



V O L U N T A R Y
A C T I O N
C U M B R I A

Village Hall Update

~ September 2002 ~

Inside...

As the nights draw in and the days get colder, we look to the boiler and hope it will make it through the Cumbrian winter. If you do have a disaster and have no reserves to cover it, the **Village Hall Loan Fund** may provide a swift solution.

We have some more suggestions for **Funding**, as usual, in the middle section!

Is your community in danger of losing its Post Office? Turn the page to take a quick look at **Post Offices in Village Halls** – perhaps it's an alternative in your village.

Many Community Buildings play host to playgroups, day care, mother and toddlers groups... but are they properly registered? Check it out overleaf in **Children in Village Halls**.

Do you have charitable purposes? And does your Committee own the Hall or handle more than £1,000 a year? In which case you need to have gone through **Charity Registration**, again, overleaf.

Cumbria is very lucky to have so many good **Training Courses**. We've highlighted some of the best for you in the middle section – do take advantage of them!

Voluntary Action will be holding its own **Village Hall Training Events** before Christmas and in January. PLEASE look inside and let us know if you are interested!

And More....





Last Post?

Post Offices in Village Halls

During the last ten years the number of post office branches in the UK has continued to decline. The village hall can and does offer an acceptable alternative to a complete loss of service. For example, some post office branches are in purpose built premises, and in some cases a new village hall has been built with the office integrated from the start. In other situations, the service is provided from a committee room or some small area which is not needed for other purposes.

Village Halls and Children

Did you know ... that activities for a period of two hours for children under 8 have to be registered and inspected? Whilst the obligation to register lies with the organisers of the activity and not the village hall management committee it does revolve around the premises, the organisers and people living or working on the premises. It is these premises that the management committee is responsible for.

ACRE have recently produced an excellent information sheet on the issues around this subject and a copy can be obtained by contacting Debbie Keir in writing.



What can you do if you know your community is about to lose its post office? In the first instance contact your Rural Community Officer at VAC and Post Office Ltd. Post Office Ltd has introduced a new role specifically to combat rural post office closures, the Rural Transfer Advisor. These two groups of people can work closely with Parish Councils to establish the best way forward.

The most important thing to do is not to leave this to the last minute!

If you want information on this or any similar matter please do contact your District Rural Community Officer using the enclosed form.

(From ACRE Information Sheet No. 3)

Important - Charity Registration

If you have charitable purposes and one of the following applies to you -

- the organisation has permanent endowment (land, buildings, investments or cash which may not be spent by a charity);
- the organisation has total income of more than £1,000 a year;
- the organisation has a rateable occupation of any land, including buildings. This applies even where the local authority has agreed not to charge any rates, or has reduced the rates.

Then you **MUST** register as a charity.

For help and advice contact your Rural Community Officer or go direct to the very helpful charity commission:-

20, King's Parade, Queen's Dock,
Liverpool, L3 4DQ

Tel: 0870 333 0123 Fax: 0151 703 1555
www.charity-commission.gov.uk

£ £ £ Funding Information £ £ £

DSC Website 2002

The Directory of Social Change is putting their database of grant making trusts online to subscribers. Annual subscription fees for the voluntary sector are £110+ vat. Subscribers will be able to search by geographical area; type of activity; beneficiary, trust name etc.

For further information contact: 020 7209 5151

Ernest Cook Trust Educational Grants

Grants for educational purposes are made to organisations that are charitable. Trustees favour the following: conservation & the rural environment, the arts, crafts & architecture, the encouragement of young people and research.

For further information contact: The Ernest Cook Trust, The Estate Office, Fairford Park, Gloucestershire, GL7 4JH. Tel: 01285 713273

Co-operative Community Dividend

Community groups, voluntary organisations, clubs and self-help organisations can apply for grants ranging from £100-£5000. Projects should demonstrate a real need, an imaginative approach and have a lasting impact.

For further information contact: 0845 0901456

BT Community Connections

BT has 1200 Internet ready computers to award to community groups. The following groups are invited to apply: community groups; community regeneration projects; cultural groups; disability groups; elderly groups; environmental groups; sports groups; women's groups and medical support groups. The deadline for applying is 28/02/03.

For further information contact: www.btcommunityconnections.com/awards.htm

Scottish Power Energy Trust

Grants (upto 50% funding) are available to finance new renewable energy projects that use environmentally acceptable technologies. The trust supports projects that have a positive impact on local communities and the environment. Closing dates are at the end of March, August and November.

For further information contact: Gordon McGregor, Scottish Power Green Energy Trust, Cathcart Business Park, Spean Street, Glasgow G44 4BE. Tel:0141 568 3041.

NCVO funding for the Disabled

Funding has been made available for projects that "promote rights and participation" for disabled people. £10,000 will be available for local/regional projector or £50,000 for a national project.

For further information contact: NCVO's helpdesk on 0800 2798 798.



Lost your way? One of
your local
Training Courses
could hold the answers
you are looking for...

Legal Responsibilities of Management Committees

15th October 2002 - 10am-4pm. Venue TBC, Carlisle. **Contact:** Kay McGregor/Sylvia Hayhoe 01228 512513

How To Ask For Money Part 2

16th October - 6.30pm-9pm. WCCVS, Whitehaven. **Contact:** Ann Bell/Jane Hafren 01946 852955

Developing Your Community Building

19th October 2002 - 9.30am-5pm
20th November 2002 - 9am-5pm
21st November 2002 - 9am-3pm
Training Suite, Carlisle CVS. **Contact:** Kay McGregor/Sylvia Hayhoe 01228 512513

Your Community Fund Application

24th October - 9am-4pm. Penrith Methodist Church. **Contact:** Andrea Margolit/ Diane Jackson 01768 242138

Disability Discrimination Act

31st October 2002 - 1-4pm. Age Concern, Barrow. **Contact:** Administrator 01229 823144

Lunch & Learn: Chairing a Meeting

19th November 2002 - 11.30am-1.30pm. Penrith Library. **Contact:** Andrea Margolit/ Diane Jackson 01768 242138

Designing a Questionnaire

3rd December 2002 - 9.30am-4pm. Rural Resource Centre, Penrith. **Contact:** Andrea Margolit/ Diane Jackson 07168 242138

Roles & Responsibilities of a Management Committee

31st December 2002 - 7pm-9pm
Training Suite, Carlisle CVS. **Contact:** Kay McGregor/Sylvia Hayhoe 01228 512513

! Dates for your Diary !

Funding Fairs and Community Fund Training Days

These popular and useful events put you in contact with funders and give valuable pointers on fundraising for your halls. *Get your marker in quick to ensure a place.*

Community Fund Training Day (Eden) - 24 October 2002

Contact: Eden CVS on (01768) 242138

Community Fund Training Day (West Coast) - 20 January 2003

Contact: Ali Phillips on 01768 869526

Funding Fair at Carlisle - 29 January 2003

Contact: Ali Phillips on 01768 869526

South Lakeland Funding Fair - 19 February 2003

Contact: Ali Phillips on 01768 869526

Village Hall Loan Fund

Sometimes disaster strikes. Whether it is the traditional explosion of the ancient boiler, or a sudden escalation in renovation costs, when you need money fast, it can sometimes seem like there's nowhere to go.



The **Village Hall Loan Fund** may provide the answer. It is a **LOAN**, not a grant, and you will need to repay it! The current rate of interest, set by the Treasury, is 8%, but you should remember you only pay interest on the outstanding balance of the loan, not the whole amount. The loan is **UNSECURED** and there are no penalties for early repayments.

You can receive up to £20,000, but smaller loans of up to £8,000 are more common, over a period of five to eight years.

The big advantage of the VHLF is its speed and simplicity. When you need funds **NOW** and you know you can support the repayments, fill in the simple application form and approval can follow in as little as two weeks. As you all know, grants usually take much, much longer.

The VHLF is a last resort, and should be treated like one. We would advise Committees only to take out a loan if they are sure they can support the repayments. But when disaster strikes, the VHLF can sometimes be the answer.

(The VHLF is administered by ACRE on behalf of the Countryside Agency, who provide the funds. Contact your Rural Community Officer for details.)

Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)

We know from speaking to you that meeting the requirements of DDA is a big concern for many of you. Following a recent training session on the DDA by the Disability Rights Commission, attended by Julia, Anna and Cathie, we would like to try and reassure you.

From October 2004 service providers (that's you!) will have been expected to address the legislation on removing barriers to the built environment. Addressing the legislation in some form is non-negotiable. How you go about it is negotiable.

What the legislation asks for is a "**reasonable** adjustment," "within the resources of the organisation concerned." If you have looked at what you would need to do to make your building accessible, the cost is astronomical and you can't get a grant, you cannot reasonably be expected to have put in lifts, ramps and accessible toilets. You should be able to make small, low cost adjustments like putting contrasting paint around doors so that people who are partially sighted can see them easily, and providing a temporary ramp for wheelchair users.

Remember, the DDA isn't a big stick to beat you with. Undertake an Access Audit, write an Access Plan, make a commitment to making the changes you can, and you will improve the accessibility of your hall for all the community. And that's got to be a good thing.

For more help, use the Disability Rights Commission helpline:- 08457 622 633

Voluntary Action Cumbria will be hosting two Training Events.

The first will be held before Christmas and will focus on the Disability Discrimination Act and its relevance to Village Halls. The second event will cover the Principles of Fundraising for Village Halls and will take place in January. The dates have not been confirmed, but we will keep you posted! If you are interested, please contact Debbie Keir or Cathie Fleming.

Who's Who? – Your Rural Community Officer

Here is our usual quick guide:

Gail Knöpfel	-	South Lakeland
Anna Scamans	-	Copeland
Debbie Keir	-	Allerdale
Jennie Wilkinson	-	Carlisle
Julia Wilson	-	Eden



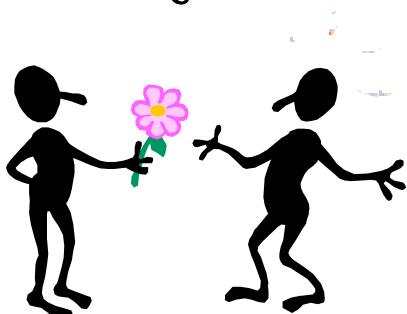
Congratulations to Debbie, who was married in July!

And finally.....

If you have any information to share or success stories to shout about, please contact either Anna Scamans, Debbie Keir or Cathie Fleming at:

Voluntary Action Cumbria
The Old Stables
Redhills
Penrith
CA11 0DT
www.ruralcumbria.org.uk

Thank You!



Don't Forget!

This time we've included two copies of the Update: one for the Committee and one to display in the Hall. Please make sure you put this up on your notice board.

We have enclosed a copy of the Advice Request Form. Please, please, please use these as your way of getting in contact with us. It helps us meet your needs in the most efficient and appropriate way. Once the forms are received back in the office the right Officer for your area will get back to you within 10 working days whenever possible. and