



## NORTHUMBERLAND COMMUNITY

# NEWS

VOL. 25 - No. 6

Mid December 2005 - Mid February 2006

## SEASON'S GREETINGS



to all our readers  
from all the staff at the  
Community Council



The office will  
be closed from  
midday Friday 23<sup>rd</sup>  
December opening  
again on Tuesday  
3<sup>rd</sup> January

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# CHANGES MEAN LOSING VALUED TEAM MEMBERS BUT GRASPING NEW OPPORTUNITIES

THOSE OF YOU WHO ATTENDED our annual meeting, in Alnmouth, will have heard from our now chairman, Bob Langley, of the changes that are occurring within the Community Council.

Our other readers of Community News may be finding out for the first time what our plans are. There is sad news as we will be losing several valued and hard-working staff and closing some of our offices.

However, we must think positively and concentrate on the future and the new exciting challenges and opportunities that are presenting themselves to us and our partners.

Due to an unexpected reduction in our European Objective 2 funding, this autumn, we have, unfortunately, had to undertake a major and urgent restructuring, both of staff levels and services.

Since the mid 1990s, the Community Council has brought together and built up an experienced and successful team of community development staff, which has been located in local centres throughout the rural parts of Northumberland.

This team has also served as the co-ordinator for a variety of European and national Government programmes such as Objective 2, Leader+, Vital Villages, England Rural Development Programme, and for other grant-giving bodies and public services.

The development of the team benefited from the financial contributions of groups, trusts, authorities and programmes both within and outside Northumberland and we are grateful for this.

However, now that the level of Objective 2 funding, which would be required to enable us to sustain our previous work commitment, is no longer forthcoming, we have no alternative but to make new plans.

With a reduced team, smaller budget, fewer premises and a revised business plan, we must plan ahead and decide on our priorities and capabilities, also having as paramount the needs of the community groups we exist to serve.

Our new staffing structure comes into effect in January and, between now and the end of that month, most of our time must be spent working out the logistics of our new structure and how we will continue to provide an effective and professional support for our target groups.

We need to consult with staff, partners, funders and customers, as their views are crucial. In order to do this, our executive committee has decided that we will be temporarily suspending our work in the

community, until February.

We apologise to those clients who may be affected by this withdrawal of some hands-on services but, of course, we will be available to be consulted, by telephone, in an advisory role.

We hope that you will understand the importance of getting the new way of working right, so that we can continue to play a major and central role in supporting the communities of Northumberland, in what is rapidly changing scene for the voluntary and community sector.

Many organisations such as ours, throughout the country, will be competing for fewer funds and there are signs that the amount of money available to bodies that perform similar roles to us will continue to be harder to come by.

We are hopeful, however, of having continued financial support from the Government through DEFRA and One NorthEast, through Northumberland Strategic Partnership.

This will enable us to retain a team of invaluable community development workers, based in Berwick, Alnmouth, Morpeth and Hexham.

In addition, we will still make available, countywide, our specialist knowledge, providing advice, information and training about community buildings, funding, legal and constitutional issues, parish council and local government matters and VAT, for example.

Although we look forward to the future, we cannot overlook the fact that these changes have been and will be difficult for staff and trustees. We are losing some valuable members of the team and we thank them for all they have done for the organisation and the community.

Without them, we could not have achieved what we have for the voluntary and community sector. Throughout the county, there are small and large groups and settlements that have benefited from the advice, practical help and support, often beyond the call of duty, that our colleagues have provided. We wish them all well for the future.

We are saying farewell to Bill Carr, Sandi Downing, Richard Powell, Chris Barker and Judith James and closing our offices in Haltwhistle, Bellingham, Widdrington Station and Rothbury.

Such pruning clearly marks another considerable change in how the Community Council's presence will be felt in Northumberland. But, we are determined that that presence, even if lighter weight, will continue to make a difference. We shall keep you informed as

the new plans take shape.

The revised staff team will be:

**Berwick office** - Els Nicol, Berwick Voluntary Forum, 5 Tweed Street, Berwick, TD15 1NG

telephone: 01289 304141

email: elsnicol@ccn.org.uk

**Alnmouth office** - Julia Sharpley, The Centre, 27 Fenkle Street, Alnmouth, NE66 1HW

telephone: 01665 605540

email: juliasharpley@ccn.org.uk

**Morpeth office** - Ken Walters, Tower Buildings, 9 Oldgate, Morpeth, NE61 1PY

telephone: 01670 517178

email: kenwalters@ccn.org.uk

**Hexham office** - Jane Hart, Hexham Community Centre, Gilesgate, Hexham NE46 3NH

telephone: 01434 607871

email: janehart@ccn.org.uk

Based at the Morpeth office will be our director, David Francis, and assistant director,

Alan Hedley. In addition to their managerial responsibilities, they will continue to provide countywide specialist support to parish councils, community groups and other voluntary bodies on legal, financial, organisational, managerial and related issues.

Also in the Morpeth office are our finance officer, Linda Frater, assistant finance officers, Margaret Tweddell and Carol Megson, office manager, Chris Hall, and administrative officer, Sue Andrew-Stewart. These changes will have no impact on the work of other projects within CCN as they remain fully funded. There will be no break in their activities during December and January when a normal service will continue to operate. For example: LEADER+; REALL; Change-Up; Carer Link; Volunteering Centre North Northumberland; BizFizz; NALC; and others.

If you have any queries about our present or future structure or services, please do not hesitate to contact David Francis, at Tower Buildings, Morpeth, by telephone, on 01670 517178, or email at davidfrancis@ccn.org.uk

## HINDMARSH HALL WELCOMES CCN'S AGM

THE HINDMARSH HALL, Alnmouth was this year's venue for the Community Council AGM, which attracted 78 friends and representatives. The Duke of Northumberland, President of the organisation, welcomed all those present and introduced Mr John Hall, Chairman of the Hindmarsh Hall Management Committee, who gave a short resume of the recent refurbishment of the hall and the help given by CCN in this project.

The President then introduced Mr Chris O'Bee, of Calor, who presented the awards for the Northumberland Community Life Competition to the three winning communities - Wingates, Norham and Horsley. As the community in the winning position, Wingates would be entered into the next step of the national competition along with 40 other communities in England.\*

This was followed by apologies, adoption of the minutes of the 2004 AGM and presentation of the 2004-2005 Annual Report from the Venerable Bob Langley, CCN Chairman, in attendance in place of the retiring Chairman Judith Arthur, who had felt unable to continue in the post

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CCN's President, the Duke of Northumberland presents Wingates' representatives Linda Wilson, Sue Rouitt and Kirsty Bell the first prize in the Northumberland Community Building Life Competition watched by Chris O'Bee from Calor

# NEW PROGRAMMES FROM THE BIG LOTTERY FUND

THE BIG LOTTERY have recently released information on soon to be launched new programmes:

## Community Buildings programme

ACRE (Action for Communities in Rural England) and its Rural Community Council network (including the Community Council of Northumberland) have lobbied for several years for a dedicated Village Halls grant programme.

In October 2005 the Big Lottery Fund issued a press release saying "Village halls and other local venues will benefit from the new Community Buildings programme announced by the Big Lottery Fund today. The programme will be open for business by summer 2006. The Big Lottery Fund will make £50 million available over three years through the Community Buildings programme to projects across England. More details about the scheme, including information about those who can apply and how, will be released in 2006".

At a further point in their press release BLF state "Historically, both the Millennium Commission and the Community Fund provided a significant level of funding for community buildings; the Millennium Commission contributed £50 million in the form of a dedicated programme, while the Community Fund has awarded over £138 million to community buildings since 1995".

From the information given above the Community Fund awarded an average of £15.3m per year over the 9 years beginning 1995. The new dedicated village halls fund promises £50m over 3 years, which equates to an average £16.6m. This compares well with the Lottery's previous record, even taking inflation into account, and village halls/community buildings can rightly look forward to further announcements, probably in the summer of 2006.

## CCN require an Honorary Architect

OFTEN IN JOB advertisements in the national and local press you may see the annotation "This is a re-advert: previous applicants need not reapply". The re-advertising indicates a level of difficulty in finding the right candidate or perhaps that the salary scale may be a little low for the level of responsibility expected from a successful applicant.

Imagine then the difficulty in attracting a candidate for a responsible post where the remuneration is £nil per annum!

Over many years, thanks to the generosity of volunteering architects, the Community Council has been able to offer the services of an Honorary Architect to assist the management committees of the many village halls and community buildings in Northumberland by giving general advice on the structure and condition of the hall. The various reports produced have not been detailed design statements or project management plans but have been sufficient in detail to enable numerous community centre and village hall management committees to decide on their next steps towards developing their project.

Gil Jackson, our most recent Honorary Architect moved south early in the year and we have been searching since then for a replacement. We last "advertised" the post, without success, in the June issue of Community News, in the following terms:

The role of Honorary Architect would suit a recently retired and suitably qualified person who loves Northumberland and would like to put their expertise to good use. The job is honorary but out of pocket expenses and travel expenses will be paid. Please contact Alan Hedley on 01670 517178 if you think you can help.

(Email address is [alanhedley@ccn.org.uk](mailto:alanhedley@ccn.org.uk)).

At this point there is no information on the application process or who will be eligible to apply. Alan Hedley, Village Halls Adviser within CCN, said "Over the years the Community Fund has developed a comprehensive knowledge during their assessments of applications involving property. As a result they introduced some guidance booklets giving advice on how to get started and outlining the additional information that they would need with any application to fund a community building. I have no knowledge of what the application form for the new programme process will look like but suspect it will be heavily influenced by the previous application process employed by the Community Fund. I would therefore suggest that halls planning an application under the new programme take a look at the Community Funds website and download the guidance applicable to village halls and property applications, but always bear in mind that this would be preparatory research only as applications to the Community Fund can not now be made."

[www.community-fund.org.uk](http://www.community-fund.org.uk) will access their website. Move through "funding your project" to "forms and guidance" to get a list of publications available.

### Reaching Communities (England) programme

At the time of going to press the programme has not been officially launched so available information is limited. Reaching Communities is BF's main demand-led programme aimed at local communities in England to support projects that bring real improvements to the life of people in most need.

It is expected that the majority of the funding in the programme will go to voluntary and community organisations.

Reaching Communities will be open to local groups as well as larger organisations working to meet local needs. These groups will include:

- \* registered charities
- \* statutory bodies, including schools
- \* charitable or not for profit companies
- \* social enterprise

The programme will provide funding of £100 million in its first year in England, with up to £500,000 available for individual projects. After its North East launch on 12 December more information will be available at [www.biglotteryfund.org.uk](http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk)

# NORTHUMBERLAND LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT

## A Brief Guide

DURING SUMMER 2004 Local Government Minister Nick Raynsford launched a national debate on a 10 year vision for local government which would promote "self-confident local authorities working with partners to deliver high quality services". The initiative is part of the Government's ongoing drive to modernise public services and it focuses on four broad themes:

- \* Leadership
- \* Citizen Engagement
- \* Service Delivery and performance framework
- \* A new relationship between central, regional and local government.

Local Area Agreements are a key mechanism in the modernisation process and offer the potential to develop a new way of working to build a more flexible and responsive relationship between the layers of government. They place the emphasis on achieving local solutions that meet local needs whilst still contributing to national priorities set out by central government. Local authorities and their partners negotiate their LAA with their regional Government Office to reach agreement on a set of priority outcomes for their area and the targets and indicators that will be used to measure progress towards achieving them.

The LAA is a vehicle for delivering public services more effectively, strengthening partnership working and building a more productive relationship with central government.

The LAA has a three year time span and is reviewed and updated at regular intervals.

### PROGRESS ON THE NORTHUMBERLAND LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT

Local Area Agreements are structured around four mandatory blocks or themes:

- Children and Young People
- Healthier Communities and Older People
- Economic Development and Enterprise
- Safer Stronger Communities

For the purpose of developing Northumberland's LAA the Safer Stronger Communities block has been split into its two component parts giving a fifth thematic group. The two elements will be brought back together for the final submission of the agreement.

The County Council is designated as the accountable body for the Local Area Agreement but the emphasis is very much on partnership working which includes

statutory and non-statutory agencies and the voluntary and community sector.

Theme group leaders have been working closely with key partners and stakeholders over the summer to gather information and data to inform the process and identify the priority outcomes within each of the thematic blocks of the Northumberland LAA. This initial work was shared, discussed and confirmed with a wider audience at a recent Stakeholder Event held at Linden Hall attended by more than 160 people.

### NEXT STEPS

The initial draft of the Northumberland LAA will be submitted to Government Office for the North East on Monday 24th October. This essentially marks the start of a period of further intensive negotiations to fine tune the content of the LAA and work through the detail. A near final draft will be submitted to GONE before Xmas and a final draft will be expected by the end of January 2006. The agreement will be "signed off" by all partners by mid-March and operational from April 2006.

### HOW PARISH/TOWN COUNCILS CAN BE INFORMED AND INVOLVED

A number of opportunities exist for the involvement of Parish and Town Councils in the next stage of development. These include

- Through Parish/Town Council representatives on district and county level Local Strategic Partnerships and County Council Area Committees
- Through regular tri-partite meetings involving County/District/Parish Councils
- Through receipt of regular Partnership Update newsletters
- Interactive Website [www.northumberland-laa.org.uk](http://www.northumberland-laa.org.uk)
- Forthcoming Focus Group sessions

For more information or if you would like your Council to be added to our mailing list and database, please contact

Karen Archbold, LAA Co-ordinator  
Chief Executive's Directorate  
Northumberland County Council  
County Hall, Morpeth  
Northumberland, NE61 2 EF

Tel 01670 533488, Fax 01670 533072

E mail [KArchbold@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:KArchbold@northumberland.gov.uk)

## SUPPORT FOR THE VCS - Financial Management

ALL COMMUNITY and/or voluntary projects in Northumberland can now get on-site Financial Management support. This support will include the development/introduction of paper-based financial control systems, development of electronic systems of financial control, development/delivery of payroll systems and services as well as the development and implementation of appropriate organisation financial management policies and procedures.

The Financial Management Support Service will be delivered by a range of partners across Northumberland, ensuring investment in and development of existing service providers, building on existing identified needs, developing existing infrastructure capacity and developing local skills.

For further details please contact: Steve Elliott, Chief Officer, Blyth Valley Community Matters, Eric Tolhurst Centre, 3-13 Quay Road, Blyth, Northumberland, NE24 2AS. Tel: 01670 540969; Fax: 01670 540106; Mob: 07958 060041; Email: [shellott@btconnect.com](mailto:shellott@btconnect.com)

# A VILLAGE HALLS CONSORTIUM FOR NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND

VOLUNTEERS IN THE BOROUGH OF BERWICK and Alwick District have joined forces to help and support Village Halls in the area. At a recent meeting, chaired by the Community Council of Northumberland, they undertook to set up a formally constituted Village Halls Consortium. "I have tried for several years to find people who would take the idea forward," commented Alan Hedley, the Village Halls Advisor with CCN. "We as development officers can see the benefit, but it takes local people to make it happen."

It is expected that the Consortium will organise 2 annual events at which Village Hall Committee Members can get together to share experiences and expertise. A Consortium could even get as far as applying for funding on behalf of Village Halls in North Northumberland, but that would be a project for the future. "We know what Village Halls can achieve by working together," said Clive Hallam-Baker, the newly elected interim Chairman of the Consortium, "A good example of this is the way a number of Village Halls in the Berwick area saved money by sharing the costs associated with Licence applications".

An interim Management Committee has been formed and consists of 10 members. All members have an involvement with a local Village Hall or are keen to support the objects of the Consortium. This interim committee will come together over the next few months to prepare the Consortium inaugural meeting. The enthusiasm is great and ideas are plentiful!

All Village Halls in North Northumberland are encouraged to make contact with the Consortium by phoning their local representative: for Berwick - Clive Hallam-Baker (01890-820501) and for Alnwick - Sylvia Harrison (01670-787127).

The next meeting of the interim committee will be held on Tuesday 17 January from 2-4 pm at the Breamish Hall in Powburn.

## Free IT Health Check

IS YOUR ORGANISATION fully up to speed with the latest IT issues? Are you struggling with your software? Do you have a strong firewall in place?

If you're not sure we can help! NCDN is launching a completely free ICT support service for voluntary and community organisations across Northumberland. This government-funded project through Change Up is designed to ensure that local VCS are confidently using their IT equipment to its full capabilities.

One of our friendly computer experts will visit you to evaluate your IT requirements. They will pinpoint actions that will aid your organisation's future IT strategy. We will then provide free follow-up support according to your needs. This could be in the form of training, helping you update software or hardware or even helping you purchase the right computer for the job.

To qualify for the health check you simply need to be a local not-for-profit organisation operating without in-house IT support.

### IT Health Check

Please note we have a limited number of spaces so the sooner you contact us the better!

Ellie Noble (Project Manager)  
Email: [ellie@ncdn.org](mailto:ellie@ncdn.org)  
Phone No: 01665 576812  
Website: [www.ncdn.org](http://www.ncdn.org)

Members of the working group at their November meeting in Watson Memorial Hall, Lucker



## NEW CHILDREN'S NETWORK

WOULD YOU BE INTERESTED in joining a Network of voluntary and community organisations working with children, young people and their families? It aims to provide a collective voice for those organisations to influence the Families and Children's Trust (FACT). This is the new structure which plans, commissions and delivers services to children, young people and their families throughout the county.

As the voluntary and community sector (VCS) makes such an important contribution in providing these services, it's important for the sector to have a direct input into determining policy and organising delivery so that the very best interests of young people are served. The FACT Partnership is very broad. It includes young people themselves, as well as all those who have an interest in children and young people. It plans to meet twice a year. The smaller FACT Board meets quarterly and presently includes one representative from the VCS.

Clearly it is important to set up a mechanism to ensure that the voice of those hundreds of VCS organisations and groups is heard loud and clear. That is why a Network is proposed to initiate a way of working to ensure that their views are listened to and acted upon at every level of FACT. This VCS/FACT Network, as it is currently known, aims to avoid creating just another "talking shop". Instead it proposes to put control of the VCS input to FACT firmly in the hands of network members.

There is a lot of talk from both local and national government about partnership working and "engaging" with the voluntary and community sector. This new Network hopes to convert those laudable aims into reality.

If you are interested in joining the VCS/FACT Network, or know someone who might be, please contact Gladys Twizell at the Northumberland Children's Fund, Epsom Drive, Jubilee Industrial Estate, Ashington, on 01670 523366 or email [gladys.twizell@nch.org.uk](mailto:gladys.twizell@nch.org.uk)

## TEAM EFFORT AT ANCROFT!

THE NEW £165,000 HALL at Ancroft, a small village in the North of the Berwick Borough, was officially opened on 14 October 2005, ahead of schedule and completed within six months! The new hall replaces a building taken from an airstrip at Haggerston in 1921.

The Chairman, Jim Turner, of the new Ancroft Memorial Hall was keen to highlight the team effort that had gone into developing and building the new community facility. At the official opening event, Alan Hedley and Els Nicol of CCN received special thanks for their help and support with regard to finding funding sources such as DEFRA and the Northern Rock Foundation.

Bill Nesbit, the Treasurer, explained to those present that a great deal of work had been involved in securing match-funding for this project. "Now that we have this fine new facility, please use it," he encouraged all community members who came to admire the new building. "The building has cost £165,000 and so far we have raised £125,000. We are now actively pursuing other sources of finance, but we will need to have many fundraising ventures and we need your support."

The rest of the evening was used to engage with the community, look at ways of developing new clubs and groups for the hall and to come up with suggestions for fundraising.

For further information, please contact our Village Halls Advisor, Alan Hedley in Morpeth (01670-517178).



The team, Ancroft Memorial Hall management committee. From left to right - Liz Bennett, Frank Nelson, Bill Nesbit (Treasurer), Margaret Wright, Felicity Hay and Jim Turner (Chairman)

## Role for Parishes in Licensing

MEMBERS ATTENDING THE NALC AGM in Morpeth in October had a lively debate about the operation of the new Licensing Act 2003. This is the Act which brought together the licensing of premises for the sale of alcohol and hot food, and for public entertainments. District councils are now fully responsible for granting and renewing these licences. Parish councils from throughout Northumberland and Newcastle were concerned that the Act does not give them a right to be consulted and, in many instances, it is 'hit or miss' whether they even get to hear about the applications relating to their area. Also, even where a parish council does make its views known, there is no automatic notification of the district council's final decision. This practice is in contrast to the town and country planning development control system. It was therefore resolved that NALC would press for a change in the legislation and, in the meantime, to request the district councils to consider introducing voluntarily a mechanism for consulting parish councils over licensing applications.

Still on the theme of the Licensing Act, the Community Council has recently raised a concern about the impact of the new licensing fee structure on small retail businesses, such as village shops, corner shops and garages, which sell small quantities of alcoholic drinks. The fees are high, in relation to the level of sales, and CCN is concerned that this is threatening the financial viability of those enterprises. So far, we have asked the Commission for Rural Communities for help and Lord Vinson of Roddam Dene (a CCN Vice-President and former chairman of the Rural Development Commission) has raised this issue in the House of Lords.

Even if we are too late to change the licensing fees which have already been paid, let's hope that this can be changed for the future.

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due to family ill-health. A presentation of the accounts, election of officers and election of Executive Committee, both Representative and Associate members concluded the business section of the agenda.

This year was the first opportunity for the CCN Director, Dr David Francis, to give the Address, which he presented jointly with the Venerable Bob Langley on the subject of:

### CCN - THE PAST, PRESENT AND THE FUTURE

The presentation covered the history of the organisation from its beginnings in 1951. While representatives of organisations who were at the meeting were aware of many historical aspects of CCN's work that related to their own organisation, many other facets were less obvious.

CCN history shows our involvement in research and inception of groups such as Age Concern, CABx, REALL and the Pre-School Association, and the CCN staff, from very varied backgrounds, continue to offer a multitude of experience in areas very relevant to the groups supported in the county, including parish plans, VAT, development trusts, links into a variety of funders, community panels and the ChangeUp consortium.

Recurring themes continue to occupy our thoughts on a regular basis. Basic services such as electricity, television, phone coverage and water vie for attention with school closures, grant aid, resolving conflicts, rural centres and re-organisations, yet these are also linked in some ways to emerging opportunities in new EU programmes, DEFRA Social and Community programmes and Local Area Agreements.

"The present" led on to the future of the organisation, with many changes and challenges to face, not least the end of a number of funding opportunities, e.g. EU Objective 2 and reductions in Lottery funding, together with the realisation that CCN was also having to re-think our own future, what to do and how we will be structured. The ultimate decision to "down-size" the organisation was a difficult but necessary step with many implications and limitations on work-load but CCN would continue to apply itself to the aims and objectives of the organisation to its best ability in the future.

After a period of discussion with

questions from the floor, the speakers were thanked and the meeting closed.

### \* WINGATES WINS THROUGH

On Tuesday 6 December Linda Wilson, Sue Rollitt and Kirsty Bell attended an awards ceremony in London for the Calor Village of the Year® competition, where the guest of honour was Alan Titchmarsh. Although they knew that they had won the Building Community Life competition in Northumberland it came as a great surprise to them when it was announced that

Wingates had won the Business category, and £500 prize money, in the North England region of the competition, competing against villages from Cheshire, Cumbria, Humber & Wolds, Lancashire, North Lincolnshire, Redcar & Cleveland, Tees Valley and Yorkshire.

CCN congratulates Wingates on their success and commends the team of Linda, Sue and Kirsty who collated the put-together of the application. It is an achievement of which Wingates and Northumberland can be proud.

## A CONFERENCE CENTRE IN THE HEART OF THE NORTH PENNINES

DENEHOLME IS AN EDWARDIAN MANSION, situated on the outskirts of Allendale, which was once owned by Northumberland County Council when it was used as an outdoor centre. The Centre was closed in 2000 and later acquired by the Fawside Foundation with the view to developing the site as a conference and training centre for community and private use.

Over a period of some years the Community Council of Northumberland has been happy to give advice and support to Fawside in the development of their Deneholme Project. Funding advice has been provided through our community development officer at Haltwhistle (latterly Chris Barker) whilst specialist VAT advice has been obtained from Alan Hedley, Assistant Director based in our Morpeth office.

The hard work though throughout these years has been carried out by James Watson, the project manager, Anne Grieve, project officer and the trustees of the charity who are now seeing the fruits of their labour in the refurbished building.

Deneholme residential and conference centre is now open for business. Managed by Fawside, a local environment and social enterprise charity, the Centre offers:

- Accommodation for groups of up to thirty, in small shared rooms with allocated facilities.
- Day conference facilities for up to seventy people.
- Nearly 300 square metres of training and meeting space, including a large multi use space, a separate conference room and an IVT suite. Presentation aids are available.
- Attractive communal areas with a central log burning stove, sun lounge, lawns and woodland gardens
- Superb catering based on the best in local produce, with a range of menus to meet all needs.



CCN congratulates Fawside on its successful venture. For more information on Deneholme go to [www.deneholme.co.uk](http://www.deneholme.co.uk)

## WIND PRESSURE GROWS

PARISH COUNCILS AND OTHER COMMUNITY GROUPS are becoming increasingly anxious about the plethora and scale of wind farm developments which are being mooted for many of Northumberland's rural areas. Hitherto, wind turbines have been pretty few and far-between: for example, a small row along the coast at Cambois, and the turbine formerly at Knowesgate, near Kirkwhelpington.

However, in recent months news has emerged about a large number of possible schemes, with possibly over 150 turbines in total, and likely to be visible from dozens of miles in each direction. So far, sites have been identified in the locality of Berwick, Alnwick, the Wanneys, Hexham, Haltwhistle and Consett. A number of different developers are involved. With the planning applications, some will be determined by the relevant local planning authority; but the larger ones will be decided by the Department for Trade and Industry.

Wind power can make a contribution to the nation's need to move away from a dependence on oil and coal. Some of the developers are offering the prospect of grant aid schemes and/or shared ownership, to benefit local residents and communities. However, there are real fears that the scale and number of windfarms will have a serious impact on the landscape and attractiveness of Northumberland, and hence on people's quality of life and the tourism industry.

We in the Community Council do not have a ready answer. Through our REALL initiative, we are happy to promote and support community-led initiatives which embrace a range of renewable energy technologies. We also recognise that farmers and landowners must diversify their enterprises, of which renewable energy opens up some exciting opportunities. However, we are concerned about the very disjointed and unco-ordinated way in which 'the wind industry' is being allowed to develop, and at the apparent lack of sufficient controls to safeguard important landscapes and environments. We therefore very much hope that the Government and local authorities will work closely together to ensure a more acceptable approach to the planning and placement of windfarms, in Northumberland and elsewhere.

For more details about prospective windfarm developments in Northumberland, it is worth looking at the website of Northumberland and Newcastle Society ([www.nandnsociety.org.uk](http://www.nandnsociety.org.uk)) which has a useful summary and overview.

## 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](mailto:alanhedley@ccn.org.uk).

Copy deadline for the next edition is Tuesday 17 January 2006.

For more information on the Community Council check out their website at [www.ccn.org.uk](http://www.ccn.org.uk)

## HOW TO CONTACT US

### MAIN OFFICE

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