

Rival bid unveiled to replace village hall

Suffolk Free Press Sunday 19 May 2013

A parish council has applied for planning permission to build a new village hall.

Monks Eleigh Parish Council wants to build a new hall on land it owns at the village's recreation ground on Church Hill, and has applied for planning permission from Babergh District Council.

If approved, the single-storey hall would have 20 car parking spaces and would be clad in black board to blend in with other "barn-type" homes in the village.

A chartered surveyor's report shows the existing hall, also on Church Hill, can only be used for a few more years as its concrete construction has degraded.

It was built in 1953 and is well used by the community for dance classes, carpet bowls and by the village history group.

The parish council plan is being put forward as an alternative to another scheme, seven years in the offing, to build a community hall in the grounds of Monks Eleigh Primary School.

This plan has already received a £180,000 grant towards construction from Suffolk County Council but is dependent on the sale of the existing village hall, which has stalled because of a lack of a buyer.

The hall land is up for sale for £225,000 with plans for a developer to demolish it and build four houses on the site.

Several village organisations, as well as the school, have been involved in fundraising for the community hall at the school.

Monks Eleigh school governor Sally Connolly said: "We understand this parish council plan is being put forward as an alternative proposal.

"Our plan to build the village hall in the school's grounds is well-established and is a fantastic opportunity.

"It is a classic example of how schools and the community can come together."