

ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23



CHAIR'S FOREWORD

We started this year with a higher level of uncertainty than usual, mainly brought about by changes in the nature and source of grant funding. This demanded skilful and judicious planning from Andy and the team to ensure that participants, for example over 1,900 people engaged in the employment hubs, were able to complete their programme of support from staff with whom they had built a trusting relationship.

Short-term funding, funds being badged slightly differently, or having a slightly different focus meant that more was required of the team for less. Having a team that is flexible, able to cover a wide remit and exudes a strong passion for Northumberland led to a fleet and effective response to changes and targets for the year being met.



The warm hubs toolkit was launched nationally, making it possible for other areas to model CAN's unique approach to supporting communities in difficult times. Food, companionship and stories bring village communities together, and that was strongly evident in the heritage project. Fifteen halls completed projects telling stories about the development of their village halls, capturing those special moments in their own unique way and having a great deal of fun in the process.

We welcomed the strong focus on green energy and supporting those in some of the remotest areas of the County who were off grid. CAN significantly exceeded the requirements of The Energy Advice Project in Rural Northumberland, mainly through direct contact with over 2000 households. Over 700 households were provided with energy saving products, such as LED bulbs.

350 home energy audits were completed by our energy advisers, exceeding project targets. The fact that CAN was not selling or promoting any product gave confidence that advice was completely independent. Some staff trained to take on this expanding area to complement other activities including employment hubs.

The climate action feasibility study paid for from the Rural Community Energy Fund paved the way for planning permission to be sought for 11 community buildings to have solar panels installed. The cross-community co-operative managing the work started hammering out terms of engagement. There is a significant interest in this innovative pilot. As well as the 19 community buildings involved in the preliminary stages this year, another 30 buildings have signed up to the scheme. New targets for fund raising to meet costs for panels, batteries and installation were agreed.

Andy continued to expand the reputation and influence of CAN. A successful pilot of brokering Lottery Community Funds across Northumberland enabled 34 village halls to undertake capital improvement work which was beyond their means financially. Delighted with this success, the funders awarded CAN the leadership role in a cross-county initiative with Durham and Cumbria for 18 months starting in the 2023 financial year.

The year ended, much as it has done since Andy became chief executive. All targets reached, several exceeded, a very carefully balanced budget and a good strategic overview of the year ahead.

Jean Humphrys, Chair

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Company No: 7805401 **Charity No:** 1144604

SOME HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

This has been another year of considered growth at CAN, with a gradual expansion of the staff team and funding secured. CAN is proud of the way in which we have not only sustained but expanded our services and support for Northumberland's rural communities during and after the pandemic, cost-of living crisis and other significant events of recent years. Highlights include:

- We secured additional funds from the Energy Industry Voluntary Redress scheme to employ a **Domestic Carbon Reduction Officer**, advising off-gas grid households on the transition away from fossil fuels, and adding to the tremendous success of our two **Energy Advisers** providing essential energy support and advice to vulnerable residents across rural Northumberland.
- Based on the success of our partnership with The National Lottery Community Fund, we launched a new £1.5 million programme of support with our ACRE Network partners in Durham and Cumbria, providing much needed investment into **village halls and community buildings** across the rural north. The foundation for this partnership is CAN's hugely valued support service, including one-to-one case work, good practice resources, training, funding bid support and achieving the Hallmark accreditation standard.
- Our **Rural Employment Hub** network continued as a critical element of the countywide voluntary sector employability partnership which successfully delivered the 'Bridge Project,' exceeding all targets. The partnership secured UK Shared Prosperity Fund resources to implement the new 'Solid Foundations' project, based on the previous years' success. CAN operates six hubs every week across the rural county ensuring rural unemployed residents have access to the support they need.
- Our **Warm Hubs** project has expanded to even more community venues where people can be assured of finding a safe, warm and friendly environment in which to enjoy the company of other people and benefit from energy advice. With funds secured from Northern Gas Networks, we developed a toolkit and supported organisations around the country to follow our national exemplar Warm Hub model.
- Our direct partnership with the **Northumberland Association of Local Councils (NALC)** has remained a fundamental element to the way we work. Through a dedicated officer, we have provided advice, training and a wide range of support throughout the year and further consolidated the NALC-CAN relationship into the future.
- Our enabling hub for community-led housing, **Communities CAN (North East)** has continued to support local communities keen to deliver community-led affordable housing schemes where these are needed in many parts of Northumberland and the wider North East. Our dedicated Coordinator delivers support to groups and organisations across the area, ensuring a strong pipeline of projects is maintained.
- Our climate action work has continued to expand with feasibility studies into the installation of solar panels and associated battery storage completed at 39 community buildings across the county. Work progressed on the establishment of **Northumberland Community Energy Ltd** as a co-operative aiming to enable community buildings to lower carbon emissions, reduce energy costs and enhance community resilience. Funds were secured to progress the initial batch of installations in the ensuing year.
- We worked closely with the **National Innovation Centre for Rural Enterprise** (led by Newcastle University) and the **Rural Design Centre** (funded through the North of Tyne Combined Authority) on a range of projects, harnessing the innovation expertise of both the academic and private sectors to solve entrenched rural issues. We maintained our strong participation in the unique and effective **ACRE Network** (Action with Communities in Rural England), focussing on national policy influence, resource acquisition and learning from our rural peers around the country.

For more information about our activities during 2022/23 and our plans for the future, please view our website or contact info@ca-north.org.uk



CAN'S FINANCES

2022-23 saw CAN's income and expenditure continue to grow – despite the ongoing impacts of the covid-19 pandemic, cost of living crisis and other events – and the staff team to expand.

Previous years' surplus was invested in further activities and services and, despite an accounts deficit of £11,868, expenditure of restricted project funds received in the previous year resulted in a net addition to reserves for the year of £14,440.

Our reserves remain healthy and at the level we need to cover redundancy liabilities which consequentially grow as our staff team expands, and other contingencies. In addition, we have a small project fund available for investment in new activities.

Our key financial relationships with both Defra and NALC have been maintained. Each year a number of funded programmes came to an end, but we continue to diversify our other income with a combination of grant, contract, consultancy and directly earned income representing the continuing strength of our relationships with funders and partners, maintaining robust foundations for subsequent financial years.

In the face of continuing challenges faced by our communities, sincere thanks must go to all our funders for their continued support throughout the year together with our committed and passionate staff and trustees, our members and supporters, all of whom are listed below.

Income and Expenditure Account (year ended 31 March 2023)

INCOME	£	EXPENDITURE	£
Voluntary Income		Raising Funds	
Donations & legacies	4,641	Cost of generating income	4,945
Other trading activities	9,790		
Investments	1,286		
Grant Income		Charitable Activities	
DEFRA	42,405	Salaries, NI, pension	235,486
Community Foundation	30,000	Project direct costs	478,097
Energy projects	97,341	Support costs	9,470
Community Buildings Officer	19,155		
Rural Community Energy Fund	94,060		
NICRE	12,000		
BBO Project	236,137	Governance Costs	
Community Housing Fund	30,115	Salaries, NI, pension	9,702
Energy Redress	83,296	Administration	4,781
Other	8,524	Independent examination	1,164
Other Income			
NALC	30,000		
Prudhoe Partnership	12,500		
Haltwhistle Partnership	14,000		
Wingates	3,285		
OilCAN	3,242		
TOTAL INCOME	731,777	TOTAL EXPENDITURE	743,645
		SURPLUS FOR YEAR	(11,868)

Patron His Grace the Duke of Northumberland

President Lord Curry of Kirkharle CBE

Vice Presidents

Rt Hon Lord Alan Beith; Mrs S E Black MBE; Rev Canon B Burston; Ven R Langley; Mrs S Walker; Dr D Francis

Honorary Treasurer Adrian Hinchcliffe

Board of Directors

Jean Humphrys (Chair)
Jan Ashdown (Vice Chair)
Elizabeth Elliott
Valerie Vaughan
Barrie Hensby from 4.11.22

Ven Catherine Sourbut-Groves
Sian Armstrong until 4.11.22
Stephanie Ellis from 4.11.22
Lesley Tudor -Snodin until 4.11.22
Adrian Hinchcliffe until 4.11.22

Staff

Andrew Beresford – Bridge Worker
Carol Davison – Finance & Admin Officer
Alan Gerono – Development Officer
Tracey Morgan – Community Development Officer
Julia Plinston – Community Development Officer
Alex Scott – Bridge Worker
Margaret Tweddell – Finance & Admin Assistant
Anna Revell – Energy Adviser

Louise Currie – Community Initiatives Officer
Andy Dean – Chief Executive Officer
Tom Johnston – Communities CAN Coordinator
Christine Nicholls – Community Development Officer
Graeme Popay – NALC Chief Officer
Leanne Shipley – Warm Hubs Coordinator
Brian Watson – Domestic Carbon Reduction Officer
Caroline Armstrong – WH Coordinator (support)

Work Coaches: Caroline Armstrong, Michelle Awburn, Lisa Douglas, Joy Pacey, Sarah Sunderland, Tracey Hinton

Marketing Consultant: Carrie Brookes

Members and Supporters 2022-23

Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE)	Cresswell Village Hall
AF Affinity Ltd	Crookham Village Hall
Age UK Northumberland	Lord Curry of Kirkharle
Allenheads Trust Ltd	Dalton Village Hall
Alnwick Town Council	G Dawson
Amble Town Council	Dept of Environment, Food & Rural Affairs
Ancroft Memorial Hall	Diocese of Newcastle
J Ashdown	His Grace the Duke of Northumberland
Beadnell Womens Institute	Durham County Council
Rt Hon Lord Beith	Ellington Social Welfare Centre
Birtley Village Hall	Ellington Village Hall
S E Black MBE	E A Elliot
Bowsden Village Hall	S Ellis
The Breamish Hall Powburn	The Energy Savings Trust
Broomhaugh & Riding PC	FoNDT
B Burston	Forestry Commission
Bywell PC	D Francis
Capheaton Parish Council	R Freeman
Choppington Parish Council	Gateshead Council
J Clark	M Gibbs
Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation	R Gibbs
Colwell Village Hall	Gilsland Village Hall
Communities CAN (North East) Ltd	Great Whittington Village Hall Committee
Community Foundation	Greenhead PC
Cornhill Village Hall	Ven C A S Groves
Country Land & Business Association North	Haltwhistle Partnership Ltd
Mr G Courtice	T Hawkins
Craster Community Trust	Haydon Parish Council

<p> Healey Parish Council Healthwatch The Hearth Centre (Horsley) Ltd Mr G Hepburn OBE Heddon on the wall Parish Council Hedley on the Hill Parish Council B Hensby Hepple Parish Council A Hinchcliffe High Forest Community Association Hindmarsh Village Hall T Hood N J Hooks Horsley WI/Village Hall Howick Village Hall Trust J Humphrys Inspired energy W D Johnson The Joicey Trust Jubilee Hall, Newton on the Moor The Jubilee Institute, Rothbury Just Giving Kirknewton Village Hall Trust Kirkwhelpington Memorial Hall Knarsdale with Kirkhaugh Community Hall B Langley Langley Village Hall Lesbury Village Hall J F Lewis Longhoughton Community & Sports Centre Trust A Lowrie LSI Energy C G Matthews-Maxwell Merton Hall Recreation Centre Middleton & Todridge Village Hall Mr M Middleton G E Miller Mind Active D Morgan N Mundy National CAB National Energy Action The National Lottery Community Fund The National Lottery Heritage Fund Netherton Village Hall Netherton War Memorial Hall Newbrough Parish Council Newcastle City Council Newcastle University NICRE </p>	<p> Norham Parish Council Northern Gas Networks Northern Powergrid North Northumberland Village Hall Consortium Northumberland Assoc of Local Councils Northumberland County Council Northumberland CVA Northumberland Estates Northumberland Federation of Women's Institutes Assoc of Northumberland Local History Societies Northumbria Youth Northumbrian wine & food society OilCAN Members Otterburn Memorial Hall Ovingham Reading Room Ponteland Memorial Hall R Poppleton Prudhoe Community Partnership Rennington Village Hall S Richardson The Rothley Trust Rural Churches for everyone K Rushworth Shilbottle Community Hall Slaley Commemoration Hall Slaley Parish Council C Sourbut-Groves South Charlton Village Hall Stannington Village Hall Stamfordham Village Hall Stocksfield Community Association H Talbot Taret Village Hall Thropton War Memorial Hall Tees Valley Combined Authority L Tudor- Snodin Ulgham WI United Reformed Church Upper Coquetdale Community Transport V Vaughan Voluntary Organisations Network North East Wall Village Hall S Walker Wark Mechanics Institute & Town Hall West Northumberland Com Buildings Consortium Whalton Village Hall Whittingham Memorial Institute Wingates Windfarm Community Fund Workers' Educational Association Wylam Institute Community Association </p>
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