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AT LAST A HOME FROM 'HOLME...

Sport and community link-up

BRIDGEHOLME Cricket Club can start the new season on the front foot now that it's finally got the go-ahead to turn its new pavilion into a community centre.

The club joined forces with the Eastwoods Residents' Association to develop the site but their plans were delayed for a year thanks to the Environment Agency's concerns about flooding.

Club chairman Keith Hudson says everyone is delighted to have received approval at last. "It's just dragged on and on," he said. "At one point we thought we'd have to give up. We were not getting nowhere."

"The Environment Agency presented it as if it flooded like the Nile instead of just bubbling

up. The most that's ever happened is that four or five people have got their feet wet."

A flood-risk management strategy had to be drawn up before the agency withdrew its objections.

The new plans will see the pavilion turned into a multi-purpose room suitable for meetings and social events, with a bar being installed early next year.

Keith says that, by being the focal point of the Eastwood community, it should secure the future of Bridgeholme Cricket Club.

"Hopefully, it should regenerate the club," he explained. "In my view, all cricket clubs are only a couple of years from death because of the costs involved."

"We have to become self-generating in terms of funds and the best way to do that is to get people into the club. All the clubs that have survived and thrived have bar facilities and do more than just cricket."

The club and the residents organisation are looking to create a playground at the rear of the building for younger children, as well as provide a shelter for managers to hang out.

Inside there will be a table tennis table, as well as a snooker or pool table. Plans for a keep-fit class, a youth club and a facility for the elderly are also all in the pipeline.

A committee has been set up to organise the running of the building, with half its members representing the club and half the residents' association.

The next challenge is to raise matching funding so they can draw down a grant of £2,000 from the Countryside Agency's Vital Village Programme.

Keith added: "We want people to know that they can come on down and use the club. Our members always make people very welcome and it's a lovely place to be on a sunny day."

If anyone feels they can contribute towards turning the pavilion into a community centre, then contact Keith on 01708 812484.



Club chairman - and a familiar sight opening the building for Bridgeholme in the summer months - Keith Hudson, centre, with insurance of Eastwood Residents' Association Mark Harris, left, and chairman John Park, right, in the Eastwood process.

E.R.A. Eastwood Residents' Association
Matthew Ludlam



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