



LIFE AFTER 2006

INVEST 2006 is a campaign of voluntary organisations and funders in the North East to secure new or continued funding to build stronger communities and to promote economic inclusion. With a secretariat provided by VONNE (Voluntary Organisations Network North East), Invest 2006 includes a diversity of local and regional bodies, varying from the Community Foundation and councils of voluntary services, to specialist bodies concerned with older people, children, black and ethnic minority groups and so on. The Community Council of Northumberland is one of the founder members.

Why 2006? This is when a number of significant domestic and European funding programmes come to an end: for example European Objective 2 and the single Regeneration budget, but also smaller, more-focussed schemes such as the Market Towns Initiative, LEADER+ and the last vestiges of the old rural development programme. At the same time, the capacity of local authorities, the Care Trust and grant-making trusts to invest in voluntary sector activity remains tight. Other schemes such as the Children's Fund and Neighbourhood Renewal will begin to wind down, and the funds generated by the National Lottery are similarly in a gentle decline.

Within Northumberland, an extremely wide range of voluntary organisations are already affected. Vocational training schemes, village hall refurbishments and rebuilds, childcare initiatives, youth organisations, Citizen's Advice Bureaux, environmental work, community support and care schemes are already beginning to face difficulties: whether through cuts in expected annual support, or the closure of certain schemes of work, or dashed hopes in securing capital funding for new premises. On top of the collapse of the Countryside Agency Vital Villages Programme in 2004, even the smallest and remotest rural communities are affected, as well as the town-based larger voluntary organisations.

Invest 2006 is working with the larger 'players', most notably the Government Office for the North East and OneNE (the regional development agency): first, to gain a common understanding of the nature and scale of the problem; and second, to develop greater flexibility and sensitivity within the programme opportunities which are likely to emerge over the next few years. This is involving action in the national arena, as well as within the North East. To this end, Invest is taking the opportunity of the General Election to encourage prospective candidates before the election, and successful candidates after the election, to support the case for action by the government. As part of this initiative, a postcard campaign is being planned, to enable a wide range of local organisations to engage with their MPs.

Despite the difficulties that lie ahead, there is good reason for optimism. Here are a few examples:

1. Northumberland Strategic Partnership: The NSP is responsible for channelling millions of pounds of ONE's Single Programme each year into Northumberland. A change in ONE policy has caused Northumberland's budget to fall from £16million to about £11million, and a change in government policy has reduced the breadth of regenerative activity which can be supported. Nevertheless, the NSP has

worked hard to ensure that a range of community-led regenerated activity will continue to be supported.

2. European programmes: Even though the remaining funds in Objective 2 are now very tight, the programme secretariat within GONE is keen to ensure that further money can be found for new voluntary sector projects, by 'recycling' from under-spending projects elsewhere in the programme. In addition, a second GOLD small grants scheme is now a possibility, starting in 2006. Beyond Objective 2, the region's European Strategy Group are now working hard to negotiate a post-2006 major programme, and to ensure that voluntary bodies can play a significant part in it.

3. Rural programmes: Despite the gloom following the collapse of the Vital Villages programme in 2004, DEFRA is working hard to put new community funding opportunities in place. These will start in a modest way during 2005, with a grant programme to support new parish plans community appraisals. Some £30k will be available in Northumberland. Then, from 2006 new grants for community projects are being planned, although no details are yet available.

For more information about the Invest 2006 campaign, view the website www.invest2006.org.uk, or contact the secretary Jane Streater at VONNE, on 0191 233 2000 (email jane@vonne.co.uk).

ELLINGTON - END OF AN ERA

AFTER 95 YEARS of coal production, the closure of Ellington Colliery will finally see the end of deep mining in the North East. The recent announcement by UK Coal of its intention to close Ellington was not entirely unexpected, as rumours had been circulating around Ellington and Lynemouth for several months. Following its previous closure in 1994, Ellington was reopened in 1995 by RJB Mining (now UK Coal) and has received Government aid to support its viability.

In an attempt to alleviate the effects of the loss of 340 jobs, a Task Force was established drawing together a wide range of organisations, agencies and local authorities including Northumberland County Council, Castle Morpeth Borough Council, Wansbeck District Council, Blyth Valley Borough Council, ONE North East (the Regional Development Agency), Job Centre Plus, the National Union of Mineworkers, East Northumberland Regeneration Initiative and the Coalfields Regeneration Trust. The work of the Task Force has partly involved looking at packages put together to reduce the impact of colliery closures in other parts of the country.

Of the total number of employees losing their jobs, there are approximately 54 who live in the villages close to the colliery namely Ellington, Lynemouth, Linton, and Widdrington. Even though this is not a large proportion of the workforce, it does not lessen the impact of the closure on the wider community. With rumours of the impending closure having circulated for some time prior to the announcement, residents of Ellington and Lynemouth have naturally been concerned about the future use of the colliery sites in both villages.

UK Coal has disclosed outline plans for the site in Ellington, which involve a mixture of housing and recreational use. The company has been aware for several years that the Ellington Youth and Community Association had ambitions to provide sports and recreation facilities and indeed, UK Coal had previously identified a part of the Ellington site for the use of the association.



Their plans now move a step closer to reality with the proposals of the company for the site.

The future of the Lynemouth site is not as clear. The possible contamination of the land involved means that alternative uses will be limited and therefore a longer-term plan will likely emerge when the condition of the site is fully investigated.

Staff of the Community Council have worked with communities in the former coalfield villages for the past 10 years and will continue to provide support through this difficult period of regeneration.

SCHOOLS IN NORTHUMBERLAND

THE COUNTY COUNCIL completed the first phase of its consultation on 'Putting the Learner First' in mid-March and, by the time that this edition of Northumberland Community News is published, a full Council meeting scheduled for 19 April may well have settled the shape of our schooling for decades ahead.

We in CCN submitted our response to the County Council, expressing our support to seek solutions that would address the inter-connected problems of surplus places, tight revenue budgets and inadequate buildings. While sympathising with the very difficult task which the County Council faces, we did feel that greater efforts needed to be made to engage the support of Northumberland's communities, and to ensure that any changes did not take place in isolation from the wider efforts that are being made to tackle the regeneration of many of our urban and rural areas. Copies of CCN's submission are available on request from our offices in Morpeth.

The review has certainly generated a great deal of interest recently in the local press. NEAG (Northumberland Education Action Group - an alliance of local groups) staged a stimulating conference at Alnwick castle covering a lot of territory: from how children learn, to making sense of schools' performance statistics, privately-financed academies and the involvement of young people in decision-making. Recently, an alliance of head-teachers of first and high schools, GO2 Northumberland, has formed to support the County Council's proposal to re-organise into a 2-tier primary and secondary education system.

Disputes continue over the validity of statistics relating to educational performance and over the likelihood of securing sufficient and appropriate capital funding. The forthcoming County Council election on 5 May and varying interpretations of the response to the Council's consultations, have also generated debate.

Dialogue and debate is healthy within a democracy, especially when the future of Northumberland's largest local government service is being planned. However, we look forward to the time when the County Council begin to build a consensus within Northumberland and to work with local community interests, as well as with schools, to find some imaginative and appropriate solutions to the problems which we in Northumberland undoubtedly face.

Copies of a wide range of consultative documents and reports can be viewed on the County Council website: www.northumberland.gov.uk/learning or by contacting County Hall on 01670 533000.

BUILDING COMMUNITY LIFE IN NORTHUMBERLAND

SINCE 1997 CALOR funded and organised the Calor Village of the Year competition. This year the competition judges communities on a total of six aspects of rural village life, one of which is Building Community Life. The other five categories cover Business, Young People, Older People, the Environment and Information Communication Technology (ICT).

All villages in the 6 local authority districts of Northumberland are being offered the opportunity to participate in the new competition this year in the Building Community Life section. Information and entry forms have gone out to villages across the county to encourage them to enter the newly established Calor Building Community Life competition.

The Community Council of Northumberland, who is hoping to receive a good response from villages, is running the competition. Though the prize money may encourage villages to get involved, it is hoped that villages may benefit from the self-analysis and evaluation of their community, which will come from the completion of the entry form

Northumberland's competition, which is offering prizes of £350, £200 and £100 for three successful villages, has been launched following support for the Calor Building Community Life competition from Defra (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs). Defra is providing funding in 2005 at both county and national level to enhance the newly established Building Community Life category.

The Building Community Life entry form consists of 14 questions covering many aspects of a village's community life, from the networks available in a community to support people in need, to the range of activities that goes on in the village hall or other village centre. Answering the questions should get residents working together and encourage them to look at how everyone within the community is being provided for. It's an opportunity for them to celebrate all the positive aspects of life in their village and to consider any issues or opportunities that become apparent following their involvement in the competition.

Following on from this competition, later in the year one village in Northumberland will also be nominated by CCN to go forward to represent the county in the prestigious national English Calor Village of the Year® competition, which was recently launched on the BBC's Countryfile programme. Thanks to Defra's involvement, 2005 marks the first year in the competition's history that every village in England has the opportunity to enter the English Calor Village of the Year® competition, which this year has a prize fund of over £36,000.

Alan Hedley, CCN's Village Halls' Adviser and organiser of the event said, "This is a great opportunity for Northumberland's villages to prove themselves as the caring, well-integrated and enthusiastic communities I know they are. I'm sure the county's villages have got what it takes to do well, but we won't know unless they're proactive and give the competition a go!"

The Northumberland Building Community Life competition is open to villages with a population up to 5,000. Entry forms have been posted to all parish councils and village hall

SPRING MEETING

INVITATIONS to CCN's Spring Meeting 2005 have now gone out to all the organisations on our mailing list. If you have not received your invitation please contact Chris Hall on 01670 517178.

The meeting will take place on Wednesday 4 May at the Knott Memorial Hall, Heddon on the Wall.

Light refreshments will be available from 2.00pm. The meeting will be chaired by our President the Duke of Northumberland and will commence at 2.30. After the business part of the meeting there will be a presentation from Professor Neil Ward, Professor of Rural Economy at Newcastle University, on the subject of the Future of our Rural Areas.

trusts in Northumberland. Further information and entry forms are available from Alan Hedley at the Community Council. Ring 01670 517178 or email alanhedley@ccn.org.uk, or can be downloaded from CCN's website www.ccn.org.uk.

The deadline for entries is 27th June 2005 and judging will take place in July. The winners will be announced on 19 August, and a formal presentation event will take place later in the year.

FINANCIAL HELP FOR INDIVIDUALS IN NEED

THE ELIZABETH FINN TRUST gives financial help to individuals whose careers have been interrupted or ended through illness, accident, or family breakdown, or pensioners who are struggling with an inadequate income. They can also help their partners and children when making ends meet becomes a constant worry.

The Trust help British or Irish people from over 120 occupations - for example, former teachers, nurses, managers, senior secretaries, farmers and artists.

The Trust gives grants towards household and disability equipment, and might also help with the cost of repairs and replacements such as a leaking roof or broken boiler. Many applicants also qualify for a weekly allowance of up to £20, which can be added to the basic level of income support, without affecting benefit entitlement. They welcome referrals from family, friends or health and welfare professionals.

Last year over £2m was used to help people nationally. Those helped have said that the Trust makes a real difference to their lives making them feel valued, providing them with information, and welcoming them as a member of the Elizabeth Finn Trust family.

Recent research has shown that, in Britain today, 3.8 million people would qualify for help from the Elizabeth Finn Trust. It is their goal to help as many of them as we can to a much brighter future.

For further information or an application, please contact the Elizabeth Finn Trust on Freephone 0800 413220, or visit our website at www.elizabethfinntrust.org.uk.

Local Contact: Linda Bates (Regional Co-ordinator) 01670 787135

ROYAL GARDEN PARTY

CONGRATULATIONS to two lucky Chairmen of parish councils and their spouses, who have been selected by NALC (Northumberland Association of Local Councils), to attend a Buckingham Palace Garden Party on Thursday 21 July. They are:

- Cllr John and Mrs Barbara Huddart, of Lowick Parish Council
- Cllr Eileen and Mr John Drew, of Broomley and Stocksfield Parish Council.

We hope they have an enjoyable time.

CLERK REQUIRED

HUMSHAUGH PARISH COUNCIL is a small council of 7 Councillors covering one ward in the North Tyne Valley, who meet bi-monthly in Humshaugh Village Hall. Their current Clerk retires at the end of April, so they are hoping to appoint a new clerk from 1st May 2005.

The new clerk will be employed for between 3 - 4 hours per week.

Further details can be obtained from Mr. M. Robson, Chairman, Humshaugh Parish Council, 6 Waynriggs Terrace, Humshaugh, Hexham NE46 4AD Tel: 01434 681789.

Community Buildings and the Licensing Act 2003

OUR FEBRUARY 2004 issue contained an article on how the Licensing Act 2003 may affect community buildings. *

Following on from that article the Community Council, in conjunction with staff from the licensing departments of the District Councils in Northumberland, organised 2 Information Evenings, in May 2004, to explore the implications of the Act 2003 in relation to community buildings.

Since then the DCMS (Department for Culture, Media and Sport) have issued Government Guidance enabling the local authorities in Northumberland to publish a statement of their Licensing Policy detailing how they will fulfil the four main objectives of the 2003 Act.

Each of the 6 District Councils were required to publish separate policy statements, but understandably, as each were required to work within the same Government Guidance, their statements are very similar.

Each district has been active in their education programme holding numerous road shows that have been well attended by those affected by the Act, including a number of village hall and community building committees.

Many community buildings currently have a Public Entertainment License (PEL). To convert these licenses to the new Premises Licence (PL) they will first have to renew their existing PEL. At the simplest level they may elect to retain the conditions within their PEL. However it is thought that this will be an opportunity for many halls to add to their current facilities. For example the PEL covers public dancing, music or public displays, contests or exhibitions of sport or other similar types of entertainment. It does not cover stage performances such as plays, pantomimes and operas so a separate licence is needed if the hall drama club puts on a pantomime or a touring group presents a play. The new Premises Licence can be set to include this type of entertainment and others such as film shows.

Building on the success of last year's events the Community Council are again organising two Information Evenings directed specifically towards management committees of community buildings. The events will be held at venues in the North (25 May) and the West (8 June) and again we are fortunate to be able to call upon the services of the designated officers from the local authorities. Mr Paddy Gasgoigne, Head of Legal and Democratic Services for Blyth Valley Council will lead the Northern event, with Mr Philip Soderquest, Principal Environmental Health Officer, Tynedale Council, leading at the Western venue. More details of these events will be sent to the contact for all the community buildings on CCN's address list. If you do not receive an invitation and would like more detail please contact the Admin Office at 01670 517178 or email alanhedley@ccn.org.uk

* A copy of the February 2004 issue of Northumberland Community News can be viewed as an html document or downloaded as a pdf document at www.ccn.org.uk

COMMUNITIES AS EMPLOYERS

NEW LEGAL REQUIREMENTS were introduced in October 2004 which have emphasised again the need for even the smallest of bodies to have in place a range of basic policies, procedures and other provisions whenever they employ staff. These apply as much to community groups as they do to businesses or large organisations. Briefly, some of these requirements include:

1. **A written statement of the main terms and conditions of service:** These need be nothing more sophisticated than a letter from the employer (e.g. the chairman of the management committee) to the member of staff, confirming the main terms such as the salary, processes for reclaiming travel and other expenses, holiday entitlement etc., and cross-referencing to other documentation such as various policies and procedures. Alternatively it can be a lengthy, self-contained document covering a very wide range of relevant procedures.
2. **Employers' liability insurance:** Linked to a need to ensure that health and safety issues considerations are met. Periodically, a risk assessment should be carried out.
3. **Disability:** Since October 2004, the Disability Discrimination Act has required employers to make 'reasonable adjustments' to accommodate disabled employees. In some instances, grants are available to meet these adjustments.
4. **Industrial relations:** Since October 2004, employers have been required to put in place appropriate grievance and disciplinary procedures, so that issues relating to employer/employee difficulties can be addressed within the organisation, before having to resort to a tribunal. Various model documents are now available.
5. **Income tax:** Unless the Tax Office has agreed a dispensation (which it has done for smaller parish councils and other small community groups) employers normally have to operate a PAYE system, whereby the employees' Income Tax and National Insurance are deducted at source, by the employer.

In addition to the legal requirements, there is a great deal of what constitutes 'good employment practice'. Various publications, plus basic advice, are available from the Government agency ACAS (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service). In addition, we in CCN are currently working with other voluntary sector advisory bodies in Northumberland to try to develop a more effective support system for community groups, on employment matters. Contact David Francis or Alan Hedley at Tower Buildings.

NEW POWERS FOR PARISH COUNCILS

ONE OF THE FINAL BILLS of the old parliament to receive Royal Assent before the General election was the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005. As well as increasing the powers of local authorities in a variety of ways, this Act is significant in empowering parish councils to address anti-social behaviour.

Parish councils are given the power to issue fixed penalties for litter, graffiti, fly-posting and dog offences. In addition, the regime of dog byelaws is being replaced with a simplified system which will enable parish councils to deal with dog fouling; ban dogs from designated areas; require dogs to be kept on a lead; and restrict the number of dogs which can be walked by one person.

Although not all parish councils will wish to use these powers, they do reflect a growing recognition by Government of the need to give local councils more clout to tackle local issues.

NALC will issue further guidance on the practicalities of these new provisions in due course.

COME HOME TO A REALL FIRE



A wood burning bio-mass boiler of the type used in some community halls

LAST JUNE the Country's first wood fuelled district heating scheme was switched on in Kielder. A biomass boiler now supplies heat and hot water to the village school, a youth hostel, business workshops, six new three-bedroom houses and the Kielder visitor centre. REALL (Renewable Energy at Local Level) supported the scheme since its inception and were proud to see it come to fruition. Mervyn Anthony, REALL's Project Manager, was quoted in the early days of the Kielder scheme saying that 'REALL is hopeful that if the Kielder project takes off then more rural communities will follow their lead'.

Edmondsley, a small, former mining village in County Durham is doing just that. The village is looking into the prospect of using a variety of renewable energy sources to supply all of the energy needs of the village. The eventual goal is to take the entire village off the national grid. The project is being spearheaded by Chester-le-Street District Council, and being backed by, amongst others, the EAGA Partnership, One North East and the Energy Saving Trust. Once again REALL is supporting the project by looking into the feasibility of the use of biomass boilers within the scheme.

In Kielder's case, the surrounding forest not only supplies the fuel for the biomass boiler in the form of wood chips but also ensures that the whole system is carbon neutral. Trees absorb as much carbon during their lifespan as they emit when they are burned, and state of the art biomass boilers are so efficient that CO₂ emissions are taken up by the surrounding forest in a matter of hours. There is therefore no net carbon emission. In addition the surrounding forest is constantly being replanted to replenish felled areas.

But wood is not the only biomass fuel. In the case of Edmondsley, which is not surrounded by forest, local sites for the growing of biomass will also be identified. These 'energy crops' are usually willow, grown over 2-4 years on what is known as short rotation coppice; and grasses such as miscanthus, which give a bigger harvest per hectare than willow and can be harvested annually. Energy crops require very little in the way of pesticides and herbicides and can greatly improve the biodiversity of the area, as there is usually an increase in the number of plants and wildlife within the area compared to existing farmland. It is also hoped that the local siting of biomass crop production will provide much needed employment opportunities for the area around Edmondsley.

Biomass is not just for big schemes. Many small community projects across Northumberland are looking to install household biomass schemes, such as log, or wood pellet boilers. Northumberland Eco Wild Team (NEWT) for example, after taking on board REALL's advice about renewable energy, are now looking into the purchase of a biomass boiler as the most energy and cost efficient way of providing an environmentally friendly, renewable energy heating system for their holiday cottage project at Beal near Berwick.

GET IN TOUCH - REALL welcomes enquiries about ideas for renewable energy projects. For further information, to be invited to events, to be included on the mailing list, or to discuss a potential project, please contact any of the following:

Mervyn Anthony, REALL Project Manager, Benmar House, Choppington Road, Stobhill, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE61 2HA. Tel 01670 505451. REALL@ccn.org.uk (REALL is a project of the Community Council of Northumberland.)

NEW STAFF

GEORGE COURTICE joins CCN as Sector Development Officer, a new post funded through the Government's Change Up strategy. Although employed by CCN, George will work closely with a wider network of VCS (Voluntary and Community Sector) and public bodies, and as such will report to a consortium of interested bodies.

George moved to the North East in 1974 to work as a researcher at Tyne Tees Television on the regular Sunday farming programme. He spent the next 25 years producing a range of factual programmes for a variety of different broadcasters. For the last three years he has worked for The PRIME Initiative as its North East Regional Development Manager promoting the option of self-employment and enterprise for people over the age of 50. He lives with his partner, teenage daughter, dog and one chicken near Scots Gap and is greatly looking forward to working with CCN.



NATIONAL YEAR OF THE VOLUNTEER

EARLY IN 2004, Chancellor Gordon Brown designated 2005 as the Year of the Volunteer. The Year is being co-ordinated by Volunteering England and CSV, working in partnership with the Home Office, the government department responsible for encouraging active citizenship.

The aims of Year of the Volunteer are to:

increase the number of volunteers, particularly individuals from marginalised groups and young people

increase the availability of volunteering opportunities in the public and voluntary sector

raise the profile of the work done by volunteers in the UK

acknowledge the commitment of volunteers.

All volunteer organisations are encouraged to participate in and benefit from the Year. It offers a chance to increase involvement by providing volunteering opportunities, raise awareness of volunteering and promote individual volunteer organisations, by adopting the Year of the Volunteer brand for existing work.

During the Year, each month has been allocated a theme; April's theme is Justice, which incorporates opportunities to volunteer as a magistrate, work with Victim Support and provide advocacy support, amongst many others.

Other themes during the year are:

May - Environment

June - Recognition (including National Volunteers Week 1-7 June, now in its 21st year)

July - Veterans

August - Sport

September - Ability

October - Citizenship and Community

November - Europe

December - Animals

If your organisation would like to know more about Year of the Volunteer, there is a website dedicated to promoting the initiative, as well as any events and activities directly relating to the year. Visit it at www.yearofthevolunteer.org for more information.

SUCCESS FOR TEENAGE NORTHUMBERLAND WILD TEAM



The Team

A TEENAGE WILDLIFE WATCH GROUP in the Berwick Borough area, has become overall winner of the Volvo UK Young Environmentalist Awards 2004/5!

The Northumberland Eco Wild Team, NEWT for short, is working on a project to create an environmental farm holiday to share their ideas for protecting the environment in the home and on the farm. The teenagers have researched how a farm cottage can be renovated and furnished with as little impact on the environment as possible and will participate in the practical 'green' refurbishment. The team put together a huge research document looking into insulation, eco paint, compost toilets, timber, flooring, soft furnishings and renewable energy. They hope to create a resource pack from their findings and are currently designing a website: www.thenewts.org.uk that should be launched at the beginning of April.

The Volvo Young Environmentalist Award scheme provides young people with an opportunity to gain recognition and financial reward for local environmental activities with which they are involved. The NEWTs decided to put their project forward.

This year more than 50 projects addressing subjects such as biodiversity, energy, transport, water, conservation waste and recycling were entered by schools and youth groups from all

over the UK. In the end 10 groups were selected to receive a Volvo Award of £500. The NEWTs were selected overall winners!

As well as receiving £500 towards their project, a team of five NEWTs and 2 leaders have been invited to attend the Volvo Adventure Conference in Gothenburg in May! This is an international three-day event where young people discuss their ideas for local environmental projects with experts and draw up a statement on sustainability that is submitted to the United Nations Environment Programme.

'We'd like to thank Community Development Officer, Els Nicol', was the comment of the group, 'she told us of the Volvo Awards and made this very exciting trip to Sweden possible!'

The NEWTs have carried out many conservation projects and practical work on Hunting Hall farm. They were involved in a project to improve an existing pond and woodland and took part in the Great House Sparrow Rescue. 16-year old Meg has created her own 3-acre wood with pond and carried out a survey on the importance of grassy margins to farmland biodiversity. The team are designing a leaflet-guided farm trail to explain their work and help families explore wildlife conservation.

For any further details, please contact our local CDO on 01289-304141.



SUE ANDREW-STEWART joined CCN on Valentines Day in an Administrative role in our busy office in Tower Buildings, Morpeth. With previous experience in a voluntary organisation in Scotland, Sue was able

to "hit the ground running" and has already become a valued member of staff. She writes to introduce herself:-

"Having moved away from Northumbria in the early 70s, I have a varied background, having done work ranging from Personnel, Stock Control, MOD and Photography to Local Authority roles in Northumberland, Yorkshire and Aberdeenshire. Most recently I spent 13 years in Community Education in Aberdeenshire (Administration, Finance and Area Youth Work), followed by a Project Administration role in Property Maintenance since I returned to Northumbria two years ago.

I also worked for many years as a volunteer in Youth Work, for a Scottish Community Council, as Editor of Community Council news magazine and in local events organisation (Portlethen Gala) and also for 12 years as a Set Designer/Builder/Painter and Properties Mistress for Aberdeen Opera Company and other local theatrical groups.

My interests include theatre, travel, gardening, art, digital photography, interior design and DIY of all sorts - linked with a passion for computing - currently learning to build pcs.

Now living in Blyth with my partner, I have 2 daughters, both married and living in Aberdeen, and one step-daughter who is due to make me a pseudo-Grandma in Mid May!"

THE CLUB DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

NORTH COUNTRY LEISURE, the parent organisation of Leisure Alnwick District and Leisure Tynedale has secured nearly £200,000 to fund the Club Development Project. Funding has been secured from a variety of sources including European Social Fund and Northern Rock Foundation. The two year project will allow clubs throughout the Alnwick District and Tynedale and Berwick areas to receive support and assistance.

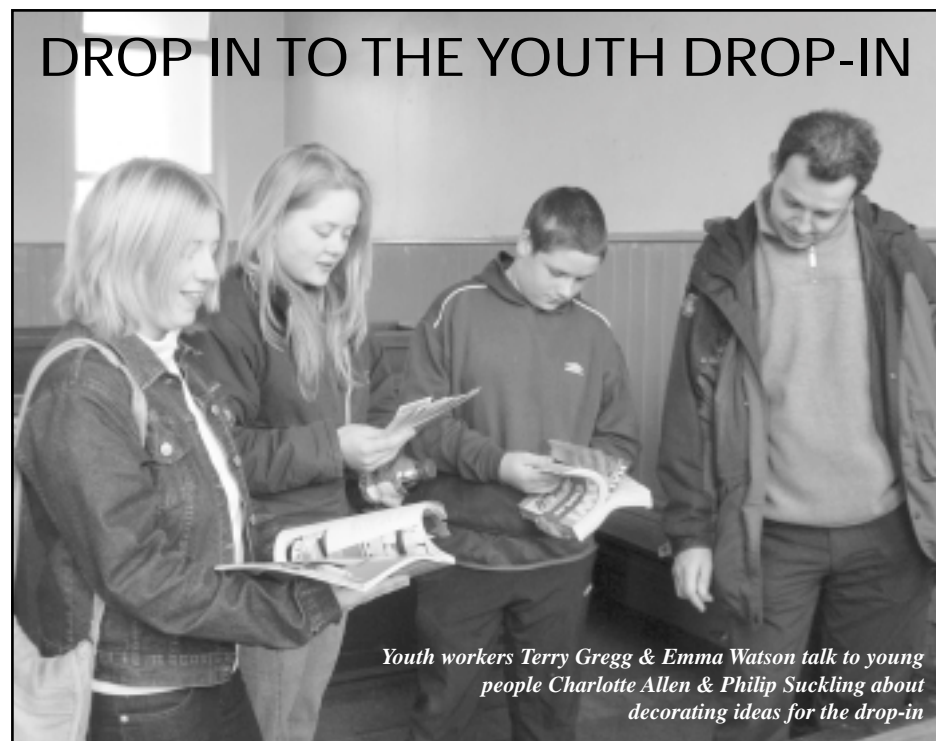
Many local clubs are run by volunteers who give up their time to ensure there is an opportunity to play sport in your town or village. Although rewarding it can be demanding on time as well as needing to manage budgets, transport players, and find new venues.

The Club Development Project will help clubs address issues of child protection, first aid, supporting, developing and mentoring club volunteers including officials and coaches, help clubs achieve club mark, developing new sections within clubs and creating new clubs.

Two Sports Club Development Officers have been appointed to work within the Northumberland area. Jennie Brewis, based at Willowburn Sports and Leisure Centre, is the officer for Alnwick and Berwick Districts and Philippa Whitworth based at N.C.L. House in Hexham, the officer for the Tynedale area.

Club representatives were invited to attend information evenings held throughout the three areas. At these evenings they received information about the two year project and found out how the project could benefit their clubs. Clubs were then invited to apply to become part of the 2005 project. Forty clubs across Alnwick, Berwick and Tynedale will receive help in the first year which runs until December 2005 with another forty clubs receiving support in the second year (January 2006 to December 2006).

To find out more about the project or to find out how your club can benefit from the 2006 C.D.P., contact Jennie Brewis at Willowburn Sports and Leisure Centre on 01665 605030 or Philippa Whitworth at N.C.L. House, Hexham on 01434 613221.



Youth workers Terry Gregg & Emma Watson talk to young people Charlotte Allen & Philip Suckling about decorating ideas for the drop-in

MANY YEARS and many newspaper articles have passed under the bridge since the idea of a youth drop-in for Bellingham was first raised. Bellingham Community Trust took up the idea in 1999 and, after a period of slow progress, the end is now in sight and work on refurbishing the former Magistrates' Court is due to begin in April 2005.

The disused Court House, next to the Police Station, had been identified as suitable and funds were sought to make it an attractive meeting place for 13 to 19 year olds. Grants from BBC Children in Need and The Tudor Trust, together with a number of smaller local funders, raised the sum required. Agreeing a lease with the Police Authority and obtaining planning permission took a little longer.

From the first, young people have been included in the decision-making process and this continued last week when an open afternoon was held. Young people came to look round the building and make suggestions for decoration and furnishings. Ideas, some of them quite surprising, will be incorporated, if possible, in the final design.

Trustee David Allen said, "The enthusiasm for the Youth Drop-in is still strong, even though some of the young people who first brought the idea forward are now old enough to become youth workers themselves."

MEET THE FUNDERS' DAY



Jane Hart, CCN's Community Development Officer based at Bellingham, leads one of the workshops

AN EXCELLENT TIME was had by all concerned at the recent 'Meet the Funders' Event'. Representatives from groups involved in a wide range of activities gathered at Hexham Mart to consult with Funders and receive funding training.

The Funders, including Barclays, Community Foundation, Co-op, Northern Rock Foundation, Northumberland National Park, Tynedale Small Grants, Tynedale Rural Transport, Community Council of Northumberland and Unity Trust, were delighted by the response of groups and appreciated the opportunity to 'get out of the office and put faces to projects'. It was agreed that such an event should be an annual event, so next year look forward to a bigger and better funding extravaganza.

The three workshops were well attended and thanks must go to Jane Hart, Community Council of Northumberland; Wendy Howe, Northumberland Care Trust; and Ian Jefferies, J4B (a representative from the company responsible for the new on-line funding support.) If you are interested in this online service check it out at www.online4community.info/tynedale

Northumberland College also provided the computer bus enabling enquirers to surf the web for funding information. The additional bonus of the bus was the provision of a very helpful member of staff from the college, who was able to field a number of general ICT questions.....possibilities of another event?

NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND VILLAGE HALLS CONSORTIUM

In the west of the County is a network of village halls existing under the heading of Tynedale Village Halls Consortium. The Consortium was established in 1997 with the objectives:

- To serve as a forum for discussion
- To assist with the identification of and management of potential joint projects and funding applications
- To improve communication and co-operation between village halls

- To promote the exchange of good practice.

Despite suggestions on several occasions since then, to attempt to establish a similar forum for community buildings in North Northumberland, these have failed to result in the formation of a village halls network to cover the Alnwick and Berwick districts of the County.

Earlier this year Els Nicol, Clare Wood and Ken Walters, the Community Council's three Community Development Officers covering North Northumberland, tested the water for the support of such a forum by canvassing some of the halls with which they have been working. There appeared to be a positive response. A meeting of the three CDOs, Alan Hedley the Village Halls Adviser and representatives of some of the village hall management committees has been arranged for late April when discussion on the viability of the consortium will take place. It is hoped that an open meeting of representatives from North Northumberland community buildings can be arranged for the early summer.

All community buildings will be circulated with details of any future developments but in the meantime the above mentioned CCN staff would be pleased to accept any expressions of interest from management committees that feel they may be able to assist in promoting such a Forum.

WALKING FOR HEALTH

Our last issue contained an article on the Walking for Health Initiative featuring the work of Barbara King, Healthy Walks co-ordinator for CARAD (Communities in Alnwick, Rothbury, Amble and Druridge).

An error occurred in the publication of their current walks programme. The Alnwick long walks are every Wednesday from Willowburn Sports and Leisure Centre at 1.30pm and NOT every third Friday as previously printed. Our sincere apologies to those who may have missed the opportunity for a Wednesday walk or who were inconvenienced by turning up on a Friday.

WHAT WE DO

THE COMMUNITY COUNCIL OF 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

CCN is anxious to ensure that it effectively supports local communities and therefore operates a process of continuous evaluation. This requires feedback from our users. Any comments on services provided 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.

Northumberland Community News is published bi-monthly. 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 at Tower Buildings, 9 Oldgate, Morpeth, NE61 1PY or email items direct to alanhedley@ccn.org.uk.

Copy deadline for the next edition is Tuesday 24 May 2005.

For more information on the Community Council check out their website at www.ccn.org.uk

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