

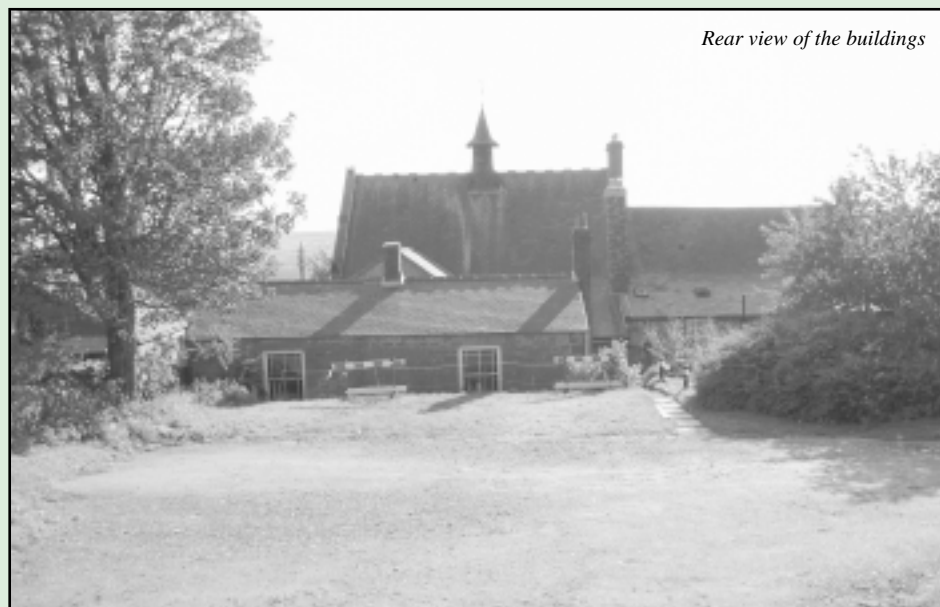
## THE HEARTH AT HORSLEY

THE HEARTH AT HORSLEY is an exciting new multi-faceted development project in East Tynedale. Several historic buildings in Horsley village have been undergoing restoration during the last two years in order to create community spaces and studios for nine talented local artists. All the artists are members of a network group that is responsible for the very popular Art Tour, where visitors have the opportunity of seeing and talking to artists at work. There will be a large art workshop and community space where people can enjoy a wide variety of activities. In addition, visitors can taste home cooking and purchase art in the warm surroundings of the newly created coffee shop, the one time manse. The adjoining historic church will be open to visitors to learn about our heritage with music and story telling on several days. The community spaces are already being used by local groups such as the women's guild. Other people use the spaces for music practice, community meetings and events. A new youth club has also been established.

The project seeks to create a number of employment opportunities and facilities for training.

There is great potential to link the project to the tourism economy of Tynedale, as Horsley is situated on the A69 trunk road 10 miles east of Hexham and eleven miles west of Newcastle. The parish of Horsley is in one of the most scenic parts of east Tynedale. There are outstanding views of the Cheviots, Simonside and the North Pennines from Horsley Hill. An extensive network of public rights of way and quiet lanes through open space and mixed woodland, provide the walker and cyclist with great opportunities for peace and relaxation. The Hadrian's Wall long distance path is situated one mile north of Horsley village.

*(Continued on back page)*



Rear view of the buildings

# ONE OR TWO NORTHUMBERLANDS?

OVER THE LAST YEAR, we have carried occasional articles on the government's progress on preparing the ground for a referendum on a regional assembly for the North-East. Here, CCN's Director and NALC's Secretary David Francis gives a personal view on one aspect of the referendum: the prospect of reorganising local government in Northumberland.

I can hardly believe that on Guy Fawkes night this year the fate of Northumberland County Council and the 6 district councils may have been sealed for ever. And by what? - a vote by local electors as an after-thought to the big question on how our region is governed. Are we ready to cast our votes? I doubt it.

The debate (or lack of it) about whether one or two new all-purpose unitary authorities (UAs) will best suit Northumberland, has been dominated by sparring between the existing councils. I suspect that the all-postal vote in late October and early November will be influenced as much by people's perceptions of single issues (the schools' review, car parking charges, frequency of bin-emptying etc), as by the bigger issues of effectiveness, efficiency, accountability and sustainability.

The idea of unitary authorities is not new. It was embodied during the era of county boroughs, prior to the 1974 reorganisation, and in the very rural outer isles of Scotland after the 1975 Scottish reorganisation. In 1986, the metropolitan districts were given UA status (with the dissolution of metropolitan county councils such as Tyne and Wear), and a number of 'shire' areas became UAs in the mid 1990s: for example, Darlington, Middlesbrough, Rutland and Herefordshire, as well as a large number of former county boroughs such as Nottingham and Bristol.

The difficulty facing successive reviews of local government structures in Northumberland in recent decades has been to find viable alternative solutions. Prior to 1974, the then county of Northumberland had a population of 504000 and it covered 1994 square miles, including substantial townships and suburbs in Tyneside. The 1974 reorganisation saw a loss of 3% of the area but a massive 40% of

Northumberland's population and rates base, when the new North Tyneside and expanded Newcastle councils were created. Since 1974, Northumberland County Council has been the most sparsely populated English upper-tier authority, and its slender financial base has been obvious. It has struggled to provide the sorts of specialist services which are taken for granted in the densely populated UAs such as Newcastle and Gateshead. Many rural schools and social services have only survived due to cross-subsidy from the urban population of Cramlington, Blyth and Ashington. Spare revenue cash to fund the voluntary and community sector has been pitifully low. At the same time, it has been a major challenge to balance the competing aspirations of the dozen, or so, towns and several hundreds of villages and hamlets.

Both in 1994 and again in 2003 the Boundary Committee (formerly Commission) reached similar conclusions: that a single UA, based on the present County Council area would be the most viable, but it would need to address public concerns over its remoteness; that a South East UA (covering Blyth Valley and Wansbeck) would be reasonably viable; that a Rural UA (covering Berwick, Alnwick, Castle Morpeth and Tynedale) would face questions of viability, but would be facing a fairly common set of rural problems across its territory.

We have to face the fact that any UA is going to be larger and more remote than any of the existing 6 district councils, and much larger

than the 26 urban and rural district councils and municipal boroughs which existed before 1974. A South-East UA would need to address the traditional rivalries between its various towns and, in my view, would need to facilitate the re-introduction of something like the community-based councils which were extinguished in 1974, as well as providing a network of 'one-stop shop' centres. The challenge both for a single Northumberland UA (1936 square miles) and for a Rural

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Annual General Meeting

CCN are pleased to announce that their AGM will be held at Beaconhill Community Centre, Cramlington on Wednesday 10 November 2004 commencing at 2.30pm. There will be a buffet meal at 1.00pm for those who wish to attend earlier. Details have been circulated to those on our mailing list and can be obtained from our administrative staff at Tower Buildings, Morpeth. (Meals, if required, must be ordered and paid for by 3 November).

At 2.30 pm there will be the formal business of the AGM, to be chaired by our President the Duke of Northumberland.

This will be followed by our guest speaker Jeremy Cripps, Project Manager of the Families and Children's Trust (FACT), Northumberland, who will be talking about FACT and the development of child care initiatives in Northumberland.

## HELP US PLAN FOR YOUR NEEDS

EACH YEAR THE COMMUNITY COUNCIL produces an annual business plan that it communicates to its Trustees, staff and stakeholders. This plan comes in the form of a work programme that is compiled through a bottom up process of extensive consultation.

Using our current years programme as a basis, we confirm that the work being done is still relevant and meeting the needs of our stakeholders and we identify any new pieces of work required. This process involves discussions with our Trustees, staff, funders and, equally as important, those in receipt of the services we provide.

Feedback from our users comes from a variety of sources e.g. through our front line staff, representatives of the groups supported and our partners in other agencies and organisations. Anybody with a direct interest in the Community Council and what it does is invited to contribute to the planning process.

Our current plan includes group headings such:

- Monitor and influence rural service provision
- Capacity building for rural communities including the provision of advice, support and training
- Promotion of good practice via publication of our newsletter as well as through our use of an extensive networking system
- Representing rural communities at county, regional and national level
- Addressing local priorities that may change from year to year i.e. items of concern peculiar to the county
- Ensuring that CCN staff are equipped to meet the needs of the communities that we serve
- Addressing identified needs, such as renewable energy, rural housing and volunteering, through the staff of our projects.

If you wish to comment on this process or to obtain any further information then please contact David Francis or Alan Hedley on 01670 517178.

## "BATTY ABOUT DEVELOPMENTS"



The Pipistrelle bat is common in the Northumberland area

IF YOU ARE CONSIDERING extending your village hall or other non-residential facility, it would be worthwhile at a very early stage contacting your local planning department as English Nature earlier this year issued revised guidelines covering requirements for "Bat Mitigation". In essence it is likely that the planning department will require a bat survey to be carried out prior to granting permission for the development so it is essential that you make contact with them at a very early stage to ascertain IF THEY WILL REQUIRE A SURVEY OR NOT. Surveys can only be carried out during the period from March to September each year, as English Nature will not accept surveys carried out over the hibernation period. Also, should you have bats present, it will restrict the periods when work can be done particularly in areas where the bats are known to be, but your consultant will advise you on the correct timescales and will if requested liaise with any contractor.

It is not generally known but all UK species of bats (14) are protected by legislation. Some of the legislation is from European Law and some from English Law. The main points of law can be found in the following:

- *Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981) (as amended)/Wildlife Order (1985)*
- *Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW Act)*
- *EC Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora as amended (also called the Habitats Directive)*
- *Conservation (Natural Habitats & C) regulations 1994 as amended (referred to as the Habitats Regulations)*
- *The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (1980) (Bonn Convention)*
- *Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural habitats (1979) (Bern Convention)*
- *Planning Policy Guidance No (9) (PPG9)*
- *UK Biodiversity Action Plan*
- *Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAP's)*

Any bat survey for a building other than a family home will have to be undertaken by a consultant, who will carry out various visual inspections and also conduct a number of emergence/swarming checks prior to submitting a report to the client. This report will indicate if bats are present or not and if there is evidence of bats using the building what mitigation the developer will need to put in place to permit the granting of planning permission. It is an offence under section 9 the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 as amended (most recently by the CROW Act) to;

- *Intentionally kill, injure or take a bat [Section 9(1)]*
- *Possess or control any live or dead specimen or anything derived from a bat [S9(2)]*
- *Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection by a bat [S9(4)(a)]*
- *Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat while it is occupying a structure or place*

*which it uses for that purpose [S9(4)(b)]*

- *Sells, offers or exposes for sale, or has in his possession or transports for the purpose of sale any live or dead bat [S9(5)(a)]*

It is possible to get planning permission while there are bats roosting/using a building but this requires a disturbance licence which a consultant can apply for on your behalf so do not panic.

These guidelines are not designed to prevent extensions or major developments taking place, but to ensure that the wildlife of our country is maintained in a satisfactory state especially as many of the bats species are under serious threat.

English Nature can be contacted at their Stocksfield office on 01661 845500 and they will pass you onto the appropriate bat help line contact.

## NEW FUNDING ON THE ROAD FROM THE COALFIELD REGENERATION TRUST

ACROSS THE NORTH EAST, Road Shows and funding surgeries will be taking place in November and December to let people know about the new funds available from the Coalfield Regeneration Trust.

They will then be accepting applications for projects from both statutory and voluntary/community sector groups which begin from April 2005 and onwards. The application stage can start from as early as November 2004 onwards.

Voluntary/Community Groups and Statutory Agencies interested in applying or coming to a Road Show in their area can call them for an invitation, or to discuss the project.

The Road Show will help applicants understand the Themes of the grants and how to apply. There will also be funding surgeries available at the Road Shows where people can speak to one of our team about their project. These one to one surgeries will need to be booked in advance. These events will be followed by further surgeries in all parts of the coalfields area. Staff at the North East Office can also answer eligibility questions.

### BACKGROUND

The Coalfield Regeneration Trust was set up in 1999 by John Prescott to respond to the economic and social decline after the closure of mines in the 1980's and onwards. So far the Trust has distributed £90m in grants across UK Coalfield Communities.

Since the Trust was launched they have made grants totalling more than £14 million to more than 400 North East groups. The average grant size is £35,000 and although the Trustees have supported applications for around £200,000 in special circumstances, most are much smaller.

Themes included: Self-Reliant Communities, Working Communities, Life Long Learning Communities, Enterprising Communities and Attractive Communities.

To Find Out More Contact them at the North East Office on 0191 4285550 or email: [northeast@coalfields-regen.org.uk](mailto:northeast@coalfields-regen.org.uk) WEB: [www.coalfields-regen.org.uk](http://www.coalfields-regen.org.uk)

## FUNDING FOR SHILBOTTLE GARDEN ASSOCIATION

SHILBOTTLE GARDEN ASSOCIATION was established in 1975 by the community of the village then. Up until now the storage facility for all the supplies for the association has always been located in a member's garden shed. Over the last few months the association has, with support from Clare Wood, CCN's Community Development Officer for the Alnwick area, adopted a constitution, leased a piece of land and secured funding from Awards for All for £4602.00 to build a new concrete garage, non-slip paint, scales and shelving.

The main aims of the association are to provide the people in Shilbottle and District with affordable garden materials as well as help and instruction with allotments including tips on growing your own plants. The association always ensures that the village of Shilbottle is in bloom with plenty of flowers throughout the year in the community garden and on the roadsides.

If anyone in Shilbottle and district is interested in joining the association they should contact Bill Bisset on 01665 575350 for further details on joining fee and yearly subscription.

(Continued on from front page)

Northumberland UA (1883 square miles) would be to develop local decision-making structures, and local one-stop shop centres. In addition, the creation of any new UA will result in a smaller number of councillors than is the case at present: the number is not known, because this would be the subject of a Periodic Electoral Review which would be carried out only after a 'yes' vote in the referendum. The prospect of fewer politicians may be welcomed by many residents, but this will bring bigger challenges in terms of effective representation.

What would be the effect on the identity of Northumberland, as a community and a territory? In recent years, the growing significance of North-East regional institutions and programmes (One NE, GONE, Objective 2, Regional Housing Board) has created its own sub-structure based on 4 sub-regions, of which Northumberland is one. Whatever happens to our councils, there will still be a variety of Northumberland-wide institutions: the Strategic Partnership, Care Trust, Learning and Skills Council, Families and Children's Trust, Connexions Service, Lord Lieutenantcy, Duchy, Community Council, Further Education College, and so on. Some parts of the voluntary sector might need to reorganise their boundaries, if these currently follow the boundaries of councils which might disappear over the next few years. The experience of previous local government reorganisations has been for newly-created councils, based on new boundaries, to want to create a new identity and to suppress previous identities. Will this reorganisation be any different?

Throughout the review period, which effectively started in June 2003, both the Community Council and the Association of Local Councils have not opted for any one particular UA proposal. There are two main reasons for this. One is that the opinions held by our membership and constituencies are probably as divided as in the population as a whole: between those supporting one, those

supporting two, and those who are opposed to any change. The second reason is that this issue is going to be subjected to a popular vote, and therefore the opinions of organisations, agencies, businesses and so on do not play much of a part.

In my view, the future of local government in Northumberland is too important to be left to the outcome of what could be a poorly-informed vote, by a minority of electors. However, that is the method that Parliament has decided.

Do you want to find out more? The official material on the pros and cons of different Unitary Authority Options is in the form of the Boundary Committee for England's Draft Recommendations (December 2003) and Final Recommendations (May 2004) for Unitary Local Government in Northumberland. These can be downloaded from [www.boundarycommittee.org.uk](http://www.boundarycommittee.org.uk)

The submission of opinions and evidence by councils to the Boundary Committee can be viewed on their websites, or by contacting their offices directly.

## THE VILLAGE HALLS LOAN FUND

THERE ARE OCCASIONS when a village hall needs help to fill temporary gaps in funding, either for specific projects or for urgent work connected with the hall. Although it is nice to be able to access grants it is not always possible or necessary to do so. An example might be the sudden demise of the hall's boiler in the middle of winter. The winter programme of community events would be in jeopardy without the warm and comfortable premises people are used to. Applying for a grant can be a lengthy process and success can never be guaranteed. The hall may decide on a fund raising strategy to raise the money but in the meantime needs to replace the boiler to enable the activities in the hall to continue. In this situation a loan could be a sensible solution.

Another common situation is where a refurbishment project has all the necessary finance on offer to cover the building costs but can not start because one of the offers is valid only from a date of say 6 months ahead. It may make sense to borrow money to enable the project to begin immediately. Though there will be interest on the loan it could be that the building costs 6 month later will have increased to more than the interest that might be due on a loan.

Hall committees are reminded that the Village Halls Loan Fund exists specifically to assist in circumstances such as these.

The Village Hall Loan Fund originated in the 1930s and continues to play a significant role in funding village halls enabling building, renovation and refurbishment work that may otherwise fall by the wayside. The new Information Pack provides clear and detailed information of the benefits, criteria and the application process.

Managed by ACRE and funded by the Countryside Agency the fund provides help and assistance for village halls that need that extra bit of funding for a variety of projects such as completing a new hall; emergency funds for a new roof; providing access ramps or simply filling a gap whilst other sources of funding are drawn down or the results of a funding bid are awaited.

Loans are available over five or eight years, there are no security or guarantee requirements and no penalties when making extra payments or a sudden windfall enables the loan to be paid off early.

For further information contact Alan Hedley, Village Adviser at CCN on 01670 5178 or email [alanhedley@ccn.org.uk](mailto:alanhedley@ccn.org.uk)

# STILL DOING I.T. IN THE COUNTRY

SUPPORTED BY KEN KEN WALTERS and Clare Wood, CCN's Community Development Officers in the Alnwick District, Learning Choices, a charity based in the Jubilee Hall in Rothbury, has been awarded a total of £68,000 from defra's (Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs) England Rural Development Programme to fund the "Doing I.T. in the Country" educational programme. The programme has been specifically designed for farmers and those employed in agriculture. It has resulted from research and consultation with a number of independent farm consultants, local farmers and farm administrators. It gives farming families and employees an opportunity to look at their operation and how integrating modern technologies, financial and admin procedures into their business can improve efficiency and strengthen their business.

Under the management of Abbey Farndale, Learning Choices aims to run 30 "Doing I.T. in the Country" courses, over the next 2 years which will be arranged in consultation with the students themselves.

In Abbey's words "We will be going out into rural communities and after attracting approximately 10 students we will work with them, finding the most suitable time and venue for them. The tutors will deliver the course; however, if a student wishes to focus their learning onto one specific area, spreadsheets

for example, our friendly tutors would do just that. This is one of the many benefits of small classes, as well as being a much friendlier and a non-threatening environment, it allows our tutors one to one time with all of the students. The course builds around national qualifications and covers a number of themes including, Basic Information Communications Technology, Administration and Financial Management.

It is great that defra are supporting Learning Choices in this project, they have offered a grant totalling 75% of the project costs. I would also like to thank the Hadrian Trust who are also supporting this programme. Through the support of these funders we are also now able to commission a customised Web site and student Forum. Students will be able to continue working and learning from home, comfortable in the knowledge that they still have access to expert knowledge whenever they need it. We believe learning should not be restricted to the class-room, or in our case, the village hall."

For further details Abbey can be contacted on 01669 621899 or by email at: [learningchoices@supanet.com](mailto:learningchoices@supanet.com)

# ARE YOU AN NHS PATIENT?

NEARLY ALL OF US are at some time and, when we are, we do not always feel up to dealing with additional problems ....

... it may be that there is further information we need about NHS services and are not sure where to turn to find it

... it may be that we need the support of someone who will listen to our concerns and ensure that they are responded to, liaising with staff and management as needed

... or perhaps, through our own experience, we have a suggestion which may improve services for others as well as ourselves

If you do need help with any concerns about NHS services, the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) has been created countrywide to offer confidential support and advice, as well as ensuring that the organisations providing the services learn from patients' experience and respond with improvements where needed. In the North of Tyne area, 14 local PALS officers deal with concerns involving eight NHS Trusts, which between them cover from the Tyne to the Border, from Kielder and the Cheviots to the coast.

If you have a concern that PALS can help you with, the team can be contacted during usual office hours through the Freephone number 0800 032 0202

... if you leave an answerphone message at other times, a PALS Officer will respond to your call as soon as possible.

PALS relies very much on the additional support of its volunteers, all of whom receive a full and varied training; their assistance in helping people to access the service is invaluable - if you would like to join them, please ring the Freephone.

If you are a member of a group which would benefit from further information about PALS through a short talk or presentation, again, please contact us through the Freephone.

# CONTACT A FAMILY

CONTACT A FAMILY is a national charity which provides information and support to families who have a child with any disability or special need. They have a the local office which covers the North East area. Through the Contact a Family Directory - Specific Conditions, Rare Disorders and UK Family Support Groups they can provide information on specific conditions and relevant national groups. They also signpost parents, carers and professionals to appropriate local organisations and support services.

Contact a Family produce a range of publications which include free regional quarterly newsletters, factsheets on general issues including fathers, siblings and transition, and other general publications on issues affecting families of children with disabilities and special needs.

They can help parents and carers who want to set up local support groups. They hold workshops for both families and professionals on a range of topics and also have a network of Local Volunteer Representatives in the North East who are parents of children with disabilities themselves and are all very knowledgeable about their local networks.

If you would like more information about our work or to be added to their mailing list for free newsletters, please contact:

*Kathy Rist or Sarah Lewis*  
Contact a Family North East  
The Dene Centre  
Castle Farm Road  
Newcastle upon Tyne NE3 1PH  
Tel/Fax - 0191 213 6300  
E-Mail - [northeast@cafamily.org.uk](mailto:northeast@cafamily.org.uk)  
Website - [www.cafamily.org.uk/northeast](http://www.cafamily.org.uk/northeast)

## A FAMILY EVENT

Norumberland Federation of Women's Institutes are holding a second County Day at Howden Hall School, near Corbridge on Saturday 30 October from 10am to 3.30pm. Competitions, craft demonstrations, gift stalls, displays, flowers, home-baking, music. Something for all the family - all welcome!

# WEBSITES

EASIER ACCESS to internet services has changed most of our working and leisure time activities to one degree or another in the last few years. If we want information on almost every thing under the sun it is likely that there is something about that subject we can access on the world wide web.

In the many of the items appearing in Community News you will find reference to a website that offers you more information on the subject covered in the article. It is not always easy to keep up with the growing number of valuable websites that are appearing for the benefit of the voluntary and community sector. If any of our readers have a particular favourite or have come across a new site of interest do please share it with us at CCN. Email details to [alanhedley@ccn.org.uk](mailto:alanhedley@ccn.org.uk) and give us the chance to pass on your favourites to others.

# SCHOOL NETS NEW COMPUTERS



(left to right back row) Susan Dowson and John Sammons with some of the pupils who will be using the computers.

PUPILS AT BELLINGHAM MIDDLE SCHOOL are reaping the benefits in the world of IT after Milecastle Housing donated four computers for them to use for their studies..

The company has been upgrading its own systems and no longer had any use for the old computers but didn't want to let them go to waste. So Information Technology manager John Sammons contacted local schools to see if they would benefit from the computers.

Over the next few months Milecastle Housing will be distributing around 20 computers to schools including Bellingham Community Middle, Hexham Middle and Hexham Priory School.

John said: "Whilst the computers were no longer suitable for our purposes, they are still adequate for most school requirements so it was the obvious choice to contact head teachers to see if they were interested.

As a company we help bring affordable housing to those that need it most and we also feel it's important to help the local community where ever possible. Children are our future tenants and computers are playing an ever-increasing important role in careers so it's important that pupils have as easy access to computers as possible."

Milecastle Housing is also exploring the possibility of installing some of the computers in sheltered accommodation so elderly people have easy access to the Internet. Other alternatives being considered are placing them in areas where the tenant groups meet.

Susan Dowson, head teacher at Bellingham Community Middle School, said: "Pupils are taking an increasing interest in computers so it is a huge help to have been donated these computers so more pupils can use one at any given time - information technology is such an important learning curve for children and they enjoy it.

We are pleased that Milecastle Housing has made the time and effort to give us these computers - it's always encouraging when a local company invests in the local community."

# NEW CCN STAFF



*Francis Surplis*

FRANCES SURPLIS is CCN's new administrative Officer based at our Widdrington Station premises. Frances worked for various organisations in an administrative capacity until 1996 when she completed a two year HND in Business and Tourism. From 1998 for 3 years, Frances and her husband worked in Dumfries and Galloway in Scotland and embraced the Scottish way of life. She emigrated to Hawkes Bay in New Zealand in 2001 where she managed a Backpackers hostel and enjoyed the 'Kiwi' lifestyle for a while. She returned to her homeland of Ashington, Northumberland where she took up a position with our office in Widdrington. Frances is also 'loaned' out on a part-time basis, to the ENRGI offices in Widdrington.

## A REALL OPPORTUNITY TO LOWER YOUR ENERGY BILL!

RENEWABLE ENERGY can provide practical solutions to many community groups energy problems. Often a high fuel bill, an unreliable energy supply or a worn out boiler can stop a community building from being fully utilised. Renewable technologies have comparably low running costs, for example a Ground Source Heat Pump provides 4 units of heat energy for every one unit of electrical energy it uses to power the pump. That's three units of free energy! Furthermore grants can be obtained in some circumstances to help meet the initial capital cost of installing a renewable technology.

REALL (Renewable Energy At Local Level) is geared to helping community groups develop renewable energy projects in north east. We can assist groups in exploring the options that are available to them on their particular site and offer advice on the technologies they may wish to consider. Our advice is free and you are not obliged to act upon any advice given.

REALL can assist groups such as village hall committees, voluntary groups of all kinds, parish councils, schools, small businesses which play an essential economic role in a rural area, groups of residents, and new groups set up to run schemes. The group may already have a scheme in mind for which it would like help, or may be in the early stages of thinking through an idea. If you would like to discuss an idea or if you would like more details of the scheme please contact our REALL Project Officer, Lindsay Nicholson on 01207 529621 or email: [lindsaynicholson@ccn.org.uk](mailto:lindsaynicholson@ccn.org.uk).

(Continued from page)

Horsley has an ancient woodland dating to the Medieval period that is particularly noted for its wide range of plants, red squirrels and population of roe deer. For those who prefer fishing there are excellent opportunities at the nearby Whittle Dene reservoirs.

The vision to create the Hearth at Horsley came about as a direct result of a village appraisal and the need to restore and make use of a number of listed buildings around the village church. By achieving this there was hope that we would be able to revitalise the heart of the

# VICTIM SUPPORT - WHO NEEDS IT?

IN TODAY'S WORLD OF BEWILDERING COMMUNICATION, with every event scrutinised and instantly reported by a voracious media, we have never been more aware of our vulnerability to suffer from abuse of our property and person. The Police and Courts exist to fulfil the need to first prevent crime, secondly to solve reported crimes and finally to deal with perpetrators once caught. Their role is necessarily objective with responsibility towards society as a whole rather than the individual, the victim.

This injured party, the faceless victim, can be deeply traumatised by events. Realisation of his or her vulnerability, fear of reporting the crime, irrational shame and guilt, feelings of frustration at the outcome, fear of reprisals, all leave their mark. Without assistance in dealing with such issues, very few people are

strong enough to remain unaffected by the trauma. A real need exists for a dedicated, trained, professional body devoted to the cause of the victim. Victim Support!

While most people helped by Victim Support suffer no long-term harm, many are quite severely shocked and distressed, and such people are entitled to and deserve an effective support service. Our aim is to offer appropriate support to every person referred to us and, through our team of highly trained and dedicated volunteers, we strive hard to achieve this. Our volunteers undergo in-depth training (some over many years and in specialist areas such as rape, sexual assault, domestic violence and homicide), to offer emotional support, practical help and advice.

Many victims require information about police procedures or may be concerned about housing and benefits issues. Others may become involved in giving evidence at court. Victim Support has a Witness Service in every Crown Court and Magistrates' Court in England and Wales to provide emotional support and practical advice on court procedures to witnesses asked to attend court and give evidence. Many people are entitled to pursue a claim for criminal injuries compensation, advice and practical help with claims is part of what we do.

People react differently to crime and not all victims require our service; this is fine and is always pleasing to hear. Others need limited support for a short time while, in some cases, a volunteer may work with a victim or family for over a year. We will listen and the service we offer is based on individual needs and reactions to crime.

Your local branch is Northumberland Victim Support, whose main office is located in Bedlington with satellite offices in Hexham, Alnwick, Berwick and Blyth. Our help can be accessed in several ways but our main source of referral is Northumbria Police who, as an agreed policy, automatically refer victims of burglary, theft, robbery, assault, harassment, threats, criminal damage and arson to the scheme on a daily basis. Consent of the victim in cases of sexual crime and domestic violence, and of the victim's family in cases of murder is required for referral. Victim Support offers all

victims of crime its help, even if the crime remains unreported to the police. Strict confidentiality of course always applies. And our services are free.

Our work may be endless but we at Victim Support accept that. Whether as a friendly voice on the telephone, a friendly face across a coffee cup at any of our offices, or a personal visit to your home, we offer sound informed advice, and remain dedicated to helping the victim regain control, confidence and dignity. We are there, in strict confidence, if you need us in any way.

Last year, 7,231 victims were referred to Northumberland Victim Support and individual contact was made with each culminating in 4759 letters, 3,172 contacts by telephone, 473 visits to the home, 312 visits to our offices. In addition £371,172 was secured on behalf of victims of violent crime through successful criminal injuries compensation claims. This level of service would not be possible if not for a committed team of 33 volunteers supported by a small staff team. We are hoping to expand our team of volunteers in all parts of Northumberland but particularly in Wansbeck, Alnwick, Berwick, Blyth and Cramlington and are looking for sensitive and responsible people who have two hours a week to spare to help us provide guidance and practical help to those members of the community who have suffered injury, loss, fear or distress as a result of crime. We call for the maximum degree of confidentiality in all respects and comprehensive training is provided. Our next training course will start in September, so if you feel you possess the qualities we are looking for and would like to know more please contact any of the numbers listed below.

## Northumberland Victim Support

30A Front Street West  
Bedlington,  
NE22 5UB  
Tele: 01670 822334

### Satellite Offices

Alnwick  
Tele: 01665 602863

Hexham  
Tele: 01434 600117



The Kitchen funded by GOLD (Grant Opportunities for Local Development)

village and provide space for a wide range of activities. The building work and restoration is almost complete and has been supported by many local people and organisations. Much of the finance has been raised locally with about one third coming from grants such as Objective 2, Leader + Entrust, GOLD, NCC and Vital Villages.

The phased project has taken 5 years to reach the present situation with a huge amount of effort from members of the local community. A major reason for the success of the project has been the way in which a range of players have engaged with the process including local businesses and the church community. The original vision for the scheme emanated from the church, as there was a desire to act as a catalyst for regeneration. Much theological reflection took place, turning theory into reality, putting resurrection at the heart of the community through the establishment of the centre. It is interesting to note the church community has increased membership threefold since the start of the project! There certainly is a sense of something happening in Horsley!

## MILECASTLE HOUSING'S NEW HOMES IN BELLINGHAM

MILECASTLE HOUSING decided to build new homes for rent in Bellingham after a Housing Needs Survey carried out by Tynedale Council in 2001 highlighted a lack of affordable housing in the area. The company looked at and considered a number of sites in the village before purchasing the land adjacent to Reenes Way and Charlton View.

The total cost of the project is £1,013,000, funded partially from a £866,825 grant from the Housing Corporation. The scheme is made up of 15 properties, nine 3 bedroomed houses and six 2 bedroomed flats. The contractor building the properties is Border Construction.

In the process of developing the scheme, Milecastle Housing has carried out extensive consultation with the community including presentations to the Parish Council and the Community Trust as well as taking part in the Community Planning Event in the village in April 2003. Before construction of the new homes began, Milecastle Housing installed additional parking spaces for residents in Westlands.

Completion of the properties is due in November 2004 and we hope that the new tenants will be moved into their new homes in time for Christmas.

Each property features oil fired central heating, double glazing, high quality fitted kitchen, shower, composite doors and parking space. The whole project has been designed and built to meet the highest current standards for comfort and security for the new occupants.

The new homes will be subject to a "Section 106 Agreement" which means that when they are let, there is specific criteria set out to say who they can be let to, for example, they must have a connection to the parish, e.g. residence or work.

Bill Tebay, Director of Operations for Milecastle Housing said "Milecastle Housing wants to provide homes for local people in rural communities to help future generations to continue to live there."

Anyone who is interested in renting a property from Milecastle Housing should contact Tynedale Council to have their name placed on the Housing Register. They will then be nominated to Milecastle Housing when there is a suitable property available. If they are already a tenant in a Milecastle Housing property and would like a transfer, they should contact Mr Rutherford, Housing Officer for the area on 01434 652273.

Work in progress on the new houses



## PUBLICATION DETAILS

Northumberland Community News is produced by the Community Council of Northumberland. The first edition came out in October 1981 and it has appeared every two months since then. The newsletter should be of interest to anyone who is working to benefit their local community. We use it to circulate useful information on sources of advice and money, to alert people to changes in legislation or service provision which may affect them, and to pass on ideas and news from one community to another. There are regular items on Parish Council affairs, community halls and funding as well as other items of informative and newsworthy value; but our hope is that most people read the whole paper as a means of keeping in touch with voluntary activity and the rural parts of the county.

Northumberland Community News is distributed free to Parish and District Councils, the County Council, village hall and Age Concern committees, the rural clergy and many voluntary organisations. Copies are also available in public libraries. If you belong to one of the groups mentioned and do not see the newsletter, find out why not. If you would like more copies contact the Community Council.

Contributions and ideas are welcomed. Please get in touch with the Editor, at Tower Buildings, 9 Oldgate, Morpeth NE61 1PY For information on the Community Council check out their website at [www.ccn.org.uk](http://www.ccn.org.uk)

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