

Staffordshire Village Halls Advisory Service



Village Halls Newsletter



IT'S TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

It's time to renew your membership of the Village Halls Advisory Service, or if you are not already a member, perhaps you would consider joining this year. (Please see enclosed leaflet/membership form.)

The Village Halls Advisory Service provides members with:

- Access to free advice and support on any issue relating to your community building and its management.
- Copies of the Village Halls Newsletter
- Access to free information sheets (max. 10 per annum) on a wide range of topics relevant to village halls and community buildings
- Discount on ACRE publications and model documents
- Free enrolment to Hallmark; a quality standard scheme specifically designed for charitable village halls and community centres.
- The right to nominate a representative for election to the Community Council's Board and vote at our Annual General Meeting.
- Access to our PAT service

Membership runs from 1 April 2017 - 31 March 2018 and costs £40.

VILLAGE SOS LEGACY

The Village SOS campaign achieved its contractual targets and came to a close just before Christmas. Over 800 people signed up in England, during the life of the campaign. ACRE will be exploring opportunities for future funding and in the meantime will be putting together a monthly newsletter for those who signed up for the scheme, which will contain success stories, case studies and funding opportunities for enterprising community ideas.

ACRE will shortly be shutting down the Village SOS website and replacing it with a holding page, which will advise visitors that the campaign has closed and direct them to YouTube and written case studies to showcasing some of the work that has been done since 2014.

National Minimum and Living Wages Increase

The National Minimum Wage (the minimum pay per hour most workers are entitled to by law) and the National Living Wage (for all employees aged 25 and over) are due to increase in April. The increased figures are as follows:

- 25 years and over - £7.50 per hour
- 21 – 24 years - £7.05 per hour
- 18- 20 years - £5.60 per hour
- 16 – 17 years - £4.05 per hour
- Apprentices under 19, or 19 or over but are in their first year of apprenticeship - £3.50

APRIL 2017

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ENCLOSURES: Membership Leaflet
Oil/LPG Boiler Offer - Please display in your hall



The Hallmaster online bookings system is:

- Internet based, with NO software to download or updates to apply
- Can easily integrate with existing websites
- Reduces workload
- Allows for multiple users to have access to the hall bookings
- Automated emails for confirmations and messages
- Additional Invoicing & payment tracking module converts bookings into invoices
- Support via telephone and email
- Annual price covers unlimited bookings and upgrades

A 90 day free trial is available, but when you sign up for a full Annual Licence, if your hall is a member of the Village Halls Advisory Service, you will receive a £10
Website: www.hallmaster.co.uk.

Published by:

Community Council of Staffordshire
Suite1A/1B, The Whitehouse,
3A Chapel Street, Stafford
ST16 2BX

FUNDING

BLF: Reaching Communities Buildings programme closed

We have been informed that the Reaching Communities Building Programme closed in January 2017, as the Big Lottery is looking at the most effective way of supporting ideas which centre on places and spaces. Community building projects can still access small scale funding through the **Reaching Communities** programme, which offers up to £100k as part of a project proposal.

www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/prog_reaching_communities

The EnviroGrant Scheme

Veolia is launching a new scheme in March which offers small amounts of funding (up to £1,000) to local groups in Staffordshire, such as charities, voluntary and community groups, sports teams, societies and schools.

The following types of projects will be able to apply to the fund, but all applications will be considered:

- Those which contribute to the protection or improvement of the local environment, either via practical action or promotion and education.
- Those which improve the quality of life for the local community by providing new facilities or improving those already in existence.

Projects with an environmental/green focus will be prioritised, however all applications will be considered on their individual merit.

Tel: 0203 5672411/ 07824 460233

Email: hilary.hampton@veolia.com

Greggs Environmental Grant Programme

The environmental grants programme supports projects that improve the physical environment in a way that will improve people's lives.

Any not for profit organisation can apply, preference will be given to small, locally based and community led organisations.

The grant can include purchase of equipment, sessional salary costs, purchase of trees/plants, small capital projects and learning activities. Greggs are also interested in new approaches and innovative ideas as well as sustainable approaches to supporting your local environment. The maximum grant is £2,000.

All projects must deliver a real benefit to the environment. Priority will be given to projects that also include one or more of the following:

- Improves the local environment
- Ensures involvement of local communities

- Delivers a sustainable and measurable difference
- Supports people in need

Local organisations based near Greggs shops are more likely to receive grants.

www.greggsfoundation.org.uk/environmental-grant

The Silver Social Grants Fund

The Silver Social Grants Fund is a new fund, which will run throughout 2017 and will award small grants of between £1000 and £3000 to organisations who are working to break the isolation often felt by older people.

Social clubs and luncheon clubs are the first activities that come to mind and they are great ways to create new friendships and support structures for older people, but there are other ways that older people can be involved in their community – by getting involved in volunteering, by taking a leading role in local community initiatives and by passing on often overlooked skills to a new generation. That's why the Silver Social Fund would like to encourage more people to do more – making use of all of their skills and experience.

For more information and to apply visit:

staffsfoundation.org.uk/ssa/

TESCO Bags of Help

Community groups across the UK are being invited to apply for Tesco Bags of Help funding as the application criteria opens to allow for more communities to bag some cash for their project.

As well as continuing to fund the development of and activity in outdoor spaces such as allotments and community gardens, grants will now be available to fund the purchase of items such as sports kits, camping equipment, spades, litter pickers or specialised medical equipment.

Funding is also available for improvements to community buildings, for example scout or guide hut, church or village hall or sports changing rooms. Groups looking to hold seasonal events and activities such as a Christmas lights can also apply for funding through the programme.

These are just some examples of projects that are now eligible as the green light will be given to many other schemes that meet the programme's aims and objectives to fund projects which will benefit the local community.

To ensure that the programme is really local the number of projects funded every two months has been increased and there are new funding amounts – with £4,000, £2,000 and £1,000 up for grabs.

Website: www.tesco.com/carrier-bags/

Playground Safety

Every year many children are injured as a result of playground accidents. In many cases these accidents could have been avoided if the play area had been correctly maintained. The obligation regarding duty of care is significantly increased whenever children are concerned.

Statistics have highlighted an alarming increase in the number of injuries to children in play areas, especially head injuries. It is therefore essential that the committee ensure that children are provided with as safe an environment as possible.

The siting of a play area should take into consideration:

- Proximity to roads – safe crossings
- Any potential water hazards for risks of drowning, health and pollution
- Electricity pylons and substations for mechanical, electrical and electromagnetic hazards

Seek expert advice before installing any equipment and take careful note of the British Standards that apply regarding safety.

- Impact absorbing surfaces are strongly recommended in order to minimise the likelihood of serious injury.
- It is important that the playground equipment is inspected annually by a professionally qualified and independent person. If you need advice on this aspect we suggest you contact the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) or the Register of Play Inspectors International (RPII).

- Arrange weekly inspections by a responsible adult and formally record findings. Check that all equipment and surrounding areas for litter, glass etc. and clear immediately.
- If any equipment is found to be damaged or in a dangerous state ensure that it is taken out of use or repaired immediately.
- Slides need to be placed facing away from the sun as chutes become extremely hot and can cause burns
- Erect signs stating that no dogs are allowed in the play area
- Enclose the play area with fencing and a gate which are designed to avoid trapping or impaling
- Supply waste bins and empty them regularly
- In the event of an injury, maintain a written report in your Accident Book and report the matter to your insurer immediately
- Siting and condition of trees and bushes should avoid the danger posed by climbing, eating poisonous berries or tripping over exposed roots.

For more detailed advice, visit the RoSPA website:
www.rospace.com/play-safety/advice/

Article provided by **Insure Your Village Hall** on **0330 123 5990**
or visit us at www.insureyourvillagehall.co.uk

KEEPING YOUR FINANCES IN CHECK IN 2017

Trustees have a legal duty to look after their charity's money and other assets. They need to understand and keep track of their charity's income and spending to spot any issues as early as possible to prevent them from affecting the charity's success. Here are some key tips from the Commission's wide ranging guidance on financial issues.

Charities should:

- be able to recognise at an early stage when the charity is no longer viable and plan for what will happen to beneficiaries, staff and assets
- develop a policy on reserves which establishes a level of reserves that is right for the charity and clearly explains to its stakeholders why holding these reserves is necessary
- recruit trustees with time and the right skills and experience to understand their finances and plan strategically for the future

- hold regular trustee meetings to keep track of income and spending
- put internal financial controls in place to make sure all spending is properly authorised
- review sources of income - are there any new opportunities?
- regularly review planned and proposed expenditure- can they do anything better or stop doing something altogether?
- regularly review their risk and risk management policy
- take professional advice before agreeing significant future financial commitments

The Charity Commission's 15 questions document helps trustees check these critical areas and signposts other relevant information.

Extract from Charity Commission News Issue 56

PAT SERVICE



Portable Appliance Testing Charges:

Within 5 miles of Stafford, up to 20 items	£55
5-10 miles of Stafford, up to 20 items	£65
10-15 miles of Stafford, up to 20 items	£75
15-20 miles of Stafford, up to 20 items	£85

And so on

Additional items (above 20) will be charged at:

Members - £1.50 per item

Non-members - £2.50 per item

If you would like to arrange for your portable electrical equipment to be tested, please call Cathy on:

[01785 242525 Ext 206.](tel:01785242525)

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