



Village Hall Update

~ August 2007 ~



A note from the Editor....

Welcome to the August 2007 edition of the Village Hall Update. In this issue: a return to looking at Village Halls, and their management issues



- **Managing the Management Committee** ~ Looking at the roles and responsibilities of Committee members
- **Increasing the usage of your Village Hall** ~ Points to consider when trying to increase the number of hirings for your Hall
- **Low Carbon Buildings Programme Phase 2** ~ Government grants for installing renewable technologies

Carl Glynn

The Village Hall Update is the newsletter of Cumbria's Village Hall Advice Service. It is produced by **VAC** for the benefit of all Village Hall Management Committees across Cumbria.



Managing the Management Committee

The 'secret' behind every good Village Hall is a strong, capable Committee. Okay, so it's not really a secret, in fact it's quite obvious, indeed it's so obvious it's often the most overlooked factor. It's also something that's not that difficult to achieve, which means that on the face of it every Village Hall has the potential to be thriving and successful.

Some things are easier said than done though, and it's that first step that's often the hardest to take. One of the main stumbling blocks is the fact that things might have been seemingly running along merrily, so there has been no cause for any concern—nothing seems broken so nothing needs fixing.

However, the committee might well have drifted away from how the Village Hall charitable Trust was originally intended to be managed, sometimes in terms of who should be on the Committee, how many people should be on it, how many times they should meet and in some cases what it is they're actually meant to be doing.

This drift is often purely unintentional, resulting from successive misunderstandings and misinterpretations of the Trust Deed. Whatever the reasons are, they are fixable, and avoidable.

So what do we do?

The first thing to do is to make sure that everyone on the Committee is aware of their role and responsibility, which is that **everyone** has the **same amount** of responsibility for running the Village Hall. This includes managing the finances too! The role of the Treasurer is to organise the finances, i.e. keep the accounts up to date to reflect money coming in and money going out. How that money is raised, what it's spent on, who it's paid to is the **collective** duty and responsibility of the **whole** Committee.

It has also been documented that Village Halls that have Committees that meet often (e.g. every 4—6 weeks) are in better shape in terms of usage and finances than Village Halls that have Committees that only meet every quarter.

Don't be afraid to admit that you don't quite know how meetings should be run!

No-one expects a Village Hall Management Committee to produce a Maastricht Treaty, so why run a Committee in that manner?

A lot of people are turned off from attending meetings and joining a Committee as they are often run on the same bureaucratic lines as one of the sub-committees of the European Union, and in that case who can blame them?

Yes, a Committee meeting needs to be structured and managed, which is the main role of the Chair, but it needn't be overly so. The meeting should stick to the agenda, which should have been prepared and circulated in advance of the meeting, by the Secretary, but it should also allow debate.

Minutes of the meeting need not be transcribed verbatim; they should provide a short account of the topic discussed, but most importantly they need to record the action that's been decided, who will action that decision, and the date it is to be completed by. It is important to point out that deciding not to make a decision, or deciding not to take action on something are both valid decisions in their own right too, and therefore need to be recorded as well.

Who can help us?

Myself, Carl Glynn, Village Halls Adviser here at VAC is your first point of call. Available every Tuesday, I can talk through your query, and if necessary follow it up with further assistance and advice.

ACRE produce the extremely helpful publication *Managing your Hall*, which is worth every penny of the very modest £8.00 price tag. It details further the roles of each Committee member, and gives practical advice on how to prepare and carry out Committee meetings, and even the Village Halls AGM.

Unlike the ACRE Village Hall Information Sheets which are available free of charge from VAC, publications need to be ordered directly from ACRE 01285 653477 or acre@acre.org.uk



Marketing your Hall—Don't hide your light under a bushel!

Faced with rising outgoings, such as insurance premiums and utility charges, Village Halls are increasingly looking to maximise the number of bookings for the Hall.

Some Village Halls are looking at embarking on substantial marketing campaigns, with some rather worryingly looking to poach users from neighbouring Village Halls.

VAC actively discourages Village Halls from undertaking such practices, as they are the exact opposite of the charitable aims under which Village Halls were established.

Quite often it's not necessary to adopt such an approach anyway, as there can sometimes be an untapped pool of users within the community.

The vast majority of Village Halls in Cumbria have been established for over 50 years, and so in a sense have 'always been there' in the eyes of the community and the Committee.

This in itself can be a Hall's main pitfall, as the Committee can be under the impression that everyone in the community is aware of what's happening in the Hall in terms of activities, whilst the majority of the community can often wonder what goes on in the Village Hall, and has no idea of who to ask to find out. People who have moved into the area won't know who to contact or how.

Spread the word

One of the simplest, almost passive ways of marketing your Hall is to have a notice board available which details the activities taking place, when they're taking place, who organises them (so interested people can enquire about joining), and also who to contact—and most importantly how and when—to hire the Hall for an occasional event.

Another way of spreading the word of who you are, where you are and what you have to offer is to embrace the internet. Some Village Halls have their own websites, which allow people to view their Hall before booking, and have details of who to contact.

All Village Halls in Cumbria are listed by District on the Village Halls section of the VAC website. Many Halls have given permission to have contact details with their listing, although a number of Halls still have no details listed. This is a free service to Halls in Cumbria by VAC; check the VAC website to see if your Hall is listed.

Some Village Halls either have a newsletter, some have a section in a Parish newsletter, but sadly most don't have anything.

A newsletter that distributed to everyone in the community is a great way of keeping people informed of what's happening inside the Hall, and also what's happening with the Committee, including letting people know that they can become involved with the Committee, and how they can become involved.

VAC can help with ideas of how to organise getting a newsletter started, and ideas on how to continue it.

Be contactable

That earlier point of who to contact, how and when, is an important one that is sadly overlooked by the majority of Village Hall Management Committees, as they again rely on the principle of everyone knows who to ask.

If having personal contact details on display is a little unnerving for some people, an alternative is to purchase a Pay As You Go mobile 'phone.

This has three main advantages in that

- ❖ The number is not traceable to a personal address
- ❖ The 'phone can be easily transferred to another person in cases of holidays
- ❖ The voicemail feature is an inbuilt answering machine, so people who want to pay you money to use your Hall can leave you a message.

A basic model mobile 'phone can be bought from a supermarket for under £20, and it will surely pay for itself!

As usual, any further queries, please feel free to contact me any Tuesday to discuss.

Many Village Halls have expressed an interest in 'doing their bit' to help lessen the effects of Climate Change, and implement as many of the solutions as possible highlighted in the booklet *Improving Energy Efficiency in Village Halls*, which was produced by VAC and distributed to all Village Halls in November 2006.

One of the main stumbling blocks for Village Halls installing these technologies is that the cost for some of the technologies are still prohibitive.

This has been recognised by Government, and so the Department for Business, Enterprise & Regulatory Reform (BERR) (formerly the DTI) operates the Low Carbon Buildings Programme Phase 2 (LCBP Phase 2).

This programme gives grant assistance to public sector buildings (including schools, hospitals, housing associations and local authorities) and charitable bodies, which includes Village Halls.

The programme will fund various technologies to varying maximum amounts as follows:

❖ Solar photovoltaic (PV)	50%
❖ Solar thermal hot water	30%
❖ Wind turbines	30%
❖ Ground source heat pumps	35%
❖ Automated wood pellet stoves	35%
❖ Wood fuelled boilers	35%

VAC and Cumbria CVS can help Village Halls find further grant assistance to fund the remaining percentage.

The LCBP Phase 2 requires the technologies to be installed by a registered Framework Supplier, who have been appointed by BERR to install at least one of the technologies listed above.

The Framework Supplier can assist with the completion of the application form for LCBP Phase 2

The Framework Suppliers are:

British Gas
0208 734 9088
0208 734 9015
TheEnergyEfficiencyTeam@centrica.com

Dimplex
01489 773243
lcbp@glendimplex.com
www.dimplex-resource.co.uk

E.ON UK
0800 051 5687
lcbpp2@eon-uk.com

The Low Carbon Partnership (TLCP)
0845 070 7700
advice@tlcp.co.uk
www.tlcp.co.uk

RES Heat & Power
0845 606 0608
www.lowcarbonheating.co.uk

solarcentury
0207 803 0100
publicsector@solarcentury.com
www.solarcentury.com/grants

Solar Microgeneration Limited (SML)
01295 201201
info@solarmicrogeneration.co.uk
www.solarmicrogeneration.co.uk

Through The Low Carbon Partnership, Cumbria has its very own Framework Supplier, Sundog Energy Ltd, installers of Solar PV systems.

Sundog Energy Ltd has recently installed a 4.95 kWp solar photovoltaic system on the roof of Crosscanonby Community Centre, and is currently working with Grayrigg Coronation Hall to install an integrated PV system in their new roof.

To discuss the LCBP Phase 2, and how your Village Hall can possibly access funding, contact Carl Glynn at VAC on 01768 869525, or Sundog Energy Ltd on 017684 82282

Visit the LCBP Phase 2 website
www.lowcarbonbuildingsphase2.org.uk



Funding Advice



Cumbria CVS operates funding advice in Cumbria. Once your project is at the stage of seeking funding (to double check you're actually at that stage contact Carl Glynn), contact your local CVS office.

Carlisle office

27 Spencer Street, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA1 1BE.
Sylvia Hayhoe
sylviah@cumbriacvs.org.uk
Tel: 01228 512513

Eden office

Unit 4b, Redhills Business Park, Penrith, Cumbria, CA11 7TJ.
Jozi Brown
jozib@cumbriacvs.co.uk
Tel: 01768 242138

South Cumbria office

Stricklandgate House, 92 Stricklandgate, Kendal, Cumbria, LA9 4PU.
Jane Johnson
janej@cumbriacvs.org.uk
Vanessa McGill
vanessam@cumbriacvs.org..uk
Tel: 01539 742627

Barrow office: contact the South Lakes office as above.

West Cumbria office:

Maryport Community Resource Centre, 12a Selby Terrace, Maryport, Cumbria CA15 6NF.
Amanda Crane
amandac@cumbriacvs.org.uk
Tel: 01900 819191

Funding Fairs

Funding Fairs are an opportunity to meet Funders face to face to discuss the eligibility of your project, and a chance to attend workshops to hone your fundraising skills!

Eden Funding Fair

Thursday 18 October 2007, Penrith Leisure Centre, Southend Road, Penrith

For further details, please contact Nicola Howells at the West Cumbria office on 01900 819191

South Lakeland Funding Fair

Friday 23 November 2007, Ladyholme Centre, Windermere

For further details, please contact Jane Johnson on 01539 742 627 or email:
janej@cumbriacvs.org.uk

Carlisle Funding Fair

Thursday 24 January 2008. Carlisle Racecourse, Carlisle

For further details, please contact Sylvia Hayhoe Tel: 01228 512513 or
email:sylviah@cumbriacvs.org

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 Community 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 Community Officer) 01768-869524
juliawilson@ruralcumbria.org.uk

Eden

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

West Cumbria

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

Jeff Downham (Strategic Rural Community 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 all have our own direct dial numbers with voicemail. To help, we try to leave details of when you can catch us in the office on our voicemail messages, but if we're not there, please leave a short message and we'll get back to you as soon as we can.



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 12th October 2007. Carl Glynn

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The Old Stables
Redhills
Penrith
CA11 ODT

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.html