

Community Action Northumberland NEWS

SPRING ISSUE - March 2011

CAN - supporting voluntary action and communities throughout Northumberland

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Silver Celebrations

Since Community Council of Northumberland (now called Community Action Northumberland), was



formed in 1951 we have had only two appointments in the lead role. Alec Trotter O.B.E. was Secretary of the organisation for 35 years, and David Francis our current Director, (the role title changed with David's appointment), who joined us in 1986 as the organisation moved into Tower Buildings, and who in February completed his first 25 years in post.

To mark this occasion and show our appreciation, the staff felt it appropriate to buy him a gift, then decided that this was a chance to hold a larger get-together and contacted many past staff to ask if they would like to join us. We hoped that they, and David's family might be able to come along, but like Topsy, the event 'just grewed!' with Executive members, our President and Vice Presidents, and

individuals and organisations with whom David has worked over the years showing their appreciation in sending their good wishes, contributing to a gift and coming along to the event, if they were able.

The resulting contributions were overwhelming and it was felt that we should perhaps rethink our initial idea of a personal satellite navigator as a gift – subsequent emails and letters between us and the contributors helped us reach an agreement and we purchased accordingly.

Current staff held a small celebration in the morning, with their own presentation and the bigger event was held in the Corn Exchange in Morpeth Town Hall. To enable the rest of us to creep out of the office unobserved, our Executive Chairman, George Scott arranged a 'meeting' with David, and managed to persuade him that a Pensions expert was visiting Morpeth Town Council during lunchtime..... an ideal opportunity to access more information – or not!

When they arrived at the Town Hall, David was perplexed to see several familiar faces. His expression then changed to one of amazement as he waked in to a round of applause.

Speaking on behalf of his many friends and colleagues, George presented David with an engraved watch and a cheque. David responded with an emotional impromptu speech giving some background to his time in Northumberland, and thanking everyone. As he said at the time 'I used to think I had a finger on the pulse of what was happening at Tower Buildings – now I know differently!'

The event gave everyone the opportunity to 'catch up' over a tasty buffet lunch from Roch's Catering.

Staff members were very pleased to find that others appreciate David as much as they do, and would like to thank everyone for their interest and participation.

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Celebration

Linda, Jane and George



All organisations change when a member of staff leaves, but for CAN we will notice a much bigger loss with the retirement of three long-serving and senior members of staff at the end of March.

Linda Frater, our Finance Officer, joined us in 1988, initially single-handedly as our sole 'finance person' but eventually growing to be part of a team of three. Linda's creativity, attention to detail and meticulous organisation, meant that we have always had a clear handle on our financial position, and have been able to satisfy and impress the full range of auditors: not only our own external auditor, but also those associated with

external funding sources such as Europe, GONE and OneNE. Linda has nurtured and developed her two team colleagues, Carol Megson and Margaret Tweddell, who will continue to handle CAN's and NALC's finances.

Jane Hart, our Senior Community Development Officer, joined us in 1998, following a career in the County Council's Library Service. When she joined us, she already had a good grasp of the geography and communities of Tynedale, having organised the mobile library services in these areas. She also had had experience as a parish council clerk and as organiser of the local Talking

Newspaper for the Blind. Over the years, she has supported numerous community projects through to fruition, as well as defusing some internal difficulties within local communities, and latterly taking charge of CAN's monitoring and reporting procedures.

George Courtice, Sector Development Officer for the Northumberland VCS Consortium, joined us in 2005, after a career in television and latterly in supporting new micro-businesses. George has brought intelligence, patience, diplomacy, tenacity and wit to the task of developing a united voice for voluntary organisations, engaging with the County Council and other decision-makers, and promoting Northumberland's VCS interests on the regional and national stage. He managed the delivery of the Capacity Builders Change-Up incentive programme in Northumberland, and also assisted the County Council with their investment programme.

All three members of staff will be hugely missed, and we thank them all for their contributions, commitment and companionship.

Happy birthday, CLP!



Community-led planning, (CLP), local appraisals, parish plans, and village design statements are all examples of initiatives which are taken by local communities to assess needs and opinions and to plan and implement improvements. The idea of CLP is not new. In fact, Northumberland boasts what was probably the first-ever CLP in this country: 'Stocksfield – an Experiment in Democracy' which was undertaken 40 years ago, in 1971. Twenty-five years ago the Allenheads

village appraisal was probably the first CLP to focus significantly on regeneration. Its achievements included workshops for small businesses, tourism-promotion, social housing, better bus services, a louder voice for the community in decision-making, a shop/post office, circular walks, and more.

More recently community appraisals and parish plans provided a basis for attracting investment and grant aid from European and UK programmes, to build new village halls, attract small businesses, promote tourism, develop volunteering, improve communication, for example. And yet, one of the original intentions of CLP has also remained the most elusive: to influence the policies and decisions which are made by local planning authorities. Until now!

Among the processes in the Localism Bill is a mechanism to give parish-level CLP real teeth, in terms of development-

control policy and decision-making. The underlying intention of this new neighbourhood planning is to increase the quantity and the quality of housing and employment-related developments, beyond what would ordinarily be achieved through the mainstream LDF (local development framework) system. As such, it will build upon the LDF.

CAN, NALC and other community-support bodies are working with the county Council and the National Park Authority to develop a framework of support for CLP, to help interested communities to embrace the new Localism Bill opportunities.

Contact David Francis for more information....

Localism and the Big Society – in Northumberland

Shortly before Christmas, the Government published its Localism bill – a massive piece of proposed legislation which will add statutory clout to the furtherance of their Big Society agenda. Although the Bill's introduction was overshadowed by a range of bad-news stories about budget cuts and service-closures, there are some significant and exciting opportunities within the bill. What will this mean for Northumberland?

The main theme of the bill is decentralisation and local empowerment, and the bill goes much further than ever before in empowering communities (more than local government or the voluntary sector) to use their initiative and to take charge of some aspects of local decision-making.

Neighbourhood Planning – a new form of community-led planning, will be able to make local planning policies and thereby approve or refuse new developments. Civil servants are currently drafting the procedural and quality-control requirements which will be needed.

The Bill also proposes a number of 'Community Rights': to Buy, Build, and Challenge. Communities will be able to identify key buildings which house important local services, which would seriously affect the community if closed-down and sold off: examples include shops, post offices, garages, pubs, schools and village halls. Under this Right, the principal authority would compile a register of such assets, and an owner would need to give the community the opportunity to acquire the asset if it is to be sold. This Assets of Community Value initiative would, however, still require the community to find the money to purchase the property.

The Right to Build will simplify the process for community organisations to build (on a small scale) new homes, businesses and community facilities.

The Right to Challenge will enable communities (and voluntary organisations and employee groups) to trigger a process requiring a public sector service provider to undertake a commissioning exercise for the service in question.

There will be new requirements for the developers of larger sites to hold pre-application decisions with local communities. Communities will benefit from a proportion of the Community Infrastructure Levy on larger developments. Planning enforcement procedures are to be strengthened, regional strategies abolished, and the provisions re parish polls amended.

Other provisions in the bill include:

- Dilution of the Standards/Code of Conduct regime, but a re-introduction of criminal sanctions for transgressions
- Clarification of the rules covering pre-determination and pre-disposition in public decision-making
- Pressures to introduce mayoral governance arrangements in principal authorities
- Publication of senior staff's pay scales
- Provision for local referendums (including those for larger increases in Council Tax precepts)
- Changes to the business rates regime
- Changes to the social housing system.

Further initiatives, which do not require new legislation, include a Community Right to Reclaim (unused public sector land and

buildings), 'data transparency', regulation of council newsletters, public recording of council meetings, and a host of others.

It is true that some of these proposals may not have a significant impact on Northumberland. For example, the ability of local communities to purchase 'assets of community value' will be curtailed by the ability to secure enough funding. Also, the County Council is already finalising a Community assets Policy which goes significantly beyond the basic legislative proposals. However, many more of the bill's proposals will offer significant opportunities to local communities.

This, in turn, presents a significant challenge to us all to ensure that the relevant support-services are in place to nurture community initiatives. The new neighbourhood planning process alone will require significant support both from community development bodies and from planning experts. Similarly, we cannot under-estimate the work involved in negotiating and supporting a community take-over of local assets such as community centres, recreational facilities and street-based amenities.

Nevertheless, these are important opportunities for Northumberland's communities and CAN will, as ever, be there to provide both support and encouragement.

Further details about the Bill and its processes can be viewed at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/localgovernment/decentralisation/localismbill/>



CAN's Spring Conference

CAN's Spring Conference (formerly called the Spring Meeting) will take place this year on Wednesday 11 May at Ponteland Methodist Hall. Refreshments will be available from 1.30pm. It is both an informal meeting of CAN's members, but also an open invitation for all and any who are interested in CAN's work.

The main theme of the conference will be Community-Led Planning, and we hope to have presentations from several speakers, including David Francis, on both past achievements and also new opportunities.

The Conference, which will be chaired by our President, the Duke of Northumberland, will also hear from CAN's Chairman of Trustees, George Scott, about current news, including proposals for a change in legal

status to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation or Company. As with previous events, there may also be home-made cakes!

Invitations will be sent out electronically to those for whom we hold email addresses, and by mail to those without. You will also be able to access details and returns forms on our website www.ca-north.org.uk

A warm welcome at Mitford



Pictured are Dan Wood of Acrol, with committee members Teresa Scott, Vera Filer and Brian Talkes, by the security cages that protect the heat pumps on the outside of the building

Mitford Community Centre is celebrating the completion of the installation of a brand new heating system that will revolutionise the way the building is used in the future. Without gas in the village and the price of oil going through the roof, the committee has been searching for an environmentally friendly way of heating the Hall and ancillary rooms without costing the earth. Wood chips seemed to be an option but issues of availability, storage and handling, meant that this did not seem practical. Heat pumps provide a very efficient way of using electricity, giving out 3-4 times the amount of energy that they consume, and have been successfully tested at Powburn Village Hall. A similar system was therefore eventually chosen for Mitford Community Centre. Ideally the heat source would be from the ground, but this is really only practical in a new build; the option was therefore taken to use ambient air. Acrol, a Tyneside based, air conditioning company, proved to be the perfect partners and designed a system that would meet all the needs of the building. The company kept to their original quote, despite a near 2-year delay in getting approval from the grid, that we could proceed. In the end, it was the sterling efforts of Lorraine Dobson from Community Energy Solutions, and her electrical consultant, that ensured that the project could go ahead without any connection costs.

The hall was only completed in mid-February and already, the Hall has been used for a four day session of NCC management meetings. The attendees commented that the difference that the heating has made is remarkable. Before, the noisy, inefficient, ineffective wall fan heaters meant that overcoats were the norm at meetings, but now shirt sleeves are possible.

Contributors to the cost are: Big Lottery Fund - Awards for All, the Community Foundation for Tyne and Wear and Northumberland, County Councillor David Towns (Discretionary Fund), the Sir James Knot Fund, Mitford Parish Council and local fund-raising efforts by our dedicated committee.

The committee has also raised funding to refurbish the hall and its bright, attractive décor makes it a very pleasant venue for all sorts of activities and events. The next phase is to extend the hall to offer increased storage space and re-furbish the toilets, adding a new toilet with disabled access.

The Hall is ideally sized for events such as dances, children's parties (where the adjacent new playground is a big attraction), ceilidhs and meetings of all types. If you wish to use the hall for an event or meeting – or if you are interested in coming along to see the new heating system, please contact Vera Filer on 01670 510886 or via e-mail (vera.siler@mypostoffice.co.uk).

Limiting CAN's liability

Over the last ten years, or more, the volunteers who make up CAN's Executive Committee have been aware of the growing burden of legal liability which they face in taking responsibility as our charity trustees.

This is not to say that CAN is not well-managed. We operate a well-established system of performance-management, risk management, staff supervision, financial budgeting and monitoring, regular insurance reviews, and so on. However, our grant-income can fluctuate, we incur significant staffing costs which cannot be adjusted rapidly, we have a continuing commitment to a final-salary pension scheme, and one of our long-term funding partners is introducing greater financial uncertainty into the mix. Our trustees have therefore resolved to make changes to our governance arrangements and our legal structure.

Subject to the agreement of our membership, we will be looking to place the responsibility for running CAN in the hands of a new charitable company (or, if possible, a Charitable Incorporated Organisation), which will replace the current committee arrangements. This new company (or CIO) would have a constitution, objects and structure which are very similar to that currently in CAN. The difference would be that the legal liability of the members of the new committee would be limited, which is not the case with the 'current CAN'. Thus the new structure would still be able to be governed by people drawn from the voluntary sector, the County Council, NALC members, and so on, and it would hold AGMs (and other General Meetings) which will be chaired by the President.

We propose to progress these proposals at our next two general meetings: to discuss these ideas in-principle at our Spring Conference at Ponteland Memorial Hall on 11 May, and to take the decision at our AGM on 3 November.

Parish and county services: where now?

No-one can have missed the alarm and uproar in the world of local (parish and town) councils which was caused by a County Council letter, shortly before Christmas, warning of imminent closures or reduction in services if local councils did not pick up the tab. This was heightened in the New Year, through follow-up letters which pointed to a need for local council budgets to increase by 4 or 5 times to meet the County Council's cuts.

Fortunately, Council Leader Cllr Jeff Reid, with the backing of his colleagues, moved quickly in mid-January to head-off the threat. So, apart from some bruising and wounds which will heal in time, what is now happening regarding the provision and funding of local services? Our summary is as follows:

1. The Northumberland Charter for Local Councils identifies a list of services which should normally be provided (if at all) by a local council rather than NCC. This list includes play areas, parks, allotments, bus shelters, village greens, burial grounds, etc. In those parishes where NCC has been providing these services, a process of transferring to the relevant local council began in 2009, and it is hoped to complete the process by April 2012. In most instances, there will be a freehold transfer of property to the local council.
2. Local councils have always been able to pay to enhance NCC-run services, such as grass-cutting and youth services. As NCC budgets become tighter, these opportunities will increase. NCC will need to be clear and consistent regarding its 'baseline' level of provision, to enable local councils to understand the value which they would be adding.
3. The Charter, NCC's emerging Commercial Strategy, and now the Government's forthcoming Community Right to Challenge, will open up new opportunities for local councils and voluntary organisations pro-actively to run NCC services, under contract.

Presumably, this will apply to those services for which NCC will wish to retain a responsibility in the longer term, and which NCC are able to continue to fund.

4. In addition to the planned and negotiated transfers described above, there are likely to be service closures which happen as a direct result of the £45million cuts which are outlined in NCC's budget plans for 2011-12. Regrettably, local councils and their communities may only learn about these at a very late stage, and they will have to decide whether they wish to take them over, quite possibly without financial support from NCC. We would hope that NCC would nevertheless provide guidance and allow time for appropriate provisions to be made.

Therefore, in many respects, the situation is back to where things were in August 2010, when NCC Deputy Leader Cllr Roger Styring confirmed the year's extension of the transfer process, to April 2012. This welcome intervention bought valuable time in which to:

- research and verify the detail of each service in each parish, including its description, current management and maintenance arrangements, costs, tenure arrangements, staffing implications, plant/machinery etc
- agree the 'ground-rules' regarding the transfer process and any necessary safeguards
- put in place the capacity within NCC's property and legal teams to cope with the workload of making the transfers
- communicate and negotiate with each local council where transfers are in prospect
- provide training and other support
- allow local councils to consult their communities, before putting in place new budgeting, staffing, contracts and other provisions.

Clearly, there is a lot of work to be done in the coming months, but there is every opportunity to 'get it right' to enable transfers to be made in April 2012.

Community Assets

What may be a liability to the County Council may also be an asset and an opportunity for the local community. In the lead-up to Local Government Reorganisation, the County Council recognised that the efficiencies of merging seven councils into one new one would mean that some property would no longer be needed. In addition, Government-led cuts (which began in 2009) are causing the Council to dispense with property other than what is absolutely essential to retain.

The Council is therefore keen either to dispose of surplus property to the highest bidder (in order to maximise the receipt of capital) or to find a means of enabling the community to run and benefit from the property. In this way, a council liability can become a community asset.

The Council has now prepared and adopted a Community Asset Strategy, both to encourage such transfers, and also to put in place an appropriate process of decision-making and support. CAN and NALC welcome this initiative, and will be working with the County Council to support its implementation.

The Strategy can be viewed at <http://committees.northumberland.gov.uk/aksnorthumberland/images/att7638.doc>

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



Our cuts: their efficiency savings

George Courtice
Northumberland VCS Consortium

Towards the end of February, Northumberland County Council agreed its budget for the next financial year, 2011-12. In doing so the elected members voted to cut £45 million from its spending plans. We estimate this to be about 16% of last year's net spending – excluding the £188 million designated schools grant and other ring-fenced budgets. By any measure this is a swingeing reduction affecting just about every service the Council provides. Northumberland of course is not alone. Newcastle City Council too has recently announced similar levels of cuts and savings and is losing over 600 jobs. Our county has, of course, long argued that it is prone to particular punishment in times of spending constraints because its settlement with central government has not taken sufficient account of its special circumstances.

The extent of the cuts is largely due to the withdrawal of Government grants flowing to Local Authorities. The forced response is no longer to trim budgets but to cut services severely - sometimes entirely. The £2.8 million Working Neighbourhood Fund is an example. Established to help those furthest away from the world of work, it disappears on April 1st. The voluntary and community organisations in Northumberland were chosen to deliver much of this service because they were offering innovative and imaginative new ways of tackling the issue. Children's Centres are losing nearly £700k, the Youth Service £350k, Connexions £880k. Arts and heritage grants drop by £150k, and even support for community enterprise coaching is to be cut by £20k.

The mechanisms of central government funding to Local Authorities are fiendishly complex. Many special grants have gone and other, Area Based Grants, been cut or moved into a general pot so are no longer allocated to particular purposes and can be used to fill shortfalls wherever they may occur.

There are two main avenues of funding flow from the County Council to the voluntary & community sector – contracts

and grants. The former is a commercial arrangement where the Council buys services from the sector usually as a consequence of a competitive tender. At the last count the sector had contracts to the value of about £30 million but it has to be said that these mainly involved larger, well established voluntary organisations.

The overwhelming majority of organisations and groups within the sector have traditionally relied on grant income from their local authority. For next year this drops from £1.27 million to £1.23 million. This appears to be a relatively small reduction (4%). For those thinking the sector has escaped lightly – think again. This is on top of the 19% cut we incurred last year. This reduction, amounting to £53000, is also concentrated on a small group of organisations – those bodies providing support and advice to the sector – which had already incurred disproportionate cuts the previous year and whose funding from other sources is also disappearing. We estimate the net effect to support services could be a massive 47% over the 4 year period 2009-2013.

At the time our heads are buzzing with parliamentary green papers and bills over how to ensure communities are empowered to do more and decide more, our capacity to provide effective support services is clearly threatened.

The Minister responsible for communities, Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP, wants to hold to account those Councils which make disproportionate cuts to the sector. From our point of view the joint aim should be to reduce the impact of these cuts by working together with elected members and officers. This will not be helped if unnecessary barriers are created by introducing several months of purdah as a consequence of the plan to introduce competitive commissioning arrangements for support services. Constructive collaboration is the key and we are optimistic that, as the Council enters uncharted waters, the very best support services that circumstances allow, will emerge.

Royal Garden Party



Thanks to all parish councils who nominated their chairman for the annual NALC Royal Garden Party ballot. The two successful nominees are Felton Parish Council (Cllr Tony Hood and Mrs Hazel Hood) and Ashington Town Council (Cllr John McCormack and Mrs Iris McCormack).

We hope they have an enjoyable trip on 19 July.

Community-led plans

Congratulations to Newton & Bywell and Newbiggin, for the recent publication of their community-led plans. Newton & Bywell's is an up-dating of its predecessor which had been compiled in 2002, and which had resulted in a range of new projects, notably the new community hall. Newbiggin's is the first to be compiled following the formation of the Newbiggin Town Council in 2009.

Copies are available to view via www.newbiggintowncouncil.gov.uk/docs/townplan.pfd and Newton & Bywell's by request from adrian.hinchcliffe@btopenworld.com

Hallmark visit – Middleton and Todridge Village Hall



It is with some trepidation that you invite your peers to sit in judgement over you. But having made the decision to go in for the Hallmark scheme, it would be a brave committee to pull out at the last minute. This national scheme, which is administered in Northumberland by CAN, offers recognition to those halls which have reached a certain standard. There are three levels and Middleton Village hall was attempting to achieve Hallmark 1. Those doing the assessment were two volunteers from the North Northumberland Village Hall Consortium.

As I strolled up to the hall on a chilly February afternoon, imagining it would be a bit like waiting for the head teacher to arrive, I was horrified to discover that the “visitors” (for that is what the assessors are called to supposedly make us feel more relaxed) were already there and no doubt busy making notes of our failings.

The reality of the visit could not have been further away from what took place. We had already received a checklist of the items and issues they were looking for so it was relatively easy to go through them. What made it really valuable was that those doing the assessing helped manage their own halls and so knew all about the limitations of hiring agreements, ensuring that trustees

all recognised they were collectively responsible for managing the finances, and the importance of understanding and abiding by the Trust Deed. It turned out to be much more of a sharing experience than we had envisaged.

Of course there were several areas where we could make improvements. It was then that I realised the real value in the exercise. The ultimate aim of Hallmark is to help ensure our community buildings are better managed. That should mean they will be safer, used by more people of all ages and backgrounds, and have greater financial security. We are forever being told that potential funders need evidence of the impact our organisations make. Well, Hallmark is an important step along that path....and I am delighted to report that Middleton Village Hall was awarded Hallmark 1.



The Atlantics performing at Middleton Village Hall in November 2010

CAN website



The CAN Website has been completely redesigned and can be visited at www.ca-north.org.uk. Please take some time to explore it. We will be adding to, and developing the content in the coming months and years.

As we were finding it increasingly difficult to maintain the website, we decided to look at a complete overhaul and, with the help of the Community IT Academy, we installed Joomla! as our engine to run the site. Joomla! is a content management system and application framework, this makes it easier to manage the site and add additional features.

Some of the new features we have added include an online forum which provides a great opportunity for information exchange, discussion and debate. To take part in the forum all you have to do is register using the link on the top menu bar.

We are now managing our email newsletter through the website which means you can register to receive it by filling in the form on the website.

Alongside the CAN website is a site dedicated to the Northumberland Association of Local Councils (NALC), this area is managed and updated by NALC.

If you have any comments or suggestion please do not hesitate to get in touch by emailing Marc Johnson at marcjohanson@ca-north.org.uk

Have you seen the Little Red Book?

Congregations throughout Northumberland are being urged to use a free practical guide to caring for their places of worship.

Last summer, English Heritage launched its Caring for Places of Worship campaign. With the help of Ecclesiastical Insurance, it sent copies of a free, practical booklet to more than 30,000 places of worship all over England.

The booklets, which are A5 size, bright red and contain a dvd, were mostly sent to the people on the mailing lists of Ecclesiastical, Methodist and Baptist Insurance companies who deal with insuring their local church, chapel or other place of worship. These people were asked to share the booklet with their PCC or congregation.

Additional copies can be obtained by

contacting English Heritage Customer Services on 0870 3331181, email customers@english-heritage.org.uk or you can download a copy from the English Heritage website www.english-heritage.org.uk/caring-for-places-of-worship

It could make all the difference to how people look after and use their buildings – 28% of those who've read it said they'd already made or planned new things because of the ideas in Caring for Places of Worship and others are working towards bigger changes.

Congregations have told English Heritage that the most useful sections are those on improving maintenance, opening the building to more visitors, widening community use,

fundraising and making the building more secure.

Dr Brad Poulson of St Margaret's Church, Owthorpe in Nottinghamshire, said: "I just wanted to express my sincere thanks for putting together such an insightful and sympathetic guide. As a PCC member at the heart of our Grade II* village church restoration activity, I recognise many of the emotions that were so evident on the DVD."

Christopher Walton, President of the Oxfordshire Historic Churches Trust, said: "It brilliantly encapsulates all the data and strands which the county trusts have been working on piecemeal up to now and will an invaluable tool for the future."



Help I'm a trustee!

Have you just joined the committee of a voluntary or community group?

Have you recently become the chair, secretary or treasurer of a group?

Are you feeling unsure about what you should be doing?

If this sounds like you, then help is at hand.

CAN offers a range of "taster" sessions suitable for new committee members or officers or for more experienced members who wish to refresh their knowledge. The sessions cover the roles and responsibilities and provide tips on how to improve the way you operate. The sessions also give the opportunity to meet other people and share experiences.

For more information, contact Louise Currie or your local Community Development Officer (contact details are on the back page) or visit our website.

Remember - you are not alone!

Copy deadline for the next issue is Friday 17 June 2011

For more information on Community Action check out the website at:

www.ca-north.org.uk

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 to the left. 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. 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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