

A village hall for the future

ECO-FRIENDLY: New building to survive modern-day floods

By David Green

A NEW community hall in a Suffolk village has been designed to be "flood-tolerant" in the face of the kind of extreme weather events that brought recent disaster elsewhere in the country.

The ground-breaking design, aimed at allowing floodwaters to invade the building without causing damage, has been drawn up on behalf of villagers at Bruisyard, near Framlingham.

It represents the kind of architectural thinking the Environment Agency wants to see on all new buildings located in flood plains.

The new hall, which will cost £195,000, is being planned for a site beside the River Alde, land which was bought by the parish council in 1995.

Although the site has not flooded within the memory of existing villagers, the architect, Robert Smith, who lives at Bruisyard, has designed the building to be flood tolerant.

It will, according to John Gibb, village hall spokesman, be able to accommodate up to 600mm (two feet) of floodwater without suffering significant damage.

"We will be able to open doors in the building to allow the water to flow through. Furniture will be stored separately in secure containers.

"The floor will be stone slab and waterproof. Electrical points will be above 600mm and power will drop from the roof and will be behind brick walls.

"The underfloor heating will be secure from flooding and the sewage plant will continue to work during a flood," he said.

The new hall will be equipped with a kitchen and catering facilities and will seat 52 people.

Mr Gibb said: "The design takes into account the possibility of the sort of flooding faced by Gloucestershire and Yorkshire this summer and the hall is designed to accommodate water running through the building without causing damage. "It is environmentally sustainable with high levels of insulation using natural wool, solar panels for water heating, air source pumps for space heating and a state of the art water recycling system."

An initial development grant had been awarded by the Big Lottery Fund in March and the architectural drawings for the planning application have now been completed.

If and when permission is granted, the funding for the construction of the building will come from the Big Lottery Community Buildings Programme. Parish Council Chairman, Peter Robinson, said: "The design is for a model village hall. It has traditional character and is environmentally sound. It is just what Bruisyard needs."

Land for the hall car park will be leased to the village hall by local landowner, Robert Rous, at a "peppercorn" rent.

The new building will replace a former village hall, known locally as the "Iron Room", donated 120 years ago by the Rous family.

Constructed from corrugated iron and having a wooden floor, it was assembled in a corner of Church Field in 1886, but fell into disrepair in the 1960s and had to be demolished.

david.green@eadf.co.uk



NEW START: With the plans for the new Aldeide Hall at Bruisyard: From left, John Gibb, of the village hall committee, Richard Smith the architect, Eleanor Berwick vice-chairman of Bruisyard Parish Council and David Smith of the village

