**Village Hall Advisory Service**

There are 10,000 village halls in England which represents the largest network of community-owned facilities in rural Britain. At the heart of rural community life, they provide a hub for social activities, classes and services such as post offices, doctors’ surgeries and shops.

The term ‘village hall’ covers a range of rural buildings, including church halls and community centres, in which a variety of activities take place – from pantomimes to playgroups.

Village halls often provide the only place to meet within a rural community, providing vital and diverse support to improve quality of life, particularly for those who are least able to travel to more distant centres of activity.

The key to the continuing survival of village halls is the volunteer management committees who have to deal with an increasing burden of legislation yet manage to keep their halls financially sustainable mostly by earning their own income and local fundraising.

Supported by Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE), the HWRA Village Halls adviser helps community volunteers to manage their buildings by:

* Having local knowledge and an understanding of the issues in the area
* Providing information, training and advice, by telephone, electronically and through a range of publications
* Building relationships with parish councils and public service partners
* Carrying out research that provides detailed data on issues affecting halls
* Promoting and raising the profile of village halls at local, regional and national levels

On the national stage, ACRE speaks up for village halls, ensuring Government policymakers are aware of the challenges faced by volunteers who are often struggling with red-tape and the demands of managing a community building. ACRE works with the Charity Commission as one of four partners, to provide advice and guidance on land and property issues.

ACRE developed and manages Hallmark, a quality standard scheme for village halls to reward and recognise good practice. Achievement of the quality standards – level 1, 2 and 3 also attracts reductions in insurance costs with some suppliers.

To find out more please contact Carole Foster on 01652 637700 or email villagehallsadvisor@hwrcc.org.uk .

The Village Halls Advisor works closely with the two Village Halls Networks that cover the Humber & Wolds area: East Riding Village Halls Network (ERVHN) and northern Lincolnshire Village Halls Network. To find out more about the support in your area please click on the links below:

East Riding Village Halls Network (ERVHN) brings together, supports and represents 81 East Riding rural community buildings which include village halls, church halls, parish rooms and community buildings. To find out more, click here

**North Lincolnshire & North East Lincolnshire Network**

In North Lincolnshire and North East Lincolnshire, the Village Halls Advisory Service is provided through HWRA membership. There are two levels of membership:

HWRA (basic) Village Halls Memberships - £25 provides access to:

* ACRE factsheets and model documents (charges apply for model documents)
* Desktop support from a Village Halls Advisor
* 3 yearly network meetings at a cost of £10 per person per meeting

HWRA Village Halls Network Membership - £50 (less than £1 per week) provides access to:

* ACRE factsheets and model documents (discounts apply)
* Access to the Desktop Support from the Village Halls Advisor responding to individual hall questions at 5 levels (where required/appropriate):
	+ Identification and provision of a Factsheet/Model document
	+ Village Halls Advisor research at local and/or national level
	+ Access to the England-wide Village Halls Advisor Network
	+ Question raised with Deborah Clark, ACRE National Village Halls ‘Expert’
	+ Access to national specialist legal team and Charity Commission link
* Network meetings 3 times per year bringing members together to receive information directly from local/national experts on identified/common topics and issues, receiving updates from ACRE, Charity Commission, government offices, sharing intelligence, experiences and resources and creating a supportive peer network
* Monthly funding and information bulletins containing national and local initiatives, funding and development opportunities
* Advertise individual village hall facilities on the Village Halls Website <https://ruralcommunitybuildings.org.uk/>

For further information please contact Carole Foster, Village Halls Advisor on 01652 637700 or email villagehallsadvisor@hwrcc.org.uk