



Picture: BILL SMITH

MAKING PROGRESS: Straw bales are used for insulation at the New Victory Hall being built at Neatishead.

NEATISHEAD

New eco-friendly village hall

Villagers have rallied around to help build their new eco-friendly village hall.

A 10-day project for villagers to help build Neatishead's New Victory Hall got under way yesterday.

The hall is being created using locally harvested straw bales as insulation, making it one of the country's most sustainable and eco-friendly community centres. The £510,000 project is the result of more than 10 years of fundraising by villagers and replaces the old Victorian building which has served the village, near Wroxham, for 100 years.

Set to be completed in August, the main walls of the timber frame building have already been built and rendered with lime and a "living roof" is in place and flowering.

All this week, local people will join sponsors, architects and planners on site and organisers

hope it will help them to see the building as theirs to enjoy.

Ian McFadyen, project co-ordinator, said: "Straw buildings have a bad press because of the three little piggies tale, but we would like to challenge all the big bad wolves out there to come and see for themselves what a fantastic facility this is - it will change perceptions and others will surely follow.

"This is a rare opportunity for people to be inspired by, and help construct, a community building and it will further increase the sense of ownership that the local villagers have in this unusual and exciting project."

On Saturday the trustees are holding an open day to enable everyone to see the progress that is being made. During the event, which runs between 10am and noon, it will be the turn of youngsters from the area aged 14 to 18 to do their bit for the build.