

Dear Resident,

September 2006

Things have quietened down a little over the holiday season but steady progress is still being made on a number of fronts with the fund-raising efforts for the new hall. The main newsworthy items are that the preparation of the application to the lottery fund is progressing well and discussions with Anglian Water (regarding their proposed pumping station adjacent to the site of the new hall) have been successfully concluded. We have also identified a number of organisations that assist projects such as ours, and we have obtained feedback from several existing and potential users of the new hall to determine their needs.

Lottery Application

The Big Lottery Fund (BLF) www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/prog_community_buildings recently released their guidelines for new applications for grants for Community Building projects. The good news is that we are eligible to apply for a grant from the BLF, but it is a complex and time consuming process and there is huge competition for limited funds.

We are aiming to submit the Stage One application (which helps the BLF choose the most deserving projects) by this October. They can take up to 6 months to confirm if our Stage One application has been successful. If we get through this we then have 9 months in which to prepare and submit our Stage Two application, which involves much more detailed cost analysis, design information, project management schedules etc. A final decision is received from the BLF within 6 months of submitting the Stage Two application. This means that the earliest we could start work on the hall using lottery funds is early 2008. However, we intend to apply for other grants in the meantime, in case our BLF bid is unsuccessful.

Our application needs to stand out from all the others to have any chance of success, as there are plenty of other deserving cases and competition for lottery funds is fierce.

One way of doing this is to incorporate unique design features into the new building. We could, for example, set out to make it the most eco-friendly village hall in the region (or even the country). It is feasible and very appropriate, given that we live next to a national park, to at least consider building the hall from completely recyclable and eco-friendly materials such as wood, straw, thatch and other similar products. If you search the internet (you could start with www.aecb.org.uk or www.strawbalefutures.org.uk) you will find plenty of examples of, and advice about, environmentally sustainable buildings. Such an approach would certainly help set us apart from most other applicants, would set an example for others to follow and could possibly result in lower building and operating costs.

Another option is to incorporate additional features into the new building that widens its usefulness to the local community. Ideas under consideration include a small tourist information centre (possibly in conjunction with the Broads Authority), an IT facility, youth club facilities, post office, adult education services etc.

We are currently exploring ideas like these but we recognise that much valuable hard work and expense has gone into the current proposed new hall design so we are seeking the views of the wider community before we make any attempt to change the planned design substantially. If you have any strong feelings either way then please get in touch by sending an email to enquiries@victoryhall.org.uk or calling any member of the fund-raising committee.

We are also investigating the viability of holding adult education classes in the hall and would like to hear from you if you have special skills or knowledge to become a facilitator, or if there is any potential activity or subject in which you would like to participate.

Anglian Water

You are probably already aware that Anglian Water wants to build a small pumping station next to the land where the new hall will be situated. This will enable residents in parts of Neatishead to connect to a mains sewer if they want to. Anglian Water has agreed (after detailed negotiations with the Neatishead Parish Council and the Victory Hall Trustees) to build the roadway and car park for the new hall and to provide financial or technical assistance with various other lesser matters relating to the new hall.

Work on this project is expected to start in October. This is excellent news as it reduces our build costs by at least £20,000, which is a very valuable boost to the new hall project.

Events

The '200 Club' is proving a success and is generating useful funds for the new hall. If you would like to join then download the forms from the website, or contact Dolly Newcombe.

A Fun Wine Tasting Evening is taking place on **6th October** at Barton Hall, where teams will have their knowledge tested to the limit whilst competing for prizes. Details are in this month's NIB but places are limited so please phone (01692) 536354 promptly for tickets.

Other village hall dates for your diary:

Bingo Evening	13 th October
Quiz Night	3 rd November
Art and Craft Fair	18 th November
Xmas Fair	9 th December

We on the fund raising committee are pleased with the steps forward over the last two months and are delighted that, at last, it appears that some progress will be made on-site as a result of the agreement with Anglian Water. However, we really do need feedback from people in the community - yes, you! - who care about the new hall so that we can assess what local people want and need. **If you want to influence the design of the new hall or the services on offer, or simply help us move things forward, then please get in touch!!!**

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On behalf of the New Victory Hall Fund Raising Committee