



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 July 2000

Welcome to the July edition!

Three months have passed since the publication of our first *Village Hall Update* during which time much has changed for the county's Village Hall Advice Service. I have now formally relinquished responsibility for those halls in East Cumbria. They will now be served by the very capable Anne Bilbrough who, to ensure that the Service remains relevant at all times, has been using the last few months as an induction period gathering as much information as possible about her new role. Throughout the same period I have continued to regularly attend training events.

I would like take this opportunity to thank all those who responded to the questionnaire distributed with the last Update, the results of which are being used to steer our service to meet your needs in the coming months.

All that remains is for me to encourage you to read on, absorb the latest news and information and to ask you to make sure that you share its contents with the rest of your management committee at the next opportunity.

Regards,

Jonathan Walkingshaw

- **ENERGY EFFICIENCY WORKSHOP**

The 15<sup>th</sup> September 2000 is a special day for VAC's Village Hall Advice Team, as it signifies the launch of a new approach to our service delivery. To compliment our existing personal approach to advice, we are now hoping to deliver training events to assist committee members with key issues. These will also act as an opportunity for committee members from village halls around the county to share their thoughts and ideas with each other.

September's workshop will tackle the subject of **energy efficiency in community buildings** and if successful will enable all of those attending to conduct an energy audit on their own hall when they return. Delivered in association with **Furness Energy Partnership**, this event aims to provide you with the knowledge and skills to make your village hall cheaper to run and also more sensitive to the environment. Want to book your place? Simply complete and return the accompanying invitation. I look forward to seeing you there!

- **NEW GUIDELINES FROM THE NATIONAL LOTTERY CHARITIES BOARD**

Since our last edition of Update in April, the Village Hall Advice Team at VAC has received full training on the new Property Applications guidelines provided by the National Lotteries Charity Board (NLCB). The last Update noted that now applicants considering making a bid to the NLCB for building purchase, lease, refurbishment or construction can submit an application to cover the often extensive cost of project planning and management.

However when we last went to press we were not aware that this package of financial support accompanies the introduction of more stringent demands from those submitting property applications. If you are presently considering making an application to the NLCB to improve or replace your village hall it is crucial that you acquire the new guidelines. For full details of the requirements please contact the NLCB on **0845 7919191** and request the Property Applications leaflet, or contact either Anne or myself at VAC.

- ***RATE RELIEF – WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW***

Since The Local Government Finance Act 1988 was implemented a decade ago, village halls have been liable to pay non-domestic or business rates which initially filled many village hall management committees with dread. However this same Act brought with it considerable benefits in the form of mandatory rate relief. Sections 43 and 45 of this Act dictate that organisations “established for charitable purposes only” qualify for an **80% rate reduction**. It is highly likely that you benefit from mandatory relief at present, however if you do not you must contact your local rating authority about the discrepancy immediately.

More interestingly Section 47(ii)(a) of the Act allows local rating authority’s to waive the remaining 20% of the rates bill of “a charity or trustee of a charity”. This additional relief is known as discretionary relief. To find out how to apply for discretionary relief, please contact your local rating authority.

- ***THE DATA PROTECTION ACT – WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR YOU?***

As of 1<sup>st</sup> March 2000 the Data Protection Act 1998 came full into force. As a result community organisations such as village hall management committees that record names and addresses or other characteristics of living people will now be governed by the Act. For specific details of this legislation contact the Data Protection Commission by phoning **01625 545745** or visiting its website: [www.dpc.gov.uk](http://www.dpc.gov.uk)

However do not panic! Thankfully there are exemptions from the Act, consequentially if the data you keep falls into any of the following categories it may not be necessary to notify the Data Protection Commission:

- **Staff administration (including volunteers)**
- **Advertising, marketing and public relations**
- **Accounts and records**
- **Non profit-making organisations**

Please note that the afore-mentioned exemptions are only valid if the community organisation does not process any data of a personal nature likely to cause the individual damage or prejudice their rights and freedoms.

- **THE VILLAGE HALL ADVICE SERVICE**

If you have questions, concerns or desires regarding your local village hall, please talk to us. Specifically we can offer advice and information on:

- **Project planning and development**
- **Fundraising and building comprehensive funding packages**
- **Serving your community**
- **Technical and legal advice, and much, much more!**

Please remember that we are here to help in any way that we can, so if you feel that your village hall management committee could use some help, advice or guidance please contact Anne Bilbrough or Jonathan Walkingshaw at the following address:

**Voluntary Action Cumbria  
The Old Stables  
Redhills  
Penrith  
Cumbria  
CA11 0DT**

**Tel.: (01768) 242130 Fax: (01768) 242134**

**[Vac@dial.pipex.com](mailto:Vac@dial.pipex.com)**

Or simply use a copy of the **Advice Request Form** enclosed. Remember! These forms enable us to deal with your enquiry more efficiently thus improving the service you receive from us!