



VOLUNTARY
ACTION
CUMBRIA

Village Hall Update

~ November 2006 ~



A note from the Editor....

Welcome to the November 2006 edition of the Village Halls Update. As well as the usual features, this issue includes:

- **Fire Safety Risk Assessments** ~ An overview of the changes to fire safety
- **The Charities Act** ~ An overview of the relevant changes in the new Charities Act

Carl Glynn



Changes to Fire Safety legislation



October 1st 2006 saw The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 come into force, which serves to update all previous legislation.

The Order requires:

- ❖ The appointment of a responsible person (s)
- ❖ A Fire Safety Risk Assessment
- ❖ Fire precautions to be put in place where necessary and where it's reasonable and practicable to do so.

The main thing is not to panic. Although Fire Certificates ceased to be valid on 1st October, they can be used as a good starting point for carrying out a Fire Safety Risk Assessment. If a Fire Certificate was previously issued for your Village Hall, provided the standards set with regard to fire precautions have been maintained, and no material alterations have been made to the fabric or layout of the hall, it is unlikely that significant changes will need to be made.

Responsibilities of the Village Hall Management Committee

The Management Committee is responsible for appointing a **Responsible Person**. This can be one of their own, or a representative from the local Fire & Rescue Authority or an independent fire protection consultancy/company if it's felt necessary.

As far as Village Halls are concerned, it is felt that if they are of standard construction and of a standard simple layout, Village Hall Management Committees will be capable of carrying out their own Fire Safety Risk Assessment, using the guidance provided by the Government.

In order to do this, it's important to understand what is required, and what the terminology means.

What is a risk assessment?

As stated in the ACRE VHS 15 a risk assessment is "nothing more than a careful examination of what could cause harm to people, so that you can weigh up whether you have taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm"

What is a Fire Safety Risk Assessment?

The Government's fire guidance confirms ACRE's definition stating "a fire risk assessment is an organised and methodical look at your premises, the activities carried on there and the likelihood that a fire could start and cause harm to those in and around the premises".

The **aims** of the fire risk assessment are:

- to identify the fire hazards
- to reduce the risk of those hazards causing harm to as low as reasonably practicable
- to decide what physical fire precautions and management arrangements are necessary to ensure the safety of people in the premises if a fire does start.

The five **steps** of a fire risk assessment are:

- identify fire hazards
- identify people at risk
- evaluate, remove, reduce and protect from risk
- record, plan, inform, instruct and train
- review.

The Village Hall Management Committee have a responsibility to ensure that hirers are aware of the fire safety regulations, and that they need to appoint someone who will take responsibility at the event to ensure that they are carried out.

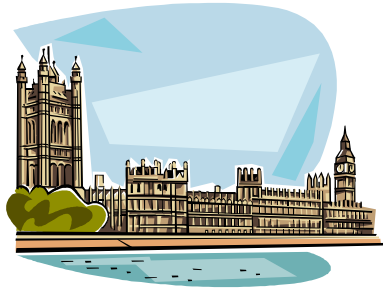
Hirers should be fully instructed with regard to fire procedures and the use of equipment. The easiest way to do this is through a hiring agreement and conditions of use, which all Halls are encouraged to adopt.

It has also been suggested that Village Hall Management Committees could hold an open session at the end of the AGM for regular hirers to explain what is expected and required.

The guidance (No 6) can be downloaded free from www.firesafetyguides.communities.gov.uk or from the HSE www.hse.gov.uk

ACRE have produced VHS 37 Fire Safety in Village Halls to assist with this subject.

As always, if you have a specific query, I can be contacted every Tuesday on 01768 869525.



The Charities Bill

The Charities Bill received Royal Assent on 8th November 2006. This means that the Bill has become the Charities Act 2006, and is now law. Except for some technical provisions the Act has not yet come into force, and it is expected that it will take around two years to fully implement the act. The Village Hall Update will keep you informed when the relevant legislation is passed.

There are a number of changes that are either relevant to or may affect, Village Halls. These points are;

- ❖ The requirements for registration
- ❖ Administrative changes
- ❖ Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)
- ❖ Powers to pay trustees
- ❖ Trustee indemnity insurance

Requirements for registration

The current stipulation is that if charitable trusts (which Village Halls are) own or occupy land or buildings then they must register as a charity. Under the new Act this requirement is removed, although it will still be possible to register voluntarily if desired.

Administrative changes

Unincorporated charities will have the power to alter their administration procedures, such as the number of Trustees, groups to be represented on the committee etc, without having to ask the permission of the Charity Commission first. This change will only be needed if there was no provision in the Trust Deed to allow these changes in the first place. A copy of the alterations will still need to be sent to the Charity Commission afterwards.

Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)

Currently if charities want incorporate, i.e. to have a corporate structure to protect against personal liability, they have to register both as a charity and as a company, which means they have to meet the dual regulatory burdens of both

the Charity Commission and Companies House. The Act creates a new option for charities – the Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). A CIO will have the advantages of a corporate structure, such as reduced personal liability for trustees, without the burden of dual regulation. Creating CIO's will require additional, secondary legislation and the recently formed Office of the Third Sector will start consultations in preparation for this legislation in the New Year.

Powers to pay Trustees

The Act does **not** allow trustees to be paid for being trustees. Voluntary trusteeship still remains a key principle of charity. However, the Act allows trustees to pay an individual trustee for providing an **additional** service to the charity – if they think it's in the best interest of the charity – without having to go to the Charity Commission for authorisation to do so.

An example of this could be a trustee who's a plumber providing plumbing services to the charity **as long** as the trustees agree that it's in the charity's best interest, for example, because the trustee is charging a better price or in some way delivering a better service than the trustees could get elsewhere.

Trustee indemnity insurance

Trustee indemnity insurance covers trustees from having to personally pay out when claims are made against them, such as health and safety breaches which cause an employee injury, as long as the mistake was honestly made and not the result of wilful misconduct.

In practice, trustees are not held liable in this way for honest mistakes, but anxiety about the possibility may have made people reluctant to become trustees. There was also the issue that the charity's funds should not be used to pay for insurance which would personally benefit trustees.

The Act allows trustees to take out trustee indemnity insurance using the charity's funds without the having to seek the permission of the Charity Commission, as long as there's no provision in the charity's governing document which specifically forbids this. If there is a specific prohibition in the charity's governing document then trustees will need to go to the Charity Commission so that they can amend this before they can buy trustee indemnity insurance.

Dates for your diary

VAC Village Halls Advice Service — Directory of Events

7th February 2007 Balancing the Books - Effective Bookkeeping
The Victory Hall Broughton-in-Furness 7:00pm — 9:00pm

21st March 2007 Planning your Project
Lowick Community Hall 7:00pm — 9:00pm

Please note: to save costs and time in administration, once you've returned your booking slip for a particular workshop, the only time you'll be contacted is if the event has been cancelled.

Cumbria Funding Links — Funding Fair

25th January 2007 Carlisle Funding Fair

Carlisle Racecourse

Contact Sylvia Hayhoe 01228 512513

Funding Surgeries

12th February 2007 Eden Funding Surgery
Kirkby Stephen Council & Community Centre 11:00am — 1:00pm



CUMBRIA
WASTE MANAGEMENT



Cumbria Waste Management Environment Trust (CWMET)

Cumbria Waste Management Environment Trust (CWMET) provides grant assistance to local community groups, charities and voluntary organisations for environmental projects. The money comes from Cumbria Waste Management and Lakeland Waste Management through the landfill tax credit scheme (LTCS). The rate of grant will normally be up to 50% of project costs, up to a maximum grant of £20,000. For Grants over £20,000 the organisation must register as an Environmental Body.

To be eligible for a Landfill Tax Grant, applications must come from community groups or organisations, which are non-profit distributing bodies. Applicants must have a constitution or 'rules', which allows them to support at least one of the following objects.

- ❖ Where it is for the protection of the environment, the provision, maintenance or improvement of a public park or other public amenity in the vicinity of a landfill site (within 10 miles) e.g. creation of a conservation area, installation of a play area, tree planting, improvements to a Village Hall or community building etc.
- ❖ Where it is for the protection of the environment, the maintenance, repair or restoration of a building or other structure which is a place of religious worship or of historic or architectural interest which is open to the public and in the vicinity of a landfill site (within 10 miles).
- ❖ Where it is for the protection of the environment, the conservation or promotion of biological diversity through-
 - (i) the provision, conservation, restoration or enhancement of a natural habitat;
 - (ii) the maintenance or recovery of a species in its natural habitat, on land or in water (within 10 miles of a landfill site).

CWMET can now support projects within the local authority districts of Carlisle, Eden, Allerdale, Copeland, Barrow and South Lakeland (with limited exceptions in some districts). The Allerdale and Carlisle districts of Cumbria are currently under spent for this financial year, so CWMET would welcome applications from projects in those districts. If you have a project that you think may be eligible, please contact CWMET, The Old Stables, Redhills, Penrith, Cumbria, CA11 0DT, Tel: 01768 242140, cwmet@dial.pipex.com

The Marketplace



This section of the Village Halls Update offers the opportunity for Village Halls to exchange unwanted items, or send out a plea for help tracking down that much needed item or service.

Have it

Soulby Village Hall, (nr Kirkby Stephen)

Soulby Village Hall have plastic ducks for hire! The rates for hiring these are:

- ❖ 300 for £25
- ❖ 600 for £40

Hirer to collect.

For more details contact 01768 71554

Cumbria Funding Links



Cumbria Funding Links provides accessible and quality funding information, advice and support to local voluntary and community groups across Cumbria through:

- 1) the provision of support from funding advisers within local CVS offices. This service includes the provision of a list of relevant funders, specific funding advice and more in-depth (one-to-one) funding support per project, as well as checking funding applications and other assistance as required. These advisers have been working closely with Carl Glynn to provide an appropriate service to local Village Halls.
- 2) the organisation of Funding Fairs across the county. There is generally 3-4 of these Fairs each year, including Carlisle (January 2007), West Cumbria (June 2006), East Cumbria (October 2006) and the Children & Youth event at Barrow (November 2006).
- 3) the production of a FREE monthly Funding Bulletin, which contains details of new (and continuing) grants and funding schemes; provides details of local, regional and national training events; imminent funding deadlines and other articles of interest within the Funding Extra section.

If you would like any further advice, support or information with regards to your particular project, please contact your local CVS office:

- **Barrow and District CVS**, 72-74 Scott Street, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria, LA14 1QE. ODP@barrowcvs.org.uk Tel: 01229 823144
- **Carlisle CVS**, 27 Spencer Street, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA1 1BE. sylviah@carlislecvs.org.uk Tel: 01228 512513
- **Eden CVS**, Unit 4b, Redhills Business Park, Penrith, Cumbria, CA11 7TJ. mailroom@edencvs.co.uk Tel: 01768 242138
- **South Lakeland CVS**, Stricklandgate House, 92 Stricklandgate, Kendal, Cumbria, LA9 4PU. JanJ@cumbriacvs.org.uk Tel: 01539 742627
- **West Cumbria CVS**, Maryport Community Resource Centre, 12a Selby Terrace, Maryport, Cumbria, CA15 6NF amanda@westcumbriacvs.solis.co.uk Tel: 01900 819191

If you wish to receive regular copies of the Funding Bulletin, please e-mail: info@cumbriafundinglinks.org.uk or contact Cumbria Funding links on 01768 869523.

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 VAC's Community Team, alongside the Rural Development Officers. The Village Halls Telephone Advice Service operates every Tuesday on 01768 869525, where the Village Halls Adviser is available to answer your queries.

Who's who in the Community Team

Here's your quick guide:

South Cumbria & Furness

Julia Wilson (Rural Development Officer) 01768-869524
juliawilson@ruralcumbria.org.uk

Eden

Anna Scamans (Rural Development Officer) 01768-869529
annascamans@ruralcumbria.org.uk

West Cumbria

Hellen Aitken (Community Liaison Officer) 01768-869520
hellenaiken@ruralcumbria.org.uk

Jeff Downham (Strategic Rural Development Officer) 01768-869526
jeffdownham@ruralcumbria.org.uk

Village Halls Adviser (Available every Tuesday)

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

Team Manager (also covers Carlisle)

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

Contacting Us:-

We know it can be hard to get hold of us, as 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 2nd March 2007.
Carl Glynn

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The Old Stables
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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, and previous issues, can also be downloaded from the Village Halls section of the Voluntary Action Cumbria website:

www.ruralcumbria.org.uk/villagehalls