

Dear Resident,

January 2008

It's been quite some time since the last Newsletter, back in July, but the Trustees have been busy and things have moved on very, very positively in the interim. 2007 was a vintage year for the Victory Hall in fund-raising terms and, also, in preparing for the new building project.

2007 Highlights

- **We successfully won through to the Big Lottery Fund Stage 2 application process** in our efforts to win a grant from them, something that only about 15% of all applicants achieve.
- **More than £67,000 was secured in new grants and donations**, taking the total 'pot' of cash, assets and pledges for the new building to over £270,000.
- **A design concept was selected for the new building** after an architects' competition and this was then followed by wide-ranging consultations with user groups and others to ensure that the internal layout meets the needs of as many people as possible.
- **The planning application was submitted** in late November after a successful public meeting to discuss the proposed plans - it will be considered by North Norfolk District Council soon but the planners have already recommended that it be approved.
- **The revised Constitution was agreed** with the Charity Commission and all adult residents of Neatishead, Irstead and Barton Turf are now entitled to vote at the AGM. Previously, the Constitution restricted the right to vote to Neatishead residents only.
- **A monthly Farmer's Market was established**, in response to clear demand expressed by residents at our public meeting in November 2006, and this has proved very popular with local traders and residents alike.



Victory Hall Farmers Market
January 2008

2007 Highlights (cont)

- **The computer club continues successfully**, thanks to a grant from the Town Close Charity for new computers. The club had been under threat after funding was withdrawn by the local college because of budget cuts.
- **The Victory Hall was refurbished** by the women of the local W.I. so that it remains a pleasant place to use and visit until the new hall is built.
- **Community consultation and communication efforts continued.** These included numerous user-group meetings, two seminars (Building with Straw; Eco Power and Heating Options), one public meeting plus updates in the NIB and in Newsletters.
- **Positive discussions continued with other stakeholders** including, amongst others, with the Broads Authority, North Norfolk District Council, Neatishead Parish Council, Stalham with Happing Community Partnership, ACRE and Norfolk Rural Community Council. All these organisations are playing a part in helping us to secure a lottery grant.
- **An environmental study was commissioned and completed** to determine the best way of heating the new building. This concluded that a Ground Source Heat Pump would provide the optimum heating solution, so this is now being investigated in more detail.
- **Policies and Procedures have been reviewed and updated** as part of the preparatory work for the Lottery Application. These are currently being shared with user groups.

New Hall Design

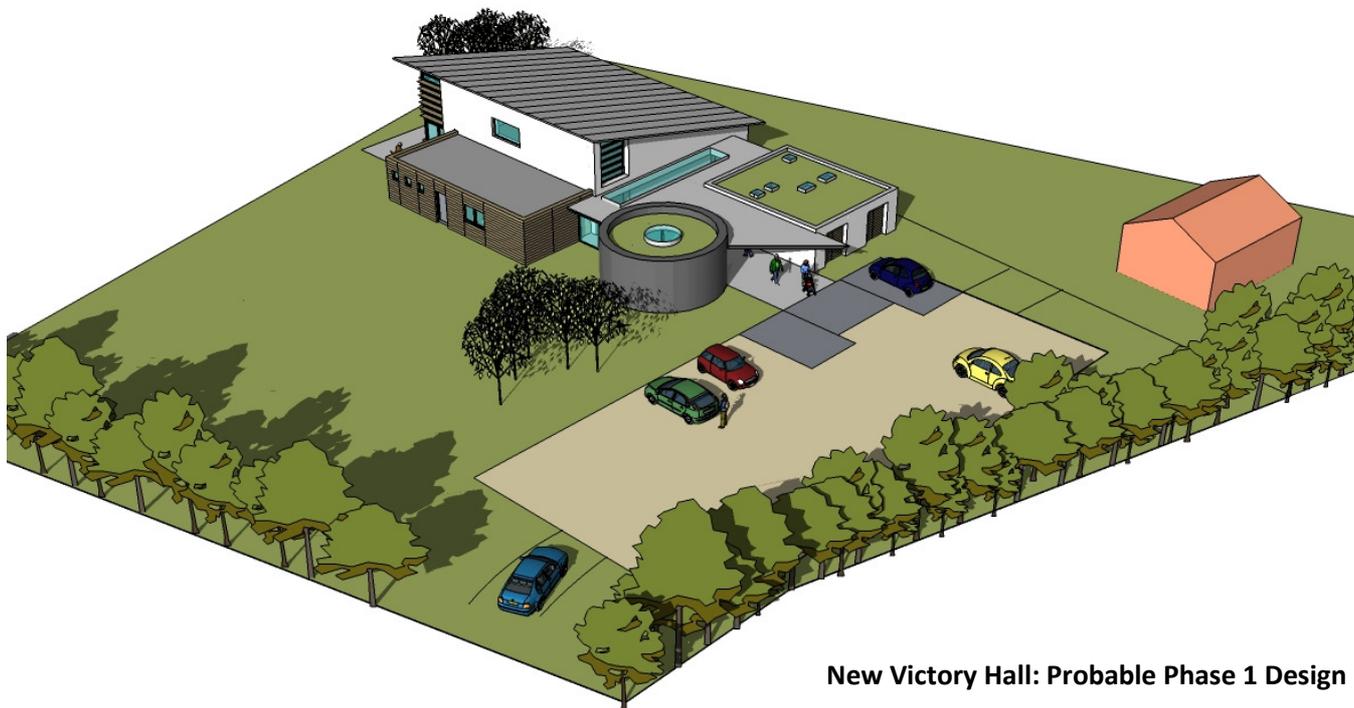
The design that will be submitted in the Stage 2 lottery application has been finalised after a series of meetings with the Architect and Quantity Surveyor to make sure that what we are proposing is affordable. It has been scaled down, as was always intended, from the planning application as we will only build what we can justifiably use at this stage. If the new building is as successful as the Trustees anticipate then the potential for future expansion (changing rooms, dedicated youth area etc) has already been allowed for in the design / planning application.

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, we will not be able to include the upstairs meeting room / gallery and the games area car park in the first phase but efforts to raise finance for these will continue.

The main hall and meeting room will be built using timber frame and straw bale, 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.

BLF Stage 2 Application

Provided our planning application is approved, **the Stage 2 application to the BLF (for £177,000) will be submitted in February.** A robust business plan has been developed which demonstrates that the community can afford to finance and operate the new hall and the Trustees are confident that, with professional help, the building can be constructed safely, on time and to budget. As these are critical elements that have to be demonstrated in the Stage 2 Application, we are hopeful that we can present a very strong case for Lottery funding that will be well received. The outcome will not be announced for 6 months after it is submitted but we will continue planning and preparation work in the intervening period by finalising the detailed design, identifying potential contractors, researching power and heating solutions etc.



New Victory Hall: Probable Phase 1 Design

Project Budget

The budget for the project is £490,000. This includes about £43,000 in contingency and inflation allowances. The mathematical geniuses amongst you will quickly recognise that £270,000 + £177,000 does not quite equal £490,000!!! In fact, the shortfall is £43,000 - which is, coincidentally, our contingency allowance. This shortfall **will** be eliminated over the next 12 months through a combination of bank interest, ongoing fund-raising events, other grants, donations and (if necessary) a medium term, government backed loan from ACRE (Action for Communities in Rural England). What this means is that the new hall project requires your continued support in user groups and at community events - **SO PLEASE CONTINUE TO GET TO THEM!**

Project Timetable

The project timetable has slipped slightly as it has taken a little longer than anticipated to agree the final design and obtain planning consent. If things go to plan and we secure the BLF grant, we hope to **start construction in late Autumn 2008 and open the new hall in summer 2009.**

Other News

- We are still waiting to hear the outcome of the Post Office's strategic review of rural post offices. Until that is announced we cannot resume our efforts to start a part time post office service in the existing building.
- Work is progressing very slowly with the Victory Hall website (www.victoryhall.org.uk.) update. It remains, however, a useful way of contacting the Trustees if you have any ideas or comments. If anyone can provide additional assistance with this it would be much appreciated.
- About 65 people attended the public meeting in November to hear about the plans for the new hall and address any questions or concerns with the Trustees. The questionnaires returned after the meeting indicated overwhelming support for the proposals. Furthermore, there is clearly enough support to get several new user groups functioning, with the most popular being **Talks, Yoga / Pilates, Aerobics and Dance Lessons.**
- Co-ordinators have already been found for Yoga and flower-arranging classes and these will start soon in the hall - more details are in this month's NIB magazine. We are hopeful that Dance lessons could also start soon - investigations are underway to find out what sort of dance style is most popular and what teachers are available.

Forthcoming Victory Hall Events

- **The Victory Hall AGM is scheduled for 7:30 pm on Tuesday 5th February.** Any nominations for new Trustees should be sent to Mrs. L. Hickin, 'Charnwood', Berry Hall Road, Pennygate, NR12 8BE by 29th January. All residents of Neatishead, Instead and Barton Turf are welcome to attend the meeting and exercise their right to vote for the Trustees of their choice, so please come along.
- The next **Farmers Market** will be held on **Saturday 9th February.**
- The Events Committee is currently planning the schedule for 2008 and this will be published once it is ready.

Ian McFadyen

On behalf of the New Victory Hall Building Fund Committee