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Residents celebrate village hall funding

BRUISYARD: Meeting place will be 'fantastic asset'

By David Green

RESIDENTS in one of Suffolk's most sparsely populated communities are celebrating after hearing that plans for its new "flood tolerant" village hall can go ahead – thanks to a £187,000 award by the Big Lottery Fund.

During the past few decades, Bruisyard, which has a population of just 175, has lost its shop, its pub, and its village hall, the latter having to be demolished in the late 1960s after becoming structurally unsound.

With several clubs and associations in the village in desperate need of a meeting place, the parish council formed a committee to make plans for a new village hall.

Local architect Robert Smith designed a building which would be energy efficient and able to cope with floods from the nearby river.

However, it soon became clear that the amount of money needed – about £220,000 – could not be raised within the small community and an application was made to the Big Lottery Fund.

Yesterday, villagers were told that the bid had been successful and a cheque for £187,000 was on its way.

The new village hall, for which planning permission has already been granted, will be built on the Parish Park in the centre of the village on land which was previously a waste ground for storing old farm machinery.

This land has been transformed over the past ten years by the parish council into an attractive



'TREMENDOUS NEWS': Committee members and residents celebrate winning lottery funding for the building of a new village hall in Bruisyard

Photograph:
JERRY TURNER

area and the village hall will complete its transformation – confirming the park as the social hub of the community.

Peter Robinson, parish council chairman, said: "Bruisyard has been without a village hall or any other public meeting place for over 30 years. But now the funding from the Big Lottery Fund will help us to recreate a very important community facility lost so many years ago."

David Smith, secretary of Bruisyard Village Hall Committee, said: "The award by the Big Lottery Fund is tremendous news

and a huge step forward in realising our plans for building a village hall. Our plan is for the hall to be completed by the autumn of next year so that clubs and self-help groups like the children's activity club, youth club, senior citizen's lunch club, exercise classes, computing/IT classes can start using it."

Mr Smith said the hall would help address the problems of social isolation which could be particularly acute for the young and elderly in rural communities.

Sara Betsworth, head of the Big Lottery Fund in the east of

England, said: "The new village hall in Bruisyard will be a truly fantastic asset to the local community."

"In a village where there is no other public building, the hall will be essential in fostering greater social interaction and maintaining a strong sense of community. We're delighted to be supporting this project."

Applications for small grants have also been made to Suffolk County Council and Suffolk Coastal District Council.

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