

Villagers convene to say goodbye to hall

Tuesday 17 February 2015

A celebratory wake was held this week to mark the closure of a village hall built by residents in the 1950s.

Building work on Monks Eleigh Village Hall began in 1953, with an opening ceremony in 1956.

Called Coronation Hall, the building was home to many fetes, jubilee celebrations and community events, but, in the last 20 years, it has deteriorated, suffering from “concrete cancer”.

For the last seven years, villagers have been attempting to build a new community hall, leading to fractions and accusations between opposing groups as one project faltered and another succeeded.

On Sunday, however, villagers gathered together to say goodbye to the old hall at its “end of life” party.

Photos gave a chronological history of the village from the 1950s to the present day, with particular focus on the hall itself.

Resident Paul Goodchild also shared video recordings of village events held in the 1950s and 60s, while visitors enjoyed a tea party.

“Everyone was delighted to see all the historical things,” said Angela Forrest, chairman of the Monks Eleigh Village Hall Trust.

Nearly a quarter of the village’s 400-strong population turned up to say a final goodbye.

The hall’s site has been sold to developers and the building will be demolished to make way for new homes.

A new village hall is set to be built on the village playing field.

Mrs Forrest said villagers were looking forward to seeing the new centre built.