



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

## December 2001

A lot has happened in our rural communities since our last update and the aftermath of Foot and Mouth continues to cause real problems in many areas. Village hall committees however tell us that they are meeting again and are anxious to make plans for the future. We hope you find this issue helpful in your deliberations.

Additional help with project planning, funding packages, involving your community etc. is also available from Voluntary Action Cumbria via your local Rural Community Officer :-

Allerdale	-	Debbie Steele
Carlisle District	-	Jennie Wilkinson
Copeland District	-	Lorraine Smyth
Eden District	-	Anne Bilbrough
South Lakeland	-	Gail Knopfel

They can all be contacted through :-  
Voluntary Action Cumbria  
The Old Stables  
Redhills.  
Penrith CA11 0DT

## **Vital Villages**

The Vital Villages programme is a Countryside Agency initiative that has been designed to support villages to maintain thriving communities and plan their own futures.

This is done through a grant programme which provides funding for Parish & Town Plans, Community Services and Parish Transport thus enabling local people to have a voice in their own future and to make decisions about local improvements.

All the Parish Councils in Cumbria will have now received an information pack and may well have had a representative at one of the information evenings being held, but to find out more please contact your Rural Community Officer. on 01768 242130

## **Freedom of Information Act 2000**

The Freedom of information Act 2000 will be implemented gradually starting from 30 November 2002. When implemented it will provide a general right of access, although with significant expectations, to information held by public authorities, and other bodies in the course of carrying out their public functions.

Charities and other voluntary organisations may in some situations be defined as public authorities and thus have to provide information to anyone who applies for it. All individuals and organisations will have the right to apply to a public authority for information.

## **Funding Information**

**The Comic Relief UK Grants programme** has changed its priorities away from working with refugees, the young, the elderly and the disabled and now has a pilot programme to help community-led self help groups in deprived areas called "Supporting Communities". Tel 0207 820 555

**The New Opportunities Fund** has been contacted to obtain accurate information about the scope and criteria of the fund. Their response is as follows:

"The New Opportunities Fund PE and sport in schools programme will be launched in November. There will be £581.25 million available in England for the programme.

As the name suggests, the primary focus of the programme is on sports facilities for use by school-age young people,. We anticipate that most facilities, but not all, will be based on school sites. However, it has been suggested that there will be instances where the most appropriate site for facilities will be elsewhere - this could include village or community halls.

We would strongly advise parish councils and other bodies with an interest in village halls to contact their LEA once the programme is launched later this month to discuss possible partnership bids. Tel: 0845 0000 121

## **Funding Continued.....**

**The Bernard Sunley Charitable Foundation**, which has helped a considerable number of church and village halls improvement or access projects has changed its number to 0207 408 2198

## **Publications**

**Implications for Village Halls providing services in Village Halls** Paper by ACRE. September 01

The recent developments in funding strands to put services into Communities has resulted in many village halls being expected to or feeling pressured to accommodate village shops, Post Offices or similar services.

This paper aims to set out the main issues:

Provision of building; constitutional matters; rent/rates; VAT & planning permission.

## **Equal Opportunities Policies**

A number of enquiries have been received recently about writing an Equal Opportunity Policy for Village Halls as it can be a requirement of some funding bodies. There is an information sheet written by Community Matters (0207 226 0189) explaining why community organisations need an equal opportunity policy, what it might consist of, and how to set about developing and implementing one appropriate to a particular organisation.

## **Dates for your Diary**

### **9,10,11 July 2002 The Rural Life Conference**

The theme for the next conference is 'Rural Communities Count' It will look closely at the issues of social inclusion, levels of governance necessary to support thriving, diverse communities, as well as identifying 'grass-roots' examples of sustainable rural living and working..

### **Coming Soon.**

There are plans to run two workshops on different aspects of running your village hall, these are Community Consultation and Long Term Management of Village Halls, and these will take place between January and April of 2002. If you wish to express an interest in advance please contact either Anne Bilbrough or Gail Knopfel

## **Calling all Eden Halls. Opportunity Awaits you.**

We have been asked to let you know of an opportunity for those in the Eden area. Belinda Fox is hoping to start a new venture in the area for under 7-year olds. Physical fun sessions franchised from a nation-wide company. Would you like this run from your hall for your local community? She will hire the hall, bring her own equipment and run the session. Don't miss this opportunity for something different in your area. For further information please contact: **Mrs Belinda Fox on 01768 868230**

## **Bursaries for Training and Consultancy**

VAC provides information and advice on training and development for community groups and voluntary organisations, including village hall committees. It can also provide **bursaries** to help cover the costs of training courses and consultancy work. For further information, contact Quentin Merritt, Training and Development Officer, VAC. Tel: 01768 242130

## **And Finally.....**

We are looking for your views on what should be included in this newsletter, give us your ideas for features - or do we want to include features?, your feedback and views are needed. Please send them to :

Village Halls Advisor  
VAC  
The Old Stables  
Redhills  
Penrith  
Cumbria  
CA11 ODT