

NPWG Report for Parish Council Meeting: 27th November 2024

Construction and Funding Update

Draper and Nicholls have advised that following the resurfacing of the car park this week, they have now completed the construction and have followed up the snagging identified by Chaplin Farrant, apart from the mirrors above the sinks in the toilets.

It is hoped that an up-to-date costs position will be available by the meeting.

The New Pavilion Working Group

The group met on 6th November and the meeting minutes have already been circulated. The meeting discussed progress with the project, funding, and what needed to be undertaken to facilitate the opening of the hall in November. The suggestion by the contractors that the pre-school should be temporarily shut down for a few days to facilitate the removal of the temporary classroom was rejected. It was agreed that the proposed handover to the Parish Council should be before the 18th November when the pre-school would reopen in the new hall. An email was subsequently sent to Chaplin Farrant, who discussed the situation with Draper and Nichols, and agreed to the 18th November opening, without the need for the pre-school closure beforehand.

The NPWG also agreed to ask for volunteers to move the pre-school and Parish Council furniture and equipment into the new hall before the 18th. Volunteers successfully moved everything over by Sunday 17th and the pre-school duly reopened in the new hall the next day.

It was also agreed that a press release should be prepared to coincide with the handover, focussing on the pre-school move into its new premises (and to try and avoid misreporting by the Press as previously had occurred). An article appeared in the EDP and NEN papers and webpages, which accurately reported the handover, apart from a slightly negative headline about the delays.

Charles Bussey and myself accepted the keys to the hall from Draper and Nicholls on Thursday 14th November. This event was publicised on the Stoke Holy Cross Residents Facebook page and has since received over 100 likes and some very complimentary comments. This clearly shows the level of interest and support in the village for the new hall, which is very encouraging.

It was agreed that the first major event in the hall would be the Christmas carol service on 21st December, although a start could be made to bookings before then. The formal opening would take place in the New Year.

Finally, the Chair announced that he felt that the NPWG had now fulfilled its objective of designing, securing funding, and overseeing the construction of an up to date replacement for the former pavilion on the playing fields. It was agreed that the future management of the hall should be undertaken by a new group/subcommittee of the Parish Council, and there have already been several meetings to take this forward.

The long standing members of the NPWG, including Charles Bussey, myself, Fenella Bhaskar and Heather Fitsimmons have all decided to stand down from the project.

This is after a decade of navigating the various ups and downs of trying to build a village hall in times of economic restraint and uncertainty. In the end however, it has eventually turned out to be a very successful outcome, the result of all the hard work and determination that was required to build a new community hall for the village.

Once again, can I again thank all the persons, and particularly Charles, who have taken part and contributed to the Working Group over the last ten years. None of this would have happened without the hard work, enthusiasm, and commitment given, particularly over the last 18 months. Can I also thank the Parish Council (and especially Carlo and Stewart Hull) for its continuing support over the years to back the project, which at times must have seemed a rather forlorn hope.

Hopefully, following receipt of the welcome funding boost from the South Norfolk Community Infrastructure Fund, we have at last provided Stoke Holy Cross with the type of Community Hall it needs and deserves!

Glyn Davies – Chair, New Pavilion Working Group