



VILLAGE-VOICE

Welcome to the eleventh edition of VILLAGE-VOICE
an email bulletin specifically for management committee members and user groups
of village halls and community buildings across County Durham

Another Hallmark success!

We are pleased to report that another village hall in the county has achieved the Hallmark Level 1 accreditation. Hett Village Hall, which is a very unique building in that it is a salvaged, ex-army, Nissen Hut, is the only remaining public facility in the village and provides an excellent community hub for the villagers of this rural location with no public transport links.

The assessors were very impressed with the highly organised way in which the management committee run the hall and offer a wide range of activities to suit all age groups.

Hett Village Hall decided to undertake the Hallmark assessment as a way of clarifying that the way in which the building is run is correct and Brian Ogden, Secretary of Hett Village Hall described the Hallmark process as "informative, helpful, friendly and professionally accomplished."

If your committee would like to find out more about Hallmark and the assessment process, please contact Helen Brown on 01207 529621 or email helen.brown@durhamrcc.org.uk

HALLMARK



a quality
standard scheme
for village halls

Hallmark 1 achieved

Give us your views....

Do you live in the Derwentside area?

Have you needed to use any aspect of Health or Social Care services recently?

We would like to know what you thought of the experience, the good and possibly the not so good.

Why not join us for refreshments and an opportunity to air your views? The information you provide will be entirely confidential and could be used to bring about changes or improve services in the future.

Come along to one of the venues below:

- Wednesday 28th March 3.00pm – 4.30pm Park House, Station Road, Lanchester
- Saturday 31st March 11.00am – 1.30pm Village Hall, Quaking House, Stanley

Numbers are limited so please call Lesley Millgate on 01207 529621 to reserve your place.

Places for Everyone

www.placesforeveryone.org is a free resource for the voluntary sector and includes a useful toolkit, up to date news, downloads and links to relevant capital funding.

The "An Introduction to Capital Development" online course has been designed to support voluntary sector organisations that are exploring the option of capital development to understand the process and consider how it can best overcome these barriers.

Visit <http://www.globelearning.org/ecs/product/an-introduction-to-capital-development> for more information

Fair Fuel Fayre in Weardale

If you are wondering what to do about rising fuel bills, you may find some answers in Stanhope on Thursday 1st March.

Weardale Community Partnership has teamed up with social enterprise Northern Community Power, to hold an event to help the community take some control of the issue.

Suppliers of renewable technologies, such as Solar and Biomass will be there along with agencies working on the linked questions of Fuel Poverty, Energy Sovereignty and Climate Change.

Steve Day from Northern Community Power told us: "It is just not acceptable for people to suffer from the cold. The situation is getting worse as energy bills rise. The new incentives for insulation and renewable energy sources give us an opportunity to do something about the problem. A whole systems and community approach is the best way to harness these opportunities".

Community Energy Co-operatives are springing up all round the country and anyone interested in starting one in Weardale can come along on 1st March or call in at the Hub in Stanhope.

"At community scale, medium size generation of power becomes attractive. For example, micro-hydro looks a possibility here, along with bio-mass heating of business and community buildings, using supplies from Hamsterley Forest", Steve said.

The Fair Fuel Fayre is at St Thomas' Church Hall from 9-4 on Thursday 1st March. There will be an exhibition of suppliers and agencies as well as seminars on various topics.

Bishop Auckland company, ACIS Energy is sponsoring the event, along with Northern Community Power.

For more information contact Steve Day on 07786091373 or email steve.day@ncpower.org

Brighter Futures Together

Helping you take simple actions for your community

Tuesday 20 March 9.00am – 2.00pm The Great Hall, Sutherland Building, Northumbria University

You are invited to attend a half-day event which will officially launch the Brighter Futures Together toolkit, and explore the role of community and community groups in responding to the sustainability challenge.

The Brighter Futures Together toolkit is a central source of information, advice and guidance for individuals and community groups who want to undertake action to improve their neighbourhoods, including links to key partners, community programmes, funding opportunities, and a section featuring local case studies, where groups can learn from other examples.

The event is led by the Sustainable Communities North East Initiative in partnership with the Sustainable Cities Research Institute at Northumbria University. Event speakers include Stephen Hughes MEP and Trewin Restorick, CEO of Global Action Plan.

For more information visit <http://www.sustaine.com/news-events/31/brighter-futures-together-helping-you-take-simple-actions-for-your-community>

Big Lottery Review of Community Buildings Funding – Have Your Say...

The Big Lottery is carrying out a detailed review of how best they can support community buildings projects and other capital projects (e.g. land, play areas) in the future. They want views from national, regional and community level stakeholders to help shape this future funding.

This is your opportunity to tell them what you think of their current funding offer and how it could be improved to better meet the needs of people and communities most in need with a limited amount of funding available.

Currently they have up to £75 million to invest in buildings with a community use until 2015. This is currently being channelled through the Reaching Communities Buildings programme. In addition, smaller capital works are also currently funded through the revenue strand of Reaching Communities and even smaller projects are supported through their Awards for All programme.

To access the survey please visit <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/6BPCFTF>

Invitation to 'Let's Talk about Food'

Durham City Town Hall Monday 12th March 9.30am – 4.30pm

You are invited to attend a free event "Let's Talk About Food" at Durham City Town Hall on Monday 12th March. This is the first of several gatherings that will contribute towards the creation of a Sustainable Local Food Strategy for County Durham and the establishment of a Food Partnership. The project, which is hosted by Durham Rural Community Council, aims to deliver a Strategy that supports production and supply chains of sustainable, healthy local produce. This will be achieved through a participatory process of development involving a wide range of stakeholders.

During the morning you can hear some inspirational speakers including Lord Curry of Kirkharle and Molly Clear (Incredible Edible Todmorden). The afternoon will be more informal with a choice of mini workshops showing some diverse examples of local food activities. To register your place, please go to: www.durhamlocalfood.eventbrite.co.uk (registration is only available online). Early registration is advised as places are limited and registration will be on a 'first come, first served' basis.

At this event, you will have the opportunity to gain a broader insight into some of the issues around food systems and policy, and see some examples of how these are being actively responded to. In addition, you will also be invited to put forward some initial ideas about what might be relevant in County Durham, based upon your responses to what you hear and learn about. These will then be developed further at subsequent workshops.

For more information contact Liz Charles on 01207 529621 or email liz.charles@durhamrcc.org.uk

PROGRAMME

9.30	Arrivals, Registration and Refreshments	
10.00	Introduction to the event	
10.15	Lord Curry of Kirkharle: 'Local Food and the north east economy'	
10.35	Chris Shaw: Director of Health Improvement, Sheffield City Council: Sheffield Food Plan	
11.00	Break	
11.15	Dr Charlie Clutterbuck (Hon. Research Fellow, Centre for Food Policy, City University): 'Sustainable Food – healthier for people and the planet'	
11.40	Mary Clear: Incredible Edible Todmorden	
12.00	Questions to speakers from the floor	
12.30	Lunch and networking	
13.15 – 16.00 (3 iterations)	Mini Workshops Sustain (Food Cooperatives): Kirstin Glendinning Sedgefield Community College: Tracey Emery CSA: Nelly Trevellyn (Scarborough Shearling CSA) & Mick Marston (Soil Association) Grown in Middlesbrough & Food Sustainability Action Plan for Middlesbrough: Catherine Boyle Love Food, Hate Waste (or display): Rachel Gatland Sustainable Cities: Tom Andrews (Soil Association) Flexigraze: Stephen Comber Acorn Dairy: Caroline Tweddle New Close Farm Shop: Jamie Bond Bradley Burn Farm/Shop: Chris Stephenson	Stalls Durham Local Food Website/Network/Food Project Love Food: Hazel Coppack Publications table: Liz Charles Visit County Durham: Melanie Lowes Taste North East: Sue Cresswell Durham Food Bank: Peter Maclellan Soil Association: Mick Marston (tbc)
16.15	Summing up/Next Steps	
16.30	END	

County Durham Furniture Help Scheme seeks help from Teesdale and Weardale Village Halls

The County Durham Furniture Help Scheme based in Chilton aims to relieve poverty by the provision of a furniture and household good recycling service to those people resident in County Durham and neighbouring counties who are in necessitous circumstances. They also provide work experience opportunities for unemployed people to help them learn new skills to enable them to return to employment or self-employment especially 18 to 25 year olds.

To meet the ever increasing demands for their services they need to continue expanding especially in rural areas; their current strategy is to identify units based on their Chilton model in Teesdale, Weardale and other rural places and to work with local groups and charities.

The proposed units would also help provide a venue for local traders, community groups and individual to offer their produce and services in addition to our business.

By establishing bases in these areas it will help bring their service closer to individuals and families in need in remote areas. There is also an idea to make a video and an internet link from the new base to the main base/salesrooms in Chilton so that potential customers can see what goods are available there.

The CDFHS will also by virtue of its reuse ethic add to Durham County Councils targets for recycling and waste reduction additionally, benefitting local communities by making use of bulky waste and scrap.

If your village hall or community centre would be able to provide any space to assist with this project or you would like to find out more about it please contact Chris Palmer, Managing Director on 01388-721509 or email chris.palmer@cdfhs.co.uk

For more information please visit www.cdfhs.co.uk

Co-operative Community Energy Challenge

The Centre for Sustainable Energy is working with The Co-operative to deliver a new initiative called the Co-operative Community Energy Challenge, which forms an integral new element of The Co-operative's Clean Energy Revolution campaign.

The Community Energy Challenge will provide 12-18 months of enterprise development, mentoring, technical advice and community facilitation for six to eight communities, enabling them to initiate co-operative renewable energy projects at a significant scale (e.g. valued at £1m to £3m and/or rated in excess of 500kW). As well as providing expert support, CSE can spend money on your behalf for any initial costs needed to get your project moving. See www.cse.org.uk/coopenergychallenge for more details on how to apply.

This support is being managed by CSE on behalf of The Co-operative. It builds on our PlanLoCaL programme and resources (see www.planlocal.org.uk) and aims to bring the selected community projects from across the UK to a state of readiness for further support and investment from The Co-operative Enterprise Hub and The Co-operative Bank.

There is a two-stage competitive application process for groups to become part of the Community Energy Challenge. Expressions of Interest need to have been received by **29 February 2012**. Following this, successful groups will be offered support to complete a full bid. Lack of technical know-how should not be a barrier and communities with ambition are encouraged to apply at all stages of their project development.

Funding for Energy Saving Items

The Rothley Trustees want to help small charities and voluntary groups operating in the North East, to reduce their energy bills. They are setting aside £20,000 in their budget for 2012/13 for small energy saving items e.g. roof insulation, radiator thermostats, blinds and curtains, energy efficient equipment, double glazing, timer switches etc. (It is not for large projects such as solar panels and wind turbines.) Grants £100 - £1000 will be awarded at their quarterly meetings in May, August, November and February. The Rothley Trust existing eligibility criteria apply.

For more information visit www.rothleytrust.org.uk



COUNTY DURHAM ASSET TRANSFER CONFERENCE

Friday 23rd March 10.00am – 3.00pm

Bowburn Community Centre, Durham Road, Bowburn, Co. Durham DH6 5AT

AGENDA

10.00 – 10.15	Jo Laverick [DRCC/OVN] Fiona Christian [FINE] Welcome and Introduction
10.15 – 11.00	Durham County Council: Asset Transfer of Community Buildings Overview of Council's approach to asset transfer and support for community buildings
11.00 – 11.15	BREAK
11.15 – 12.15	Fiona Wharton & Heather Markham, Ward Hadaway Law Firm, Newcastle Legal considerations for organisations undertaking asset transfer
12.15 – 1.00	LUNCH [includes market place of support organisations]
1.00 – 1.45	Martin Landers, Firthmoor & District Community Association, Darlington Sharing experiences of being an enterprising community building
1.45 – 2.45	Capital and Revenue Funding for Community Buildings A number of funders [including Big Lottery Fund and County Durham Community Foundation] will be present to talk about funding for community buildings
2.45 – 3.00	Closing Remarks



To book a place please contact Helen Brown on 01207 529621 or email helen.brown@durhamrcc.org.uk Numbers are restricted and places will be allocated on a first come first served basis; a maximum of two representatives per organisation is permitted.
Deadline for bookings: Friday 9th March

Localism Act – Forthcoming Events

On Wednesday 28th March we are hosting a workshop event designed to explore in more detail the implications of the Localism Act, particularly in relation to Neighbourhood Planning. This event follows the very well received general information event which we held at Bowburn Community Centre at the end of last year.

If you would like to understand more about the implications of Neighbourhood Planning and the practicalities of producing a Plan for your community come along to the workshops which will also be held at Bowburn Community Centre from 9.30am. To reserve a place or to request further information call Carl Marshall or email him at carl.marshall@durhamrcc.org.uk

If you missed the general information event at Bowburn last year but would still like to know more about the Localism Act then join us at Marwood Social Centre on Thursday 29th March from 10am. You will hear from a number of local people who are working to produce a plan at the moment and will also find out more about the County Council view of Neighbourhood Planning. To reserve your place or to request further information, contact Carl Marshall on the details above.

Celebrating Our Limestone Heritage

A FESTIVAL of events is to be held to celebrate the natural beauty and heritage of the North-East's historic limestone landscape. The festival will run from June 9-24 as part of the Heritage Lottery Fund-supported Limestone Landscapes project.

The three-year project - a broad partnership of organisations that includes Hartlepool Borough Council - aims to help promote and preserve the unique character of the Durham magnesian limestone plateau, an expanse of sedimentary rock formed 290 million years ago that stretches from almost Tyne to Tees and from the coast to central Durham.

Festival events will include guided walks and other activities to promote family fun and fitness – all with the aim of encouraging people to learn more about the area's limestone heritage in a fun way. Activities will take place in Hartlepool, South Tyneside, Sunderland and Durham.

Ian Moran, community engagement officer for the Limestone Landscapes Partnership, said: "The underlying geology of the limestone plateau – its rocks and hidden coal seams – has provided materials to build with, coal to sell and export and lime to sweeten the land for agriculture for many generations. The limestone outcrops support rich and, in places, unique groupings of plants and animals. The festival will focus on this interaction between geology, people and nature which has shaped the landscape of the area and given it such a special and distinct character."

Further information is available from <http://www.limestonelandscapes.info/>

Job Vacancy: Durham County Council Sports and Leisure Services Job Vacancy Community Activator – Scale 4 £17,161- £19,126

This post is based within the Durham Dales Sport and Physical Activity Development team and will be responsible for direct delivery of sport and physical activity sessions to the targeted groups. Working under the direction of the Senior SPA Officer the post holder will deliver on the stated objectives of the CSN action plan.

The post holder will be expected to deliver on existing projects and develop new sport and physical activity sessions across the locality to adults 16+. It is expected that the post holder will also develop a network of casual sport and physical activity coaches to deliver on the project.

Candidates will be in possession or working towards National Governing body level 2 qualifications in a range of sports and/or a level 2 in exercise to music. They will have experience of delivering sports/exercise to music sessions to community groups. Also to have the ability to support volunteers in developing skills to develop sustainable sessions and other local based physical activity opportunities.

Post is fixed term until March 31st 2013. Post to be based between Woodhouse Close and Teesdale Leisure Centre covering the Durham Dales but may be required to work county wide as and when required

For informal enquiries please contact Deborah Holmes Sport and Physical Activity Development manager (localities) Tel: 0191 3729152 Deborah.holmes@durham.gov.uk

If you wish to apply for this post, please apply online at www.durham.gov.uk
Please note CV's are NOT accepted.

Closing Date: Wednesday 7th March Interview Date: Wednesday 14th March

Your Views and Comments

We would welcome your views and comments on this e-bulletin; 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:

VILLAGE-VOICE Contact

Helen Brown (nee Thistlethwaite), Development Officer – Community Buildings
Email: helen.brown@durhamrcc.org.uk Telephone 01207 529621