



NORTHUMBERLAND COMMUNITY

NEWS

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SEASON'S GREETINGS



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



The office will be closed from midday Friday 22nd December opening again on Tuesday 2nd January

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CCN AGM

THIS YEAR'S AGM was held on Wednesday 7 November at the recently refurbished Whalton Village Hall and attracted many friends and representatives. CCN's President, the Duke of Northumberland, welcomed those present and introduced Sue Nicholson, one of the Hall's trustees, who in turn welcomed us the "village hall with a view" and gave a brief overview of the hall refurbishment project including a thank you to CCN for the help they gave throughout the project.

This was followed by the presentation of an award to representatives from Allendale in recognition of the village winning the Northumberland Community Life Competition 2006, which is part of the Calor Village of the Year competition.

The Venerable Bob Langley, Chairman of CCN, then presented a synopsis of the Trustee's Annual Report.

He commented that circumstances were more positive for CCN than had been the case in 2005, and necessary changes were well under way.

CCN now had a 3-year Business Plan and staff were working within a new structure enabling them to implement the business plan in action on the ground. Our national body ACRE (Action for Communities in Rural England) had put in place quality standards and having reached Level 1, CCN was now well on the way to achieving Level 2. Proposals were put forward at the AGM to enable the CCN Executive Committee to reduce in size of membership, and to allow for greater rotation of members which would assist in more effective decision-making and bring in new members.

The Chairman informed those present that CCN was well on the way to securing agreements on funding for the next two years and as a mark in the new phase for The Community Council of Northumberland, proposals were put forward for a name change for the organisation. After a lengthy consultation process, the agreed name would be Community Action Northumberland (CAN).

The organisation had continued to support and advise a huge number of community groups and organisations in order to aid their development and realise funding.

Work with Village Halls, Parish Councils and Parish Plans had continued and specialist advice given in the areas of VAT, licensing and constitutions. We therefore celebrate what has been achieved and has now come to an end, but look to the growth areas for the future.

The Chairman drew attention to five important areas for the future. Developing a communications strategy, both internal and external, for our organisation. Providing support for the continuing development of the Northumberland Voluntary and Community Sector Forum to ensure the voice of the sector is heard. Taking the lead on developing and supporting parish councils in relation to the Government White Paper, supporting and encouraging the Voluntary and Community Sectors in engaging with the LAA (Local Area Agreement) and in developing local networks, draw more people into membership of our organisation. These areas would become more prominent as the year proceeds.

Finally, the Chairman thanked those members of the Trustees and staff who had worked hard for the organisation and who had left us during 2006. Thanks also went to all existing Trustees and members of staff who had coped with all of the difficulties and who had helped move the organisation forward.

The official business of the organisation was then carried out. This included amendments to the constitution which would effect changes in the structure of the Executive Committee and confirm the proposed name change to Community Action Northumberland.

CCN's President then introduced our guest speaker, John Litherland-Chief Executive NSP who thanked CCN for inviting him to give the presentation at the 2006 Annual General Meeting.

The NSP were known as a funding organisation and he felt it was important that they remain so. He acknowledged the strong support he had received from CCN Chairman Bob Langley, who was also Chair of the NSP Board and also the work carried out over the last few months, by David Francis, the CCN Trustees and Staff in return for NSP investment.

His presentation covered the issues of the Northumberland Community Strategy, the LAA and Belonging Communities.

The NSP had been asked to produce a Countywide Community Strategy for Northumberland County Council. This document would provide an overarching, long-term strategy to promote the environmental, social and economic well-being of the locality. It would provide both a visionary and grounded view of the needs and aspirations of the constituent communities and would be important for all partners and stakeholders.

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David Francis, Director of CCN in conversation with John Litherland, Guest Speaker at the AGM.

A NEW YEAR, A NEW NAME

Following consultation inside and out of our organisation the Community Council of Northumberland proposed a name change at their November 2006 AGM. From the first of January 2007 we shall become Community Action Northumberland. The first visible evidence of this change and our new logo will be available on our website at its new address www.ca-north.org.uk Why not make a New Year's resolution to view the site?

NEW ROLES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR COUNCILS

MASSIVE CHANGES in councils' structures, operations and powers are in prospect, if opportunities presented in the Local Government White Paper are taken forward. The long expected White Paper was published in late October. Although its agenda for big cities falls far short of the new city-region governance arrangements which had been expected, the agenda for the 'shire' areas (including Northumberland) is more radical. Just 2 years after the regional referendum in the North East, the prospect of merging county and district councils to form unitary authorities is again in the spotlight.

Although Northumberland is likely to be pre-occupied with the prospect of re-organisation, the White Paper provides for a range of other developments as well:

- a push to create many more parish councils
- new 'community well-being' powers for Quality Parish Councils and new freedoms on making bylaws
- strengthened local charters for devolving power to parish-level councils
- a wider choice of titles for parish-level councils
- the possibility of clustering adjacent parish councils to address the bigger or more demanding issues
- new roles and powers for the individual members of principal local authorities, including a new 'Community Call of Action' power
- a new push for directly-elected mayors/council leaders

The starting-point for any changes will be a new Local Government Bill whose main provisions were summarised in the Queen's Speech. "The Local Government Bill will:

- Strengthen the role of Council Leaders and Ward Councillors by establishing new decision-making and leadership arrangements
- Give communities a real voice and councillors new powers to better respond to local concerns

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Stephanie Atkinson and Margaret Stonehouse, trustees of Allendale Village Hall, with Allendale's award as the winner of the Northumberland Building Community Life Competition 2006, pictured with the Duke of Northumberland and Chris O'Bee, Calor representative. (Photo by George Skipper)

BIDDING FOR UNITARY AUTHORITIES

ALTHOUGH THE OVERWHELMING 'no' vote in the November 2004 referendum against creating a directly-elected regional assembly brought a halt to the then imminent prospect of local government reorganisation in Northumberland and Durham, the Deputy Prime Minister made it clear that the Government would continue to pursue the creation of unitary authorities. The White Paper creates a 3-month 'window of opportunity' for county and/or district councils to make their case for change. It appears that the Government will only consider making changes where they have received such a case, from at least one of the principal authorities. The Government's criteria are demanding, and there is no guarantee that reorganisation will go ahead within all counties, even where the case is made.

The Government's guidance requires that a case for unitary status must:

- show how all parts of a county area would be served by unitary local government, whether as one authority or more.
- be self-financing (within a 5-year 'payback period'), make continued revenue cost savings, and avoid the excessive use of revenue reserves
- provide for strong, effective and accountable leadership
- demonstrate an 'outward orientation' for effective engagement and relationships with local, regional and national government structures
- demonstrate clear and direct accountability, tackling the gulf between the governors and the governed
- show how the White Paper's local governance and empowerment proposals would be addressed (e.g. through local charters, parish councils etc)
- enable effective and value-for-money public services to be provided, taking account of the differing geography and needs, across the area

The timetable for this review is similarly tight. Currently, the Government envisages the following:

- submission of proposals to the Government by 25 January 2007
- the Government considers all proposals and confirms by end-March 2007 which ones are worth pursuing
- the Government consults partners/stakeholders on the preferred proposals April/June 2007. Consultees will include all local authorities, other public bodies (e.g. Police, Regional Development Agency, NHS etc), the business community and the voluntary and community sector
- the Government announces its conclusions re which proposals will be implemented, by end of July
- all necessary legislation (both the Local Government Act 2007 and any statutory instruments) will need to be in place before the end of 2007
- elections to new shadow unitary authorities in May 2008
- new unitaries up and running, April 2009

What does this suggest for Northumberland? The fact that the County Council and certain district councils have continued to lobby quietly for a reorganisation over the past year means that business cases will almost certainly be made: NCC proposing a single, county-wide unitary; the districts proposing 2 unitaries (one for the South-East; the other covering the North, Centre and West). A brief assessment of both of these structural options was carried out and published by the Government agency the Boundary Committee for England (formerly, the Local Government Boundary Commission) in 1993 and in 2004. However, the

Government has 'raised the bar' considerably in 2006, with tighter financial criteria and more demanding governance/community engagement requirements. With several local authorities facing severe financial difficulties over the next few years, and the Local Education Authority's commitment in principle to a highly expensive school reorganisation, it cannot be assumed automatically that either of the unitary options will stack-up. On the other hand, are the pressures on Northumberland's local government system now so great that reorganisation is inevitable and irresistible? More news in the New Year....

LAND REGISTRATION, SQUATTERS & THE TOWN/PARISH COUNCILLOR

AT A SEMINAR IN MORPETH on 23 November 2006, local councillors and clerks were given details of the benefits of voluntary registration of council owned land. Harry Charlton from HM Land Registry in Durham explained the low costs (a fee of £30 for up to 20 separate pieces if the total current use value was under £50,000) and the benefits.

- Clear boundaries shown on up-to-date plans
- Benefits in stopping loss of community land
- Less likelihood of future difficulties if deeds were missing
- The availability of informal advice from the Land Registry
- Building on that presentation, Stephen Rickitt (Northumberland County Council Legal Department) gave some thoughts on

squatters and the town/parish council.

- Highlighting the benefits of land registration to avoid future losses of council land by encroachments
- How to regularise positions where the local council was a squatter – for good reasons

Vigorous questioning then took place of the teams from the Land Registry and the Council. Summing up, David Francis (Secretary of NALC and Director of CCN) said how he was now firmly convinced that local councils and other community bodies should register land in their ownership, at the earliest opportunity.

Further details on the registration process are available from Harry Charlton at Harry.charlton@landregistry.gsi.gov.uk or from the HM Land Registry website at <http://www.landregistry.gov.uk/>

THE LANDFILL COMMUNITIES FUND

THE LANDFILL TAX CREDIT SCHEME has changed its name to the Landfill Communities Fund. The Fund was designed to help mitigate the effects of landfill upon local communities. It encourages partnerships between landfill operators, their local communities and the voluntary and public sectors. It encourages and enables landfill operators (LOs) to support a wide range of environmental projects by giving them a 90 per cent tax credit against their donations to Environmental Bodies (EBs). These donations enable locally set up trusts to give grants, subject to certain criteria, to community groups and voluntary organisations.

If you are a member of a local community or voluntary group based between Blyth and Newbiggin-by-the-Sea, or Cramlington and Dinnington, or Hexham, Great Bavington and Kirkwhelpington then you may be eligible for funding from The Banks Community Fund.

If you have a project that looks at ways of:

- a) Bringing land back into use;
- b) Reducing or preventing pollution;
- c) Providing, maintaining or improving public parks and amenities;
- d) Delivering biodiversity conservation for UK species habitats;
- e) Maintaining, restoring or repairing buildings and structures (e.g. community buildings, listed buildings and places of worship).

Then you may be eligible for funding from The Banks Community Fund.

BCF welcomes applications for grants up to £10,000. If you are interested in applying for a grant under this fund you can do so by contacting them at the following address:

The Banks Community Fund, c/o County Durham Foundation, Jordan House, Forster Business Centre, Finchale Road, Durham, DH1 5HL. Tel: 0191 383 0055. Contact: Christina Rackley.

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- Fully devolve the making of by-laws to Local Authorities and give greater powers for enforcing them through fixed penalty notices
- Cut red tape by introducing a streamlined performance framework
- Create a duty on named partners and the local authority to co-operate to strengthen delivery of the Local Area Agreement
- Provide new powers for local Overview and Scrutiny Committees to call key public local service providers to account
- Create a single inspectorate for Local Government
- Provide an opportunity for councils in shire counties to seek unitary status
- Devolve the right to set up parishes and parish councils to Local Government and give communities in London the same right to establish parishes as elsewhere".

The White Paper 'Strong and Prosperous Communities' can be viewed and downloaded from the Department for Communities and Local Government site (communities.gov.uk) or it can be purchased for £32.50p from [The Stationery Office](http://www.the-stationery-office.com).

Linked to the White Paper, we are awaiting two further developments in the near future:

- the publication of the Lyons Report into the future of local government finance
- a government consultation on revisions to the council members' code of conduct

LIMITING LIABILITY

ONE OF THE MANY WELCOME PROVISIONS of the Charities Act 2006 is the ability for voluntary organisations to adopt a new legal status, in order to limit the liability of their trustees, under certain circumstances. The Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) was first mooted in the late 1990s, when a Government review of Company Law highlighted the inappropriateness of charities seeking company status, which had hitherto been one of the few options to limit the liability of charity trustees.

Although most of the legal provisions for CIOs are already in the new Act, ministerial regulations will need to be issued, regarding the format and content of the model CIO Constitution. This means that no CIO can be created until the regulations are issued.

Meanwhile, there is potentially a growing problem in Northumberland and elsewhere where voluntary bodies which are also companies have been caught by the provisions of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, where some of the trustees/directors of the company are also members or staff of local authorities (ie parish, district and/or county councils). Under certain circumstances, this can require the company to officially describe itself as a local authority influenced or controlled company and for the councils concerned to list certain additional information in their accounts. These circumstances can apply even if the personnel concerned are not officially 'representing' their council or the company. This is an additional reason why voluntary bodies will be more attracted to CIO status rather than being a company.

It is very likely that many voluntary bodies – including CCN/CAN will be seeking CIO status in due course. We will publicise the guidance in Northumberland Community News, when it becomes available.

Allendale go National

Following on from their success in the Northumberland Building Community Life section of the Calor Village of the Year® for England competition, Allendale have gone on to represent Northumberland in the National section of the competition.

The full text of the entry from Allendale is available on their community website: www.allenvalleys.co.uk through the Latest News & Events link, . . . all 8,000 words plus summary. If anyone did not know what a vibrant, enthusiastic and innovative community lived in Allendale then a good read of their entry will make them aware.

Allendale did well to win the Northumberland section and we wish them every success with their entry at national level.

Welcome to our New Trustees and Staff

NORMAN DUNN

Norman was born in Bedlington, Northumberland and now lives in the rural north of the county. He retired early from the Civil Service where he has done a variety of jobs in what was the Department of Health and Social Security and Customs and Excise over the years. He has expertise in Information Systems and Business Analysis. Since retirement Norman has worked as a volunteer for a number of organisations in Northumberland concentrating on their internal systems to help them face their current challenges in a professional way.

As a volunteer he has been a Trustee of the Northumberland Wildlife Trust; a Commissioner for the Northumberland Democracy Commission; Chairman of the Rural Northumberland Objective 2 Priority 4 Package Partnership; Chairman of Leader + in North Northumberland; Chairman of the Northumberland Association of Local Councils and helped out other organisations on funding issues.

He currently sits on the North East Rural Affairs Forum; Vice Chairman of Glanton Parish Council. He is happy to join CCN's Executive Committee as the representative for NALC. Norman also still has links with disabled sport in Blyth.



LYNN ROXBURGH



Lynn, was born in Birmingham and later gained her degree in Business Studies.

She moved to Northumberland in 1997 from the Vale of Belvoir having lived in Somerset after graduating.

Her career began in Industrial Engineering but moved through product development into sales and marketing in the packaging industry and has centred around change management, including a management buyout.

Since moving here she has concentrated on supporting her husband, who works in the baby care industry, and their four children, who are aged from 11 to 19 years. She tries to take an active part in life in the community and encourage the children to do the same.

She is chair of Dr Thomlinson Middle School PTA at Rothbury where they have just had a fantastic fund raising year enabling them to invest £12,500 in outdoor play equipment.

For the past three years Lynn has taken an active role in defence of Middle Schools in Northumberland, which she feels play such an important part in rural community life. Lynn is delighted to be joining the Executive Committee and looks forward to playing a full role.

LOUISE CURRIE

Louise is joining the CCN staff team (for the second time!) on 27th November 2006, in the new role of Community Initiatives Officer.

Louise's working background was initially in Mental Health, then in Community Development. Louise has worked in Northumberland since 1987 for organisations such as CCN, the Local Authority and the County Council - primarily in Community Development posts, in both the urban and rural areas of the county. Most recently, she has been employed by Northumberland Strategic Partnership.

Louise lives in Morpeth and has three children of 21, 17 and 8 years. Her eldest daughter is at University and the younger two live at home and attend Morpeth schools.

Louise enjoys an active social life, loves cooking and is a keen runner, having completed 9 Great North Runs, though the last year has been taken up with building work and re-decoration of her home, which has left little time (and money!) for much else!

She is looking forward to taking up this new post and the challenges that lie ahead.



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The LAA (Local Area Agreement) was a 3-year contract with the Government, focused on tangible targets that contributed to the delivery of shared, priority outcomes, concerned with: children and young people, healthier communities and older people, safer and stronger communities, economic development and enterprise.

The LAA also represented a renewable action plan for the community strategies key targets.

Belonging Communities could provide a way of working to help deliver services that are more locally responsive, with community leadership which could bring more decision-making closer to the citizens

affected. This in turn would meet the government's new localism agenda. The 25 "belonging" communities would become the building block of our collective activity, with community development principles at the heart of that collective activity. Focus would be on delivering integrated, joined-up responses to meet community needs. Progress to date includes agreeing boundaries, area profiling, community survey and testing ways of working at different layers within the different context.

After a lively question and answer session, CCN Vice-President Sally Black gave the vote of thanks to the Speaker. This was followed by a round of applause after which the meeting closed.

"MEET THE FUNDERS" 2006

COMMUNITY COUNCIL of Northumberland organised a series of "Meet the Funders" events throughout Northumberland in October. A total of 212 people attended events in Belford, Hexham and Morpeth.

The funders who attended included:-

- Big Lottery Fund
- Castle Morpeth Borough Council Small Grants (Morpeth only)
- Community Foundation serving Tyne and Wear and Northumberland
- Co-operative Group (Hexham only)
- Greggs Trust (Belford only)
- North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Hexham only)
- Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Belford only)
- Northumberland National Park Authority
- SITA Trust (Morpeth only)
- Tynedale Council Small Grants (Hexham only)
- Tynedale Lions (Hexham only)

Workshops were held covering:-

- Successful Funding Applications (run by Francis Baring and Jim Mackison of Community Foundation serving Tyne and Wear and Northumberland)
- Monitoring & Evaluation (run by Jane Hart, CCN)

Everyone who attended was asked to complete a feedback form and 22% completed the evaluation. Of those, 96% thought the event was useful, 78% thought there was good advance publicity, 81% thought the event was well organised.

The opportunity to discuss their project face to face with funders was what the majority of people saw as most useful about the events. Although, some people would have liked a larger range of funders and disliked the necessity to queue at busy times, the majority of people were very enthusiastic and complimentary about the events.

Funders also appreciate the opportunity for face to face contact. Jim Mackison, Grants Manager of the Community Foundation serving Tyne and Wear and Northumberland summed it up, "The Meet the Funders events are so well organised and promoted by the Community Council of Northumberland that they are a great way for funders like the Community Foundation to speak to a lot of community and voluntary groups in just one afternoon. I am hoarse by the end of the day but I really enjoy the opportunity to talk to so many interesting people".

MITFORD COMMUNITY CENTRE Playground Group

FUNDRAISERS for the new playground at Mitford were delighted to receive a cheque for £6450 from The Local Network Fund. The playground was originally built over 20 years ago through the efforts of local people and is in urgent need of refurbishment to bring it in line with current Health and Safety legislation and to provide a new exciting but safe place for the village's youngsters to exercise and socialise.

A total of £39,000 is needed for site work and equipment of which over £29,000 has now been raised through grants and local fund-raising activities. This generous donation from The Local Network Fund has provided a major boost to the group's efforts and gives impetus to the last stages of fund raising.

NORTHUMBERLAND FISHNETS

(Fitness, Involvement,
Safety and
Health Networks)

NORTHUMBERLAND County Council and Northumberland Care Trust together with their partners have secured over £2 million for a major project starting in May 2006.

Northumberland FISHNETS will support and promote healthy active life in older age. It is one of nineteen projects in England to have a share of the £60 million Partnerships for Older People (POPP) funding announced by the Department of Health in 2005.

Northumberland FISHNETS will build on the success of several local schemes including handyperson services for small jobs around the house, training and accreditation for staff and agencies, fitness schemes in centres across the community and work to prevent older people falling in their homes. Crucially, older people are responsible for the project's direction via a Northumberland FISHNETS Partnership Board and are involved throughout all aspects of the initiative.

Northumberland FISHNETS will be rooted within the Northumberland Strategic Partnership arrangements and will be supported by a project management team.

- Several task groups have been formed to take the project forward:
- Older People's Partnership Board
- Accreditation
- Communications/Publicity/Events
- Community Involvement
- Education and Training
- Evaluation and Research
- Home Environment
- Intermediate Care
- Physical Activity and Lifestyle

CONTACTING THE PROJECT

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Project Manager

Northumberland Care Trust

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FIVE HALLS CELEBRATE

BETWEEN 22 OCTOBER TO 17 NOVEMBER 2006 no less than five halls held events to celebrate their achievements in their refurbishment or rebuilding programmes. Alan Hedley, the Community Council's village halls adviser was delighted to attend four of these events which are described below by the halls themselves.

SUNSHINE AT LANEHEAD

It was with great excitement that the official date for the opening of the refurbished Tasset Village Hall was set for the 22nd October. Every resident of the valley, past and present, was personally invited to celebrate the old hall's new and dramatic face-lift.

The sun shone and residents young and old flocked into the hall to maze out loud at the transformation that had occurred. From the new sparkling kitchen to the modern and luxurious toilets not a detail escaped the inspection of those who had used the hall for the last 80 years.

As the adults perused the beautiful displays showing wedding receptions held in the hall in the 1950s, Silver Jubilees of the 1970s and the millennium spectacular, the children of the valley played outside on the new wheelchair access ramp whilst proudly showing grandparents the wonderful wild flower garden they had previously planted with the help of the National Park.

The proceedings continued with Bob Milne, chair, delivering a well crafted speech during

which he unrolled a list as long as Methuselah's beard, of people who had helped with money, time and wielding of paint brushes and deserved the committees heartfelt thanks. A beautiful plaque listing all the generous funders, including Defra and The Big Lottery was presented and will take pride of place in the hall.

As both the conversations and the champagne flowed Mrs Peggy Robson, the valley's oldest resident at 96, stood to regale us all with stories of dances weddings and funerals, W.I events and plays held in the hall over the past 80 years. As she talked the crowd listened in silence and wondered at the social occasions the halls new floors would host over the next 100 years and at their own part in the future festivities.

Mrs Robson was presented with a bouquet of flowers by Ryan Walton, one of the valley's youngest residents.

To the delight of the children, the ribbon was then cut, the new extension unveiled and the celebratory cake revealed. Young and old alike flooded into the gloriously sunny



Mrs Peggy Robson, the valleys oldest resident, was presented with a bouquet of flowers by Ryan Walton, one of the valleys youngest residents

extension and the new kitchen was put to excellent use as food and drink became the order of the day and children sat in the sunshine on the beautiful pine floor with mouths full of celebratory cake.

As the people made their farewells all agreed their approval of the newest gathering place of the clans.

LAYING OF A COMMEMORATIVE STONE



The Honourable Wentworth Beaumont lays the commemorative stone (photo by kind permission of the Hexham Courant)

In July 2006 it was sad to see the old Newton WI Hall being demolished although the history of the Hall will be preserved in a display of photographs in the new Hall along with the banner of the Newton Women's Institute.

Some three months later the new Newton and Bywell Community Hall is taking shape. The builder, Craven-Smith Construction of Morpeth, expects to have the roof on by the end of November (weather permitting) which will allow the fitting out process to commence. Completion is expected in February.

On the beautiful Sunday morning of the 29th October a very special ceremony took place to mark the building of the new Community Hall and to recognise the generous contribution which the Allendale family has made to the Hall project. At 11.00am the sun shone brightly as many of the residents of the parish of Newton and Bywell gathered to witness the laying of a commemorative stone by Viscount Allendale's son, the Honourable Wentworth Beaumont.

Afterwards a well attended informal reception was held at the FieFiFoFum Gallery the largest rural fine art gallery and creative workshop centre in Northumberland.

A MORE ACCESSIBLE HALL

An open afternoon at Ulgham WI Hall on 24 October celebrated their refurbishment and in particular the new accessible toilets and storage room extensions.

The problem of providing toilets for the disabled had been under discussion for some



Plenty of new storage space now available

years, but the solution would not be a simple one. After the latest stage of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 became effective the Hall committee decided to look at the various options available.

At that time the existing toilet areas were used to store chairs, so the first requirement was to provide alternative storage. This was achieved by building two small rooms at the back of the hall, large enough to store the chairs and some tables. The existing toilet areas were re-arranged to provide a toilet for the disabled and two urinals in the gents area, and a toilet for the disabled and another cubicle in the ladies area.

As much as possible of the existing timber was re-used to make the new facilities look part

A ROYAL VISIT

The Rothbury Jubilee Hall was originally built in 1897 to commemorate the jubilee of Queen Victoria. CCN's current village halls adviser first met a determined hall committee in 1998 at which time the hall fabric had become tired and run down. Over the next 8 years the committee and a number of the local community worked very hard on refurbishing the building. Several new rooms were added, the building was re-roofed and photovoltaic cells were installed, enabling the building to generate its own electricity. With some assistance from CCN's Community Development Officer (Ken Walters) then based at Rothbury the committee raised around half a million pounds to renovate the building over several phases.

On the 9th November The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall visited the hall to officially re-open the refurbished and extended building. After a tour of the premises the Royal couple spoke to representatives of some of the groups using the hall and some of those involved in the organisation of the last 8 years. They then unveiled a commemorative stone plaque which will later be inserted into the external walls of the building.

MATFEN

Villagers celebrated the reopening of their village hall on Friday 17th November. The hall has been completely refurbished with the fund raising efforts of local people, trust funds and the support of DEFRA's England Rural Development programme and the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund.

Councillor Veronica Jones officially opened the hall and new vicar Mark Nash-Williams gave a blessing.

The hall is owned by the Trustees of Matfen Estate, managed by Sir Hugh Blackett and is leased to the village for a peppercorn rent, but it was in desperate need of renovation. Help from Tony Kirsopp from Social Enterprise and the support of Philip Smith our Chartered Surveyor was valued in enabling the Hall Committee to put together a successful bid and implement their plans.

The hall is still a traditional small village hall but now boasts a new kitchen, disabled access and refurbished toilets. The original wooden floor has been revitalised, a new heating system installed and the whole place redecorated.

of the original hall. The Committee, members and local community are very pleased with the results and are grateful to B & K Building for doing the work to such a good standard, and in a way that allowed the WI to continue with their meetings and other commitments to the community.



One of the new accessible toilets

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 23rd January 2007.

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

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