



■ Official opening – Natasha Richardson and Samuel Thomas, with project chairman Huw Edwards and Denise Buckley of the modernisation project *Picture: NIGEL BROWN 22NFW*

# £550,000 hall revamp complete

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A COLCHESTER neighbourhood came together to celebrate the refurbishment of a community hall.

Myland Parish Halls, on Mile End Road, was packed with residents and dignitaries for its official unveiling after a £550,000 extension and makeover.

The centre, opened as the parish school exactly 139 years before, now boasts two halls, boardroom, offices, kitchens and toilets.

Natasha Richardson and Samuel Thomas, from the Guide and Scout groups who

- Parish school on the site 139 years ago
- Makeover includes kitchen and toilets

meet there, cut a ribbon to open the halls. Project chairman Huw Edwards said: "Today is all about showing off what has been produced by the hard efforts of many, many people.

"It has been thoroughly enjoyable to see this building come to fruition.

"For some people the project started when we began raising money five years ago, for others when building began nine months ago, but

for me, it starts now. This project is not about bricks and mortar, but what happens inside now and in the future."

Rev Ray Gibbs, priest in charge of Myland parish, said the building had "a real wow factor". He said: "In one fell swoop this has doubled the amount of community space in the area.

"This is desperately needed in a rapidly growing neighbourhood, and is already well-used."

The project was funded with a £385,000 grant from the Big Lottery Fund, as well as additional cash from Essex County Council, Colchester Council and Essex Community Foundation.