

---

## Newsletter No.8

June 2008

# ECO-FRIENDLY VILLAGE HALL IN NORFOLK SCORES BIG LOTTERY FUNDING VICTORY

The villages of Neatishead, Irstead and Barton Turf in the Norfolk Broads are today (*3<sup>rd</sup> June*) celebrating a **£177,000 funding victory** from the Big Lottery Fund to replace their ageing village hall.

The 'New Victory Hall' project has secured the money from the Fund's Community Buildings programme, which is today making twelve awards worth **£3,442,746** for bricks and mortar investments in village halls and community centres across England.

News of the award has been greeted with delight and excitement in the villages following more than ten years of determined fundraising.

The Chairman of the Fund Raising Committee, said: "The people of Neatishead, Irstead and Barton Turf are immensely grateful to the Big Lottery Fund for this support. At last we have the finances in place to build a much-needed new village hall and we are very much looking forward to progressing with the project.

"The area has, like many other small villages, suffered in recent times from the loss of several key services and amenities and this award will enable new facilities to be established in the very heart of the village; it will undoubtedly further enhance the already strong sense of community that local people feel."

A range of renewable and carbon-neutral technologies will be used in the construction and operation of the new hall, making it one of the most eco-friendly community buildings in Norfolk upon completion. It will be built mainly from timber frame and straw from the surrounding fields with lime render. The hall will incorporate natural lighting, solar heating and green roofs, among other eco-features.

Importantly, the project will also generate additional valuable tourist income for the area and is also likely to encourage other communities to consider contemporary designs and eco-building techniques.

Sara Betsworth, Big Lottery Fund Head of Region for the East of England said: "The New Victory Hall will be a fantastic asset to these three villages who have struggled in the past with a very small and inadequate hall that is well over 100 years old. It's a major stride forward for the 1,000 or so residents and we're delighted to be supporting this project."

The press release from the Big Lottery Fund says it all - after many years of hard work and dedicated fund-raising we finally have the finances in place to build the new village hall!

**Congratulations and a very big THANK YOU to everyone who has contributed in any way to this success - it has been a great team effort so WELL DONE to everybody! Special thanks must also go to the many sponsors of the project, who will be more fully acknowledged on our new website [www.victoryhall.info](http://www.victoryhall.info) in due course.** We have a number of very specific 'Project Outcomes' that we have to deliver as part of our commitment to the Big Lottery Fund. Details of these will also be displayed on the new website once it becomes fully operational.

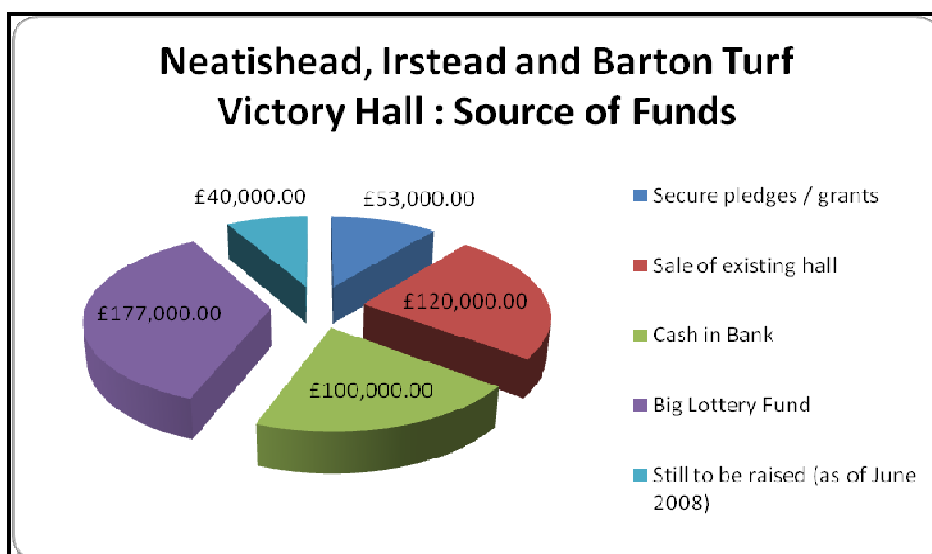
Some well-meaning folks have advised me that the 'hard work is only just beginning'. If that's true then you can expect several of us to be jumping off the nearest tall building in the near future, as we firmly believe that the hardest part of the project has finally been completed! Whilst there is, of course, still a long way to go and much hard work ahead we are now in charge of our own destiny and can plan ahead with a much greater degree of certainty. In reality, the fun part is starting.

### Forward Plan

The detailed design work for the hall should hopefully be completed by early August, after which the Quantity Surveyor will prepare Bills of Quantity and invite potential contractors to submit their bids for the work by the end of September. Site work is currently scheduled to begin in November. The overall construction phase should take approximately 7 to 9 months and the target delivery date is currently June 2009. **This timetable might slip**, depending on the ability of the chosen Contractor to prepare in time, but we will work hard to stick to it if at all possible.

The existing hall has been placed on the market for sale by informal tender with a closing date of 18<sup>th</sup> July and a guide price of £150,000. Several interested parties have already viewed the hall so the Trustees are hopeful that a good price will be received. A key condition of sale is that the existing hall remains available for community use until the new one is ready.

### Budget and Financial Status



The budget for the new building remains at £490,000 and we currently have about £450,000 of this secured (assuming that the existing hall only sells for the £120,000 that we have conservatively included in the budget). Determined fund raising efforts will therefore continue over the coming months to cover the current shortfall of about £40,000. About £15,000 of this is expected to come from bank interest, new grants and planned fund raising events. The balance will, if necessary, come from a loan from ACRE that has already been provisionally agreed. What this essentially means is that we still need to raise more funds but we have enough to commit to the project. More detailed information can be found on the notice boards located in the hall and outside the Neatishead shop, plus on the new website [www.victoryhall.info](http://www.victoryhall.info)

## New Hall Design

The new building will include a main hall, circular meeting room, adult toilets, modern kitchen, storage, a foyer (the 'Street') and children's toilets directly off the hall for Playgroup use. Unfortunately, the budget doesn't include the upstairs meeting room / gallery and the hard surfaced games area / car park but efforts to find ways of funding these will continue.



The main hall and meeting room will be built using timber frame and straw bales, suitably rendered and clad to make them weather-proof. The flat roofs will be 'living roofs' planted with Sedum or other appropriate plant life. Other eco design features are still under evaluation.

The Trustees will be working with all the user groups over the next few months to determine what specific requirements they might have for the interior fit-out, so that these can be included in the final tender package. The design of the Kitchen facilities and the children's toilets are already being considered by the relevant user-groups.

## User Groups News

- Despite our efforts, the Post Office has written to confirm that it has no plans to re-open the Neatishead Post Office or to provide any form of part-time postal service in the Victory Hall. Whilst this matter may not yet be completely closed, the Trustees of the Victory Hall do not intend to press the issue any further at this time.
- Several new user groups have started in the hall since the last Newsletter, including Yoga, Pilates and Flower Arranging. A trial period of Salsa dance classes, organised by Susan Lamb, will hopefully commence in the autumn.
- Several very enthusiastic local youngsters have requested that a youth club be formed as soon as possible in the Victory Hall and an initial meeting has been held with them to determine what they want from it. Table tennis, pool, air hockey and a tuck shop were all high on the list, with the tuck shop taking top spot for some strange reason... It's still at a formative stage but it appears likely that the youngsters will meet on Wednesday and / or Friday evenings, in the slot between the existing afternoon and evening user group sessions. We already have several adult volunteers who have offered to help but more are required so if anyone is willing to give up a few hours a month to participate in this hugely important aspect of community life then please contact Ian McFadyen for more details.
- The Trustees are still waiting to hear whether or not the Playgroup has secured the necessary finance to move to the primary school but, funds permitting, the new hall will still make provision for children even if they do move.



Supported by

**The National Lottery**<sup>®</sup>  
through the Big Lottery Fund



## Victory Hall Events

- A list of forthcoming events is displayed on the notice board outside the local shop and adverts are placed in the NIB each month. A Thai cookery demonstration will take place in the hall on 30<sup>th</sup> June, and the Victory Hall is providing the BBQ food for the Barn Dance on 28<sup>th</sup> June so please come along and support these events.
- The Jarrold's fashion show and the Casino Night were both very well supported and proved immensely enjoyable. Together they raised very nearly £2,000 for the new hall, which is a fantastic effort so our thanks goes to everyone who helped these events in any way - there are simply too many people to mention individually in this Newsletter.
- Another public meeting will be held in due course to provide everybody with a fuller update on the new hall and give folks an opportunity to ask any questions they may have about the project. Details will be announced once they have been finalised.

**Ian McFadyen (On behalf of the New Victory Hall Building Fund Committee)**