

## COMMUNITIES PLANNING FOR THE MEMBERS

VILLAGE APPRAISALS, parish plans, community health checks..... they came with a variety of names but they are very much the same thing: an assessment of needs, problems and ideas, linked to an action plan or programme to make changes and influence decisions at a local level. Crucially, they are undertaken by, with and for the local community.

In Northumberland, we have a history of such initiatives dating back to the early 1970s. Many of them have generated a variety of benefits: new village halls, social housing schemes, better bus services, a raised community spirit, for example.

We in the Community Council are keen to see not only an increase in parish plans/community appraisals, but we want to see higher standards, to ensure that they cover all of the important issues, and that they are effectively implemented. For these reasons, we are holding two events in late November, both to promote good practice and to encourage further communities to take the initiative:

- **Wednesday 29 November 6.30p.m. in the west of the county**
- **Thursday 30 November 6.30p.m. in the north of the county**

At these events we will also be assessing the new grant aid scheme to support the production of parish plans. For more details of the events, contact CCN at Tower Buildings.

## THE 32-YEAR FACE LIFT

PREPARATIONS are well-advanced for this year's Annual General Meeting of the Community Council, to be held at Walton Village Hall on Tuesday 7 November at 2pm. We are pleased to be joined again by guest speaker John Litherland of the Northumberland Strategic Partnership who will be drawing upon a variety of key initiatives and programmes to interpret what they mean for local communities around Northumberland. As well as the future of One North East's programmes and local partnership initiatives, there are the implications of the Local Area Agreement, the Natural Communities Initiative, the opportunities of the Local Government White Paper... and more.

Before John's presentation, there will be the official business of the AGM, chaired by our President, the Duke of Northumberland. Venerable Bob Langley will be presenting a very up-beat annual report, demonstrating how we have responded to and developed from the very challenging issues which we faced last Autumn as a result of the loss of European Objective 2 funding.

As heralded in the previous edition of Community News, we will also be proposing a name change and a streamlining of our Executive Committee. Following consultation inside and out-with our organisation, we will recommend a new name of Community Action Northumberland, to take effect in January. This new name reflects the dynamism which we seek to promote,

(continued on next page)

# AN OVERWHELMING EXPRESSION OF SUPPORT

WE IN THE COMMUNITY COUNCIL are keen to ensure that we provide services to communities, voluntary bodies and partner organisations which are appropriate and of good quality. Although we constantly receive feedback through a variety of routes, in August this year we undertook a questionnaire survey of voluntary groups, individuals who are active in their communities, and public bodies. By the deadline of 30 September we had received 92 completed questionnaires: 55% from voluntary bodies, 22% from individuals and 23% from public bodies.

As a county-wide organisation, with a very limited level of staffing, we provide a pro-active information service by publishing and circulating widely Northumberland Community News every two months, and a more reactive advisory service - mostly on request but sometimes by our making direct approaches to particular communities or organisations. Our survey covered both our direct services and our readers' views about Northumberland Community News.

Over the past year, 73% of respondents had received direct help from us and 11% of these had received our advice on more than 10 occasions. Almost all respondents (98%) felt that we had responded either very promptly or within a reasonable length of time. All respondents found our services to be helpful, and 68% described us as very helpful or essential.

We also asked people for their assessment of specific areas of expertise which we offer. Those rating them as good to excellent were: funding 96%; constitutions 97%; charity law 100%; legal structures 100%; plans/surveys 95%; management/administration 100%; VAT

all but one; resolving difficulties 100%; training and conferences 95%; community buildings 100%; parish councils 100%.

Northumberland Community News is our main means of keeping a wide variety of interested bodies informed about new opportunities, issues which might affect community groups, examples of good practice, forthcoming events, and news from the Community Council and related organisations such as the Northumberland Association of Local Councils. It was first published in 1982, and its format and mix of content has remained fairly constant ever since. Although we are always asking for feedback, we felt that this questionnaire would be a good opportunity to ask readers about its size, format, content, circulation, frequency of publication, impact and a variety of other matters. The survey revealed a high level of satisfaction with its size, readability, size of print, presentation and content. However, there was more divided opinion on how frequently it should be published: whether every 1, 2 or 3 months. Readers are happy to see a mix of subject matter: information about funding, legislative requirements, CCN people, CCN services, case-studies of community projects and specialist information. There was strong support to continue with our practice of including contributions from people 'outside' of CCN, and also to introduce a letters column: some suggested that this should be in the form of questions, which could then include a CCN response.

However, we should not be complacent, and we received some useful suggestions for further improvements: for example, by ensuring we cover topical issues (concerned with, for example, the environment, social housing, countryside access problems) and by ensuring better cross-referencing between CCN and our website.

Although the findings are very supportive, we will nevertheless use them to make improvements. With Community News, we will take on board the suggestions we have received, whenever possible, and we will be looking to polish-up its appearance.

We will also take steps to ensure that our advisory and training services are widely accessible, that we make increasing use of technology such as internet-based guidance notes and information sheets, and that we remain on top of emerging policy issues and legislation. We will also run similar surveys in the future, to ensure that our services are appropriate, effective, and appreciated.

Thank you to all respondents who took part. We promised that there would be a draw, and £50 prize for the first name selected at random. We are pleased to confirm that this is A Wilson, of Bowsden Village Hall, Berwick upon Tweed.

## HOLBURN VILLAGE GREEN



Lord Vinson, with his wife Yvonne, and Stephen Mather who made the wrought iron entrance gates to the green. (Photo by Bob Huggin Photography, Embleton)

ITS NOT OFTEN that one hears of the tiny Berwickshire hilltop hamlet of Holburn, just 10 households, but on 5th August this year the hamlet received nationwide publicity on the BBC Breakfast News when it covered the opening ceremony of their new village green.

Lord Vinson noted that there was a local demand for a green space for visiting Morris dancers and as a site to hold village parties. After selling a family farm he donated the land for the green.

A village green is legally defined as an area where people in the community have enjoyed legitimate sports or pastimes for at least 20 years. This obstacle was surmounted when Lord Vinson managed to get the Commons Act amended as it passed through the House of Lords earlier in the year to simplify the gifting of village greens so that they could become inalienable within months rather than having to wait at least 20 years to prove usage.

This was the first new village green in Northumberland for a great many years and at the opening ceremony a small stone commemorating the donation was inscribed "Holburn Green given by the Vinson family who farmed the Hettons 1971 to 2002"

# FIRE SAFETY REGULATIONS AND COMMUNITY BUILDINGS

THE REGULATORY REFORM (Fire Safety) Order 2005 took effect from 1 October 2006. It reforms previous fire safety laws and covers general fire precautions and other safety duties in non domestic property. The Order requires:

- the appointment of a "responsible person (s)"
- a safety "risk assessment" and requires fire precautions to be put in place where necessary and where it is reasonable and practicable to do so.

In a nutshell the main emphasis of the new order is on reducing the risk of fire and preventing fire. Building owners / managers will be required to carry out a fire risk assessment and then take the necessary steps to remove or reduce the risk so that it is as low as possible.

Prior to 1 October many village hall committees were able to obtain an inspection from the Fire and Rescue Service. From 1 October they will still be able to obtain an inspection but under the Regulatory Reform Order. The village hall management committee will also be required to appoint a responsible person, with some experience and knowledge, to carry out a fire risk assessment.

There is a recommended method of carrying out a fire risk assessment and putting in place fire safety management procedures and arrangements which can be found in the

Government guide "Fire safety risk assessment for small and medium places of assembly". This can be downloaded from: [www.firesafetyguides.communities.gov.uk](http://www.firesafetyguides.communities.gov.uk)

Where a hall has had regular inspections in the past and sought the advice of fire officers they should be sufficiently informed and aware of the standards that they are expected to maintain. To assist them in this procedure management committees should be aware that ACRE has produced two helpful information sheets:

*Information sheet 37: Fire Safety in Village Halls*

*Information sheet 15: Health and Safety Legislation (includes a section on risk assessment)*

Currently priced at £4 each plus £1 post these publications can be purchased direct from ACRE, Somerford Court, Somerford Road, Cirencester, Gloucestershire, GL7 1TW: telephone 01285 653477.

Additional the Community Council, in partnership with the Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service, have arranged a number of short (two hour) training sessions to explain how to complete a fire risk assessment.

These sessions are to be held at Wylam (morning), Friday 17 November, Belford (afternoon) Monday 27 November and Morpeth (evening) Wednesday 13 December.

Full information plus a booking form will be sent to all village halls and can be downloaded from CCN's website at [www.ccn.org.uk/contray/html/services/village-halls](http://www.ccn.org.uk/contray/html/services/village-halls)

## A PENNY SAVED IS A PENNY EARNED

NORTHUMBERLAND now has a credit union covering the whole county. Northumberland Credit Union Limited has incorporated MorCred, formerly Morpeth & District Credit Union, and PACE, Prudhoe & District Savings Group.

Saving and borrowing with the credit union is easy and makes sense for everyone. Interest changes are much lower than with most other lenders and there are no additional charges for arranging the loan. There is also free insurance on savings and loans.

The savings scheme is open to people aged 18+, who work or live in Northumberland

### Money matters - your questions answered

#### What is a credit union?

*It is a non profit making organisation owned and run by local people for local people*

#### What are the advantages of being in a credit union?

*Ownership of the organisation which looks after your money*

*Financial Security*

*Access to fair and affordable credit*

#### Will my money be safe?

By law credit unions have to be insured against fraud and theft. Each year they must submit audited accounts to the Financial Services Authority, so your money is as safe as if it were in a bank or building society

For more information, contact Northumberland Credit Union at 37 Shields Road, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE61 2SA, telephone 01670 503666.

### NEW MINIMUM WAGE

New national minimum wage levels have been set, which take effect from 1 October 2006 (the previous rates are in brackets):

Aged 22 or above	£5.35 (£5.05)
Aged 18-21	£4.45 (£4.25)
Aged 16-17	£3.30 (£3.00)

These rates are a legal requirement, for part-time as well as full-time employees.

## COMIC RELIEF

SINCE 1985 Comic Relief has raised over £400 million to tackle poverty and social injustice in the UK, Africa, and more recently in some of the poorest countries in other parts of the world. This money is principally raised through the generosity of the public via the Red Nose Day and Sport Relief campaigns.

Comic Relief promises that for every pound the charity gets directly from the public, a pound goes to help people affected by poverty and social injustice to transform their lives.

From the funds raised 40% goes to help communities in the United Kingdom. During the period 2005 to 2008 Comic Relief has 6 UK programmes:

- Young people
- Older People
- Mental Health
- Refugees & Asylum Seekers
- Domestic Violence
- Disadvantaged Communities

The Disadvantaged Communities programme is a small grants scheme (up to £5,000) that may be of interest to some communities and organisations in Northumberland. Applicants must come from areas affected by poverty or disadvantage and will need to demonstrate that their work will achieve one or more of the following outcomes:

- change things for the better
- get better services for their community
- become more involved in local decision making
- run their community groups more effectively

There are more details on their website, [www.comicrelief.com](http://www.comicrelief.com) with the added feature of a self assessment process which potential applicants can access on line before deciding whether they are eligible to apply.

## THE COMMUNITY ASPECT OF WINDFARMS

THERE HAS BEEN plenty of news coverage over the last year of possible windfarm developments in Northumberland. A large number of sites, stretching from County Durham to the Scottish border, are being looked at, by various prospective developers.

A number of different planning authorities would be involved. If all of the proposals were permitted, there would be a massive impact on the landscape, local communities and the visitor economy. Nevertheless, wind-energy will need to make a larger contribution to this country's energy needs in future, and it is highly likely that some, but not all, of the prospective developments will be granted planning permission.

Therefore, whether or not all of these schemes are desirable, proper consideration must be given to ensuring that these developments 'put something back' into the community within Northumberland. It is also important that appropriate support and safeguards are in place, to enable communities to secure benefits which are appropriate to their circumstances.

NALC - the Northumberland Association of Local Councils- has therefore welcomed a new initiative in Northumberland to work towards a 'protocol for community benefits from windfarm development'. These benefits typically take the form of a grant aid scheme for community projects similar to those which are linked to major housing or minerals developments, but there could be other options, such as community ownership of some of the wind turbines. The aim is to have a common approach throughout the county, which would apply to all windfarm developers and planning authorities. Drawing upon experiences from other parts of the UK, such a protocol could ensure communities are not 'sold short', in the planning process. The protocol would be implemented if and when a planning proposal is approved: it will not form part of the planning decision-making process itself.

Work on the protocol is being carried out by consultants Community Viewfinders, under the auspices of the Northumberland Renewable Energy Group - a partnership of local authorities, other public bodies and the voluntary and private sectors. It is hoped that a report and draft protocol will be available for wider consultation by December, and NALC/CCN will be supporting that consultation process.

## New Training Opportunities for Parish Councils

NALC - the Northumberland Association of local Councils- is running a series of training events this Autumn. As well as introductory events for clerks and councillors, there is training on a variety of legal responsibilities, including the Code of Conduct, employment requirements, and the Freedom of Information Act.

In addition, we are running an event jointly with the Land Registry and Northumberland County Council on land and property matters. This is a new initiative, which will explore the role and benefits of land registration, the role of parish councils as land-owners, and the law and practice of claiming ownership of apparently ownerless land.

All events are £5.00 per head, except for the land and property event which is free of charge. Dates and venues are:

### 1. New parish council clerks:

Wylam Institute  
Tuesday 31 October 2006 7-9 p.m.

Alnwick Mechanics Institute  
Wednesday 8 November 2006  
7-9 p.m.

### 2. The basics of parish council work, for councillors:

Wooler, Cheviot Centre  
Thursday 9 November 2006  
7-9 p.m.

Haydon Bridge Comm Assoc.  
Tuesday 21 November 2006  
7-9 p.m.

### 3. Legal responsibilities-Code of Conduct, Freedom of Information, Employment Matters:

Belford, Bell View Resource Centre  
Wednesday 1 November 2006  
7-9 p.m.

Hexham Community Centre  
Monday 6 November 2006 7-9 p.m.

### 4. Land and property matters - incl HM Registry, claiming ownership and related matters

Morpeth County Hall Council Chamber  
Thursday 23 November 2006  
7-9 p.m.

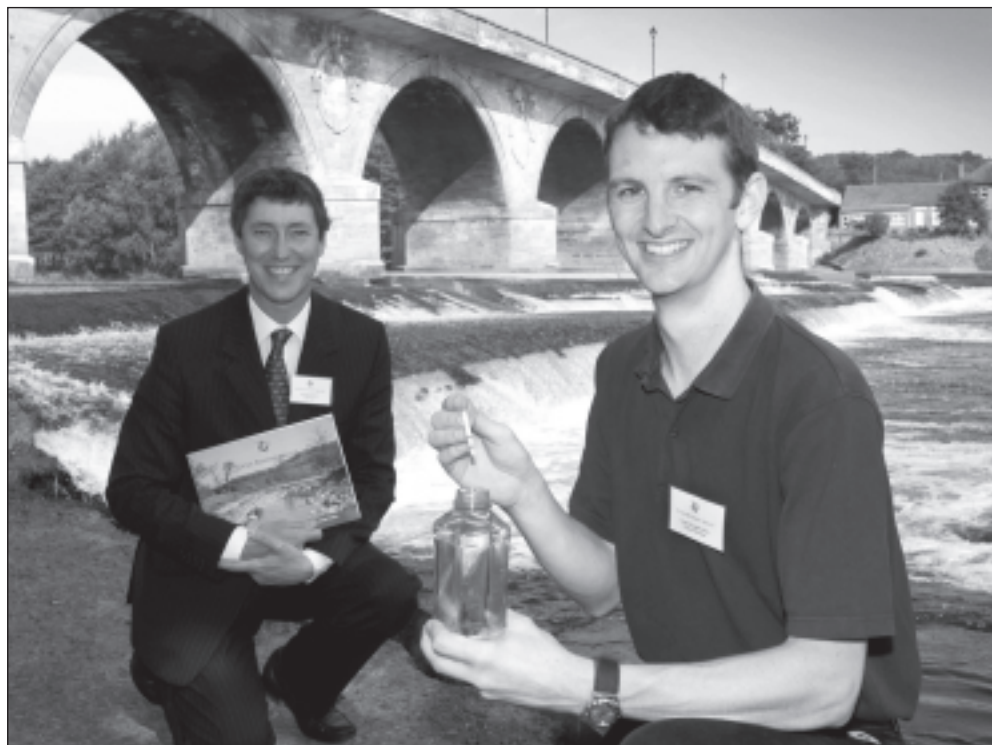
To book a place at any of these, contact NALC at Tower Buildings, 9 Oldgate, Morpeth, NE61 1PY. Telephone no: 01670 517178.

(continued on from page 1)

and by dropping the word 'council' it overcomes the long-standing confusion with local authorities and parish-level councils. This is the first name change since 1974, when we became the Community Council of Northumberland.

After the AGM we will be losing from our committee some valued, long-serving members including Philip Brooks, Bob Burston and Bryan Harwood. Philip, from Wylam, has been active in his parish council, Tynedale Council, the Lord Lieutenancy and Magistrates network, and has represented NALC on CCN for many years. Bob is Rector of Wooler, a former Chairman of CCN, a trustee of our national body ACRE, and an ardent campaigner for village schools. Bryan, who represents CPRE, is a former housing officer and has an active interest in the environment, sustainability and countryside access. We thank them for their service.

# RIVER RENAISSANCE - Tyne Rivers Trust to improve your river!



Andrew Davison and Archie Ruggles-Brise at Hexham Bridge, the site of a future fish pass.

THE TYNE RIVERS TRUST, a local environmental charity based in Hexham, has published a wide ranging Strategic Action Plan for the River Tyne that will begin the process of securing the long term future of the river and its tributaries.

The Action Plan identifies a number of major projects that will be carried out over the next three years at a cost of over £1.4 million and is the result of a year long process of detailed consultation with virtually all of the organisations, statutory bodies and individuals who have an interest in the River Tyne.

"Although the Tyne Rivers Trust has only been in existence for a year and a half, we have received tremendous support for our work from all of the key players who have a stake in a healthy river system," states Chairman Andrew Davison. "Our consultation exercise covered the length of the Tyne and beyond and helped us to establish the priority areas for action that people had told us were at the top of their list."

The Action Plan details a number of projects that will be undertaken or initiated during the next three years, including:

- **River Watch** - a scheme to train volunteers and school children in basic skills to enhance their understanding and enjoyment of the river system and to assist catchment-wide environmental monitoring
- **Wild Angling Passport Fishing Scheme** that will increase the availability of access to fishing on tributaries and waters, help improve habitat, and gather information on fish populations in the Tyne catchment in partnership with the Environment Agency, North Pennines AONB, farmers, landowners and fishermen.
- **Habitat Improvements** that will improve the habitat and biodiversity of the river catchment
- **Construction of a fish pass at Hexham weir** that will assist in the migration of fish both up and down the River Tyne, past this partial barrier
- **River Cleanups** - the Trust will support organisations and individuals in removing litter and debris along the river system
- **Web-based Information System** providing a central point of information on the condition of the river, attractions, events and opportunities for recreation, helping to further tourism to the region and provide information for visitors and those working on the river
- **Geographical Information System (GIS)** to provide a vital computerised management tool to record information from agencies such as the Environment Agency and English Nature, as well as additional information gathered by individuals and organisations participating in the River Watch programme
- **Catchment research** to evaluate the economic and social value of water-based recreation surrounding the Tyne
- **Catchment Activity Database** listing all individuals and organisations carrying out activities in the Tyne catchment.

The Trust is looking for support and volunteers for its work and if you are interested in helping you can find out more from the website [www.tyneriverstrust.org](http://www.tyneriverstrust.org) or by contacting the Trust's Project Manager, Archie Ruggles-Brise on 01434 611817.

# NATURAL ENGLAND

NATURAL ENGLAND was formally launched on the 6th October. The new organization brings together English Nature and parts of the Rural Development Service and the Countryside Agency. In the past these organizations have had the following roles.

**English Nature** is the independent Government agency that champions the conservation of wildlife and geology throughout England.

The **Rural Development Service** is the largest deliverer of a range of advisory and regulatory rural services. With the administration of a multi-million pound grant budget for schemes which support land management, rural businesses and rural communities, the RDS is the single largest organisation working for the benefit of rural areas in England.

The **Countryside Agency's Landscape, Access and Recreation Division** aims to help everyone to respect, protect and enjoy the countryside - protecting natural landscapes; and encouraging access to, enjoyment of and sustainable management and use of the countryside.

This new agency; **Natural England** will work for people, places and nature with responsibility for enhancing biodiversity, landscapes and wildlife in rural, urban, coastal and marine areas; promoting access, recreation and public wellbeing, and contributing to the way natural resources are managed - so they can be enjoyed now and for future generations. To achieve their purpose, Natural England has defined four strategic outcomes that will be used to focus activities and resources.

- *A healthy natural environment*
- *Sustainable use of the natural environment*
- *A secure environmental future*
- *Enjoyment of the natural environment*

These outcomes are in no particular order and will fully interact with one another. A follow up article in the next issue of NCN will give a flavour of what Natural England can do and how the new organisation might help your community in Northumberland.

In the meantime anyone requiring further information can contact Natural England on 0191 229 5500 where they will be put in touch with the person covering their area.

## EPILEPSY ACTION

EPILEPSY ACTION is the UK's largest member-led epilepsy organisation. An estimated 440,000 people in the UK have epilepsy. The organisation provides information about coping with epilepsy and seizures, with free help and advice through the use of email and telephone helplines.

An important part of its work is to set up volunteer-led branches throughout the country for those living with epilepsy. Epilepsy Action now has a presence in the North East and Bob Dennis, Regional Service Manager for the organisation, is currently working towards identifying what interest there might be in developing a branch in the Northumberland area.

Bob commented; "Considering Epilepsy is the most prevalent of all neurological conditions, it is the least understood and is often confronted by fear, which leads to prejudice.

Through branch development we can raise awareness of what it is like to live with the condition and help dispel the myths around Epilepsy. Branches exist to support those living with Epilepsy and work towards promoting facts not fiction as to what it means for those who live with the condition".

Bob is looking for volunteers to help with a number of activities:

- *Establish Information Advice Days*
- *Support the development of branches.*
- *Actively promote Epilepsy Awareness across all agencies.*
- *Fund Raising.*
- *Promoting a Regional Conference.*
- *Access to training and support is available.*

Bob is keen to gauge what interest there is for a local branch of Epilepsy Action. So please help him to help you by contacting him on 0776 724 2658 or e-mail: [bdennis@epilepsy.org.uk](mailto:bdennis@epilepsy.org.uk). You can also write to him at the following address: PO Box 359, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE3 2DJ.

## REALL AND LEADER

WE, CCN, HAVE RECENTLY introduced some changes in responsibility for two programmes which are under our wing.

**REALL** - Renewable Energy at a Local Level - is a Government-funded scheme through which we provide advice and encouragement to community groups in Northumberland and Durham to incorporate renewable energy solutions in their projects. With mounting uncertainties about future funding, it has been difficult to attract and retain staff. We have therefore arranged for our neighbours in Morpeth, consultants North Energy, to continue this support until March 2007.

This work will be led by Ms Nicky Smith and Ms Elaine Ruff, who are contactable on 01670 516949.

**LEADER** - the North Northumberland LEADER + European programme encourages local, bottom-up approaches to rural development. It promotes and spreads good ideas and practice and it funds new projects. With the departure of Neil Wilson to undertake world travel, we have appointed consultants David Brettell and Alan Robson to undertake the programme management. Dawn Brodie-Clark will continue to provide the administrative support. The LEADER office remains as before, at 52 High Street, Wooler, Northumberland, NE71 6GB.

## THE LOCAL NETWORK FUND

THE LOCAL NETWORK FUND for Children and Young People in Northumberland is managed by the Community Foundation serving Tyne & Wear and Northumberland. The fund is part of a national government initiative aimed at supporting organisations in Northumberland that focus on helping children and young people up to 19 years of age, and awards grants of £250 to £7000 under five themes:

**Enjoy & Achieve:** Projects or activities that help children and young people maximise their potential and develop skills for adulthood (e.g. theatre arts groups, self advocacy skills programmes, cultural dance and music projects, CV classes)

**Make a Positive Contribution:** Projects or activities which enable children and young people to use their skills and abilities in ways to enhance their own lives and the lives of their community (e.g. conservation schemes, recycling programmes, mentoring projects)

**Staying Safe:** Projects or activities that contribute to children and young people being protected from harm and neglect, and growing up able to look after themselves (e.g. anti bullying projects, safe cycling groups, after-school clubs, self-defence groups)

**Economic Wellbeing:** Projects or activities which help children and young people overcome income barriers and achieve their full potential in life (e.g. preparation for work and training, financial literacy classes for young people, homework clubs)

**Being Healthy:** Projects or activities that promote a healthy lifestyle so that children and young people are able to enjoy good health (e.g. sports sessions, healthy eating classes, peer support programmes on drug misuse)

The Fund prioritises small organisations (with a constitution or set of rules), which work within local communities.

If you have a project that you believe would fit with the criteria of the fund, then you can obtain an application pack by telephoning the National Call Centre on 0845 1130161.

Should you need help with the form or any further advice, you can contact your local CCN Community Development worker whose details can be found on the back page of this publication, or, if your group is located in Blyth or Wansbeck you can contact: Blyth Valley CVS on 01670 353623 or Wansbeck CVS on 01670 816751.



# HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND TO SAFEGUARD DAVISON'S OBELISK

THE HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND (HLF) has awarded a grant of £43,500.00 to a works committee set up as a joint venture between Felton Parish Council and Newton-on-the-Moor and Swarland Parish Council, with the brief to repair and restore the obelisk, by the old A1 near Swarland. The stone will be cleaned and repaired, along with the metal railings and the stone support wall. The area around the obelisk will be of gravel, with a flagged wheelchair access from a new lay-by. An informative notice board will be provided, and educational visits will be arranged.



The Obelisk is a Grade 2 listed structure erected in 1807 by a Swarland resident by the name of Davison, as a way of remembrance of the Battle of Trafalgar, and displays a quotation from Admiral Nelson's famous signal before the battle, together with a mention of his friendship with him. Very little maintenance had been carried out over the years when it was finally decided that it should be refurbished for future generations, it being an important part of our heritage. After a long period, the funding is now in place and it is hoped that the work will start in the near future.

John Taylor, the Chairman of the Works Committee, and a member of Newton-on-the-Moor and Swarland Parish Council, said "We are delighted that The Heritage Lottery Fund has been able to help us to preserve this Monument to one of our national heroes, Lord Nelson".

Explaining the importance of the award, HLF regional manager Dr. Keith Bartlett said: "Through the restoration of Davison's Obelisk and the education programme that accompanies it, not only will this historically important focal point be restored, it will also allow people to appreciate the interesting story behind it and through this take pride in their local heritage"

For further information, please contact John Taylor at 01670 787561 or E Mail: johndctaylor1@onetel.com

## NORTHUMBERLAND'S TOP VILLAGE 2006

ON 22 AUGUST this year, Allendale was revealed on the Village of the Year website as the winner of the 2006 Calor Northumberland Building Community Life competition.

Larry Winger, co-ordinator for Allendale's bid, expressed delight at news of the award. "People we talk to all over the district of Tynedale always smile when we mention Allendale, and comment on how much is going on in the village. We thought that this competition was a good way to recognise the community activity, and we express our appreciation to everyone in the patch for making this village such a great place to live."

A total of five villages were in line for prizes in the competition, which was run in every county in England as part of the Calor Village of the Year® competition or as a stand alone competition thanks to support from DEFRA (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs). The villages of Allendale, Bamburgh, Falstone, Felton and Norham were shortlisted from an original tally of 15 entrants and judges had a very difficult task selecting just one winner.

Michelle O'Keefe, who organised the competition on behalf of the Community Council of Northumberland, commented: "We were very impressed by both the number and standard of entries received this year in Northumberland and our judges found it particularly difficult to narrow the 15 entries down to a shortlist of five, let alone selecting one winner. However, Allendale is such a vibrant and thriving village with such an inclusive community that it just edged its way through to win the competition, gaining an impressive £500 prize thanks to DEFRA's support."

As this year's county winner, the village of Allendale has the added honour of being nominated to go forward to represent the county in the prestigious Calor Village of the Year(r) for England competition. Over 40 villages representing counties through England will be taking part in the competition which has a total prize fund of over £39,000 and a top prize of £7,000. Allendale will initially be competing in the North England region of the competition against villages from Cheshire, Cumbria, Durham, Humber & Wolds, Lancashire, Tees Valley and Yorkshire.

Special mention must be made of Felton who received a Highly Commended award from the judges.

Representatives of Allendale will be presented with their prize money and a framed commemorative certificate at CCN's Annual General meeting on 7 November with Felton also receiving their award.

(For a more detailed report see <http://ccn.org.uk/contray/html/news/village-of-the-year-2006—county-winners.html>)

## Village Sub Post Office Re-opens



AFTER SEVERAL MONTHS without a Post Office, residents of Fourstones Village and the surrounding area are once again able to post a letter or parcel - without having to travel several miles to do so.

The original Sub Post Office closed several months ago, meaning that a new person who was willing and able to run the Postal service was needed. The obvious site for a new Sub Post Office was the only remaining retail outlet in the Village - Fourstones Service Station.

With the keen support of owners Dennis and Dorothy Bowman, who have run Fourstones Service Station for almost 40 years, the Post Office application process was successfully undertaken and the new Sub Post Office finally opened at the end of July.

Sub-Postmistress Dorothy Bowman is pictured with Hexham M.P. Peter Atkinson, who was delighted to post the first letter.

Sub-Postmistress Dorothy Bowman said "A community like ours really needs a Postal service close to hand. Too many are closing down for good and we are really pleased that we have been able to reintroduce services to the area. My husband Dennis has been a Parish Councillor for many years and I also get involved in supporting village life as much as possible. At the moment we are open from 9.00am to 12.00 noon from Monday to Saturday but hope to extend that as time goes on. In the meantime, we aim to give our customers a really First Class service!"

## 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 22nd November 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

David Francis, (Director),  
 Alan Hedley, (Assistant Director),  
 George Courtice, (Sector Development Officer),  
 Julie Crocker (CDO, Morpeth),  
 Christina Hall, Sue Andrew (Office)  
 Linda Frater, Margaret Tweddell,  
 Carol Megson, (Finance)  
 Tel. 01670 517178 Fax 01670 511400  
 Email [info@ccn.org.uk](mailto:info@ccn.org.uk)

### NORTHERN AREA

Julia Sharpley, (CDO Alnwick) 01665 605540  
 Kate Whitehead, Jean Worth (CarerLink co-ordinators), 01668 219951  
 David Brettell, Dawn Brodie-Clarke (Leader+) 01668 283898  
 Mark Shipperlee, BizFizz 01665 605977  
 Kelvin Rushworth (NNVA Belford) 01668 219879  
 Terri Bearhope (NNVA Berwick) 01289 308338  
 Marc Johnson (CDO Berwick) 01289 304141

### WESTERN AREA

Jane Hart, (CDO Hexham) 01434 607871  
 Lesley Allen, (Bellingham Community Trust) 01434 220714