



Media Release

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DATE: 25 August 2004

HARROGATE COMMUNITIES AIMING FOR PRIZE HALL

The Harrogate district has six entries in the national Village and Community Hall Challenge funded by the Landfill Operator Waste Recycling Group Ltd. In order to qualify for an entry, halls have to be operating as a charity and must be within a 10-mile radius of one of their landfill sites, in this case Allerton Park.

The top prize of £250,000 is being awarded to the best two projects that demonstrate: community support; value for money; sustainability and environmental impact.

Harrogate Borough Council's leisure and amenity staff have been supporting a group of dedicated volunteers from Dishforth; Green Hammerton; Harlow (Harrogate); Kirkby Overblow, Minskip; Staveley and Copgrove prepare their entries. In the initial stages, communities are required to submit a summary of their project on just two sides of A4 paper.

Councillor Pat Jones, Cabinet Member for Leisure and Amenity Services, said:

"I am delighted to see a national funder taking the initiative to support the development of community life, particularly in rural areas with few facilities. Village Halls play an important role in bringing everyone together and are often a local lifeline. Any one of Harrogate district's six entries could make a significant contribution to community life with the £250,000 landfill prize money."

Waste Recycling Environmental Ltd (WREN) is currently assessing the applications. Victoria Mager, Yorkshire Development Officer for WREN, has visited all the village halls over the last two weeks to discuss the projects with the local groups.

She said: "This challenge is very exciting for WREN because it means that we will be able to award two grants of £250,000, which is significantly more than we have allocated to any project in the past. This is a national competition but we all have our fingers crossed that one of the competition winners will be within our area."

WREN will be announcing the eight finalists on 8 September. The finalists will be invited to complete a full application by January 2005, with the winners announced in April 2005. The six runners up are guaranteed £50,000 'runner up' prize money.

MEDIA CONTACT: Councillor Pat Jones is available for comment on 01423 872466. Further technical information is available from Helen Bowles, Project Development Officer, Department of Leisure and Amenity Services on 01423 556702. More... summary of all the entries

Dishforth Village Hall:

Residents in Dishforth have put their support behind the project to relocate their village hall to a disused church. The conversion of Christ Church, a Grade II listed building would give a new lease of life to both the community and the sandstone building. The aim is to provide a main hall, meeting room, kitchen and accessible toilet for local groups to use. David Wells, Chairman Dishforth Village Hall Committee explains: "Our ageing village hall is in urgent need of replacement and relocating to the old church would secure its long term future."

Green Hammerton Village Hall (and changing pavilion):

The Village of Green Hammerton has grown by a third over the past 10 years and the existing Reading Room is too small to hold village functions. The Recreational Charity aims to provide up-to-date facilities (hall, meeting room, kitchen, changing and toilets) on their large playing fields' site. The local cricket and football clubs welcome the plans for modern changing rooms as they currently operate from a port cabin.

Brian Halling, Chairman of Green Hammerton Recreational Charity, said: "We really need this new hall to develop the opportunities for our community to enjoy sport and leisure activities. It is very exciting to have the chance to win enough money to fund the first village hall in the district that makes full use of modern eco friendly technology."

Harlow Community Centre:

Harlow Community Centre Association is looking to replace its wooden army services hut, affectionately known as 'The Green Hut'. They intend to replicate their main hall, kitchen, cloakroom and store on the existing site in bricks and mortar. A range of social, music, fitness, drama, dance, pre-school and sixty plus groups use the hall on a weekly basis.

Isobel Phillips, Secretary of the Harlow Community Centre Association said: "We are right in the middle of one of Harrogate's urban areas but Harlow is a great little individual community. The Green Hut is very much at the hub of Harlow. We have struggled to keep the hut going and this funding would be the answer to all our wishes."

Kirkby Overblow Village Hall:

Kirkby Overblow set up a charity to plan, fundraise and build a village hall in their community. Initial surveys suggest that there is a demand for a main hall (with stage), kitchen, toilets and a meeting room.

Peter Darlington, Chairman of the Parish Council, said: "Kirkby Overblow desperately needs a social point where villagers can meet and existing clubs and societies can expand their activities. We want to provide more sports and leisure facilities and build on the success of this year's arts festival."

Minskip Village Hall:

Minskip villagers have already clubbed together to purchase a one-hectare site for their new village hall. The new building will include: main hall, meeting room, kitchen, toilets and changing. A key part of the project includes harnessing the energy from the sun and wind to generate electricity for the hall.

Eric Glegg, Chairman of the Management Committee, said: "A new village hall in Minskip will serve both the village and the wider community and preserve much of what is best in Yorkshire rural life."

Staveley and Copgrove Village Hall:

The committee for this recently refurbished hall are looking to replace the roof and extend the height of the main hall. The facility is regularly used by local people and a popular venue for children's parties - the extra height will enable the use of bouncy castles.