



Durham Rural
Community Council

VILLAGE E-VOICE

Welcome to the first edition of Village E-Voice,
an email bulletin specifically for management committee members and user groups
of village halls and community buildings across County Durham

Hallmark Quality Standards Scheme



The Hallmark Scheme was launched in 2007 by ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England) and currently operates in 20 counties via the rural community council network. It is being operated across the whole of County Durham by Durham Rural Community Council (DRCC) and is open to any village or community hall management committee.

The aim of the scheme is to recognise the good work undertaken by volunteer village hall management committees and to provide support on any areas that may require support or additional help.

The best way to think of Hallmark is as an 'MOT' for your hall – using a checklist of standards it will assess how well your hall is being operated and where there are areas that need developing or updating, DRCC can provide one to one support to work on these.

There are three levels of Hallmark which need to be completed in sequential order; it is up to each organisation how many levels of Hallmark they wish to complete:

- Hallmark 1 focuses on the management and administration of the charity
- Hallmark 2 focuses on health, safety, security and licences
- Hallmark 3 focuses on communication with the community and users, alongside general social awareness, forward planning and development

DRCC would like to offer you the opportunity to complete Hallmark 1 which will look at these key areas of your hall: Committee; Hiring; Annual General Meeting; Insurance; Accounts; Notices and Maintenance of the Building.

The benefits of completing Hallmark 1 are:

- It is FREE for your committee to complete and successful completion will result in a Hallmark certificate that is valid for three years.
- It will give your management committee and volunteers confidence that your hall is being ran in the correct way and that you are up to date with required legislation
- It will demonstrate good practice to potential funders and organisations wishing to use your hall to deliver their services
- It is endorsed by the Charity Commission as part of their Quality Standards endorsement policy
- Insurance incentives for your hall:
- DRCC Insurance Scheme Members achieving Hallmark Level 1 – 5% discount
- Norris and Fisher – specialise in cover for charities and community groups including village halls. They offer 5% discount (up to a maximum of £100) for halls that have Hallmark.
- Allied and Westminster Village Guard Scheme – tailored to the needs of village halls, Offer a discount for halls that have passed Hallmark, currently set at £10 per Hallmark stage.
- Access to support from DRCC including toolkits, templates and hands on support from staff.

We have a number of halls across the county currently working towards the accreditation. If you are interested in finding out more please telephone Helen Thistlethwaite on 01207 529621 or email

helen.thistlethwaite@durhamrcc.org.uk

The BOSS Project – Free Training Opportunities

The BOSS (Back Office Services Support) is a partnership of Durham Rural Community Council, Community Action Northumberland and Tees Valley Rural Community Council. It is supported by the BIG Lottery Fund to investigate the need for 'back office services' for rural community groups providing services to others, and is managed by Tees Valley Rural Community Council.

The BOSS Project will run training workshops across the region as part of a series of Pilot Projects designed to promote good practice in the management of voluntary community organisations:

Looking after the Money

Thursday 7th April 10.00am – 11.45am Park House

A session to develop financial policies and procedures for community groups with the aim of reducing financial risk, giving confidence in handling money and producing transparency in annual accounts

One Click Accounts

Thursday 7th April 1.30pm – 3.45pm Park House

This session is aimed at the treasurers and reluctant treasurers. It offers Book keeping made simple through the use of a straightforward computer software programme which produces monthly and annual reports at the click of a mouse.

To register your interest in any of the training opportunities please contact Ian Pillar on 01207 529621 or email ian@durhamrcc.org.uk



MyCommunitySpace is the FREE online premises resource that has been designed for community and voluntary organisations who:

- Need to find a space for their activities (meeting room, conference hall, studio etc.)
- Are looking for somewhere to promote their current rooms for hire
- Want specialist advice and support on running and maintaining a community building

If you fit into one of the above, then visit www.mycommunityspace.org.uk and start using this FREE SERVICE! Maximise room bookings and earn yourself more income. If you are searching for a space, register now to save favourite searches and to get in touch with advertisers directly via the website!

Durham County Council's Community Buildings Review – Update

The report from this review was due to go before Durham County Council's Cabinet, which discusses and makes decisions about their policies and strategies, in November 2010 but this was delayed as the Council were focusing on looking at their medium term financial plans and where to find savings.

It is now expected that this report will be considered by the Cabinet on Wednesday 2nd March and this will address the council's position in relation to community buildings. Following publication of the report, it will be open for consultation and will be available to view on the Durham County Council website www.durham.gov.uk so please check this for the most up to date information.

North East Guide to Grants for Voluntary Organisations – New Edition on Sale

Funding Information North East (FINE) has published the latest edition of its popular North East Guide to Grants for Voluntary Organisations. The 2011 - 2012 edition is the 11th in the series, and will be welcomed by organisations working in the voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors that face a real challenge to secure funding. The latest edition contains details of over £55 million available from more than 90 Trusts and Foundations that offer grants in the North East of England. The guide costs £9 for organisations with a turnover of less than £50,000, and £18 for larger organisations. Please telephone FINE on 0191 4771253, or email enquiries@fine.org.uk if you wish to order a copy.

Funding Opportunities for Village Halls and Community Centres

Foyle Foundation

The Foyle Foundation has a Small Grants Scheme designed to support smaller charities in the UK, especially those working at grass roots and local community level, in any field, across a wide range of activities. Applications are welcomed from charities that have an annual turnover of less than £100,000 per annum. They plan to make one year grants of between £1,000 and £10,000 to charities which can demonstrate that such a grant will make a significant difference to their work. There are no deadlines for submission. Applications will be received at all times but it may take up to four months to obtain a decision from Trustees. The scheme generally will not support charities that are able consistently to generate operational surpluses or which have been able to build up unrestricted reserves to a level equivalent to three months turnover.

For more information please visit www.foylefoundation.org.uk/small-grants-scheme/

Big Lottery – Reaching Communities Funding for Buildings

Community buildings within targeted urban and rural settings can now apply for funding between £100,000 and £500,000 through the Reaching Communities programme. BIG are targeting this funding to bring some of these buildings, in some of the most deprived areas of England, back into vibrant use. This strand of the programme is open to community and voluntary organisations, which along with parish/town councils from the eligible areas will be able to apply. They have up to £75 million available. They want to fund projects that will replace or improve buildings where a wide range of community activities take place, and those that are well used by their community and which have an impact long after the building work is completed.

It is vital that you initially check whether or not you are eligible to apply for this funding by visiting http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/prog_reaching_communities?tab=3&

Durham County Council Arts Development Small Grants Scheme

This scheme supports projects which contribute to the creative and cultural development of County Durham. The maximum you can apply for is £500. However, funds are limited so you should only apply for what you need. Organisations eligible to apply are community and voluntary organisations, arts organisations, social enterprises, parish or town councils and professional artists providing they can show there is a wider community benefit as a result of funding. You must be based in County Durham and your project must benefit the people of County Durham. For projects running from April – September 2011 the deadline is 12noon on 28 February 2011. For more information telephone 0191 3708803, email artsgrants@durham.gov.uk or visit www.durham.gov.uk/Pages/Service.aspx?ServiceId=838

County Durham Community Foundation (CDCF)

CDCF provides grants that make a genuine difference to the lives of local people. They manage charitable funds donated by local individuals, families, businesses and trusts, building up a source of long-term support for the community and acting as the vital link between donors and local needs, enabling people to achieve far more than they could by themselves. They currently have over 120 different funds which can be viewed at www.cdcf.org.uk/how-we-help/our-funds including EDF Energy and EON Windfarm Community Benefit funds which are available for community and voluntary groups who work within a three mile radius of the wind farms which can be used for improvements to community buildings.

There is a simple application process for all CDCF's funds that can be completed online or on paper.

For more information telephone 0191 3786340, email info@cdcf.org.uk or visit www.cdcf.org.uk/apply-for-a-grant/grants-for-groups

Veolia Environmental Trust

The Veolia Environmental Trust award grants under the Landfill Communities Fund to community and environmental projects in the UK that are near some of the landfills and facilities operated by Veolia Environmental Services (UK) plc. There are various categories and projects must come under one of these to be considered for a grant; one of the categories which may apply to village halls is projects to restore or repair buildings of architectural interest. As well as this a project needs to be within five miles of a qualifying facility operated by Veolia Environmental Services (UK) plc. and there is a geographical eligibility checker on the website for this purpose.

For more information telephone 01902 794677, email info@veoliatrust.org or visit www.veoliatrust.org

Forthcoming Events

Engaging with the New Health Structures in County Durham

On Tuesday March 15th One Voice Network will be holding a full day networking and learning event to look at the new health structures in County Durham and how voluntary and community sector organisations can best engage with them.

The event will be held at the Xcel Centre in Newton Aycliffe and will look specifically at the Public Health white paper, the emerging GP consortia, how the voluntary and community sector can feed into the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and the five Health Networks across County Durham.

The aim of the day is to develop a shared understanding of what these new structures and the voluntary and community sector can offer each other, feed into discussions around the Public Health white paper and it's impacts, as well as offering an opportunity for partners from all sectors to network and begin develop effective working relationships.

Further details will be available in due course, however if you have any questions please contact Peter Locke on 01207 529 621 or email peter@onevoice.co.uk

Royal Wedding Celebrations – organise your own events!

Why not take the opportunity to use your village hall as a venue for a Royal Wedding Party on Friday 29 April! A number of village halls and community centres across the country are already planning events and here are some ideas for you to consider:

- Large screen showing of the wedding celebrations
- Refreshments – bring and share tea, BBQ or bring your own picnic
- Entertainment – games, face painting, quizzes, music, dancing etc.
- Competitions – have a dress code and prizes for the best outfits, invite local children and crown a Prince and Princess!
- Decorate your hall – bunting, balloons, ask the local schools and halls user groups to get involved
- Fundraising – in the run up to the big day look at ways in which funds can be raised to put towards the celebrations!



This is a great opportunity to unite your community and invite people to take part in a village hall event that will hopefully lead them to support the hall in the future. You could also use the day as an opportunity to promote activities in your centre and possibly run taster sessions for potential new activities

Village Halls – Buy It, Swop It or Flog It....

Does your hall have any items you want to sell, swop or give away, or are you looking for something in particular for your hall?

If yes, please send the following information:

- Description of items to sell or required
- Price (if applicable)
- Contact details: name, telephone number and/or email
- Photograph (if applicable)

by email to helen.thistlethwaite@durhamrcc.org.uk or telephone Helen Thistlethwaite on 01207 529621 and we can circulate the information to our vast network of village halls and community centres throughout County Durham.

Your Views and Comments

As this is the first issue of Village E-Voice we would welcome your views and comments on it; please also let us know if there are any topics you would like covering in future issues. Please feel free to circulate this e-bulletin amongst your committee members and if anyone would like to receive it directly in the future please ask them to contact me on the details below.

Village E-Voice Contact
Helen Thistlethwaite, Rural Development Officer
Email: helen.thistlethwaite@durhamrcc.org.uk Telephone 01207 529621