

Village Halls News and Information

Issue 34

August
2009

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If you recall in the May 2009 Village Halls News & Information, I mentioned that DRCC planned to launch the new Hallmark scheme across the county later this year.

This quality standards initiative, specifically designed for village halls aims to ensure that hall trustees are managing the organisation to a recognised minimum standard. It will provide a checklist of activities that halls will be assessed upon in three key areas of operation:

Hallmark 1 - assesses whether the hall is complying with the requirements of its charitable status

Hallmark 2 - assesses compliance with legislative issues

Hallmark 3 - examines the role of the hall in the community and how it interacts with its users and the wider community.

Thanks to a small grant from the 'Firm Foundations' fund which is administered by Derbyshire Community Foundation, the scheme will now be open for applicants from 1st November 2009. To help halls prepare for the scheme, DRCC will organise a training workshop for each of the three Hallmark standards mentioned above over the next nine months.

There are three main benefits from gaining Hallmark:

1. It provides funders and other organisations interested in village halls with a bench mark for a well managed hall
2. It gives village hall volunteers confidence that they are running the hall in the correct way
3. It helps market village halls to potential customers

If halls wish to register their interest in Hallmark before 1st November, they can do so by contacting DRCC. Application forms will be sent out prior to this date. Following application, the hall committee will then receive a list of the standards that are expected for a Hallmark 1 award, together with the names of the two visitors, who will visit and assess the hall. Committee members do not have to attend the training workshops but these are specifically designed to help support applicants with the necessary preparation.

Details of the first Hallmark 1 training workshop will be sent out to halls shortly.

Refer to DRCC website for further details or contact Helen Faraday on tel: 01629 821928 or email: h.faraday@derbysrcc.org.uk

Green Communities - 'Making it Happen' Event



Following the success of the 'How to Energy Audit your Community Building' event earlier this year, we have teamed up again with the Energy Saving Trust to host this second workshop called 'Making it Happen'.

This FREE training day is tailored to support the development of community-based energy projects for community buildings. It will be held at Town Hall Matlock on Tuesday 15th September, from 10.00am to 4.30pm.

What you will learn:

- How Green Communities works - what it can do for you
- What makes a successful community based energy project
- Getting started, idea development research and planning
- Factors influencing success and failure, and to get your project going
- How to raise interest in your project and work with project partners

Bookings are taken on a first come first serve basis so if you are considering attending this event, I suggest that you reserve a place as soon as possible. You have to book directly with Green Communities, rather than DRCC, by either telephone on 0844 848 0077 or on-line at:

<http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/cafe/Green-Communities/About-us/Green-Communities-membership>

Greener Communities also ask that delegates register with them as free members on their website at : <http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/cafe/Green-Communities/About-us/Become-a-Member-or-Update-Profile> Members also benefit from a funding database, training courses, consultancy and technical advice, community bursaries and a community carbon calculator tool.

Green Communities is a rebranding of the former Community Action for Energy (CAfE)

Legislative Updates:

Legislative Reform of the Licensing Act 2003 is now in force

The Department for Culture Media and Sport announced the introduction of the Legislative Reform (Supervision of Alcohol Sales in Church and Community Halls) Order 2009 from 29th July. The new changes will allow volunteer committees managing community buildings to take joint responsibility for the sale of alcohol in their buildings instead of being required to appoint an individual as the Designated Premises Supervisor (DPS). However, they can still choose to have one if management committees consider it appropriate for them to hold one as explained in May's edition of this newsletter.

Small communities whether rural or urban have found it very difficult to recruit and fund a volunteer DPS who was willing to take on the responsibility and the required training. This much needed reform of the Licensing Act 2003 is welcomed by ACRE and the Rural Community Action Network following years of lobbying on behalf of community buildings. Essentially the reforms mean that:-

- A community building can still choose to apply for or retain the sale of alcohol on their Premises Licence using a DPS
- A community buildings can apply to sell alcohol on a Premises Licence without the need for a DPS, but need to apply to include an alternative licence condition for the management committee to have joint responsibility for the supervision and authorisation of all alcohol sales. Please contact your Licensing Authority for an application pack.

- A community building wanting to remove the requirement to have a DPS should apply for the removal and submit the fee of £23 to the Licensing Authority.
- A community buildings can vary its Premises Licence to include the sale of alcohol, regulated entertainment, changes to structure/layout and amendment/removal of a licence condition. You should contact your Licensing Authority for an application pack – appropriate fees will be charged.

We recommend that hall committees contact their licensing officer for further advice and assistance.

Updated ACRE Village Hall Information Sheets

Revised versions of the VHISs explaining the licensing reforms are now available from DRCC : VHIS 9 - Village Halls and its Premises Licence; VHIS 10 - Alcohol in Village Halls; VHIS 22 - Village Halls as Employers.

Sales, leases, transfers or mortgages: What trustees need to know about disposing of charity land - CC28 (Version May 2009)

This new guidance replaces the previous version of *Disposing of Charity Land* (CC28). It is a complete rewrite in a new format. It amends previous guidance and updates it to reflect provisions of the Charities Act 2006.

Trustees must always act in the best interests of their charity. How they demonstrate this is usually left to their discretion, but when it comes to selling, leasing or transferring their charity's land, the law sets out clear requirements to ensure that these important transactions are properly managed in the charity's interests and that the trustees obtain the best price reasonable in the circumstances. In most cases the law enables trustees to proceed without approaching the Charity Commission, for approval to the transaction before they can proceed.

This guide will help trustees understand the steps they have to take when disposing of their charity's land and when they need Charity Commission authority. In cases where trustees **do** need CC authority, it outlines the information they will require.

To view or download the guidance go to: <http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/publications/cc28.asp>

National Minimum Wage

From 1 October 2009 national minimum wage will go up for: Over 21s from £5.73 per hour to £5.80, 18-21 year olds from £4.77 to £4.83 and 16-17 year olds (above school leaving age and are not apprentices) £3.53 to £3.57 per hour. General information for employees and employers about all aspects of minimum wage is available from 0845 6000 678 or on the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills' (BIS) website (formerly Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform's - BERR).



There is also an interactive website, enabling workers and employers to find out how the minimum wage applies to them, at www.tiger.gov.uk. The accommodation offset rate (the amount that can be taken into account for living accommodation) is £4.46 per day (£31.22 per week), and will go up to £4.51 per day (£31.57 per week) from 1 October 2009. Guidance for workers and employers on how the accommodation offset operates is at www.berr.gov.uk/files/file38769.pdf.

Alternatively, contact DRCC for further advice on how to calculate the accommodation offset.

Charity Property Help

The Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors has joined forces with NCVO, The Return Foundation and the Charity Finance Directors' Group to launch a Charity Property Help service. It provides a service designed to assist charities, including village halls and voluntary organisations with free support and guidance on all property matters in the UK and to help them manage their property assets more effectively. It will provide a one hour consultation with a RICS regulated member firm free of charge, which could cover matters such as property maintenance, environmental issues, lease, renewals and tenancies or planning issues.

For further details and to register your query go to: <http://www.charitypropertyhelp.com>

Community Sustainable Energy Programme (CSEP) - Push for more renewable installations in East Midlands

Results from the national Village Halls Survey 2009 show that 66% of the halls that responded to the survey in Derbyshire, had previously taken some steps to improve the energy efficiency of their hall. Surprisingly however, it revealed that 98% of those halls had no source/s of renewable energy. These figures reflect a regional trend and clearly there is a need to encourage more halls to consider micro-generation technologies. CSEP are currently targeting the East Midlands together with London, North East, North West and Yorkshire as proportionally they have received fewer applications from these regions. They are keen to receive more of both project development and capital grant applications.

CSEP is an open grants programme run by the Building Research Establishment (BRE) as an award partner of the Big Lottery Fund (BIG). BRE carries out research, consultancy, training and testing to help create better buildings and communities.

CSEP provides £8 million to community-based organisations for the installation of micro-generation technologies, such as solar panels or wind turbines and energy efficiency measures including loft and cavity wall insulation. Energy efficiency measures will only be funded in combination with a micro-generation technology installation. It also provides £1 million for project development grants that will help community organisations to establish if a micro-generation and energy efficiency installation will work for them.

The maximum capital grant available is £50,000 or 50% of the project costs. The maximum project development grant is £5,000 or 75 per cent of the study cost - whichever is lower. as proportionally there have been fewer applications so far. For further details visit: www.communitysustainable.org.uk.

Deadlines for future rounds for the Capital Grant:

Round 7 Friday Deadline 30 October 2009 for Panel Meeting 9 December 2009

Round 8 Friday Deadline 29 January 2010 for Panel Meeting w/c 1 March 2010

Round 9 Friday Deadline 7 May 2010 for Panel Meeting w/c 7 June 2010

Project Development grants are being awarded on a first-come first-served basis until all funds are spent. Some halls may have already applied to be part of the joint Marches Energy Agency and Local Authorities initiative that was advertised in the last newsletter. However, the number of halls that can be accepted onto this scheme are limited and Marches Energy Agency has already received a large number of applications which are currently being processed. If your hall is unsuccessful or has not applied for this scheme, you can still apply directly for CSEP project development funding.

If you have an initial enquiry about the Community Sustainable Energy Programme please call the helpline Tel: 0845 3 671 671 or Email: info@communitysustainable.org.uk or write to them at:

Community Sustainable Energy Programme, BRE, B17/221, Garston, Watford, WD25 9XX

Tesco Charity Trust Community Awards

As of 1st August, Tesco Charity Trust grants for elderly people and adults and children with disabilities are now open to applicants. Community and voluntary groups can apply for grants of between £500 and £4,000. For more information and to download an application form go to <http://tinyurl.com/16ta65>. The deadline is 30th September 2009.

Looking to Reduce Your Energy Costs?

Derbyshire RCC has teamed up with 'Make It Cheaper' to help the managers of community buildings benefit from the best available energy prices on the market.



Utility companies treat community managed buildings as businesses. 'Make It Cheaper' is the largest non-domestic energy price comparison and switching service in the country. It is independently owned and committed to offering the best deal for customers. The service is free to use and is able to compare and offer prices from all of the 'Big 6' suppliers.

Unlike household utilities, businesses are not free to switch suppliers at any time and 95% of businesses that are in a contract, are committed for between 1-5 yrs. Suppliers tend to offer attractive 'new customer' rates and penalise loyal customers with uncompetitive rates. Generally, if a business does not serve notice on its supplier it will automatically be rolled in to a new contract typically on higher rates for another 1-2 yrs.

If you are interested in receiving free help from Making It Cheaper on your non-domestic electricity and/or gas bills please contact DRCC for further details. The committee will be asked to send a Letter of Authority (a sample letter can be supplied by DRCC) along with copies of recent bills to Make It Cheaper. The Letter of Authority allows Make It Cheaper to contact your supplier(s) to confirm when your current energy contract(s) will end.

Make It Cheaper will then contact you ahead of your contract renewal date to get you the best market rates at that time. It will also read the small print on your behalf to determine how and when to serve notice and can advise customers on how to get on and stay on, the most competitive energy rates.

Surface Water Charges

Since 1999 some water companies have charged for surface and highway water drainage on the basis of site area rather than rateable value, as was previously calculated for non-domestic premises. Some water companies introduced this new charging system in 2001 which most likely has already affected some areas of Derbyshire, but from 2010, all water companies will be required to operate the new system.

Rate relief for charity premises has meant that drainage charges have typically been low. However, where water companies have introduced the new charging system, it has led to huge increases for village halls and other community buildings such as Scout Huts, Sports Clubs and Churches. If you have not already been affected by these new charges (Severn Trent are planning to phase in the new charge over a number of years to help reduce the financial impact) and unless a discretionary rate is introduced soon, you will need to allow for future increases in your annual budget.

A coalition of organisations including Scouts, Community Matters, ACRE, churches and others continue to campaign for implementation of provisions allowing water companies to introduce a social tariff for low-income groups. They are calling for a government review to support the plight of small charities and DRCC will be sending letters to local MPs to also help lobby government.

To help support the campaign see:

'**Stop the Rain Tax**' at www.scouts.org.uk/water and '**Don't Drain Us**' at www.dontdrainus.org

Congratulations!

Hilton Village Hall - has successfully secured £400,000 of Growth Point funding towards a proposed project to upgrade the existing hall and to extend the premises to provide better facilities and a community café. This will include making the main hall more performance orientated with raised seating and help the sustainability of the hall by provided four office spaces. Growth Point is government funding delivered in partnership and in recognition of the large amount of building projects that are still on going in Hilton.

And Finally a BIG Congratulations to Dorothy Daybell

Dorothy has just relinquished the role of Secretary to Ashford War Memorial Institute following 50 years of dedicated service to the hall. Dorothy took on the job as Secretary in 1959 when the hall was still being regularly used by the local school for school dinners, P.E. and other activities. The subsequent closure of the school significantly impacted on the hall's sustainability. However, over the years Dorothy has been instrumental in obtaining various pots of funding to maintain and refurbish the hall to its current high standard. The halls greatest achievement came in 2002 with the celebrated opening of the new Post Office thanks to Dorothy's hard work and determination. Over the years, Dorothy has continually raised to these difficult challenges and dedicated a great deal of her time and effort in trying to achieve them. She continues to support the hall as a Management Committee member.

I am sure you will join DRCC in wishing Dorothy best wishes for the future.

Future Dates for Your Diary:

Greener Communities Event 'Making it Happen - Tuesday 15th September from 10.00am to 4.30pm at Town Hall, Matlock

DRCC AGM and 85th Birthday Celebrations - 29th September 2009 from 2.30pm to 4.30pm at Markham Vale Environmental Centre, Near Bolsover. Invitations to DRCC Members are being sent out shortly.

Hallmark 1 Training Workshop - 14th November 2009. Further details to follow.

Successful.



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