

# North Northumberland Village Halls Consortium

## Annual Report April 2021 - March 2022

### Meetings and Communications

Like so many other voluntary and community organisations, the Consortium relied on Zoom meetings during the Covid restrictions. The meeting in May had a new record number of over 50 people present discussing our Covid response and grant income. The meeting in June had 12 members present and heard about the work of NCC Locality Coordinators and what they could offer halls and vice versa.

Members received a total of 28 separate Mailchimp news updates covering a host of different issues including the evolving Covid guidelines to protect users and grant availability.

### Covid

The impact of the Covid pandemic throughout the year continued to be massive. Many facilities opened intermittently throughout the period, others made heroic efforts at providing support to their communities within the restrictions imposed, a few continued to remain closed and others used the lockdowns as an opportunity to make capital improvements to their buildings despite the building supply difficulties. The lower usage continued to have a massive impact on members' hire income but the Covid grants from central government, administered and distributed by the County Council, amounted to over £10600/applicant during the year. This support continued to help enormously to cover fixed and additional costs – at least for the medium & smaller halls.

### Membership

Despite the difficulties all community venues faced during the year, the membership of the Consortium continued to grow. During the period two new members joined the Consortium. We were pleased to welcome ATAC Community Hall and Embleton Parish Room. We now have 77 paid-up members. The full list can be found on our website [www.nnvhc.org.uk/membership](http://www.nnvhc.org.uk/membership).

### Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) Service

Much of the PAT testing occurs during the summer months but in 2021 this was delayed by up to 2 months so causing a disruption to our service the consequence of which has continued today. Nevertheless, we tested a record number of venues (47) and appliances (1220). Thanks again must go to our volunteer testers: Bill Brook, Martyn Robison, Alan Stripp, George Courtice, Andy Sargent, John Grey, Shelagh Coxon, Alison Thomas, Don Atha, Les Mitchell and Janet Young.

### Surveys

We publish an annual income survey for all member halls registered with the Charity Commission. It provides a useful comparison to members as well as a valuable indication of trends. All the figures used have been extracted from the annual returns to the Charity Commission and are publicly available. The latest income survey can be found at <https://nnvhc.org.uk/membership/>

The **supplier list** continues to be updated and numbers about 35 suppliers from asbestos surveys to stage lighting and everything in-between. If members had been satisfied with the quality & delivery of the work supplied, they are encouraged to submit contact details. Neither they, nor NNVHC, would be endorsing or recommending any particular supplier listed. The list is available on our website and we encourage members to update it via the Secretary ([admin@nnvhc.org.uk](mailto:admin@nnvhc.org.uk)).

### Lobbying

The Consortium made a written submission to the County Councils' enquiry into the impact of Storm Arwen urging it to adopt a more strategic approach to engage village halls as places of refuge. We also wrote to the Leader of the Council suggesting ways in which community buildings in the county could contribute to the welcoming of refugees.

## **Training**

After the absence of two years, mainly due to Covid, we offered three all-day, face-to-face training sessions on First Aid (x2) and Food Safety. Half the total costs were covered by the Consortium.

## **New Web portal for village halls: <https://northumberlandvillagehalls.org.uk/>**

Twenty-six NNVHC member venues now have a presence on this site which was launched by CAN in 2021. Many have found it a valuable way of obtaining a web presence for the first time and those halls, which already had their own website, have found it has increased their traffic.

George Courtice  
Secretary

## **Finance report for the Year ending 31 March 2022.**

On the 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2022, the current balance of our Barclays bank account was £10,175.48. The year's summary accounts shows that our income was £3252.00 and our expenditure £1,566.66 which gave us a surplus for the year of £1685.34. The figures are affected by income being received but expenditure not incurred during the period. This was particularly true of our Members' Training which straddled the year end as well as the Covid kits which were purchased in 2021 but recharged to members in 2022. As a consequence our surplus for the year was enhanced.

## **Income**

**Membership** has continued to grow, and we now have seventy-seven paid up members. Annual membership fees remain at £10.00.

As the number of members joining the **PAT scheme** increases so does our gross income from the service.

**COVID Response Kits** The remaining balance of £450.00 has been received direct from Members.

**Members' Training** This income of £360 came direct from members attending the courses in part payment of them.

**Total income £3252.00**

## **Expenditure**

**Administration expenses**, stationery, printing and a 20% proportion of insurance £138.13

**Website** £133.33

**Portable Appliance Testing:** £1131.20 This was lower than forecast due to no training or replacement parts being purchased

**VONNE Silver Membership** No change in this year's membership fee of £84.00. This allows our members to access VONNE's on-line funding directory.

**Members' Training:** £80 This was an early cost incurred before most of the training started.

**Total expenses £1,566.66**

**Statement on NNVHC Reserves**

The Management Committee wishes to make the best balance between the prudent management of the resources under its trust and the best use of the charity's resources to deliver its aims. This approach is reviewed annually.

The reserves policy aims to maintain three designated unrestricted funds:

- a) a PAT training and equipment fund sufficient for replacing test kits and occasional refresher training sessions - £1500
- b) a training fund to part-fund members' general training opportunities - £2000
- c) a general fund to cover operating expenditure in the event of unforeseen costs. Based on the latest accounts this is £6675

Finally, I would like to thank Mary Wealleans for the annual external examination of our accounts.

May Wilson  
Treasurer