

**NORTH NORTHUMBERLAND  
VILLAGE HALLS CONSORTIUM**

**Ordinary Meeting Thursday 16 June 2022  
Approximately 8.00pm**

**Present:** Jack Hasson – Chairman, May Wilson - Breamish Hall Powburn, George Courtice – Middleton & Todridge Vill hall, Ellie Phillips - Longhoughton Community & Sports Centre, Simon Hadden & Andrea Munro - Longframlington, Louise Kirkwood & Julie Famelton – Wingates Vill Institute, John & Ros Grey - Netherton, John Haughie – Copley hall Howick, Maureen & Ian Blakey – Whittingham Mem Hall, Peter Pacepavicius & Barbara Anderson - Netherwitton, Pauline Martin - Ulgham WI, Garry Ritchie & Liz Elliott – Longhorsley, Jean Humphrys - Lesbury Vill hall, Judy & Dudley Williams - Newton-on-the-Moor, Colin Chipp & Eileen Cameron – Felton, Ken and Benita Robson - Bolton, Gustav Macleod - Ellingham

**Apologies were received from:** Liz Spence - St James’s Alnwick, Gill Bray - Shilbottle Community Hall, Shelagh Coxon - Creighton hall, Embleton, Moira Kay - Horncliffe Memorial Hall, Liz Rixon - Jubilee hall at Newton-on-the-Moor, Sue Jackson- South Charlton Village hall, Peter Burnham & Tim Gray – Warkworth, Angela Peereboom & Annette Manning - Beadnell WI hall, Bill Brook – Bamburgh,

**Invited Speakers:** Any Dean & Tracey Morgan, Community Action Northumberland

	Action
<p><b>1. Minutes and matters arising from the meeting of 23 June 2021</b> These were agreed as an accurate record. No matters were arising.</p>	
<p><b>2 Presentation by Andy Dean, Community Action Northumberland</b></p> <p>Andy first explained that CAN’s commitment to supporting and advising village halls dated back to CAN’s inception in 1951. Last autumn, Louise Currie had reduced her hours to 3 days/week but CAN had employed Tracey Morgan for 4 days/week thereby increasing the total service provision devoted to village halls to 7 days/week. That meant a 40% increase in total hours.</p> <p>Andy planned to concentrate his talk on the Solar Power Project in relation to village halls. He explained there were three main drivers for this project: carbon reduction, reducing energy costs and long-term resilience (particularly relevant post Storm Arwen). CAN is leading on the project with support from two main partners a) the Rural Design Centre (RDC) – largely made up of academics based at Newcastle and part funded by the North of Tyne Combined Authority and b) the National Innovation Centre for Rural Enterprise (NICRE) with a policy of using private sector expertise to resolve problems.</p> <p>The project has been divided into two Stages. Stage 1 has involved 19 halls where the initial feasibility of installing solar panels was explored as well as battery storage. Currently those halls which have installed solar panels have found that the revenue earned from selling electricity back to the grid has meant that pay-back periods for their investment have been very long. Modern batteries have the potential to change that because they would allow halls to use stored energy when required or sell when</p>	

the price was more favourable. The battery cost would however double the initial investment making the pay-back period between 11-20 years depending on each halls' circumstance.

Stage 2 now has 25 halls signed up but this list is not intended to close.

The intention is to install solar panels in all 19 Stage 1 halls and much thought has gone into how best to structure the process which would clearly require substantial initial investment. The options discussed were:

- a) Let each hall raise the funds and manage the process themselves
- b) A commercial company manages the process.
- c) A community vehicle is established possibly a "Community Power Company"

Option c) was considered the most suitable as it would enable high threshold funders like North of Tyne to invest, there would clearly be economies of scale compared with a) as the group would buy and sell on behalf of halls and, importantly, it would encourage more halls to take part. The ethos of village halls and other similar community owned assets lends itself to avoiding b).

CAN made a successful bid for Stage 2 in April and consultation is underway. More detailed surveys of the roof structures of Stage 1 buildings will be undertaken which would include any Planning issues. At present many solar panel installations can be carried out without needing Planning permission.

Hopefully funding will be available to those entering Stage 2 and potential sources are: National Community Lottery, Borderlands Growth Deal via NCC, and Defra.

The funding for Stage 1 ends in February 2023 so all the feasibility studies would have to be complete by then.

The Chairman thanked Andy for his excellent presentation and introduced Tracey Morgan.

### **3 Tracey Morgan CAN's Village Halls Community Development Officer.**

Tracey explained that she had started at CAN in November 2021 and predominantly works 4 days over 5. Her main areas of work are: information and advice (using ACRE resources), governance training, promotion of funding streams including Community Hub Infrastructure Funding (CHIF), Ballinger Trust micro grants and digital inclusion; the Village Hall Heritage project, partly funded by the National Lottery which involves the following NNVHC halls in year 1 - Hepple, Middleton and Todridge, Lesbury, Longhorsley, East Bedlington, Breamish and Newton-on-the Moor.

Louise Currie, who works on Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday, is

<p>responsible for Hallmark, Aspire (Hallmark for churches), National Lottery/CAN Partnership Project for village halls, capital funding for halls as well as a range of training, funding advice, general support, information and governance advice given to halls and, working closely with ACRE, on projects including Village Halls week.</p> <p>Currently, throughout the county, 16 halls have attained Hallmark level 1, six Hallmark level 2 and two Hallmark level 3. More information about the Hallmark scheme can be found on CAN's website <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p>Tracey's contact details are as follows: T: 07919531712 E: <a href="mailto:traceymorgan@ca-north.org.uk">traceymorgan@ca-north.org.uk</a></p> <p>The Chairman thanked Tracey and wished her well in her post.</p> <p><i>If you are unsure whether it should be Tracey Morgan or Louise Currie who you should be approaching, contact them both and they will sort it.</i></p>	
<p><b>4 Invitation to members present to consider providing venues for meetings</b></p> <p>The following halls indicated their willingness to host occasional Consortium meetings: Howick, Felton, Ulgham WI, Longframlington, Netherton, Newton on the Moor.</p>	
<p><b>5 Any other Business</b> There was no other business and the meeting closed at about 9.00pm</p>	