



Press Release: Embargoed until September 3, 2019

The Fifth Trust is delighted to learn that it has been awarded a £200,000 grant from the National Lottery Community Fund towards the redevelopment of its skills centre in Barham, near Canterbury.

The new centre will enable the Trust to provide more student places for adults with learning disabilities and the opportunity for them to gain in confidence, learn new skills, and interact with the local community.

The Trust will be able to receive students with more challenging physical disabilities, as well as provide support for older students with dementia, and life skills training for students making the transition from special schools to adulthood and more independent living.

The Fifth Trust currently supports 150 students from across East Kent, including Dover, Deal, Shepway and Thanet, in a range of activities from arts, crafts, pottery, cookery, horticulture, woodwork and IT. Their work is sold through the cafe at the vineyard in the Elham Valley and the garden centre located there.

Suzanne O'Brien, the chair of the Trust, said: *"The Fifth Trust is very grateful for this expression of confidence in our work and looks forward to making the development happen as quickly as possible so we can continue to provide the very best in person centred support for our students."*

Nikki Marley, the general manager, commented: *"Our staff and students are really excited at the prospect of having new facilities, which are fit for purpose, and will help us maintain and develop the quality of what we do."*

So far the Trust has raised over £1 million towards its redevelopment scheme which is replacing huts first erected 30 years ago. The new development will help the Fifth Trust sustain its work with some of the most vulnerable people in society as well as provide new employment opportunities in a rural area.

Building is expected to start early next year with the construction of an Amenity Hub including communal spaces, a quiet room, a kitchen and a wet room and toilets which will meet modern standards

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