Organisation of the Month—The Valleys Community Group

Who are we? We are a group of Christians, linked to Hexham Community Church, who live in the Allen Valleys, around Haydon Bridge and even in the wilds of Nenthead. We have been in existence as a group in the present form for about two years. Being part of Hexham Community Church, and therefore a small part of a group of churches called ‘Salt and Light’ churches, means that we have a Bible-based, charismatic, community-focused approach to our faith. We are one of a number of ‘satellites’ that Hexham Community Church is establishing in this part of Tynedale and the Valleys. We believe that God is very much alive and active today. We see ourselves as part of the local family of churches, and are part of Allendale Churches Together.

What do we do? We try to live what we believe 24hrs a day every day. We invariably fail in this as we are human, but we are clear what we are called to do, and continue to try to do it. We have weekly get-togethers to see how we are getting on and to worship and pray together in a lively and open way, and to seek God’s will for these valleys. These meetings are held at one of several local houses on Tuesday nights. You may have seen us at things like the Allendale Fair Sunday Service, in the annual Holiday Club at the Methodist church, in Haydon Bridge Methodist Church leading worship occasionally, or at the Allendale Show as part of Churches Together in Allendale. We will be part of the ‘Messy Church’ initiative which is mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter.

What are our plans? We believe that God wants us to build on the foundations of worship which have been laid over the years in the Allen Valleys and beyond, and reach out to people who don’t yet know Jesus. So, we have hired Allendale Village Hall for a series of meetings when we will proclaim, praise and pray. These will be monthly, on third Sundays, starting on 17th April at 6.30 p.m. Following that, we will meet on 15 May, 19 June, 17 July and 21 August. All meetings will start at 6.30 p.m. If you want to help us to proclaim, praise and pray, you would be very welcome. We also plan to continue to meet, and hopefully grow as a group who will serve the local community in whatever way God leads us.

Contact Details If you want to know more about us, you can contact me, Chris Daniel, on 083109 or by e-mail: chrisandbrenda1@btinternet.com

Dry Stone Walling

Dry stone walls are a crucial element that contribute to the special feel and beauty of our valleys. If you’ve ever wondered how it is done and would like to try it there are a few taster days coming up locally organised by the Dry Stone Walling Association. (£40/day)

16th April The Haggs, Allendale
21st May Allendale Golf Club
17th September — TBA ?Killhope
15th October — TBA ?Bill Quay
Special Taster Days/Weekends can be organised on request
Contact Leigh Dobson 07740868880
leigh@drystonewalling-services.co.uk

Sustainable Allendale April 2011 Community Newsletter

Local Housing Proposal Dismissed

The Government Planning Inspector has dismissed the application from Oaks From Acorns to build 42 houses on the steeply sloping field above Shilburn Road. Issues such as traffic, drainage, proximity to the Conservation Area, environmental concerns and effect on neighbouring properties were not felt to be significant hurdles to accepting the proposal. The key issue was the balance between the economic and social good of providing affordable housing and the detrimental effect that the development would have on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. According to local policy, all development on greenfield sites must be affordable, meet a local need and there must be a lack of alternative, previously developed sites. The Tynedale Housing Needs Survey (2004/5) indicated a need for 75 dwellings covering the area including Allendale over the 5-year period to 2010. “However, I do not know the extent of that area nor to what degree Allendale is expected to provide affordable housing for its rural hinterland”. The Allendale Parish Housing Needs Survey 2008 identified 34 people in housing need with a connection to the Parish. Again the Inspector had reservations about the data in this survey. Overall, with the 25 affordable houses currently under construction, the Inspector felt there was no robust evidence to support the need for 42 additional dwellings. He added, ‘Even if I were satisfied as to the level of need, I consider the design of the development as a whole is unacceptable’ based on the impact on the AONB.

My interpretation of the report is if there was clearer evidence of local need for affordable housing and the design of the site was altered the proposal would stand a good chance of being accepted.

The Localism Bill

The Government’s Localism Bill proposes radical change to the way local affairs are managed. Proposals include giving communities the right to buy local assets e.g. libraries, community centres and even private buildings such as pubs; giving communities the right to bid to run local services; changes to the way council tax is set and spent; increasing the power of local authorities; ending even private buildings such as pubs; giving communities the right to bid to run local services; changes to the way council tax is set and spent; increasing the power of local authorities; ending the rules preventing county/parish councillors commenting on local issues before they are voted on; replacing central targets with local plans. More information is available at www.communities.gov.uk. There is a very wide range of opinion about the desirability of such changes.

The Bill would also lead to changes in local planning processes with the creation of neighbourhood plans and devolution of some decisions to local communities. Northumberland County Council (with our encouragement) applied to the Planning Vanguard scheme to create a neighbourhood plan for Allendale Parish. This would attract (much needed) additional funding for the council and provide the expertise to help join together local information such as the draft Parish Plan, county planning policy, the draft Sustainable Allendale Action Plan etc to create a community led plan for the Parish in preparation for the introduction of the Localism Bill.
Local Events in April

**Tuesday 29th March** Allendale Anthology. Help required to create a collection of Allendale Jottings. Fact or fiction; Past, present, even futuristic. Allendale Library 6-7pm

**Wednesday 30th March** Allendale Village Hall and Recreation Ground AGM. ‘Seeking new management’. Please go along to see if you can help.

**Saturday 2nd** Quiz night with Norma’s two course supper. Sinderhope Community Centre 7:30pm. Contact Norma Spratt 685021 or Philip Wilson 685266 for tickets

**Saturday 2nd** Ceilidh to bid adieu to staff leaving Allendale Health Centre. Bar, band and shared supper. Bring enough for yourselves and share it. Free entry—donations for the band requested. Allendale Village Hall 7:30-11pm

**Sunday 3rd** Mothering Sunday. Special service St Cuthbert’s Allendale 11am.

**Tuesday 5th** Ceramic Wild Flowers with Sally Danys. The Garden Station 11:45-4:45

**Thursday 7th** Allendale Parish Council Meeting. Allendale Village Hall 7pm (Agenda not available at time of going to press)

**Friday 8th** Choral Concert by the Dale Singers. St Augustine’s Church, Alston 7:30pm. Proceeds to church funds

**Saturday 9th** St Cuthbert’s Spring Clean. Lots of jobs to do in the church, church hall and grounds. Volunteers wanted from 10am please.

**Sunday 10th** Allendale Preschool Playgroup Easter Fair. Decorated Eggs and Bonnet Competition (under 5’s, under 9’s, under 16’s and over 16’s). Featuring an Easter Bonnet Parade at 2:15pm as well as Tombola, cake stall, face painting and refreshments. At Preschool 10am.

**Monday 11th** Messy Church (inaugural session) Craft activities for children and parents with an Easter theme, finishing with a short act of worship and fishfingers and potato wedges. Trinity Methodist Church Allendale 3:45 to 5:30pm

**Monday 11th** _Nowhere Boy_ A recent release, acclaimed debut by director Sam Taylor-Wood, tells the never-seen-before story of John Lennon’s childhood in atmospheric 1950’s Liverpool, focusing on an emotional tug o’ war between the auntie who raises him and his re-discovered actual mother. Allendale Village Hall Film Club Film starts 7:45pm, cheese and wine from 7:15pm.

**Tuesday 12th** Watercolour for Beginners with Rosie Villiers-Stuart. Garden Station 11-4:45

**Wednesday 13th** Sustainable Allendale Meeting Golden Lion 7:30pm

**Thursday 14th** Parish of St Cuthbert’s AGM. Church Hall 7pm

**Saturday 16th** Allendale Village Hall Spring Clean—volunteers wanted

**Sunday 17th** Allendale Valley Community Group—Praise and prayer meeting. AVH 6:30pm

**Wednesday 20th** Vegetable Growing with Sue Hick. The Garden Station 11-4:45

**Wednesday 27th** Sketch/Paint Trees in Watercolour, Lionel Playford. Garden Station 11-4:45

**Saturday 30th** Bread Making with Mike Winstanley. Garden Station 11-4:45

**Sunday 7th May** Birdwatching for beginners, Keith Buchanan. Garden Station 11-4:45

**Tuesday 10th May** Creative Digital Photography with David Taylor, Garden Station 11-4:45

Please contact us at sustainallendale@btinternet.com 01434 670165 to publicise any events

Sustainable Allendale—the next meeting is Wednesday 13th April 7:30pm The Golden Lion—open to all. Please come along if you want to find out what we have been up to, suggest what we should be doing or help out with some of our plans. We need a volunteer(s) to help us apply for funding to start our community growing scheme. We have established good relationships with potential funders but need extra help to move forward.

Ditches and Drains

Following flooding in February the Parish Council is collecting information about blocked drains and ditches to try and help coordinate repair efforts. If you could provide any information contact the clerk to the PC.

The Rubbish Bit

Thank you to everyone who helped collect unwanted material, shoes etc for Allendale Preschool playgroup. 160kg of rubbish was saved from landfill and funds were raised for Preschool and the Firefighter’s Charity. You may have seen an article in the Courant about the council replacing charity textile recycling bins with their own bins at their refuse sites with the intention of raising funds for the council. Fortunately there is still an easy way to support local causes in the Allen Valleys. Keep on collection these items as there are regular collections by Allendale First School and Preschool.

WildWatch North Pennines

_A message from the AONB (more info is attached to the electronic version of the newsletter)_

_WildWatch North Pennines is a three year project which aims to increase our knowledge of wildlife in the North Pennines through engagement with the public. We are at the development stage of the project, with funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund, and want to know what you would like to see in the final plan. Please fill in a questionnaire. Request one from Andy Lees 01388 528801._

The WildWatch North Pennines project aims to increase the wildlife recording activity within and around the North Pennines AONB. The North Pennines is home to some of the rarest wildlife in the UK. We need good wildlife information to help us make better conservation decisions, and avoid costly mistakes, but we don't have the resources to gather enough data ourselves. We believe we can encourage more people to get recording through activities, support and training.

As far as possible we aim to work with existing organisations and structures. The three county record centres, wildlife trusts, biodiversity partnerships, the rivers trusts and local recording groups are all represented on our advisory group. We hope to help regional and local recorders and recording groups to expand and increase their activity in our area. Anyone can join in, whatever their experience or time commitment. To help us design the programme we need your input. So if you are a potential participant, or just want to be kept informed, please fill in the questionnaire. We envisage a mixture of activities for people with differing levels of interest, expertise and time. For example:

- Public surveys: recent examples included Oil Beetles and Cuckoos

Training events for the public: For example training in how to use a bat detector, how to identify amphibians, recognising bird song and so on

- More specialist training: for those who want to help track down some of our more elusive wildlife.

- For example bumble bee identification or how to find important sites for waxcap fungi.

- Support groups: if there are enough people in one area with an interest in recording and improving their skills, it would be possible to set up regular group meetings/events.

Community Oil/LPG Buying Scheme

We would like to set up a community oil buying scheme. We would coordinate oil deliveries to the Allen Valleys and negotiate the best prices/discounts for householders/organisations. Some of the saving would be used to pay a local person to administer the scheme with any excess going to community projects e.g. running the library. Benefits would be multiple—cheaper oil, local employment, fewer tankers, income for the community. Please get in touch if you might be interested.

Scarecrows

St Cuthbert’s will not be coordinating a scarecrow festival this year. They are saving their energies for a barn-storming display next May in the year of the Olympics and the Queen’s Jubilee—get thinking!