

Villagers will stick neck out over clifftop centre

by Alistair Beaton

RESIDENTS in a coastal village are to have their say on the design of a new clifftop community centre.

Collieston and Slains Community Trust hopes to widen the appeal of the building and raise cash towards its running costs by including accommodation for visitors.

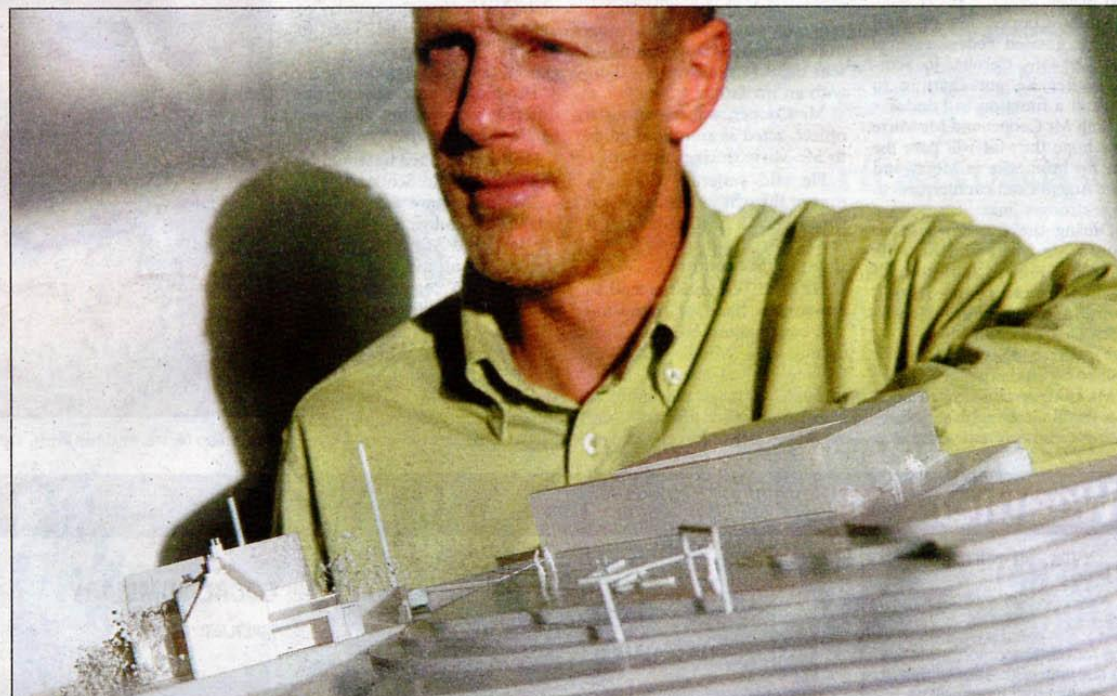
Villagers will be asked to comment on the final five architects' submissions for the design of the new centre at a series of public exhibitions.

The plans will be on display at Slains House, the former manse at the entrance to Collieston, from 10am-5pm today and tomorrow and again next weekend, with additional open sessions from 7pm-9pm on Tuesday and Thursday.

The existing centre, in a converted school, is now more than a century old but is still a hub of social life in the community near Ellon.

Residents who attended earlier sessions said they wanted a new building rather than a conversion of the existing facilities, although elements of the old school might still be included in the new design. The building could also feature accommodation for holiday lets or respite breaks.

Trust chairman Steve Rainey said: "It is hoped to have a sustainable amenity, a building



Community trust chairman Steve Rainey with one of the models for the new community centre. PICTURE BY KAMI THOMSON

that would not only provide a major local resource but also be capable of generating significant income towards its running."

A judging panel will meet on December 15 to consider the points raised by residents during

the consultation. It will be led by the trust's architectural adviser Charles Rattray, senior lecturer at Aberdeen's Scott Sutherland School of Architecture and include three professional architects and community representatives.

They will choose two designs to be put before residents early in the new year and followed by a further exhibition.

The winner will be chosen through a ballot by residents in Collieston and the surrounding

parish, with the result to be announced by the end of January. Once the final design has been chosen and fully costed, a business plan will be drawn up to be submitted to potential funding sources.