

Northumberland Log Bank



Are you in need of wood fuel due to financial constraints, poor health, advanced age or rural isolation? We can deliver dry, seasoned logs. **THERE IS NO CHARGE FOR THIS SERVICE** Make a small charitable donation if you wish.

We are also looking for volunteers.

Contact: Kate Thick

Email: katethick@hotmail.com

Tel. 07900963234

The Northumberland Log Bank is a non-registered charity supported by Northumberland County Council



CONTACT US

If you would like any help or advice please contact CAN:

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The Newsletter for the Warm Hubs Network



COSY

Winter Newsletter 2020



Bringing the hubs to you

Whilst we can't be together at the Warm Hubs currently, we thought it was still important to keep in touch and keep you informed and entertained.

This newsletter has been produced by CAN and sent out through the Warm Hubs volunteers to your front door.

Read on for the latest energy information to keep you staying warm and how the Warm Hubs have adapted their service during lockdown.



Laptops and tablets distributed to rural residents by CAN

Rural residents across Northumberland have been given free laptops and tablets arranged by Community Action Northumberland (CAN) to keep in touch during lockdown and access vital online services, including those living off-grid or who have never used digital tools in their lives.

CAN runs various projects for rural residents and early on in lockdown spotted an urgent need for devices for people from various backgrounds. Children were being home-schooled in lockdown but without electricity to run devices. Unemployed people were trying to job-hunt online but could no longer get access to computers in libraries or community centres. Residents who attended weekly Warm Hubs which bring people together in rural village halls suddenly had no social interaction, and didn't have digital skills or devices to connect with family and friends online.

Thanks to funding from a range of sources CAN staff were able to step in and purchase equipment and deliver it safely to those in need.

Warm Hubs adapts to new ways

CAN's Warm Hubs scheme has been adapting to a new way of working. A number of local residents unable to attend hub events in their local village hall/community building have also received tablets to help them keep in touch via virtual hubs.

Christine said: "Our oldest laptop beneficiaries are in their nineties and enjoying the experience of learning new skills. Virtual hubs mean we can connect people online, particularly important when the warm hub buildings aren't available."

"Warm hub volunteers have stepped up as always and are shopping, delivering prescriptions, dog walking and providing food parcels and meals via an outreach service. Virtual hubs will never replace face-to-face contact with friends and neighbours, but it helps communities feel less isolated."

Coronavirus and your energy supply

When contacting your energy supplier and/or support helplines please be aware if you are experiencing longer call waiting times than normal you could try other options such as their websites, apps, email or social media. This will also help leave phone lines free for emergencies.

If you are struggling to pay bills

Information on financial support announced by the government is available on GOV.UK. This includes the Universal Credit, Employment and Support Allowance and your rights if your work hours are cut or you are laid off.

If you think you cannot afford to pay for any extra gas or electricity used because you are having to self-isolate at home, support will be available through your energy supplier. Your supplier must consider how much you can afford and will explain your options.

The government has also launched an emergency package with energy suppliers to ensure you do not face any additional hardships in heating or lighting your home during the coronavirus outbreak. If you are struggling with money problems or are repaying a debt, options will include:

- reviewing bill payment plans, including debt repayment plans
- payment breaks or reductions in how much you pay
- giving you greater time to pay
- in some cases, access to hardship funds

No credit meters will be disconnected during the outbreak.

If you have a non-urgent question for your supplier, please first check their online and mobile advice if you are able to - most are regularly updating supporting information and frequently asked questions on their services and the coronavirus national emergency through these channels as well as via contact centres. This will help keep phone lines available for people who need help most, particularly people in vulnerable situations.

What should you do if you have an energy problem? (e.g. power cut, gas leak or energy meter problem)

Contact your supplier straight away if you have an energy problem, such as a gas leak or faulty meter. Tell them if you are unwell or self-isolating.

Suppliers and network companies are putting in place plans and emergency response measures to deal with safety-critical home visits if they are needed. They are monitoring and following government guidance and will take timely decisions on how best to protect customers and staff while delivering their services.

If you experience a power cut:

- Telephone: 105 (a free phone number)
- Visit [powercut105.com](https://www.powercut105.com)
- If there's a serious immediate emergency risk, call the emergency services too.

If you or someone you know is vulnerable, of pensionable age, has children under 5, a disability or long-term medical condition it's important to let your energy supplier know.

Each energy supplier keeps a Priority Service Register of people who may need additional assistance such as in a power cut or in dealing with supplier representatives. It's free to be added to the list.

We expect suppliers to have the safety, health and wellbeing of their customers as their central priority with a particular focus on risks to vulnerable customers or where customers are at risk of going off supply or have gone off supply.

If you are concerned or worried about the actions of your supplier or network company, contact them to explain the issue straight away. Many have set up special consumer response teams to support customers during this period of uncertainty.

What should you do if a supplier or network company needs to access your property and you are self-isolating?

If a supplier or network company contacts you to visit your property, tell them if you are unwell or are self-isolating. If you are concerned or worried about the actions of a supplier or network company, contact them to explain the issue straightaway. Many have set up special consumer response teams to support customers during this period of uncertainty.

Suppliers and network companies are putting in place plans and alternative arrangements to deal with routine activities, such as meter readings at homes where occupants are self-isolating.

If your meter is outside, it may be helpful for you to leave your meter box unlocked if it's safe to do so.

Are Smart Meters still being installed?

Under the current government advice, suppliers are continuing to carry out emergency metering work and are starting to offer smart meter installation appointments to other customers. We expect suppliers to monitor government guidance and adapt their approach as circumstances change including having processes in place to assess whether it is safe to proceed with an installation visit, and to protect both customers and staff during installation.

If you become unwell or are self-isolating, contact your supplier to tell them. You can postpone or rearrange your installation appointment if you want to.

More information can be found on

<https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-covid-19-and-your-energy-supply>

Corned Beef Stew and Dumplings

A really straightforward recipe that uses tinned corned beef instead of fresh or frozen meat.

Serves: 4 people

Cooking time: 3 hours in a slow cooker

Ingredients

Potatoes - can be from a tin or peeled or scrubbed, usually one medium potato per person but add as many as you think you need, the smaller you cut the potato the less time they need to cook.

Carrots - can be tinned, fresh or frozen

Peas - tinned fresh or frozen, (if they are tinned add them 30 minutes before the end of cooking time) You can add any of your favourite vegetables whether fresh, frozen or tinned including sweetcorn, turnip etc.

2 Beef stock cubes or similar

1 340g tin of corned beef (the corned beef is added in cubes 15 minutes before the end cooking time) For the dumplings (add 30 minutes before end cooking time)

**Either a complete packet of dumpling mix
Or 150g self-raising flour**

70g of suet

Enough cold water to make a firm dough (3-5 tablespoons)



Method

1. Place all the vegetables (except tinned peas) into the slow cooker, mix the stock cubes with enough water to cover the vegetables.
2. Mix dumplings and divide into rounds and put into the fridge.
3. Turn the slow cooker onto high and put on the lid.
4. After 3 hours check the potatoes are soft. Add the dumplings 30 minutes before the end cooking time along with any tinned vegetable.
5. The corned beef should be cut into chunks and added 15 minutes before the end cooking time, try not to stir once you add the beef as it breaks up and disappears into the gravy.
6. Salt and pepper to taste.