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CUMBRIA

# Village Hall Update

## ~ September 2005 ~



*A note from the Editor...*

Welcome to the September 2005 edition of the Village Halls Update. As well as the usual features, this issue includes:

- **The Village Halls in Cumbria Survey 2004** ~ a summary of the findings, and what these mean for Halls in Cumbria.
- **The Directory of Village Halls in Cumbria** ~ an appeal to you to help Voluntary Action Cumbria create the ultimate Who, What and Where of Village Halls in Cumbria.
- **Village Halls Explained (Part One) - Trust Deeds & Trustees** ~ helping committee members old and new unlock the intricacies of what Village Halls are and how they are managed.
- **The Marketplace** ~ an opportunity for Halls to exchange goods and services with one another.

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 Village Hall Management Committees across Cumbria.



# Village Halls Explained (Part one)

## Trust Deeds & Trustees

Over the next few editions of the Village Hall Update I will try and unravel the mysteries that surround Village Halls to help Management Committee members, old and new, gain a better understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

### What is a Village Hall?

Village Halls are unique in many ways, from size, shape, age and name, to the position they occupy in English Law. Whilst it isn't necessary to understand the entire complex and confusing way English Law operates, it is important to have a basic understanding of the elements of it that apply to Village Halls.

The first thing to understand is that, as absurd as it might sound, a Village Hall is not actually a building. A Village Hall is in fact a charitable trust, established by way of a Deed of Trust. It is the contents of these Deeds that lays down;

- why the Village Hall exists (the charitable objects of the Trust)
- who it exists to serve (the area of benefit of the Trust)
- the way in which it will operate (the Governing Document, which includes the rules of the Managing Committee).

The charitable trust (i.e. the Village Hall) then has the tenure or use of a building, either owned outright by the Trust as freehold property, or through a lease agreement, where the Village Hall is a tenant of the landlord/owner.

Although the structure of how a Village Hall is established is pretty standard, based on model Trust Deeds, the actual clauses of the

governing document are open to a certain amount of flexibility (as long as the clauses are charitable), which means that it's rare for two Village Halls to be identical.

### Freehold or Leasehold?

A Village Hall that occupies a building on a freehold basis enjoys an ideal situation, as the Trust owns the asset it occupies and usually has no clauses attached to it restricting certain activities from taking place, such as not allowing alcohol on the premises.

A Village Hall that occupies a building on a leasehold basis is in a less favourable position than a freehold Village Hall, as it is always the tenant of the asset. The building will always remain in the possession of the landlord, and also has the greater chance of having restrictive clauses incorporated into the lease, which ultimately has to be renewed at some point. That said, the vast majority of leasehold Village Halls operate on very favourable terms and it is very rarely an issue.

### The need for Trustees

The major quirk of charitable trusts is that in English Law they have no legal identity. So what does this mean? Basically it means that the charitable trust itself cannot enter into any legal contract, which includes holding titles to land or signing a lease agreement, employing staff or the purchasing of goods and services. This creates the need for something that is the cause of much confusion and misconception, particularly in the case of a Village Hall - the role of the Trustee.

### The roles explained

It is important to explore the roles and responsibilities of Trustees to fully understand them. Trustees are needed to lend their legal identity to the Trust, entering into legal contracts on its behalf, such as holding title to land or signing a lease.

The misunderstanding is sometimes compounded by the fact that a Village Hall usually has two sets of Trustees - Holding or Custodian Trustees and Managing Trustees, who have quite different roles and responsibilities whilst sharing the title of Trustee.

## **Holding or Custodian Trustees**

A Holding or Custodian Trustee exists to either hold the title to land in the case of a freehold Village Hall, thereby satisfying the Land Registry, or to sign the lease agreement in the case of a leasehold Village Hall, thereby satisfying the landlord of the building.

So why are there two different names for this role?

Again, this is borne out of English Law. A Holding Trustee is a private individual who lends their legal identity to undertake this role, and most commonly there is more than one Holding Trustee. A Custodian Trustee is a corporate body, such as a Parish Council, that lends its legal identity to undertake this role.

### **This is the sole function of this set of Trustees: in essence to act as figureheads of the Trust.**

No powers or responsibilities for the managing of the Trust are granted or associated with this role. Holding/Custodian Trustees have no power of veto over decisions made by the Managing Committee. If they do have any concerns, they can act in the same way any member of the public can and make an enquiry with the Charity Commission.

## **Managing Trustees**

The Managing Trustees of a Village Hall exist to undertake the day-to-day running of the Trust. They must ensure that at all times this happens in accordance to its governing document, which is why it is important for them to be fully conversant with the contents, and understand what is required to make sure this happens. They should also ensure that every decision made is made in the best interests of the Trust.

It is worth pointing out that the Village Hall Management Committee are in fact the Managing Trustees of the Trust.

As mentioned earlier, the clauses of governing documents can differ for each Village Hall, but the primary responsibilities of Managing Trustees remain the same, such as being required to enter into agreements on behalf of the Trust as and when is necessary (such as insurance or utilities), ensuring the financial upkeep of the Trust and maintaining the actual fabric of the building.

There are certain instances where a Village Hall has a set of Sole Trustees. This is a rare occurrence and is one that is not recommended by the Charity Commission or

ACRE.

The ACRE Village Hall Information Sheet 17 Trustees - Roles and Responsibilities, which is available from VAC upon request, explains in greater detail the full responsibilities of Managing Trustees.

## **The structure of the Managing Committee**

The structure of the Managing Committee is laid down in the governing documents, which usually also contain the rules by which the committee should conduct itself.

Again, this document varies from Hall to Hall, but one of the clauses always creates a set of Officers - usually Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer and Secretary. The creation of these posts ensures that the various Trustee responsibilities and requirements are fulfilled and carried out in a consistent manner. The responsibilities of office for each post are:

### **Chair**

The Chair of the Village Hall Management Committee is responsible for chairing the Committee meetings, making sure they stick to the agenda and run to time, and in the event of a tied vote, they have a second or casting vote.

### **Vice Chair**

The Vice Chair delegates for the Chair as and when required.

### **Secretary**

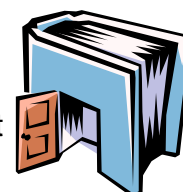
The Secretary is responsible for sending and receiving all correspondence relating to the Village Hall. They are also responsible for making notes of actions at Committee meetings, unless the role of Minute Secretary has been established, who then takes on that responsibility.

### **Treasurer**

The Treasurer is responsible for administering the finances of the Village Hall, and for producing the necessary returns to the Charity Commission as and when requested.

The other members of the Managing Committee still have equal rights and responsibilities in the management of the Village Hall.

I will be happy to answer any comments and queries that you may have in response to this article. Please feel free to contact me by 'phone on any Tuesday.





# The Village Hall Survey 2004

## The results are here!

The Village Halls in Cumbria Survey was carried out between June 2004 and February 2005 by Voluntary Action Cumbria, with assistance from Cumbria County Council. The aim of the survey was to provide the first systematic picture of the state of Village Halls in Cumbria, centering on four main areas: Buildings, Finance, Management and Usage. From this picture, support can be tailored accordingly, either geographically by District, or by topic such as Licensing.

A self-completion questionnaire was sent out to each of Cumbria's 325 Village Halls. 197 questionnaires were returned, giving a very good response rate of 61%. If you didn't receive a survey, or didn't manage to return it, copies can either be posted out on request, or downloaded from the VAC website [www.ruralcumbria.org.uk/villagehalls](http://www.ruralcumbria.org.uk/villagehalls)

Although the answers from these are too late to be included in the report that's been published, they can still be added to the data that's been collated, which is being used by VAC and ACRE as supporting evidence in negotiations with funding bodies and local authorities. A 100% response rate would be a full picture and strong evidence, so please help us to get there. If you're not sure that your Hall has completed and returned the survey, please feel free to contact me and I can easily check my records.

Some of the key findings from the survey are summarised below.

### Buildings

- The average age of halls in Cumbria is 97 years; the oldest is 400 years old.
- The majority of halls are of stone construction.
- The majority of halls provide a main hall, toilets, a kitchen and one or more meeting rooms.
- Only a minority of halls have disabled toilet facilities.
- Just under half of the halls surveyed had not yet conducted an Access Audit in line with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.
- Almost a third of halls reported that their building was in need of major repairs or complete renovation.
- A quarter of halls said that their heating system was in need of major repairs or replacement.

### Finance

- The average annual income for a Cumbrian village hall is £4,264; the average expenditure is £3,352, giving an average surplus of £912 per year.
- Almost 1 in 5 halls reported that their income did not cover their expenditure. On average income was only 75 per cent of what is required to break even.
- In terms of income from hall hire only a minority of halls charge differentiated rates for different categories of user (local, non-local, private hire) and only 40 per cent of halls use a hiring agreement.
- The average hourly charge for local groups is £5.20.
- Over half of halls surveyed had applied for funding from an external organisation in the previous 12 months.
- In total the halls surveyed had approached 60 different funding organisations. Most commonly applications were made to the Parish Council, District Council and Cumbria County Council Neighbourhood Forums.

## Management

- On average halls have 12 people on their management committees with five of these being user group representatives.
- The majority of management committees meet at least quarterly. Frequency of management committee meetings is related to hall income.
- 1 in 10 halls do not know who their Holding Trustees are.
- Only just under half reported they had a maintenance plan for their hall.

## Usage

- In total approximately 12,000 people visit the surveyed halls each week. Extrapolating this figure to include all 325 halls an estimated 26,000 people, or 5 per cent of the Cumbrian population, visit a hall each week.
- The average number of weekly users is 81.
- 40 per cent of halls report that use of their hall is increasing. Only 15 per cent report that usage is decreasing. The state of repair of the hall is clearly related to halls' performance in this regard.
- Almost two thirds of halls felt that their hall was currently underused.
- A very wide range of user groups make use of halls on a regular basis. The most common are Parish Councils, the Women's Institute and bowling clubs.

## The future

Halls identify many challenges they face in the future:

- Recruiting Management Committee members.
- Generating sufficient income.
- Raising funds to effect major repairs to their hall.
- Financial impacts of new regulatory requirements.
- Limited numbers of potential users in small, scattered rural communities.
- Too many halls chasing too few users.

**Many thanks to those of you who responded.**

## The Directory of Village Halls in Cumbria

It was also seen that the Village Halls Survey would be an opportunity to create a directory of all the Village Halls in Cumbria.

The purpose of this directory is to provide information to potential hirers, such as the capacity of the Hall, facilities available in the Hall, the location of the Hall and contact details of the booking secretary. This would mean that Halls wouldn't lose out on any more bookings because hirers didn't know who to contact.

The directory will be administered by Voluntary Action Cumbria, and will be available upon request. It's also felt that it would be useful if the directory was made available to local councils and libraries.

What it certainly won't be used for, or passed on to is mail-shot advertisers. Voluntary Action Cumbria occasionally allows other organisations to share its mailings, but only if it's appropriate to the work VAC carries out. This principal will continue.

Voluntary Action Cumbria has contact details for



all the Village Halls in Cumbria. These contacts are usually the Secretary, to whom this newsletter and other correspondence are sent. The majority of Halls have a Booking Secretary to look after bookings separate to the Secretary, who would be the most ideal contact to be in the directory.

The recent survey contained a question asking if the Committee were willing to have the details held by Voluntary Action Cumbria published in a directory. The majority of Committees were willing, but some Committees were not. This is an appeal to all Hall Committees to consider saying yes to appearing in the directory

VAC's data protection policy requires signed acknowledgement for us to release details. I would be extremely grateful if you could assist me with this, and provide details of the contact to be placed in the directory, no later than 18th November 2005.

Thank you.

A message from Cybermoor



## A website for your community.....

Community organisations interested in setting up a website for their town or village can now tap into support from Cybermoor, a community website provider based in Alston. The community sites will act as a one stop shop for local information like news, comment, events and directories.

We are looking for people across the County who are interested in setting up or further developing a community website. If you are interested, we can offer you the relevant training in setting up and running a site. You need to be enthusiastic, but you do not have to be technically minded. Our system is specially designed for community organisations as the work is spread around a number of people. We are recruiting communities that can be supported up to the end of October. E-mail [info@cybermoor.org.uk](mailto:info@cybermoor.org.uk) or call 01434 382 808 for more details.



## The Funding Advice Service

The Funding Advice Service is funded by the Big Lottery Fund and helps a wide variety of voluntary and community groups throughout rural Cumbria access funding in order to successfully run projects. The Funding Adviser post is shared between Caroline Addison and Mary Christian. Angela Walton is the Project Support Officer and works part time.

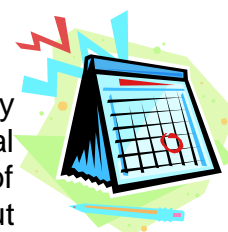
If you require any further information or advice on funding please do not hesitate to contact the **Funding Advice Service** at VAC on **01768 869526**. The office is normally open Monday to Thursday 9.00am – 1.00pm. Please note that during school holiday periods they operate a reduced service. If there is no one available to take your call, or the line is engaged, you will be connected to an answering service.

The Funding Advice Service is provided free of charge to community groups and organisations and can help by:

- Researching sources of funding for projects and running costs.
- Offering support in completing application forms.
- Providing guidance on funding application forms and letters.
- Helping you to develop a fundraising strategy for your organisation.
- Deliver or direct you to training courses to develop your fundraising skills.
- Producing a monthly newsletter which provides an update on funding news (MFU).

## Dates for your diary

Please make a note of the following training events. There is also the opportunity to hold a course to obtain the BIIAB Level 2 National Certificate for Personal Licence Holders, which is required if your Hall is applying for the provision of alcohol in its Premises Licence. Please contact me directly to enquire about running a course in your area.



### October 2005

#### Eden Children and Youth Funding Event

Friday 14th October 2005 9:30am - 2:30pm

The Evergreen Hall, Penrith

Contact: Margot Dent 01768 242138

#### Community & Parish Plans Conference

Friday 21st October 2005 9:30am - 4:00pm

Tullie House, Carlisle

Contact: Carl Glynn 01768 869525

### November 2005

#### Village Halls & Funding

Wednesday 9th November 3:00pm - 7:00pm

VAC, Penrith

Contact: Carl Glynn 01768 869525

#### Village Hall Management Healthcheck

Tuesday 22nd November 7:00pm - 9:00pm

Penrith area - venue TBC

Contact: Carl Glynn 01768 869525

(The two VAC workshops will be repeated in other districts in 2006)



## The Marketplace

This new section is a chance to offer an exchange between Village Halls, from finding new homes for unwanted items such as tables and chairs, to letting other Halls know that they can hire equipment you've got, such as plastic ducks for a duck race!

Please forward any contributions for The Marketplace to myself by 18th November 2005, contact details on the back page. Thank you.

### Have it

Following refurbishment to their Hall, Soulby Village Hall Committee have six quite new wall heaters that are surplus to requirements. The heaters are 3kw AICO ceramic infra red, and are priced at £80 o.n.o each.

For full details contact Jennifer Hughes on 017683 71101

### Want it

Sedbergh People's Hall are looking for 250 fully linkable chairs. If you have any such chairs, or know of a good supplier, please contact Elspeth Griffiths on 015396 20677.

## National Village Halls Forum

The National Village Halls Forum is a grassroots organisation representing Management Committees nationally.

It was founded in 1983 to:

- Exchange and disseminate information about Village Halls in England.
- Represent Village Halls at a national level, i.e. Government, PRS etc about the concerns facing Village Halls in respect of changes in legislation.

The National Village Halls Forum would like to invite Village Halls to take advantage of the special introductory offer of £10.00 for full individual membership. 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

[j.colby.clarke@amservice.com](mailto:j.colby.clarke@amservice.com)

A message from Aon Limited

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## 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 (15 hours) a week within Voluntary Action Cumbria's Rural Development Team. The other elements of the team are the Rural Development Officers and the Funding Advice Service.

### Who's who in the Rural Development Team

Here's your quick guide:                      area covered

#### Rural Development Officers

**Julia Wilson**                      **South Cumbria & Furness**                      **01768-869524**

juliawilson@ruralcumbria.org.uk

**Anna Scamans**                      **Eden**                      **01768-869529**

annascamans@ruralcumbria.org.uk

**Sarah Mitchell**                      **West Cumbria**                      **01768-869520**

sarahmitchell@ruralcumbria.org.uk

#### Rural Support Officer

**Carl Glynn**                      **Carlisle (supported by L Smyth)**                      **01768-869525**

carllynn@ruralcumbria.org.uk

#### Village Halls Adviser

**Carl Glynn**                      **(Available every Tuesday)**                      **01768-869525**

carllynn@ruralcumbria.org.uk

**Funding Advice**                      **(Available Mon - Thurs 9am - 1pm)**                      **01768-869526**

**Mary Christian**                      **Funding Adviser**                      **01768-869526**

marychristian@ruralcumbria.org.uk

**Caroline Addison**                      **Funding Adviser**                      **01768-869526**

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**Angela Walton**                      **Project Support Officer**                      **01768-869526**

angelawalton@ruralcumbria.org.uk

#### Team Manager

**Lorraine Smyth**                      **01768-869522**

lorrainesmyth@ruralcumbria.org.uk

#### Contacting Us:-

We know it can be hard to get hold of us. Some of the team are only in the office part-time, and we are often out at meetings. To help you, we try to leave details of when you can catch us in the office on our voicemail messages.



### 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> November 2005. Carl Glynn

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

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### Don't Forget!

### Display a Copy!

Please put one of the copies of this newsletter in your Hall, where everyone who uses it can see it, so that everyone in your community can benefit from the information.

This newsletter can also be downloaded from the VAC website:  
[www.ruralcumbria.org.uk/villagehalls](http://www.ruralcumbria.org.uk/villagehalls)