



VOLUNTARY  
**ACTION**  
CUMBRIA

# Village Hall Update

## ~ December 2004 ~



### *A note from the Editor*

You might have noticed a few changes to the Village Hall Update, which I hope you will like. These have come about in response to your comments in the survey which was sent out over the Summer.

On the whole your comments about the Update were positive, which was encouraging, but as we all know there is always room for improvement.

Also following on from comments received in the survey, I have taken the opportunity to explain what Voluntary Action Cumbria actually is, and how the Rural Development Team can be of benefit to your Village Hall.

If you have any comments about any aspect of the Village Hall Update, please feel free to let me know them by contacting me. My details are on the back page.

So read on and please do let me know if I can improve anything. Thank you.

**The Village Hall Update is the newsletter of Cumbria's Village Hall Advice Service. It is produced by Voluntary Action Cumbria for the benefit of all Management Committees of Village Halls and Community Buildings across Cumbria.**

- **What is VAC?**
- **How can VAC help our Hall?**

Those two questions are ones that seem to have been asked by quite a lot of Halls recently. So first of all I will start and explain what Voluntary Action Cumbria is.

Voluntary Action Cumbria is the Rural Community Council for the County of Cumbria. It is a registered charity (No 1080875) responsible for the delivery of a wide range of advice, information and support services to rural communities. It was established 54 years ago and is part of a national network of 38 Rural Community Councils across rural England.

Voluntary Action Cumbria's statement of purpose is:

- To promote, in co-operation with statutory authorities, voluntary organisations and where appropriate, private enterprise a complete range of services, particularly in rural areas.
- To enable local communities to develop new initiatives in response to social and economic change.
- To develop policies which favour disadvantaged groups in rural areas.
- To promote voluntary service for any charitable purposes for the benefit of the community
- To organise VAC efficiently and cost effectively.

The next natural question to ask then is *what exactly is a Rural Community Council?*

Rural Community Councils are county-level charities working to promote the welfare of rural communities by encouraging communities' self-help, local initiatives and voluntary effort. Working in partnership with other organisations, they offer advice and practical help to Village Hall Committees, Parish councils and many other groups and individuals.

The network of Rural Community Councils is supported by Action with Communities in Rural England or ACRE for short.

ACRE is the national association of Rural Community Councils, whose shared purpose is to improve the quality of life of local communities and particularly of disadvantaged people in rural England. ACRE's aim is to facilitate the

development of thriving, diverse and sustainable communities throughout rural England.

*So who qualifies for Voluntary Action Cumbria's assistance?*

As you might have guessed, we deal with rural communities.

*What qualifies as rural then?*

Basically, the only areas Voluntary Action Cumbria doesn't operate in is Carlisle City, Barrow, Workington, Whitehaven and Kendal. If you live anywhere else then we can help you.

*So how can VAC help our Hall?*

The Rural Development Team delivers three key services, the Village Halls Advice Service, the Funding Advice Service and the Rural Development Officers.

The Village Halls Advice Service operates two days a week providing help and support to Management Committees. This is done through training workshops, this newsletter and responses to enquiries received directly.

The Rural Development Officers work more closely with the groups that use and operate from the Hall, providing them with help and support, and the confidence to explore and bring about change to ensure their communities continue to thrive.

The Funding Advice Service offers tailored support to funding queries from both Village Halls and community groups. The Funding Adviser can provide guidance with funding application forms and letters, help with developing a fundraising strategy and runs training courses to help develop fundraising skills.

VAC also works behind the scenes, in a not very visible but unquestionably important way at district, county and national level on behalf of Village Halls. This is done by feeding back information we receive from Halls in a number of ways.

If you still have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me. My details are on the back page.

## **B & Q You Can Do It Awards**

B & Q aim to give local organisations the chance to embark on DIY projects that will make a real difference to their local community.

The grants will cover sustainable community projects that involve renovation and refurbishment. Projects should not involve the purchase of land or buildings.

Twenty community groups will be awarded £5,000 worth of B & Q products. Local community groups and charities can apply.

Though the closing date for 2004 has now passed, the scheme will be continuing in 2005.

For application forms and further information contact: You Can Do It Awards, PO Box 53, Heckmondwike, WF15 8YX Tel: 0845 300 101  
Website: [www.diy.com/awards](http://www.diy.com/awards)

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## **Neighbourhood Forums**

Don't forget that your local Neighbourhood Forum is a good source of grants for any community group.

Contact your local office to find out when their next grant panel is and if your project is eligible.

<b>Carlisle</b>	01228 606315
<b>Eden</b>	01434 382128
<b>Barrow</b>	01229 894312
<b>Allerdale</b>	01900 325011
<b>South Lakeland</b>	01539 773180 or 01229 894103
<b>Copeland</b>	01946 855020

Website:  
[www.cumbriacc.gov.uk/neighbourhoodforums](http://www.cumbriacc.gov.uk/neighbourhoodforums)



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## **Cumbria Waste Management Environment Trust**

CWMET distributes Landfill Tax Grants in Carlisle, Eden, Allerdale and Copeland for environment and community projects including play areas, wildlife gardens and village hall repairs.

The Trust offers grants of up to £20,000 or 50% of the total project cost. Village Halls are eligible and typically receive a grant of around £5,000.

To discuss your project contact:  
Alison Gerke at CWMET, The Old Stables, Redhills, Penrith, CA11 0DT.  
Tel: 01768 242140.  
E-mail: [cwmet@dial.pipex.com](mailto:cwmet@dial.pipex.com).

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## **Carlisle Funding Fair**

Thursday 27 January 2005  
Carlisle Racecourse

This time the Funding Fair will include a question and answer 'Funders Forum' session with a panel of funders who offer grants to Village Halls.

Don't miss this opportunity to hear it from the horse's mouth! Please note, the Fair is open to people from **all districts** in Cumbria.

Contact: Sylvia Hayhoe at Carlisle CVS  
on 01228 512513

## The Village Halls in Cumbria Summer 2004 Survey

I couldn't produce this newsletter without mentioning this! The Village Halls in Cumbria Summer 2004 Survey is an invaluable piece of work for capturing the current situation of Halls; from the structural condition of Halls themselves, assessing the levels of usage in Halls and the make up of management committees.

The information gathered from this survey will form a report that will be then be used to lobby on behalf of all Halls in Cumbria.

The response rate so far has been encouraging, with 56% of Halls returning them without any chasing up. Things have also been slowed down due to the fact that some of our contact details are a little out of date. I have been working away to rectify this situation, and we should now be in touch with some Halls that haven't received this newsletter for some time. If yours is one of these Halls, welcome back!

So please, if any of your Committee change or move, please let me know so that I can carry on sending things to the right person at the right address.

I have also included a copy of the survey for those Halls that haven't returned the original. If you haven't already sent your survey back, please do so now.

### **A rose by any other name would smell as sweet!**

What's in a name?

Nothing as far as Voluntary Action Cumbria is concerned when it comes to community facilities.

A few Halls have questioned whether they qualify for inclusion in the survey, and for help through the Village Halls Advice Service, as they feel that they aren't a Village Hall.

Whether you call your facility a Village Hall, a Community Centre, a Victory Hall or even the John Lennon Memorial Hall, it really doesn't matter!

As long as your Hall operates as the community building and meeting place for your area, that's all that matters.

Size doesn't matter either. From the smallest of facilities in a scattered settlement to a big facility in a large settlement, again the only important thing is that your building serves as the community building and meeting place.

VAC uses the terms Village Hall and Hall as generic terms for all community buildings, so next time you see them mentioned, please read on as it includes you!

### **Engaging Business Support**

Would your Hall, or community group operating out of a Hall, like help from local businesses but you don't know where to start?

*Business in the Community* is organising *Engaging Business Support* workshops, to learn how to successfully approach businesses for support and to develop long-term, mutually beneficial relationships.

The workshop is free, and a buffet lunch is included. The topics will cover why companies get involved in their communities, how to start company relationships, how to make an approach to businesses and how to maintain and develop relationships.

Workshops currently planned are in Barrow in January 2005 and Whitehaven in March 2005.

To find out more and to obtain a booking form, contact;

Lynn MacNaughton on 01768 868940 or email [lynn.macnaughton@bitc.org.uk](mailto:lynn.macnaughton@bitc.org.uk) or visit their website at [www.bitc.org.uk](http://www.bitc.org.uk)

# Village Hall Surgeries

Dates for the 2005 Village Hall Surgeries are below. Owing to funding constraints, we are unable to come out and visit individual Village Halls. Instead, you can book a fifty minute slot at a Surgery in your district, where you will get advice on a particular query or on a general guide on how Hall Committees should operate. At the end of each surgery there will be a workshop session available running through the ACRE Village Hall Management Healthcheck.

You **MUST** book a session in advance, to allow us to research your query and gather any background history on your Hall. Venues are decided upon in relation to the number of bookings we receive, and the geographical spread. We then try to book a central location so that everyone has an equal distance to travel. To book a session, please contact Carl Glynn.

## ***The Surgeries:-***

Surgeries will run from 1pm through till 7pm, with the workshop session afterwards.

25 <sup>th</sup> January	Copeland	June	Allerdale
16 <sup>th</sup> February	Allerdale	6 <sup>th</sup> September	Carlisle
9 <sup>th</sup> March	Carlisle	12 <sup>th</sup> October	South Lakeland
11 <sup>th</sup> April	South Lakeland	November	Copeland
4 <sup>th</sup> May	Copeland		

In Eden:-

Eden District Council fund us to continue to do development work with Eden Halls. In this district, we can still come out, visit you at your hall and work with you closely. For this reason, we have not set up any Eden Village Hall Surgeries.

## **National Village Halls Forum**

The National Village Halls Forum is a grassroots organisation representing Management Committees nationally. They are starting a campaign to encourage Management Committees to lobby their MP to safeguard the future of Village Halls with the following manifesto commitments:

- a dedicated nationally available funding stream to stimulate local financial support for Hall improvements
- a review of the impact of all new legislation on Village Halls
- increased resources for support and advice services for Management Committees through Rural Community Councils.

For more information contact

John Colby Clarke  
Chairman  
National Village Halls Forum  
Town Farm  
North Green  
Pulham St Mary  
Diss  
Norfolk  
IP21 4XX  
01379 676250

## **Directory of Training Events**

Unless your Hall is one of those that hasn't had their contact details updated until recently you will have received the Directory of Training Events.

The booking form system is working well, with a number of Halls sending all their forms back at once, booking places on every event!

Unfortunately two venue mistakes made it into the final version. The workshop on **19<sup>th</sup> January 2005** is now at **Grizebeck Village Hall**, and the **16<sup>th</sup> March** workshop is being held at **Thursby Parish Hall**. Times remain unchanged.

Funding doesn't allow us to run each workshop session in each district, so we have tried as much as possible to spread them out as evenly as possible. If there are clusters of enquiries from Halls, we will hold workshops centrally in those areas. So ask and you might receive!

## Village Halls Advice Service

The Village Halls Advice Service exists to help keep Village Hall Management Committee members up to date and well informed of any changes relating to Village Halls, and to feed back at regional and national level the needs and concerns of Halls as a collective voice.

The Village Halls Advice Service operates 2 days a week within the Voluntary Action Cumbria Rural Development Team. The other elements of the team are the Rural Development Officers and the Funding Advice Service.

### Who s Who? The Rural Development Team

Here's your quick guide to all the members of the team:

#### Village Halls Adviser

Carl Glynn  
carllynn@ruralcumbria.org.uk 01768-869525

#### Rural Development Officers

Anna Scamans Carlisle & Eden  
annascamans@ruralcumbria.org.uk 01768-869529

Sarah Mitchell Copeland & Allerdale  
sarahmitchell@ruralcumbria.org.uk 01768-869520

Julia Wilson South Lakeland & Furness  
juliawilson@ruralcumbria.org.uk 01768-869524  
(Julia's maternity leave will be covered by Gail Knöpfel)



#### Funding Advice Service (available Mon - Thurs 9am - 1pm)

Caroline Addison  
carolineaddison@ruralcumbria.org.uk 01768-869526

Mary Christian  
marychristian@ruralcumbria.org.uk 01768-869526

Angela Walton  
angelawalton@ruralcumbria.org.uk 01768-869526

#### Team Leader

Lorraine Smyth  
lorrainnesmyth@ruralcumbria.org.uk 01768-869522

### And finally

Although I'm the Editor, this is YOUR newsletter, so if you feel that there are topics you'd like covering please let me know by 18<sup>th</sup> March 2005. Carl Glynn

**Voluntary Action Cumbria**  
The Old Stables  
Redhills  
Penrith  
CA11 0DT  
[www.ruralcumbria.org.uk](http://www.ruralcumbria.org.uk)

**Don't Forget!**

**Display a Copy!**

Please put up a copy of this Update in your Hall, so that others can benefit from the information.