



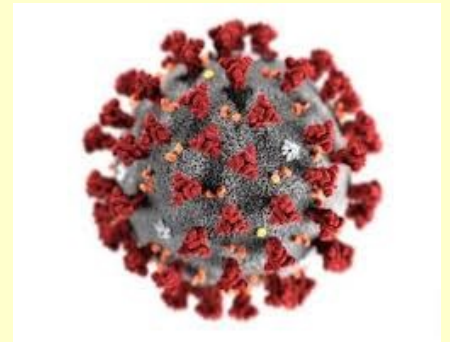
# TEES VALLEY VILLAGE HALLS NETWORK

self-governing • self sustaining • self help village halls support  
organisation

## NEWSLETTER SPECIAL EDITION

### Have You Applied?

The results of our questionnaire about obtaining the £10,000 Retail, Hospitality & Leisure grant (covid support) were quite surprising.



For those applying via the websites of both Stockton and Darlington the general response was 'It was quick and easy and payment was within four days' Two halls even had Darlington Council asking the hall if it would like the grant.

Reassurance was given that there are no restrictions as to how the money is spent and you don't have to pay it back. At the time of writing 14 Halls have received the grant.

For those applying via the Redcar & Cleveland website, this quote is typical 'The process was easy, however the 14day turnaround has not been met. The one thing to say is that you complete a form called Annex B'.

After a slow start Hartlepool B C has now given some grants.

Here are some other responses to the question:

*"We were not aware – but have applied now. Thank you for bringing this to our attention".*

(subsequently received £10k).

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“Know about it, not interested, don't need it”.

“No we were not aware-but have emailed Stockton BC today.

I am just e mailing to say thank you for bringing this grant to our attention. We applied which was straight forward and have been awarded a grant of £10k”.

“Will ask our Vice Chair to look at this again. Appreciate your help”.

## THE VIDEO – SO NEAR AND YET SO FAR

It was 17th November 2019. The Network Committee had for some time wanted to organise a video demonstrating what the Network is all about and what it does to achieve its aims. After a number of frustrating non-productive efforts, there we were, two of us, members of the committee, at Teesside University meeting the lecturer in charge of the media course.

He was a bit doubtful. The students did not usually do videos ‘to order’. They were encouraged to build a film round an invented story and would by now have sorted out what they would be doing for the current University year. We left, somewhat dejected, but about a week later a student called Bailey got in touch to say that he and a few of his fellow students were interested in our project.



On 26th November we met with them – a team of five, Adam, Ben, Bailey, Rachelle and Kye – and formulated a plan. They would

- Film a few halls externally.
- Film at least one hall internally and interview a couple of committee members of that hall to learn about the joys and problems of running it.
- Grill Brian Wake about the Network, its aims and its history.
- Interview someone from a village who attended events at his or her local hall
- Film an event at a hall as it was taking place.
- Film the Network Committee at work

On December 5th The Chairman was questioned in one of the University studios, being assured that his answers to the questions would be turned into a statement in the final product. The whole things had to be repeated later when it was found that some element of the complicated sound kit had failed.



Further short statements were made by some members of the Committee when the Team came to our meeting on 25th February to film us in action.

All was going well and we were to see the final edited version on 10th April. Then along came Coronavirus.

All was put on hold at the University and remains so pending a decision about when the University will re-open. No-one can say when that will be so we are in a state of suspense.

The whole thing has been a new experience - for the Team who had no knowledge of village halls and what they did (let alone what the Network was and did) and for those who were interviewed.

Here are some comments arising out of the interaction.

*"I never knew what a village hall was when the project started".*

*"It was great to see so many communities banding together".*

*"The Network seems to care a great deal about its members.*

*They really have the communities' and their halls' interests at heart".*

*"I was all ready with what I was going to say but they knew what they wanted – and it was different".*

*"There are one or two things that I said which I could have handled or phrased differently".*

*"I was fascinated by all the 'gubbins' they had to use".*

## Swap and Share

Readers will know that we aimed to have events for members looking at how to get funding and asking and answering the question 'Who owns your hall'. Sadly, coronavirus put paid to those but as soon as we are allowed to meet again we will be organising a really good celebratory get-together. Look out for news about that!

## A village without a village hall by Neil Brimer



West Park is a new Garden Village on the edge of Darlington and the A1. (see map)

There were some great advantages to my moving to Darlington about 15 years ago including being closer to work, new built housing in a great location with great access to all the amenities one could need. Over the years while the plans may have changed, West Park is a great place to live with more great

amenities most new build estates could only wish for.

We have a great school, cafe and a pub alongside a selection of independent traders and national chains. As the Village has grown and families have moved in, the thing that stands out for me is that what is missing is a Village hall or community meeting space. Many of the barriers that were there in the beginning are still here today. Do people really need it? Who would operate the Village Hall and be responsible? The difference is we have a greater population who would find use for a space and likely have the skills to move the idea forward.



In early 2020 I asked to attend the Tees Valley Rural Action Village Hall Conference. I hoped to find out a little more about how Village Halls operate and thrive, what had been their committees` experiences of managing a community venue, where did their history start, and what had been their communities` journey? I have had the pleasure of visiting a number of village halls and community centres to find out more. Each has had an extremely welcoming committee eager to share its knowledge. For this I am incredibly thankful.

The initial phase of construction is coming to an end at West Park with the second phase starting to pick up speed. There has always been a commitment by the developer to have a community space within the development. I felt it was time to see if there was any community appetite and create a plan for developing a community facility.



West Park is unique in that in 2019 a Charitable Trust was formed to support the green space and community of West Park that forms a centre piece of the initial development. Maybe they would be willing to take on the management of a Village Hall. From my window I can see an empty office space, which maybe could be turned into a modern Village Hall, or possibly a space can be found in the new or existing development for a purpose built community space?

On my travels I have seen some great examples of creative uses of traditional village halls and new modern 21st century builds.



The possibilities turn out to be endless and it's going to need a community to make a set of designs and a suitable plan. The first steps have been taken. The next are going to need community backing, to find a location and then raise some funds for a feasibility study to make sure any plan is sustainable in the long term.

In these unexpected times of Coronavirus, social distancing and virtual networking, some might say what's the need for a bricks and mortar building?

Post pandemic I hope that individuals become increasingly community minded, with people getting to know their neighbours and valuing the social connections that face to face interaction brings from those catch ups which support our wellbeing, or the arts and craft sessions where we can be creative and express ourselves, or the sporting and exercise classes we might want to take up after being indoors. As adults we might have struggled but so have children and young people and maybe they have been affected the most. I've seen the great efforts parents are making at home but many young people miss meeting their friends and team mates in a safe space and engaging in activities no house could hope to hold.

I hope by the end of 2020 the community of West Park will be well on its way to finding its perfect Village Hall plan suitable for the whole community fit for the future.

## Two New Members

### WELCOME LUKE SENIOR HALL LOFTUS

The hall is run by a group of volunteers who battled to save their local community centre from being knocked down and replaced with housing. As you can see the hall is relatively new and being kept in good condition as it is well loved by the community.



Heather Temple, a community management group member, said: (to the Northern Echo) "It's good that we can now actively promote the centre's use for the community. A new range of activities and events will hopefully alleviate some of the problems that affect local people such as social isolation and lack of transport".

### A WELCOME TO EASINGTON VILLAGE HALL

New member, Easington (near Loftus) Village Hall, has a fascinating history. Built in the mid-1800s as a coach house to the adjacent 'big house', in the 1920s it became a church hall for nearby All Saints' Church. In 2001 it became a village hall, registered as a charity and leased from the Church.

It is run by a Committee of 13 which is responsible for the running and use of the Hall as well as keeping it in good repair.



Just before lockdown the Committee was in the process of getting quotations for substantial work designed to make the Hall really comfortable for events for all kinds. That work will involve: Re-pointing the back wall, Rectifying some damp, Refitting the kitchen, A new heating system, 60 new chairs, Painting the inside walls, Sanding/sealing the main floor.

Currently (subject to restrictions being lifted) the Hall is used by line dancers, tap dancers, Brownies, Rainbows, a film club and a monthly coffee morning.

## Something to make you smile in these difficult times.

Why do people order double cheeseburgers, large fries, and a diet coke?

Why do banks leave vault doors open and then chain the pens to the counter?

Why do we leave cars worth thousands of pounds in our driveways and put our useless junk in the garage?



Ever wonder why the sun lightens our hair, but darkens our skin?

Why can't women put on mascara with their mouth closed?

Why is "Abbreviated" such a long word?

Why do lawyers and doctors only practice?

A meeting was called to discuss a proposal to put a chandelier in the village hall.

"I'm not sure whether anyone in the village can spell chandelier."

"I'm not sure whether anyone in the village knows how to play one."

"Exactly, what we need is more lights in the village hall."



Four diplomats, one from each of the home Countries, England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland, out in the middle east get caught having a boozy night in. Strictly against the rules. They are sent to prison, brought before the local judge, tried and convicted, Sentenced to death but given one last wish because of their diplomatic status.

The Scotsman asks for a rendition of Flower of Scotland played by the Drums and Pipes of the Royal Scottish Regiments.

The Welshman asks for a viewing of "How Green Was My Valley".

The Irishman ask for the full performance of "Riverdance".

The English Man asks to go first!



## More Smiles



A Computer class at one of our halls was asked by their teacher to consider what sex their computers were. The class were split into male and female groups. After much debate the answers were:

From the male group,

Computers are definitely Female because:

No one but their crater understood their internal logic.

When they communicate they do so in a code language that only experts can understand.

Every mistake is stored on their hard drive for later retrieval.

As soon as you commit to one you spend half your salary on accessories.

From the female group,

Computers are definitely Male because:

In order to get their attention you have to turn them on.

They have a lot of data but cannot think for themselves.

They are supposed to help solve problems but half of the time they are the problem.

As soon as you commit to one you realise that if you had waited you could have got a better model.

Why do supermarkets make the sick walk all the way to the back of the store to get their prescriptions while healthy people can buy cigarettes at the front?

Why don't you ever see the headline " Psychic wins lottery"?

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