

Post Office Update

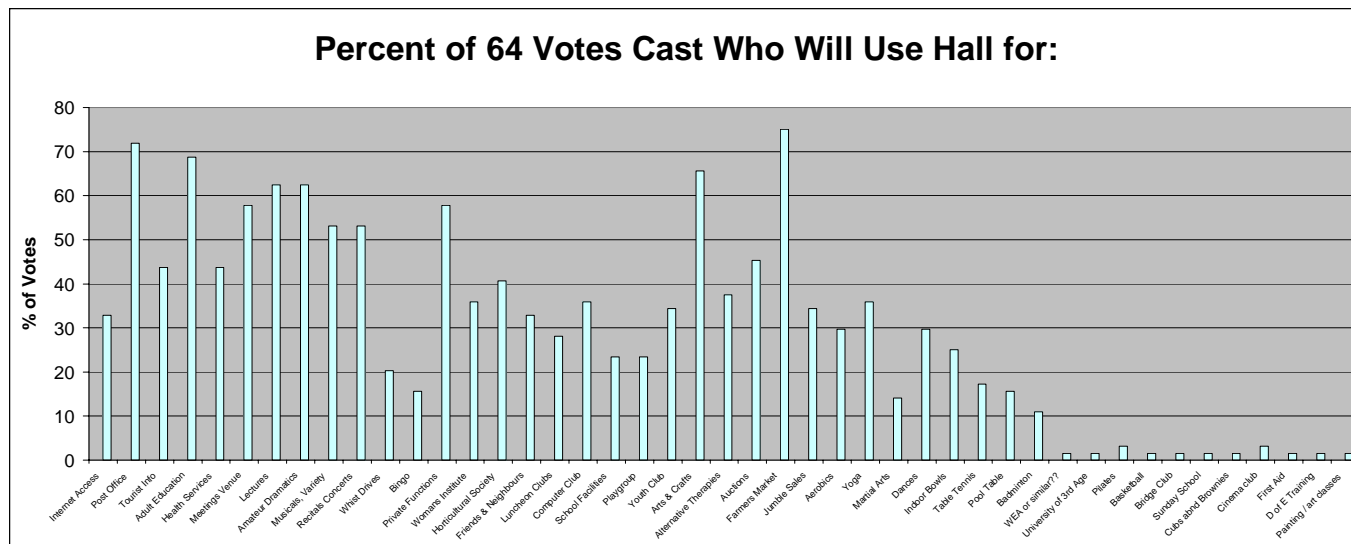
As part of our investigations into possible alternative uses for the new hall we are holding discussions with the Post Office. We are pleased to report that, subject to some minor modifications to the facilities, they are willing to use the existing hall as a temporary post office on a part time basis. Details still have to be resolved with the potential replacement post-mistress but there is a reasonable possibility that we could have a Post-Office service again, one afternoon a week, before next spring. We are dependent on the continued good-will of the replacement post-mistress but we will keep you informed....

Forthcoming Victory Hall Fund Raising Events

Xmas Fair - 9th December. If anyone is willing to donate prizes for the tombola please call Dolly Newcombe on 01692 536354

Summary of Questionnaire Results

For those of you with fantastic eye-sight we have summarised the results here. We will place them on the website in due course so that you can read them more easily....



It's been a busy time for the fund-raising committee and I would like to extend my thanks to all of them for their efforts. If anyone would like to help with the project in any way then please contact us. We would particularly like a little legal and accounting advice at this stage.

Patrick Palgrave-Moore Telephone (01692) 631231
On behalf of the New Victory Hall Fund Raising Committee

Dear Resident,

November 2006

There has been a whirl of activity relating to the New Victory Hall over the last eight weeks or so. As many of you will no doubt have noticed, work has commenced on the Anglian Water Pumping Station. We hope that the disruption will be worthwhile in the end, particularly as their efforts will ultimately reduce the costs of the entrance road and car park for the new hall, as well as providing benefits to many Neatishead residents.

The Public Meeting held on 6th November in the Victory Hall was fantastically well attended and the feedback received has been very, very positive. Those attending the meeting expressed a strong desire that we should work towards designing and, planners and funds permitting, building an eco-friendly hall that is suitable for a wider range of services and activities that meet the needs and aspirations of the community.

The Big Lottery Fund application will soon be submitted and we are in the process of applying for a number of smaller grants. Discussions have been held with the Post Office about a part-time facility based in the existing Victory Hall. The website has been updated and a new Victory Hall notice board will very soon be located next to the village stores, so you will have plenty of opportunity to find out about what is going on. Read on!

Public Meeting

Over 70 people attended the successful public meeting held in the hall on 6th November. They were treated to presentations about the current funding status of the hall and eco-friendly design considerations, followed by a Q&A session and then informal discussions. Responses to the presentations and to the questionnaire were fantastic - over 60 responses have so far been received to the questionnaire. An analysis of the results shows that those present overwhelmingly support (subject to costs and realistic ambitions) re-evaluating the design of the hall and, if possible, creating an architecturally significant eco-friendly building. More information is provided later in this Newsletter, so continue reading....

Alternative Designs / Materials

Andrew Robertson (andrewrobertson@cleanenergy.wanadoo.co.uk), an environmental consultant talked about different technical and design

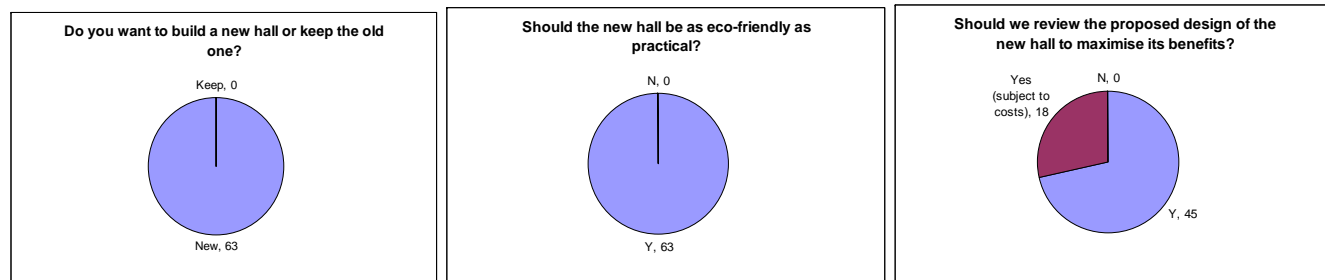


options and showed some fascinating slides of buildings made from eco-friendly materials. We will try to put some of his slides onto the website in due course, so that you can get a flavour for what is architecturally possible. After the meeting there was a great deal of interest in further exploring the idea of constructing the



new building from straw and timber, as it could allow many in the community, including children, to help during the building process. We will, therefore, start to explore these possibilities in more depth. There were several requests amongst the responses for an eco-friendly car park - unfortunately it is too late to change our agreement with Anglian Water but the car park will be made from hardcore and stone, not concrete or tarmac, so it is perhaps not as eco-unfriendly as it might have been.

Other Feedback from the Open Meeting



The top five most popular uses for the new hall were: Farmers Market (1st), Post Office (2nd), Adult Education (3rd), Amateur Dramatics (4th), Lectures (5th). A fuller analysis of the responses to the questionnaire is presented on the last page of this Newsletter. Importantly, every single respondent favoured re-evaluating the design and taking the eco route if possible. Clearly, we don't know if this will ultimately be achievable as we do not yet have an accurate idea of the costs involved or of the likely response of the planners, but we will now start to make the necessary enquiries and keep you informed about any progress.

Lottery Application

Our Stage One application to the Big Lottery Fund (BLF) will be submitted imminently. We are seeking funds of £161,000 plus 'Development Funds' of £10,000. We currently have total cash, assets and work-in-progress worth about £220,000 so a 100% successful lottery application will comfortably take us past the existing target of £350,000. It should be remembered, though, that the target may increase if we decide to re-evaluate the hall design / specifications.

The £10,000 Development Fund Grant will, if we secure it, allow us to investigate eco-friendly designs without eating into the funds raised to date, which is an important consideration for some of you.

We have worked hard on the application and taken advice from independent advisers on how to structure the responses. It has also been reviewed by a number of the user groups, parish and district councillors. It reads well and is a professional document but *please, please* remember that the competition for Lottery Funds is fierce and there is no guarantee that we will get anything, so hopes should not be raised just yet! The earliest we could reasonably hope to start work on the hall *using lottery funds* is spring 2008.

Importantly, Norman Lamb, our MP, has recently confirmed that substantial funds are still available within the BLF allocation for our region and he has kindly agreed to support our application.

Contingency Plans

We intend to apply for other grants concurrently with the BLF application, in case our bid is unsuccessful. The initial fall-back position, should our lottery application fail, is to raise the remaining funds via small grants, donations and loans. In this event we may be forced to scale back our plans for an eco-building and revert to something closer to the currently proposed new design, but we believe that it is better to aim high and risk falling short than to aim low and not get what we need. If you think differently then please let us know! Remember, too, that we are extremely unlikely to win a BLF grant with the current replacement design, so we have nothing to lose by taking the eco-route with this application.

Feedback from User Groups

Constructive meetings have recently been held with representatives from NABS and the Playgroup, who are both important users of the existing hall. Unfortunately, the current planned design (as shown on the website) is less than ideal for both groups so we will work with them to find acceptable solutions. We have also received useful feedback from the W.I., Friends and Neighbours, Barton Bowls Club and several parish councillors. We are still working towards obtaining more feedback from the primary school, Broads Authority and other user organisations / service providers. If anyone else wants to discuss their hopes / expectations for the new hall then please get in touch.

Further Fund Raising

Over the coming months we intend to evaluate the possibilities for institutional and private loans, and large donations from local residents. This topic is fraught with potential pitfalls but the reality is that we have significant borrowing capacity and there are also (hopefully!) a number of local individuals who are capable of gifting or lending substantial funds (or guaranteeing loans) on favourable terms.

The current shortfall, assuming we win some of the smaller grants, is about £100,000 (probably more if we 'Go Go Eco', as one of the correspondents to the questionnaire advised!). We are (perhaps naively) optimistic that, if necessary, a significant slice of this could be secured by appealing to the philanthropic instincts of local residents. We have had confidential discussions with one resident who has verbally indicated that he will donate at least £10,000 to the fund provided the new building meets certain design / eco criteria. This is a fantastic start - is there anyone else out there who is willing to enter into confidential discussions to explore financing / funding options / loan guarantees? If so, please call Ian McFadyen on 01692 630150.

It is perhaps worth noting that, for every £1,000 donated by a taxpayer, the Victory Hall Charity can claim an additional £282 from the Inland Revenue. Higher rate taxpayers can also claim a tax refund of at least £230. Thus each donation of £1,000 results in the charity receiving £1,282. This 'costs' a standard rate taxpayer £1,000 and a higher rate tax payer a maximum of £770. So, if 12 higher rate taxpayers donate a net £5,000 each we will reach our initial target without needing lottery funds. Easy, really! See www.hmrc.gov.uk/charities and your accountant for more advice. Disclaimer- Your village hall is at risk if you do not keep up with your payments.