Louise Mensch MP helps Rockingham Village Hall celebrate grant

14/10/2011

The project led by volunteers from the local community will repair and conserve the hall, and develop it as a base for learning about the history of Rockingham village, and its relationship with the Rockingham Castle Estate.

Louise Mensch MP will be celebrating the news alongside local volunteers. The volunteer's hard work and determination has led to this restoration project being made a reality.

Through the preservation works, the hall's original Welsh slate roof tiles will be reinstated, whilst the rear porch and the missing chimney of a pair restored. The bellcote will be conserved, the bell for which is stored on site – inscribed 1869 J Taylor Loughborough.

People from across the community will be able to get involved, and learn about their heritage through a wide range of activities that are being planned as part of the project.

Young people will have the chance to learn about the history of the local area through new education resources that will help school children contrast modern Corby with the traditional village of Rockingham. The transformed village hall will also provide space for school groups to use as a base for exploring Rockingham's history.

The volunteer group will also be organising talks, lectures and heritage open days alongside tours of the hall and village, and establishing a new local history society to help research and draw together information panels and an exhibition telling the story of the village.

Louise Mensch MP for Corby and East Northamptonshire commented: "It's fantastic to see investment going into such worthwhile cause. My thanks to the Heritage Lottery Fund for helping with the preservation of the Hall and the ensuring the facility is kept and utilised for further generations."

Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund East Midlands, Emma Sayer, added: "This is a thorough and well thought through project that will protect the hall's architectural integrity and stimulate its use as an important local heritage building. Robust plans to use the hall as a base for learning mean that the wider heritage of Rockingham – recorded in the Doomsday Book as once held by a Saxon thane* - will be accessed by present and future generations."

Ian Norman, Secretary to Rockingham Village Hall said: "The whole community has been very enthusiastic about our project from the outset. The benefits to the villagers of Rockingham and the wider surrounding area are considerable. We are all looking forward to the exciting times ahead."

Built in 1844 Rockingham Village Hall was originally a village school and became a Village Hall in 1947. The school closed in 1946 and the building has since been used as a village hall.

The hall is a volunteer run facility, led, managed and run by the local community. The project will increase the number of volunteers, involving a much broader range of people.

Consultations were carried out with local primary schools, local residents, existing users, surrounding villages, community groups, Corby Heritage Centre and Rockingham castle, and the project has their full support.

Note to editors

* A freeman granted land by the king in return for military service in Anglo-Saxon England.

Rockingham Village Hall
The Village Hall was originally the old school and was erected by the Hon Richard Watson in 1847, who pioneered rural education in the neighbourhood. The School opened with 90 pupils from neighbouring villages. As the years passed Rockingham School began to suffer the effects of the very education it had pioneered, and as other schools opened in neighbouring villages the roll began to dwindle, until in 1946 it was left with only nine children. The authorities regretfully decided to close it in January of that year, the remaining scholars being absorbed by neighbouring Cottingham School. Since January 1947 the building has been used as a Social Centre, or Village Hall.

The Village Hall is a registered charity and is run by a committee of trustees and other volunteers. Visit the Rockingham Village website

Further information

HLF Press Office: Robert Smith, 020 7591 6245, email roberts@hlf.org.uk

Rockingham Village Hall: Mark Stewart, 01509 230 703 email msa.mark@googlemail.com