist with every aspect of life. It also provides a platform for residents and businesses to tell the Government why it is so important for Northumberland that we get better broadband connections. Printed postcards, replicating this platform off line have been distributed to all of the County's libraries to ensure that those people who currently can't get online have a voice in this vital debate.

Rural Community Broadband Toolkit

BDUK is developing Rural Community Broadband Toolkit containing material to support the development of local projects, including the Community Data Book. The toolkit will contain a variety of information

and pointers to existing guidance and material, and further material, will be added over time. It will also contain information on a number of possible business models which communities may wish to consider

in developing their plans. Each model of involvement will require a gradual increase in community commitment to match the difficulty and expense of serving customers in remote areas.

Rural Community Broadband Fund – Is your community up for the challenge?

DEFRA has recently launched for England the Rural Community Broadband Fund (RCBF) with funding of £20 million and it is now open for Expressions of Interest (EOI). The fund is part of the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE) and is jointly funded by DEFRA and BDUK.

It also aims to provide improved broadband in hard-to-reach areas. The first EOI round is open between 1st December 2011 and 31st January 2012 and full details of how to apply for this round can be found in the applicant's handbook which can be downloaded via <http://rdpenetwork.defra.gov.uk/funding-sources/rural-community-broadband-fund>.

EOIs may only be submitted during an open round. For the first round, potential applicants will need to complete an EOI form by 31st January 2012 and applicants will be notified by the end of February if successful and invited to submit a detailed application.

What Do Applicants Have to Do?

The RCBF requires that applicants identify local demand for a service to support their case for investment. So they must collate data to support their EOI by completing a Community Data Book. This data should include technical details such as what telecoms connections each household currently has, where the slow spots are, where fibre solutions will not reach etc to help applicants understand the local picture and need for their project. The BDUK Rural Community Broadband Toolkit will contain a template for the Community Data Book. Applicants must not commit to works specifically related to any EOI under the RCBF prior to approval of a full application and grant is paid in arrears so they need to demonstrate an ability to bankroll the project until such point as the grant is paid. There is no limit to the size of project or grant investment but it is likely that below a certain threshold projects will not be economically viable, and they will be subject to a value for money assessment. The RCBF will provide up to 50% of total

'eligible' costs (up to a maximum of £300 per premise) including capital works, facilitation and technical support, other service establishment costs, but not ongoing maintenance costs. The remaining funding must come from private sources including individual householders' contributions. No other public sector funding sources are eligible under the RCBF so for example European Structural Funds (ERDF), National Lottery and local authority funds cannot be used as match. Funding must be contracted by 31st December 2013.

Will you be Applying to the RCBF?

We would very much like to hear from you if, having read this article and the additional information on the RCBF webpage, you intend to put in an EOI by 31st January 2012. Please let us know by ringing Marc Johnson on 01665 605540 or email at marcjohanson@ca-north.org.uk

Learn about Hallmark together!!



The Hallmark Scheme is a quality standard scheme which aims at improving the effectiveness and management of village halls. The two main benefits are;

- It provides funders and other organisations, interested in village halls, with a benchmark for well managed facilities.
- It gives village hall volunteers confidence that they are running the hall in the correct way.

There have been 10 halls in the county that have achieved Hallmark 1 standard. We have been a little surprised that so few have taken it up - especially in view of the potential benefits to be had. So - we are offering the opportunity for halls to come together to take a look at what it entails to achieve it - and for reassurance that it is easier than you think!!

Two sessions will take place - one has been arranged in the North Area of the county on the morning of **Tuesday February 7th 2012** (venue to be decided) and there will be a similar session held in the West of the county later in **February/early March** (date and venue to be decided). We hope to have representation from trustees of halls

that have achieved Hallmark, who will talk about the experience and the benefits the award has brought for their hall.

If you would like to join Louise, and other interested trustees, finding out how straightforward it is to achieve Hallmark 1, then please contact Louise (details below). She will add your name to the list/s. The venues will be decided, once expressions of interest have been received - based on where the majority of trustees are coming from.

If you are interested in participating or wish to discuss it, please email Louise Currie at [CAN \(louisecurrie@ca-north.org.uk\)](mailto:louisecurrie@ca-north.org.uk) or phone 01670 50816.

The Localism Act

In mid November 2011, the Localism Bill gained Royal Assent, which means that it is now the Localism Act 2011. **What is the Act likely to mean for local communities in our area?** The Act itself is very wide-ranging, and it includes a lot of provisions about the governance and operation of principal local authorities, as well as opportunities for local communities. Here are some of the highlights:

- 1. Neighbourhood Planning:** the Act paves the way to giving statutory powers to new-style, community-led Neighbourhood Plans. These Plans, which are entirely optional, add to the basic policy provisions of the LDF (local development framework), with an assumption that they will increase the volume and pace of new developments. In Northumberland, three communities are acting as designated 'front-runners', to test-out Neighbourhood Planning: Allendale, Alnwick/Denwick and part of the North Tyne area. The government is still consulting on some draft regulations which will put some 'flesh on the bones' of this new system. We must ensure that appropriate support is in place for local communities who wish to prepare their own plans.
- 2. Community Rights:** the Act gives communities a number of new rights. The Right to Bid enables the creation of a statutory register of premises which housekey services such as shops, pubs, polling stations, libraries etc. If and when the premises are put up for sale, the community has a 6-month opportunity within which to purchase it. The Right to Challenge enables a community to trigger a review of how a principal authority organises and provides a public service, thereby opening the opportunity for its provision by an alternative provider. There are further Rights relating to the re-use of derelict land and the granting of Neighbourhood Development Orders. We do not yet know how popular these rights will be, among local communities, especially when they mean an extra burden of work or cost, or the fragmentation of an otherwise economical county-wide service.
- 3. Council tax levels:** a local referendum will be required if any precepting authority (including a parish/town council) proposes to raise its Council Tax precept beyond a level which Parliament will prescribe. Neither the process nor the limits/parameters have yet been determined, but we assume this could be introduced for the April 2013 financial year (ie in little over one year's time). A DCLG consultation on this proposal, undertaken in 2010, revealed the impracticabilities and potentially high costs of this scheme, but it appears to have survived the Parliamentary scrutiny.
- 4. Transparency:** principal authorities are already advised to list all of their expenditure transactions that are worth £500 or more. The Act requires publication of senior 'officers' pay levels. In Northumberland, the County Council already publishes this information and it does not appear to excite a great deal of interest.
- 5. Rubbish collection:** the Act repeals some 2008 legislation, which made it possible to charge or levy fines where rubbish bins have been over-full. In addition, some local authorities are being supported to revert to weekly bin collections.
- 6. Planning:** Regional Spatial Strategies (formerly, Regional Planning Guidance) will no longer be required, but neighbouring authorities will have a duty to co-operate with each-other covering shared interests, such as on public transport planning, major retail parks, and flooding. Developers will have to consult communities over significant proposals even before they submit their planning application. There will be more flexibility, to the benefit of local communities, in the deployment of the Community Infrastructure Levy. Planning Inspectors will have less scope to alter the wording of Local Plans. The government will take control, from the Infrastructure Planning Commission, of regulating nationally-significant infrastructure proposals.
- 7. Council powers:** the Act opens the possibility of a 'general power of competence' which enables councils to provide or support whatever services and powers they feel appropriate, without the need for more-specific legislation. On the surface, this appears similar to the 'power of well-being' which was conferred by legislation in 2000. It is uncertain whether this new power will automatically be granted to all councils.
- 8. Ethical standards:** the national Standards Board will be closed, but individual authorities will still need a code of conduct, and a councillor's withholding or misrepresentation of financial interests will become a criminal offence. It is hoped that the new system will no longer require the investigation of trivial complaints, and that there will be greater sanctions against serious misdemeanours.
- 9. Predetermination:** the Act clarifies that councillors can have opinions, preferences and pre-dispositions about public matters, without this automatically fettering their involvement in any relevant decisions.
- 10. Business rates:** councils can offer discounts on business rates, but they would need to fund the resultant shortfall in revenue.
- 11. Cities:** there will be scope for the government to transfer powers to local authorities in the major cities. The Government will also require referendums in these larger cities, including Newcastle, to determine support for new directly-elected mayors. We are not aware of any great demand for an additional authority-figure in Newcastle.
- 12. Governance:** the Act removes the requirement for principal authorities to operate an Executive/Cabinet or a mayoral decision-making system. This would enable the reintroduction of cross-party committees, if councils wish. Potentially, this could make council business more transparent and accessible, but it might also slow things down.
- 13. Social housing:** a narrower range of people will be eligible for social housing; there will be more flexibility re social housing tenancies; there will be greater scope to place homeless people in private rented accommodation; housing rent income will be retained within local authority funds; a nationwide home swap will be introduced for social housing; changes will be made in the 'voice' for social housing tenants; and the requirement for Home Information Packs has now been abolished.

A 'plain English' summary of the Act can be seen at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/pdf/1923416.pdf>

Supporting and developing the VCS in Northumberland

Significant concerns have been raised by the VCS and County Councillors, and by regional charitable organisations, about what will be the future shape of 'infrastructure services' for the VCS in Northumberland. The short answer is 'we don't know'. However, here are some pointers:

- the County Council is aiming to retain its financial support for the VCS at a similar level to that of the current year
- new commissioning arrangements have changed, and will continue to change, how support services are organised
- in the interim the main support-service providers (Wansbeck CVS, CVS Blyth Valley and CAN) have

each received offers of financial support for the half year Oct 11-March 12 of about 25% of the previous full-year equivalent. No decisions have yet been made about future years.

- the Big Lottery is continuing to contribute to local support services but current grants programmes will cease over the next few years
- the outcome of a Northumberland VCS bid for Cabinet Office/Big Lottery Transforming Local Infrastructure funding should be known in January, which may be an opportunity to develop services to the VCS
- for CAN, DEFRA will be continuing its RCAN (Rural Community Action Network) support until March 2015, for 'strategic influencing and intelligence'

work (ie not for supporting the VCS)

- NALC is continuing to work with and through CAN to ensure a joined-up package of support for parish councils and their communities
- with a greater proportion of County Council funding now going into 'overheads', support services are currently being funded in part by financial reserves, something which cannot be sustained for much longer.

It therefore seems likely that some tough decisions will be needed in the spring, and it is far from certain that the pattern and availability of support services which exist at present will be sustainable for very much longer.

CIO News



For those voluntary organisations that are considering the possibility of becoming a CIO (charitable incorporated organisation), the most recent information

from our contact in the Charity Commission suggests that this will become possible in Spring 2012. Although the primary legislation is already in place (the Charities Act 2006) and model constitutions for CIOs are available, the Regulations have yet to be laid before and approved by Parliament.

Unlike the formation of an association or a company, only the Charity Commission can formally create and register a CIO. The CIO is a more attractive legal form than a company for voluntary bodies. Because of the likely scale of demands, the Commission has indicated it will give priority to the creation and registration of brand-new CIO organisations, compared with the conversion of existing charitable companies into CIOs.

Nevertheless, unless there is a very pressing need for a voluntary body to achieve limitation of legal liability for its trustees, CAN believes that it is preferable to be patient and await the arrival of the CIO structure.

Contact David Francis if you have any queries.

Young People in our Communities CONFERENCE

Community Action
Northumberland



Northumberland Clubs for Young People (NCYP) are excited to announce the details of a conference we are delivering in partnership with Community Action Northumberland (CAN)

The conference will be held at Stannington Village Hall on Thursday 23rd February 2012. The purpose of the event is to update the CAN network on the exciting developments at NCYP and provide an update on wider work with young people across the county. The day will also provide an opportunity to engage in discussion around providing local solutions to the needs and aspirations of young people.

The event is aimed at people NOT currently engaged in developments that support young people - our target

audience is all members within the CAN network. This includes members of parish and town councils and committee members and volunteers of village halls/ community buildings and Community Associations and groups.

Speakers on the day will be Leon Mexter (Chief Executive of the Regional Youth Work Unit), Stuart Dearlove (Independent Chair of Youth Work Northumberland) and Jon Niblo (Chief Executive of Northumberland Clubs for Young People) The event is free for everyone however places per organisation may have to be limited. Lunch will be provided For further information and to book a place, please contact Louise Currie or Carol Megson on 01670 517178 or complete the booking form on CAN website – www.ca-north.org.uk

Gilsland Has Gone Green!

This year Gilsland Village Hall has seen some major refurbishment projects which have transformed the hall into a warmer, brighter venue for all groups that use it.

This started with the replacement of all the windows and doors with double glazed uPVC fittings which immediately reduced the amount of draughts.

The next stage was to replace the out of date, expensive-to-run heating system with a sustainable system using renewable energies. This will provide a more sustainable future for managing the Hall's energy costs and also helping to lower its carbon emissions.

A 14kW air source heat pump and full radiator distribution system has now been installed externally at the rear of the building. This replaces the 37 kW of wall heaters previously used to heat the hall. The heat pump, which delivers heat at lower temperatures over much longer periods than gas or oil boilers, still has some impact on the environment as it needs electricity to run, but the heat it extracts from the air is constantly being renewed naturally. It is also very noticeable that the new radiators don't feel as hot to the touch as they might do with a gas or oil boiler.



User groups no longer have to pay through the meters for electricity. A small one off charge will be added to the booking fee in the New Year but this will still be cheaper than putting pound coins in the meter for groups

A 3 kWp set of Solar Photovoltaic Panels has been installed on the south facing roof. These panels will generate electricity whenever there is daylight on them, however the stronger the light, the more electricity is produced. Through the government's Feed In Tariff scheme the Hall's Management Committee can claim 43p for every kilowatt of electricity generated by the panels so this will provide an income source for the village hall to help with future running expenses and hall developments.

They are also able to use the electricity the panels generate for FREE, and the third bonus of this scheme is that they also get paid a small amount (3p per kilowatt) for 50% of everything generated which is assumed to be fed back into the national grid – this is guaranteed to be paid for 25 years and is index linked as long as the system gets registered by 12 December as after this date the government is reducing the tariff they pay to 21p – less than half.

The Hall will also be making a 55% savings on its carbon emissions annually which, over the lifetime of these renewable energies, is a staggering 112,300 kg of CO2.

Insulating the Hall was the other large part of the project - which supports the renewable technologies that have been installed. The Hall is now fully insulated – there was none previously! Sheep's wool insulation has been put in the roof

void and the walls and window reveals in both the ground floor and upper halls have been relined with Kingspan insulated plasterboard. A new entrance lobby has been created which has eliminated any draft when the front door is opened. This insulation should reduce the heat loss by 70%.

Although not part of the insulation, heating and energy efficiency project, it was identified that major structural repair was required to the hall roof. This has been carried out at the same time to minimise disruption and to ensure that the hall is a structurally sound building for another 120 years!!



Once all the major parts of the project were completed the hall was completely decorated – with the help of local volunteers from the community. Paint was supplied by Johnstone's / Leyland Paints from Currock, Carlisle at a greatly discounted price and a great donation of manpower was received from Carillion Enterprises.

The total cost for the project was just over £83,000 which was raised – in addition to local support - chiefly through grant funding from 1



Electronic copies of CAN News

If you want to receive electronic copies of Community News as well as, or instead of, hard copies, email sueandrew@ca-north.org.uk or subscribe directly via the website on www.ca-north.org.uk

The Sweet Sound Of Success...

Santander has announced the winners of the first north-east Social Enterprise Development awards. The three winning enterprises are Trust in the North, the Rising Sun Farm in Wallsend and the Hextol Foundation who have won £50,000, £30,000 and £15,000 respectively.

Trust in the North is the social enterprise trading arm of the Lynemouth Community trust, supporting disadvantaged people in the village of Lynemouth. It runs the Beehive café and produces quality chocolate and fudge products under the Kenspeckle brand.

The Hextol Foundation, based in Hexham, aims to improve the lives of people with disabilities and other disadvantages by creating opportunities to work and by providing education and training. The award money will enable Hextol to hire a sales person, which will help them to grow and expand their work.

They run a number of enterprises - Hextol GreenBox – for mailing distribution; Hextol Lunches; Hextol Decorators and Hextol Gardeners - that provide safe and supported work experience and work-based training; using seed funding to start them but, over time, establishing them as stable, viable businesses, independent of on-going grant funding support.



The photo shows Chris Milner, Phillip daCosta and Melanie Rudd from the Hextol Foundation receiving the Santander Social Enterprise Development Award from Craig Iley, Santander Regional Director.

Alongside the prize money, winning social enterprises receive access to support from Santander including mentoring programmes, funding for internships and university business courses and training. The Community Foundation (Tyne &

Wear and Northumberland) managed the awards and will also now work with the winning organisations to assess the social impact of their business and the prize fund on local communities.

Focus On FITs

The Feed-in Tariffs (FITs) scheme was introduced on 1 April 2010, under powers in the Energy Act 2008. Through the use of FITs, the government hoped to encourage deployment of additional small-scale (less than 5MW) low-carbon electricity generation, particularly by organisations, businesses, communities and individuals that have not traditionally engaged in the electricity market.

This allowed many people/groups/communities to invest in small-scale low-carbon electricity, in return for a guaranteed payment from an electricity supplier of their choice for the electricity they generate and use, as well as a guaranteed payment for unused surplus electricity they export back to the grid.

Small-scale low-carbon electricity technologies were all eligible for the scheme – wind; solar photovoltaics (PV); hydro anaerobic digestion; domestic scale microCHP (with a capacity of 2kW or less).

On 7 February 2011, the Government announced the first comprehensive review of FITs. Phase 1 of the Review considered: small-scale solar PV (with a total installed capacity of 250 kilowatts or less) prioritising energy efficiency by linking PV tariffs to specified minimum energy efficiency requirements from 1 April 2012, and introducing new multi-installation tariff rates for aggregated solar PV schemes, applying to new installations with an eligibility date after 1 April 2012

Phase 2 of the review will consider wider issues including tariffs for non-PV technologies, new cost control mechanisms and administrative aspects of the scheme.

An eight-week consultation has been now launched on PV systems and will run until 23 December 2011.

If the proposals are implemented, they would introduce a new tariff for schemes up to 4kW in size of 21.0p/kWh – down from the current 43.3p/kWh effective

from 1 April 2012, which will affect all installations with an eligibility date on or after 8 December 2011.

Reduced rates are also proposed for schemes between 4kW and 250kW, to ensure that those schemes receive a consistent rate of return.

Low Carbon Communities reports that there is anecdotal evidence that this is already having significant impacts on various community projects who are (or were) in the process of raising funds for larger projects. And as such it is campaigning for a 'community tariff' to be introduced. <http://lowcarboncommunities.net/community-fits/>

The Energy Saving Trust has produced a factsheet which can be accessed at ... <http://lowcarboncommunities.net/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/est-fits-note.pdf>

Renewable heat incentive now open for applications

Businesses and communities across Britain can now apply for the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) tariff payment – said to be the first of its kind in the world.

The start of the scheme was delayed while DECC resolved the scheme's compatibility with EU state aid rules. However these have been resolved and the scheme opened for applications on November 28th.

Under the scheme organisations can apply to Ofgem for support and will receive payments on a quarterly basis for heat generated over 20 years - from renewable technologies including biomass boilers; solar thermal equipment; and heat pumps installed since 15 July 2009.

Recipients will be paid up to 7.9p per kWh for biomass boilers, 8.5p per kWh for solar thermal and up to 4.5p per kWh for heat pumps.

It is hoped that the RHI will give a significant boost to the economy including supporting thousands of green jobs, reducing the UK's dependency

on imported fossil fuels and reducing carbon emissions and helping to meet the government's renewable targets.

The Renewable Heat Premium Payment (RHPP) scheme is already up and running, providing money off renewable heat technologies for householders. Vouchers are still available - householders have until 31st March next year to apply. There will also be support for householders under the second phase of the RHI, the timing of which will be confirmed early in 2012.

Details of how to apply for RHI can be found on Ofgem's website:- <http://www.ofgem.gov.uk/e-serve/RHI/Pages/RHI.aspx>

Ofgem also have a helpline number for queries on the RHI. The team can be contacted on 0845 200 2122 or by email to RHI.Enquiry@ofgem.gov.uk.

More information about the Renewable Heat Premium Payment scheme can be found on the DECC website... http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/meeting_energy/renewable_ener/incentive/incentive.aspx

What We Do

Community Action Northumberland provides a range of advice and support services for community and voluntary groups to enable people throughout Northumberland to overcome disadvantages and improve their quality of life. These services include:

- Funding advice
- Management committee development
- Advice on constitutions, charity law and legal structures
- Support for village halls/community buildings
- Project management support
- Local regeneration
- Support for parish councils
- Employment services
- Production of community newspaper

Additionally CAN seeks 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
- 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.

CAN is anxious to ensure that it effectively performs these roles and therefore operates a process of continuous evaluation. This requires feedback from our users and partners. Any comments on our performance are not only welcomed but essential to help us to make sure that we are meeting the overall needs of users and maintaining our quality standards.

CAN News is published on a quarterly basis – see the next copy deadline below. It contains useful information on sources of advice and funding, helps to alert people to changes in legislation or service provision which may affect them, and passes on ideas and news from one community to another. Contributions and items of informative and newsworthy value are welcomed.

Copy deadline for the next issue is Friday 2 March 2012.

Please get in touch with the Editor, Louise Currie, at Tower Buildings, 9 Oldgate, Morpeth, NE61 1PY or email items direct to info@ca-north.org.uk.

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CAN offices will close at noon on 23rd December and will re-open at 9am on 3rd January.