



NEWS RELEASE

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Thursby Parish Hall first to receive national quality award in Cumbria

Village hall volunteers joined ACTion with Communities in Cumbria (ACT) on Saturday to congratulate Thursby Parish Hall on becoming the first hall in Cumbria to receive a Hallmark Two award for good management, health, safety, security and licenses.

The nationally recognised award is the only quality mark available to community buildings which in Cumbria is administered and overseen by ACT, with local volunteer peer assessors.

ACT Development Officer Fran Richardson presented the award at one of the charity's regular Community Buildings Events. Fran congratulated the hall saying "This is a fantastic achievement and represents the terrific dedication of the committee at Thursby. Through a process of peer assessment they have shown that they operate their hall not only safely and legally, but also with an attention to detail which gives users great confidence and affection for the community venue.

"The Hallmark award acknowledges the good work undertaken by community building management committees across the country and aims to encourage improvement across all their work and activities. Committees which receive a Hallmark award are praised for their achievement in managing their hall to a nationally recognised and high standard.

"This is a marker of the quality of the hall that says it is well run, well organised and well administered. Having the award can also improve the chances of successful grant applications and lower insurance costs.

"We do hope that more Cumbrian Village Halls will access the Hallmark scheme and show what a valuable resource they are. It's wonderful to recognise the work of the hundreds of volunteers who keep our community buildings going."

Peg Eastwood accepted the award on behalf of Thursby Parish Hall saying "It's a great honour to receive this award and it reflects on the hard work the committee have put in to improving the management of the hall and the excellent facilities it provides for the local community.

"We first looked at the criteria for Hallmark One back in 2015 and whilst it wasn't possible to go for the award then, we found it a very useful guide and it encouraged us to ensure good hiring practice and management was in place. Last year we achieved Hallmark One and were spurred on to then do Hallmark 2.

“It does take time to put everything in place but having clearly defined processes which have been discussed by the committee helps everyone understand how the hall works. It gives a good framework for new and future committee members and if the management is clear, this carries over to a smoothly run hall, which gives hirers confidence that the charity is well run, well managed, legally compliant and quality assured.

“We’re very pleased to have been awarded Hallmark Two in September and to officially receive the award today. The committee would also like to thank all the staff at ACT for their generous help and guidance throughout.”

Next week ACT will celebrate 70 years of supporting communities at its AGM on 19th October at Braithwaite Institute. Throughout its history the charity has provided support and advice to village halls and community buildings. This includes running free training events for the people, mostly volunteers, responsible for running these important community facilities.

The latest event was at Lowick Community Hall, an environmentally friendly, low carbon community building in South Lakeland. Topics included the role of trustees and the implications of new data protection regulations. Attendees also looked at how they manage the risks associated with running a community venue – everything from maintaining the building in the winter months to making sure that the correct licences are in place for all activities and entertainments which take place.

The event also explored the role of Village Halls in helping to tackle social isolation, celebrating the high level of effort which goes into making them friendly and welcoming to lots of user groups, keeping people sociable, active and connected.

For further information visit ACT’s website: www.cumbriaaction.org.uk, Email: info@cumbriaaction.org.uk or Phone 01228 817224.

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Image:



ACT’s Fran Richardson (L) presents Peg Eastwood (R) with Thursby Parish Hall’s Hallmark Two award.

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Notes to Editors:

ACTion with Communities in Cumbria (ACT)

- ACT is the community development organisation and Rural Community Council for Cumbria.
- ACT champions community and rural issues and supports communities to plan for their future, develop projects, work with others, and influence and change policy.
- ACT's work focuses on helping people and communities achieve their aspirations; we provide practical advice and support and deliver training. Through a variety of partnerships we are also able to represent the interests of communities locally, regionally, and nationally.
- ACT is registered in England as Voluntary Action Cumbria, Charity Registration Number 1080875, Company Number 3957858.
- For more information, please visit ACT's website: www.cumbriaaction.org.uk