

# Community Action Northumberland NEWS

SPRING ISSUE - March 2010

**CAN - supporting voluntary action and communities throughout Northumberland**

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## Northumberland budget

Following several months of consultation and behind-the-scenes negotiations, the County Council finalised its budget in late-February. Here, CAN's David Francis reflects on the implications for voluntary organisations, local communities and parish councils.....

### The financial context:

The finances of Northumberland County Council are facing huge challenges. Some of them are due to the economic recession and HM Treasury pressure, and some are due to the additional costs associated with LGR (local government reorganisation) and the freezing or loss of investments in Icelandic banks. This has meant that the vision of a transformed and improved local government system has now been seriously challenged by the need to slash budgets and to increase charges.



In February the Government agreed to permit NCC to 'capitalise' some of its expenditure which was due to LGR: ie to spread the cost over a number of years. However, this still required NCC to reduce its budget by some 7.5 percent: that is a saving of £21 million, from a 'core' budget of £285 million. The core budget is the money over which NCC has a high degree of discretion over how it is spent: it does not include the hundreds of millions which are received and passed-on to schools in accordance with Government requirements.

### The savings

The package of reductions runs to hundreds of individual changes. For example:

- Saving £500k on ICT, through a re-negotiated contract with a supplier
- Saving £200k by optimising the routes taken by waste collection lorries
- Significantly reducing staff in the management structure
- Staff redundancies and deleting vacant posts from the staff structure

- Rationalising office space
- Reducing the corporate communications budget
- Applying 'lean working' methodology to adult social care
- Generating new income through grant aid, and via increased charges
- Transfer of certain services to local councils
- Reducing the funding to leisure trusts
- Closure of social care homes
- Savings on commissioning social care ..... and so on.

### VCS grants

Following a period of uncertainty, the finally-agreed budget included a cut of £250k in the main block of grant aid for the VCS (voluntary and community sector): that is, a reduction of 16 percent from the 2009-10 allocation of £1.57 million. This is a 2-year commitment, and so we are not expecting any further cuts for 2011-12.

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The County Council has also agreed a mechanism for allocating VCS grants, using a number of different 'routes': some involving area committees and specific NCC departments; others involving a mutually-agreed redistribution among the VCS beneficiaries. This has resulted in a large number of VCS bodies now having to 'take their chance' to seek their annual funding through the NCC Community Chest, a mechanism which hitherto had been used solely for new initiatives and one-off costs. Fortunately, a last minute set of compromises with the Conservative and Independent Group enabled the County Council to introduce a £50k pa contingency fund, to support some of the VCS bodies which may be hard-hit by the budget cuts.

### Local Government

The Northumberland Charter for Local

Councils commits the County Council to consult parish councils over '.... The impact on the relevant parish, or its immediate environs, of decisions or changes to .... the County Council's budget', as well as changes to specific services which have a local impact. Consultation and negotiation over the planned hand-over of services such as seasonal lighting and play areas proceeded well, albeit very late in the year.

However, local councils were left in the dark about a range of other proposals, for example, the closure of public toilets in parts of the former Wansbeck area, and reductions in support for local VCS bodies. This has meant that local councils may have missed the opportunity to negotiate and financially support the retention of these services, had they known about them at the right time.

### Lessons for the future

For those of us who are outside the County Council, our opportunity to engage with the budget process happened far too late, the available information was difficult to interpret, the proposals kept changing during the consultation process, and there appeared to be few principles to steer the decisions.

The indications are that the financial challenges which local government will face in 2011-12 will be as big as for 2010-11, and it is important for the Council to gain the support of the public, and of partners and stakeholders. There is an opportunity to plan now for the 2011-12 budget-making process, to ensure that VCS and local council interests can have a meaningful dialogue.

## Local Councils' Charter progress



The Northumberland Charter for Local Councils is a document which spells-out the respective roles of and relationships between Northumberland County Council and the 150-something parish and town councils. It was introduced in April 2009 as a result of widespread demand from local councils, to clarify rights and responsibilities, to achieve a geographically consistent approach to public service provision, and to open-up new opportunities for the more-ambitious local councils.

One of the Charter's provisions is for all local councils to take responsibility for a defined range of very-local amenities:

services which if they are present at all in a parish, most local councils already provide.

Due to the time needed for the new Authority to settle down, the implementation of parts of the charter only began in the Autumn but rapid progress has since been made. This includes the transfer to local councils of responsibility for seasonal lighting, allotments, many of the children's play areas and also the newer (ie post 2003) bus shelters. The next phase of work will involve the older (pre-2003) bus shelters, public seats, parks and playing fields, and public halls and community centres, which it is hoped will be transferred in April 2011, leaving burial grounds and war memorials until April 2012.

Work will also start to explore the possibilities of offering to local councils the operation of markets, on behalf of the County Council: this would be a pilot exercise, in advance of delegating other possible services. These services would only be available to local councils which are 'able and willing' and they would come with appropriate financial support from NCC.

The coming months will also see the first review of the charter. At least three parts require attention:

Refinement of the list of topics on which the County Council will normally consult a local council; the current list is a little imprecise, and therefore unreasonably open-ended

A 'reality check' on the commitment to provide a wide range of officer-support, in light of recent and continuing staff reductions

Consideration of the process of making budget cuts and its impact on local service withdrawals or closures.

Parish councils will soon be contacted for their views on these and other possible amendments to the Charter.

The implementation and review of the Charter is being overseen by a group of NCC and parish council officers and members, chaired until now by Director of Streetscene Bill Batey. Following Bill's recent retirement, the Group is now chaired by Lynne Turner (Head of Culture, Leisure and Tourism) with the support of Kirsten Francis (Policy and Partnerships Team), Andy Rutherford (Head of Neighbourhood Services) and David Francis (NALC).

# The Hallmark Experience – from a committee point of view!



I am delighted to say that Longhorsley Village Hall recently entered and passed Hallmark 1 (the accredited scheme for management of community buildings) Penny Ford, (front row, bottom left in photo), has kindly written a short article about the experience. We are pleased to say that His Grace the Duke of Northumberland will present the committee with their certificate at the CAN Spring Meeting on May 13th at Longhorsley Village Hall. Longhorsley is the sixth hall to pass Hallmark 1 and we have a couple of new entries to assess. If you want to know more about Hallmark, please contact Louise Currie on 01670 500816

## **Hesitant about Hallmark? Don't be, it's well worthwhile!**

We first heard about Hallmark from Louise Currie at CAN. It sounded like a good idea, so I attended the workshop and came away with plenty of information. After a long gap, due to hall refurbishment, we decided to apply and after agreement from the committee, formed a sub committee of three.

We met after each normal meeting and went through the requirements step by step. We went from 'this should be easy, we already do everything, to 'I don't think we are doing anything right' to 'we can do this, but we need to take our time'. When we thought we were ready, we sent off our application and arranged a date. The Constitution also went to CAN so that the assessors could check it thoroughly before the visit. This was useful as a possible discrepancy was raised and cleared.

Like any spring clean, it was an effort, but we found it an extremely worthwhile process. We weren't actually doing anything wrong, but needed to tighten up on our procedures and policies and generally make sure everything was up to date and accessible.

Did we pass? I'm pleased to say we did and I am sure you will too!

**Penny Ford**  
Secretary Longhorsley Village Hall  
Committee

# Community Buildings Relief over Rate Relief

With the new financial year starting in April, it will come as a relief to learn that the rate relief awarded annually to most of our village halls will not be affected by the Council's cuts. All those halls which had rate relief approved in 2009-10, will be sent a single page application form in the next few weeks which will ask them to confirm that their organisation has not changed since their last application for discretionary rate relief. If they indicate no change to the aims and objectives of the organisation, then the same level of relief will be awarded for the next two financial years (April 2010-March 2012). If there have been changes, then the score will have to be looked at again and, if necessary, be amended. This is very good news for community buildings throughout the county. Previously many charities, community sports clubs and other not-for-profit organisations had to apply to the local authority for rate relief every year.

## Spring Meeting



Community Action Northumberland's Spring Meeting is to be held on Thursday 13 May at Longhorsley Village Hall. Business begins at 2pm. This year's theme is 'Going for Green' – how Northumberland's communities are meeting the challenges of climate change. Showcase projects from rural areas.

### **Community Aggregates Fund**

(COMMA) now open. For more details contact Marc Johnson  
marcjohnson@ca-north.org.uk  
Tel: 01289 304141

### **Meet the Funders**

We will be running a series of our popular events again this year, on Wednesday May 5th (central area); Thursday May 27th (west area); Thursday June 17th (northern area). All events are 4.30pm-7pm - please see enclosed flyer for full details or contact Melanie Hall on melaniehall@ca-north.org.uk Tel: 01434 607871

## Tyne & Wear Museums



*Participants from Blyth Essential Skills Class taking part in their Creative Postcard project*

Tyne and Wear Outreach Team work with many community and youth groups, on and off site, on outreach projects inspired in some way by the museum collections. Past projects have included working with looked after young people, young carers, culturally diverse communities/BME communities, older people, residential homes for young and older people, women's groups, lads and dads groups, young mums, community mums, probation service, youth referral units, local history groups, disability support groups, Deaf/deaf community groups, homeless people's projects and healthy living projects to name a few.

Past projects have included:

- Making a stained glass window inspired by the industrial heritage of Ashington and Blyth

- Making a ball dress inspired by fashion and glamour museum collections
- Creative writing inspired by Roman writing tablets at Vindolanda

"Pimping" up a car in the style of the MTV programme "Pimp my Ride" inspired by tattoo and manga collections at Woodhorn  
Creating digital stories as part of the Culture Shock, an exciting two year project which aims to collect 1,000 digital stories from people across the North East of England. Check out the website for the stories which have been made so far – [www.cultureshock.org.uk](http://www.cultureshock.org.uk) This project is still going if you would like to get involved.

If you are a community group in Northumberland who is interested in working with us we would love to hear from you. For more details please contact:

Harriet Goudie,  
Assistant Outreach Officer -  
Northumberland  
Woodhorn, Northumberland Museum,  
Archives and Country Park  
Ashington  
NE63 9YF

Tel: (01670) 528039 / 07884234218  
Email: [harriet.goudie@twmuseums.org.uk](mailto:harriet.goudie@twmuseums.org.uk)

## Emergencies: where would you go?

by Ian Clough of NCC

Northumberland County Council is updating and re-writing their Emergency Rest Centre (ERC) Plan during 2010. An ERC would be activated should there be an incident which requires people to be temporarily evacuated from their homes in cases of flooding, large fires or other emergencies. Details of available ERCs would also be held in the new Northumberland Flood Action Plan and linked closely to areas at risk of flooding.

Currently most Schools and Leisure Centres are identified as potential ERCs but the Council would like to add other facilities such as Village Halls and Community Centres to give a greater availability of resources and a greater choice of premises depending on the size of the emergency. This type of information was held previously by District Councils but the detail, where available, is now likely to be out of date.

Work is in hand to send out a proforma to the committees of Village Halls and Community Buildings for completion, informing us of locations, potential capacities and contact details for key holders etc. The Council also has a draft usage agreement they will circulate covering costs and insurance issues.

The Resilience Team would also welcome suggestions for ERCs in their area from Parish and Town Councils. In the first instance it would be helpful if suggestions could be made to [eplan@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:eplan@northumberland.gov.uk)

This work will commence early from April 2010 with a view to having a more comprehensive database available for premises across Northumberland by the Autumn. A further announcement will be made in this newsletter when the exercise commences.

## Good news for community premises

We have been working with the County Council to develop a policy for the collection and disposal of waste from VCS premises, including village halls, community centres, offices, and so on. Despite having to face some challenging budget reductions, the County Council has now agreed that: 'those community and voluntary organisations that have charitable status, exist to provide benefits to their local community and who generate one 240 litre wheeled bin of general waste and one 240 litre wheeled bin of vegetable waste per fortnight should be given relief from 'collection

only' charges and continue to receive a free refuse collection service from the Council'.

This concession will be particularly helpful for the hundreds of VCS premises operating on a financial 'shoestring', and which generate small amounts of waste, while ensuring that bigger waste-producers (such as sports centres with restaurants) will be required to pay. The concession will also be available to premises in South-east Northumberland, where there has not been a council-run bin-emptying service for some time.



# Gone to pot!



Aware that local councils have been raising concerns about the winter's toll on the state of Northumberland's roads, we have asked NCC's Head of Highways and Transport, David Laux, to comment on the long-standing dilemma of pothole-filling versus longer-term improvements

Parish councils are not alone in questioning and considering the best method of repairing the highway network and in keeping it safe for road users. This is something that is probably at the forefront of the mind for nearly every highway maintenance engineer across the country for most of the time. It is certainly something we are very conscious of. Maintenance of the County's roads is an extremely challenging task given the size of Northumberland's network, the nature of its historic construction, the changing nature of traffic using it and the weather conditions (which have caused particular problems in the recent severe temperatures). Where a defect is identified which could be

of danger to the travelling public we clearly have to carry out a repair to make it safe within a reasonable timescale. We risk assess each defect in relation to its size, location and the traffic levels for the road to determine how quickly such a repair should be carried out. We would clearly love to be in a position where each of these defects could be repaired as a full patch repair. However given the size of the network, the resources available and the time taken to carry out such a repair in many cases we do have to simply repair the pothole. Such repairs can last for considerable lengths of time, but there are times when they do fail prematurely, particularly if they have to be

done in predominantly cold road surface temperatures and / or wet conditions.

We have been looking at the balance of resource between pothole repair and full patching over the last year with a trial in one area of increased patching. In addition the Highways and Transport Service have also been preparing a Transport Asset Management Plan considering all service levels for asset intervention. The Plan considers whole life interventions for the asset from construction through minor maintenance, patching, resurfacing and reconstruction. This Plan is reaching the final stages of production and has been the subject of in depth scrutiny by an all party Member Working Group. Decisions on the options stemming from the process are still to be taken and the trial we have been conducting will play into this.

I hope the above assures you that there is significant work already taking place regarding the best methods of road maintenance to provide the best level of service possible.

## What a difference a place makes?



How satisfied are you with where you live? Do you feel you belong to the area? How do you feel about various public services? Which ones do you use? Do elderly people get the support they need? Do local parents take enough responsibility for their children?

These are just a few of some hundred questions which residents of Northumberland and elsewhere were asked in a national survey conducted in Autumn 2008. For Northumberland, the responses have been separately analyzed for each of the 27 localities (formerly 'Belonging Communities') which reveals some startling contrasts between places. Some of the contrasts are surprising. Arguably, the statistics present a challenge, especially for

those localities which score poorly on any one or more of the indicators.

These are not 'someone else's problem'. There is a lot that can and should be done by parish councils, local county councillors, residents' groups, development trusts, volunteering organisations and a host of other players, to influence and improve how local residents feel about these issues. There is a host of good practice from within Northumberland which can be drawn upon.

For example:

- community-led 'parish plans'
- councillor surgeries
- community newsletters and websites
- good neighbour activities, parish litter-pick/clean-ups and other volunteering opportunities
- directories or lists of useful contacts and services
- 'welcome packs' for new residents
- 'public participation' sessions at parish council meetings
- programme of improvements for parks

- and other open spaces
- partnership work with the police and other emergency services
- community projects involving schools and youth groups

and so on.....

The findings of the 'Place Survey', for Northumberland and for each locality can be viewed on the website [www.northumberlandinonet.org.uk](http://www.northumberlandinonet.org.uk)

For further advice on taking-forward the sorts of community initiatives which are suggested above, contact the local community development services provided through CAN (Community Action Northumberland), or CVABV (for the former Blyth area) or WCVS (for the former Wansbeck area).

### 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](mailto:sueandrew@ca-north.org.uk)

# Chernobyl continuity

...is a local charity, dedicated to offering respite holidays to teenagers from Belarus who are still living with the after effects of the Chernobyl disaster.

Last year, due to Belarusian legislation, we were unable to invite any young people to the north east. However, all difficulties have been resolved and we are planning our usual group in July. Of course, this depends on the number of volunteer hosts we can recruit. Usually youngsters visit in July for four weeks, living with and as part of local families, who transport them to and from programmed events. Hosts are supported by a bi-lingual group-leader and support in kind from local companies.

Our major fund raising event is the YOUTH4YOUTH CONCERT. This year it will be held on: Friday, April 23<sup>rd</sup> 2010 at 7.15pm at the Performing Arts Centre,

Royal Grammar School, Eskdale Terrace, Jesmond. Tickets: £6.00

This annual event, held as near as possible to the anniversary of the catastrophe on APRIL 26<sup>th</sup>, is hosted by our Patron Denise Robertson, and attended by His Excellency, Aleksandre Mikhnevich, Ambassador of Belarus, Newcastle's Lord Mayor, North Tyneside's Chair [and Honorary President of Chernobyl Continuity] as well as other Civic Heads. It gives young people from our region the opportunity to showcase their talents by singing, dancing, playing instruments etc in order to support the young people of Belarus.

Integral to the concert is the section devoted to finalists of our writing competition 'TRACES OF THE BLACK WIND' so named because of the prevailing wind which took the radioactive dust from the Chernobyl reactor into Belarus. Our intention is to raise awareness that the 1986 catastrophe still has repercussions 24 years later. We hope that young people in British schools will take some time to learn about what happened

all those years ago and will also find out something about Belarus today. We hope that they will enjoy participating in our competition. The finalists will be invited to read their work at our YOUTH4YOUTH concert.

Contact 0191 250 2040 for more information and to book tickets for the concert.



*Youngsters who had participated in the Chernobyl Continuity programme enjoying coffee with the co-ordinator.*

*From left to right [sitting]: Sasha Konoplov, Gulnara Toigieva, Brenda Dinsdale, Yulia Horoshka Standing: Dziana Tsimko, Sergei Matuzov.*

# Natural Ability

...is a unique social enterprise providing housing, support and meaningful employment for people with learning disabilities in a rural area. It was developed after a discussion around the needs of people with disabilities and the lack of choice and opportunities available to them when leaving full time education. Natural Ability will provide shared supported living accommodation, enabling care, so that people with learning disabilities can live safely, learning through challenge and well-managed risk, working outdoors with animals and undertaking farming activities. There will be opportunities for tenants to develop independence, daily living skills and gain personal autonomy. We have identified a property in the Allen Valley in rural Northumberland that could provide facilities for 7 tenants. There is also 25 acres of land and buildings in which we can operate a livery stable, dog boarding kennels, cattery and small working farm, thereby creating employment and learning opportunities for the tenants and sustainability for the project. Our tenants will use local services and become an integrated part of the local community

giving opportunities to show what they can offer and be valued for their contribution.

We are a company limited by guarantee with an experienced and multi skilled board of 7 directors. With the help of Social Enterprise Northumberland we have a robust business plan. We have secured the funding for employing a project manager. If you would like any further information please contact Janice Walker at:- [janice.walker@naturalability.org](mailto:janice.walker@naturalability.org)



There's no doubt that walking is good for you. It's good for your heart, your lungs, and for the muscle and bone growth of

your children and it's good for your feeling of wellbeing! Walking offers a great way to help kids get the active habit. If parents express excitement about the prospect of a walk in the countryside, they are more likely to transmit this feeling to their children. It's important to treat the walk as an exploration or adventure and to go at the child's pace, no matter how often they want to stop and look at things; take treats to eat and plenty to drink; and head for some landmark that will appeal to them such as a castle, a playground, an ice cream van or a boating pond. If children experience walking as part of a fun activity they are more likely to want to go again. So, how do you find out what is on offer? John Harris, a keen walker, got fed up with the lack of information on walks in the County. So, he decided that if he couldn't find what he was looking for – he had better create it! So [www.walkinginnorthumberland.co.uk](http://www.walkinginnorthumberland.co.uk) came into being and its website gives you all the information you need for the best walking in the County: Details of more than 90 walks to download and print free, details of all the Northumberland walking groups, maps and walk books – plus loads more information. Check out the website and get walking!

# Green Grants available

Businesses are facing more and more regulations and increased pressure to reduce their environmental impact and cut greenhouse gas emissions. But “going green” isn’t just about helping the environment – it’s an opportunity to save money and boost profits by slashing energy bills, cutting waste, increasing productivity and improving efficiency.

This is why we have developed <http://www.greengrantsmachine.co.uk> Green

Grants Machine - a free and easy-to-use funding search website with full details on the hundreds of grants, loans and other funds available to help UK businesses improve environmental performance. This funding can help to develop new eco-friendly products, install more efficient equipment, cut waste and much more – helping to protect the environment, but just as importantly helping businesses prosper. The rural community especially will be looking to benefit from a range of European

funding enabling the agricultural industry to diversify and improve its environmental performance.

We also run another website – <http://www.j4bcommunity.co.uk> - which focuses upon the funding available to UK voluntary and community sector rather than businesses. This may be of interest to some of the not-for-profit organisations and charities in your area.

## Digging for Victory

Young people engaged through the Hirst Welfare Centre have been rewarded for the hard work and commitment that they have given to their local community over the year.

Having undertaken a series of environmental projects through the Big Lottery funded Community Space



Challenge programme the group has recently been named as regional winner of the Keep Britain Tidy, Cleaner Safer Greener Awards within the Community Space Challenge category.

Having been provided an allotment space at the Seaton Hirst allotments, Hirst Welfare’s team have transformed the previously unused space into a fully functioning working allotment with raised planter beds, storage shed and an amazing greenhouse made from 1500 recycled plastic bottles. The vegetables grown have then been cooked in healthy eating sessions that bring families and the wider community together. The young people have also grown seedlings which have been planted in the community for the benefit of all.

Glynis Reynolds from the Hirst Welfare Centre said “It is fantastic that the hard work of the young people has been recognised by winning this award. They



have worked extremely hard and have built bridges within their local community and should be very proud of what they have achieved”.

Hirst Welfare Centre’s team will be heading to Manchester in March 2010 to see if they are awarded the national prize at the Keep Britain Tidy, Cleaner Safer Greener Awards.

## Parks for People

Organisations – like Parish and Town Councils - that own public parks and gardens can apply for grants of between £250,000 and £5 million to regenerate existing urban or rural green spaces, the main purpose of which is for informal recreation and enjoyment – including parks, gardens, squares, walks and promenades. Closing date for applications: 31st August 2010. Further details on the website :- <http://www.hlf.org.uk/HowToApply/programmes/Pages/parksforpeople.aspx>

## Adapting to climate change; a guide for local councils.

ACRE and Defra have produced a new Guide for local parish and town councils: Adapting to climate change; a guide for local councils.

We need to understand how the Earth’s climate might change so that we can prepare. The impacts of climate change will vary from place to place - making action at local and regional level vitally important to help reduce future risk. Full details – and the Guide – are on the ACRE website:- [www.acre.org.uk](http://www.acre.org.uk)

# Volunteering Spotlight

Volunteering Northumberland would like to highlight a range of Trustee Opportunities that are available in Northumberland.

Being a Trustee can be a rewarding and enjoyable experience, you could learn a lot about how charities and other organisations are run, giving you experience in areas such as setting strategic goals, accounting and financial systems.

It's worth spending some time finding out about an organisation before you apply. Is it a charity that you would like to become involved with and are you clear about the level of commitment that would be expected of you?

Here are some examples of opportunities you may be interested in finding out more about.

## Management Group - Think Make Grow (Artspace)

Would you enjoy decision making along with the rest of the group regarding the development and strategy of Think Make Grow Ltd. This organisation is based in

Tweedmouth and provides workshops to the community and schools.

## Trustee - Berwick Citizen's Advice Bureau

Trustees will be collectively responsible for the governance of the Bureau, developing policy and strategic management. The board takes a high-level overview of the Bureau and its place in the community.

## Trustee Board Member - Alnwick and District Citizen's Advice Bureau

Alnwick and District CAB would like to hear from people with a background in business, charity and community work or public services. Meetings take place bi-monthly in the evenings, with quarterly sub-committee meetings through the day time.

## Charity Trustee - Silx Teen Bar

Would you like to contribute actively to the board of Trustees whose mission is to divert the young people of Blyth away from involvement in crime, alcohol and drugs, by providing them with educational and recreational activities.

**Does your organisation need more Trustees or other volunteers? If so, contact us and we will discuss how we could help you look for people who will strengthen your organisation. You could also become a member of a forum which offers ongoing support, identifies training needs and shares skills to help you recruit and retain volunteers.**

For more information about these vacancies, or general enquiries about volunteering in Northumberland, please contact your local development officer.

South East Northumberland	Ann Broome 01670 858688
West Northumberland	Liz Stokoe 07884 414396
North Northumberland	Terri Bearhope 07900 998933

[v.centre@wansbeckcvs.org.uk](mailto:v.centre@wansbeckcvs.org.uk)

## Copy deadline for the next issue is Friday 18th June

For more information on Community Action check out the website at: [www.ca-north.org.uk](http://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 with the next issue due out in June. 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](mailto:info@ca-north.org.uk).

## How to contact us

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