

Village's new hall plan gets pulled

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Monks Eleigh councillors have been told that Suffolk County Council is pulling out of plans to support a new village and shared school hall.

At an extraordinary meeting of Monks Eleigh Parish Council on Monday, councillors were told the county council has decided it is not able to commit to the construction of a joint-use hall in the grounds of Monks Eleigh Primary School in Churchfield. The school is in special measures after an Ofsted inspection.

Parish council clerk Victoria Waples said the meeting had been called to consider the correspondence the council had received from Suffolk County Council regarding the hall.

It is one of two hall projects planned in the village to replace the current hall built in the 1950s in Churchfield, which has a limited life because of concrete problems. The other is project by the parish council to build a new hall on the recreation ground site.

In a statement, Suffolk County Council communities and place officer Sarah Blake said: "We own the school land and buildings however we are not able to commit to construction of a new joint-use hall on the site because, while the future of the school is uncertain, we cannot allow any works which could limit the potential for future use.

"If the school were to become an academy, the academy might not wish to operate from joint-use premises and we would not want to fetter an incoming school provider.

"Our financial contribution to the works has had to be withdrawn as we cannot guarantee educational benefit from the investment."

Parish councillors heard that a £185,000 contribution to the community hall remained allocated in the county council budget but it would be reviewed after Christmas.