

Work to start in the spring

By **ALEX HICKEY**

A **BATTERED** old memorial hall is to receive a much needed facelift after getting a grant for nearly £250,000.

Felinheli's Memorial Hall is in line for a complete renovation thanks to a cash injection provided by the Welsh Assembly Government's Community Facilities and Activities Programme and a smaller grant from its Tir a Môr fund.

The money will be used to provide disabled access and complete a general overhaul of its facilities.

The aim will be to get more youth groups to use it for sporting activities.

The hall, which opened in 1926, is currently used by the badminton, bowling, youth and youth football clubs, as well as by the guides and brownies.

Work is expected to start on the renovation sometime in the New Year and should be completed by September 2010.

Felinheli county councillor Sian Gwenllian is delighted that the hall will be made fit for purpose for the 21st century.

She said: "The hall is in dire need of renovation, and in its current state is not up to standard."

"The grant money will allow more groups to be able to use it, such as the primary school for sporting events and Gwyl-y-Felin, which was part of the criteria for getting the grant in the first place."



BOOST: Cllr Sian Gwenllian outside the hall.

Memorial Hall in line for **£250k** renovation

The money will allow the hall to be used for concerts and gigs and also indoor sports such as basketball, netball, table tennis, pool, yoga, and gymnastics.

A new kitchen, disabled access and toilets will also be added.

Cllr Gwenllian is hopeful that the hall will complement other facilities in the village.

Part one of the scheme was completed last year with a new access road, new roof and security lights fitted, thanks in part to Gwynedd Council.

"We are approaching a very exciting time with the scheme and its hoped the building work will start in the spring and that the new hall will be up and running by next September."

"We hope that by scheduling the bulk of the work over the summer that there will be minimal disruption to the present users," she said.

Felinheli man Len Williams is hopeful that the money will allow the hall to return to its glory days of the last century.

He said: "It used to be very popular in

the village and was used for eisteddfodau, boxing exhibitions, weightlifting and the carnival queen regatta.

"It would be nice if the upgrade encouraged more people to use it, although hopefully they will look at the (lack of) parking at the hall."

■ *Residents can view the proposed plans for the Felinheli Memorial Hall at an open meeting on Monday at 7pm in the upper level of the hall.*

alex.hickey@northwalesnews.co.uk

£7.8m sailing academy edges a step closer

PLANS for an ambitious £7.8m sailing academy in Gwynedd have edged a step closer.

The Welsh National Sailing Academy and Events Centre at Hafan Pwllheli marina could generate £1.6m income annually, creating 22 new jobs and support an extra nine in related industries.

A report by Gwynedd's head of economy and community Sioned Williams was backed by members of the council board on Tuesday.

Gwynedd Council leader Dyfed Edwards said afterwards that it was important to invest in the future of the economy in Llŷn and Pwllheli and that the Môn-Menai area was not the only area that needed support.

Mrs Williams' report said the centre would benefit the economy by providing education and training facilities and strengthen links with the town centre as well as promoting and encouraging the use of Welsh. It could hold regatta and championship events, elite dinghy squad training, youth training and events.

The plans would mean building 150 extra berths for visitors, as well as improving links between the town and the waterfront.

Pwllheli, which has 400 berths at present, is one of Britain's top sailing venues, along with Weymouth and Largs in Scotland, but it lacks facilities for sailing events.

Gwynedd Council has already been in talks with the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) and the Welsh European Funding Office (Wefo) about making bids for money for the Academy. Gwynedd is likely to ask WAG for £3.95m; £3.6m from the Wales European Funding Office and stump up £250,000 itself.

Mrs Williams' report said Pwllheli had hosted a significant number of successful sailing competitions raising the area's international profile and was the only sailing training centre in Wales for the 2012 London Olympics.