

School's plea after roof starts to collapse

Staff at a village pre-school near Dereham have issued a desperate plea for help to get the facility rehomed after its roof started to cave in.

Mattishall Pre-school first opened in 1969 to offer sessional care for youngsters from the ages of two to four, and its current mobile building has been in place for the past 20 years.

But just days into the new term, staff discovered the roof had started to leak and water was pouring through into the play area.

Chairman Emma Rudd said they had to close immediately. "The water was coming down the light sockets," she said. "We got a roofer out to have a look but he said the whole thing was shot and some of the panels on the sides need replacing.

"In the past we have always been able to patch up the building but there is no point in



■ Mattishall Pre-School has closed as the building was starting to collapse. Pictured right are four-year-old Jessica Flitton, (left), and Alexa Mather, 3. Pictures: IAN BURT



patching it up any more." Mrs Rudd said the neighbouring Scout group had offered the use of their building temporarily but they will only be able to run stay-and-play sessions (where parents stay with their children) until Ofsted can come and inspect the hut.

"That will be at least eight weeks," she said. "We have told the

parents it will be at least the summer term before we can reopen as a pre-school. It leaves us with some major fund-raising to do and we are looking at about £25,000 for a new building unless there is anyone out there with one we can have."

■ Any tradespeople who can offer their services can contact Emma Rudd on 07780 707301.

Double celebration for Norwich charity

Polly Grice
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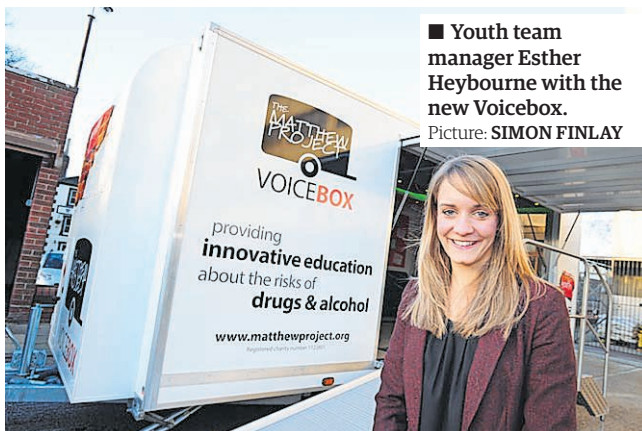
Norwich charity The Matthew Project held a special event to celebrate its 30th birthday and unveil a new tool to engage with young people.

The charity, which works with individuals and communities affected by drugs and alcohol, has raised £40,000 to buy and adapt a new caravan which will allow workers to reach young people in rural areas.

The caravan, known as the Voicebox, was officially opened at the event last night which was attended by The Matthew Project patron the Rt Revd Graham James, The Bishop of Norwich and The Lord Mayor of Norwich.

The Voicebox will be used to deliver the charity's services to young people and adults around the county at youth clubs, schools and even police events.

It was officially opened by another of the charity's patrons, Henry Cator. Young people the charity works with were heavily involved in the design of Voicebox. They collaborated with designers to give the charity ideas on



■ Youth team manager Esther Heybourne with the new Voicebox. Picture: SIMON FINLAY

how they could create a welcoming and relaxing space where young people would feel comfortable seeking advice.

The facility has a spacious seating area, a kitchen to make hot drinks and a ramp which means disabled users will be able to access services in the Voicebox.

Organisations including Aviva, Lloyds Bank PLC, Norwich Blackfriars Rotary Club and The Clothworkers Foundation all gave money towards the new facility and the charity also received donations from individual fund-raisers.

Rosalie Weetman, The Matthew Project CEO, said:

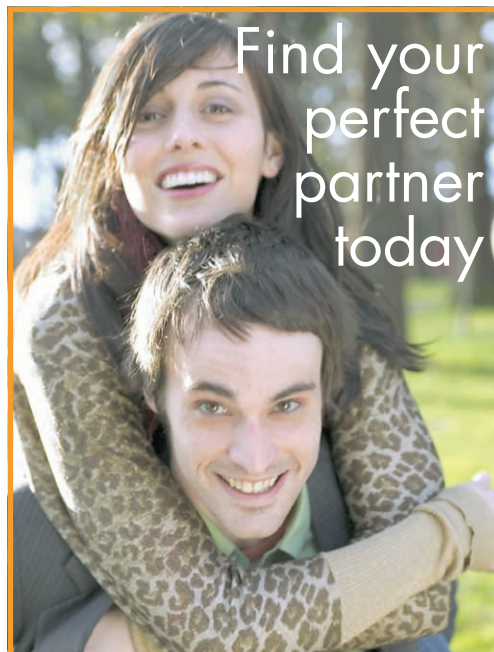
"We are immensely grateful for the support we have received over the many years since The Matthew Project began, and we hope that people will continue to support the fund-raising events we have planned in our 30th birthday year.

"We could not continue to deliver the breadth and quality of services to support those affected by drug and alcohol issues across all communities without the generosity of local Norfolk people."

■ If you need further information about the charity, please visit www.matthewproject.org

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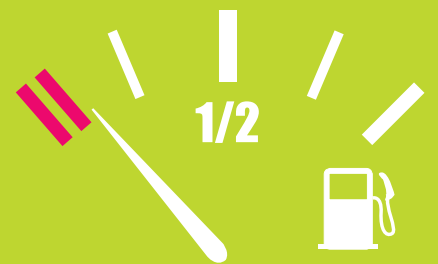
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