

Issue 21

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Village Halls News and Information

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Risk Assessment Training



We have arranged two Seminars on Risk Assessment in response to requests from participants at the Village Hall Conference at Hulland Ward in April. This is an important area of village hall management which many committees find rather daunting. From October management committees will have to conduct fire risk assessments* as well as general risk assessments.

We have therefore invited Eleanor and Bob Chumley-Roberts to lead the Seminars. They are health and safety professionals with a lot of experience of working with voluntary and rural groups. They will provide information on how to do risk assessments, a practical 'hands-on' session and handouts to take away for participants to use in their own halls.

The Seminars have been arranged in co-operation with South Derbyshire CVS on **Saturdays from 10am to 12.30pm**. The first one will be a joint meeting with the South Derbyshire Village Halls Forum and will be **at Willington Old School on 22 July**. The second will be on **30 September at Pentrich Village Hall**.

Eleanor and Bob are professionals and will be charging a fee. DRCC is able to subsidise the event, but we need to make a small charge to each hall attending the training to help meet the costs. I hope this will not put you off and that you will find the £10 charge per hall well worth paying. We will provide lunch at £4 per head for those who wish to stay for it.

Please decide which Seminar to attend and return the enclosed application form to Nancy Slaney with your cheque. If you are booking for Willington please do so by 14 July.

* *Fire Safety Risk Assessment—Small and Medium Places of Assembly (Guide 6)* has now been published. It costs £12 from Fire Safety Guides, PO Box 236, Wetherby LS23 7NB. Tel: 0870 830 7099. Please quote ISBN 978 1 85112 820 4 when ordering and make cheques out to DCLG. It can also be downloaded free from www.communities.gov.uk but the entire guide is 145 pages long.

Rural Solutions – Small Grants Fund

Derbyshire Rural Community Council and Derbyshire Community Foundation have set up this new fund to ensure rural areas continue to have access to small grant funding. It is supported through Defra's Rural Social & Community Programme.

Applications for £50 - £500 are welcomed.

This programme was set up to help forge stronger and more active communities, by using voluntary and community groups as an important resource to bring about local changes and support local people. The fund aims to foster growth of existing community entities as well as providing seed corn funding to set up new groups. Projects should therefore try and reflect one or more of the following aims:

- 1) Encouraging community activity: getting people involved and active in their local area.
- 2) Supporting individuals who feel isolated or are unable to access main services or facilities
- 3) Investigating and creating solutions to local problems and issues
- 4) Putting into action plans and ideas to keep local groups running and growing

The fund is unlikely to support the on going running costs of a group unless they specifically tackle one or more of the above aims and show exceptional need.

Activities, which could be considered include:

Feasibility studies, Consultations, Self-Help projects, information & advice services, transport projects, education and training activity, access to sport and recreation, facilities for disabled people, older people, children.

If you have a project in mind then please contact **Sarah Hand on 01332 592205** to chat about your ideas and funds available before submission of a bid.



Parish Planning Grant Scheme Extended

Knowing the issues that matter most to local people and identifying others within the community with similar views, provides the first step in trying to resolve them. The Parish Planning initiative enables parish councils and individuals to do this, by working together to consult the local community. The process aims to get people actively involved in regenerating their local community, whether it concerns social, economic or environmental issues. It provides a great opportunity for everyone to have a say and influence the quality of community life and their surroundings.

As a result, many people have benefited from projects arising from over 30 Parish Plans across rural Derbyshire in the past four years. During the period April 2006 – March 2008, Parish Councils can apply for funding to help cover the expenses involved in consultation work and for printing costs.

For further details contact your local Parish Council or Derbyshire Rural Council on 01629 824797. Examples of completed Parish Plans can be found on www.countryside.gov.uk

Rural Pub Services Grant

Please pass the enclosed leaflet to your local publican or anyone in your village who might be interested in developing services in the pub. The pub might provide a useful venue for activities you cannot host in the village hall. The grant is only available until 31 March 2007.



Thefts of tables

Allianz Cornhill has advised that in the past 18 months there has been a spate of claims from village halls which have had some or all of their tables stolen. Apart from the obvious inconvenience, such a theft may interfere with hirings until the tables are replaced. It has been suggested that these thefts may have something to do with the fact that tables used by village halls are also suitable for use at car boot sales! Painting the name of the hall on the underside of the tables may make them more traceable and therefore less attractive.

Charity Commission:

File Early

Filing accounts and returns with the Charity Commission is an important part of a charity's financial year. Visit the Charity Commission website: www.charity-commission.gov.uk and go to the *File early* link which reminds charities of the importance of filing accounts early and offers advice about how to do so.

Charity Commission Direct

This is the new one-stop shop for charity enquiries and is based in Liverpool. Each enquiry will be 'risk assessed' and priority requests immediately escalated. Staff will signpost enquiries to the right place first time and provide an enhanced service to support trustees and others who rely on the Commission's advice.

Other features of the new service include a dedicated helpline for trustee enquiries backed up by highly experienced staff, a database of frequently asked questions and faster turnaround for both postal and e-mail requests.



0845 3000 218 Minicom 0845 3000 219

Email: enquiries@charitycommission.gsi.gov.uk

Post: Charity Commission Direct, PO Box 1227, Liverpool L69 3UG

Fax: 0151 7031 555

Licensing

Mark Todd, MP for South Derbyshire, put a question to the new minister with responsibility for the Licensing Act, Shaun Woodward, about the implications of licensing costs for village and community halls. The Minister referred Mr Todd to the Independent Fees Review Panel which reports in the autumn. For details of the Panel go to the website of the Department of Culture, Media and Sport: www.culture.gov.uk/alcoholandentertainment. As halls in South Derbyshire have found, it is worth keeping pressure on your MP about any aspect of the Licensing Act you do not like or are finding difficult to manage.

DRCC Leaflet

A new leaflet describing DRCC's services is enclosed. If you would like further copies please let Nancy Slaney know.

The Good Management Toolkit is proving very useful to Management Committees. We still have a few free copies left so please let Nancy Slaney know if you would like one.

Severn Trent Water—update

John Geddes of the Burton Institute in Winster emailed to say that Severn Trent Water has admitted that all village and community halls should be in Band 3 and that any charges for back payments will be rescinded.

The Consumer Council for Water Midlands told him "In their Scheme of Charges, a formal document approved by Ofwat, Severn Trent sets a definition of 'community premises' to include village halls and community centres. These 'community premises' are then charged on Band 03. This is on condition there are no commercial aspects (e.g. permanent bars)".

Thanks to John for passing on this information, which will be useful to other halls facing similar problems with water charges.

Congratulations!

Dalbury Lees Millennium Hall Trust recently received £1000 from Derbyshire County Council Community Leadership Scheme and have also been granted £5000 from *Awards for All*. This adds to the £62,000 already raised towards their goal of providing a new village hall.

Turditch have been awarded £25,000 for a children's play area on land adjacent to the Village Hall. The local children have designed it themselves.

Utilities Warehouse

We enclose an advertisement sent to us by Graham Hunt. Graham worked for DRCC for 12 years until his recent retirement and is now Parish Clerk at Tissington.