

**COMMUNITY AND LEISURE COMMITTEE HELD AT COUNCIL OFFICES  
LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN AT 7.30 PM ON 1 MARCH 2005**

Present:- Councillor D J Morson – Chairman.  
Councillors E C Abrahams, H D Baker, P Boland, J E Menell,  
J P Murphy and F E Silver.

Officers in attendance:- G Bradley, D Burrige, P Snow and C Wingfield.

CL54

**APOLOGIES AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S V Schneider and G Sell.

The following Members declared interests:-

Councillor J E Menell as a non executive director of the Primary Care Trust, Chairman of Buffy Bus and as a member of the Uttlesford Community Support Group and Uttlesford Community Safety Action Team.

Councillor J P Murphy as a member of Great Dunmow Town Council.

CL55

**BUSINESS ARISING**

**(i) Minute CL47 (i) - Museum Resource Centre**

The Chairman confirmed that he had now met with Tony Watson the new chairman of the Museum Society. He read to the meeting a letter sent to Brian Newman in appreciation of the considerable contribution he had made to the work of the Museum and the Museum Society over a number of years.

**(ii) Minute CL48 – Community Achievement Panel**

A number of Members referred to the community awards ceremony that had taken place at these offices on 17 February 2005. There was general agreement that this had been an outstanding evening and that congratulations were due to all those who had received awards as well as to the officers principally concerned in organising the event, primarily Alex Stewart and Sue Hayden.

**(iii) Minute CL49 – CCTV Feasibility Study**

The Executive Manager (Environmental and Cultural Services) advised Members that the revenue figures relating to the CCTV system upgrade were not yet available and it would be necessary for a report to be submitted directly to the Resources Committee.

**(iv) Minute CL51 – Leisure Centres Surveys – Action Plan Update**

The Leisure Manager reported that she had received a letter from the Chief Executive of Leisure Connection stating that he would investigate the issue of

staffing cover and report back with his findings. She said that a survey was in the process of being carried out to ascertain the views of youth clubs in the area about the suggestion for discounted rates. Several responses had been received to date and it was hoped that it would prove possible to negotiate a suitable arrangement.

Members expressed a number of concerns about the way in which the existing pricing policy was operating and suggested ways in which more customers could be attracted. The Chairman referred to the special meeting of the Committee due to take place during the early part of April and said that this would provide the opportunity to make suitable representations to David Steele of Linteum (Uttlesford) Ltd.

CL56

## **MUSEUM CONSULTANTS' REPORT AND PRESENTATION**

The Museum Curator introduced the executive summary of the Audience Development Plan prepared by ABL Cultural Consulting that had been considered at the Museum presentation on the previous evening. It was expected that the final report would be available by the beginning of April.

She said that the consultation carried out as part of this exercise had been extensive. There had been a particular concentration on young people and family groups as well as those living in rural communities and a number of face to face interviews had been carried out in Dunmow, Stansted, Thaxted and surrounding areas. It was hoped that the resource centre could ultimately promote fuller engagement with all of these target groups. There was also a great deal of awareness of the considerable tourist potential for Saffron Walden.

The consultants' presentation had offered four options for determining the way forward. These were:-

- 1 Do nothing and continue as at present.
- 2 Build the resource centre and fill one of the two suggested new posts to provide a research base for the Museum and expand the research and exhibitions capability.
- 3 Build a new resource centre and fill two posts of collections officer and outreach officer to develop new links with identified audiences.
- 4 Build the resource centre and fill three posts, the third of which would act in the role of a tourism officer for the Museum service on a local, regional and national basis. The final option would involve extending the proposed Heritage Lottery funding.

It was understood that the report would be submitted to the Resource Centre Project Team at the end of March and that some of the Lottery funding would need to be drawn down to meet the costs associated with the Consultants' Report.

The Chairman said that the first option had been adopted up to this point but this was no longer feasible as more artefacts continued to be presented to the Museum requiring permanent storage. Various other options had been investigated including premises at Gold's Nurseries but none of these would be likely to qualify for Heritage Lottery funding. Effectively, the only viable options left were those listed as options 3 and 4 above. The Project Team had agreed to utilise the £30,000 granted by the Resources Committee to investigate methods of raising funds and to pay for the consultants' report. He hoped that it would be possible to employ a fundraiser from April this year.

At this point, the Committee turned to the consideration of potential sites for the provision of a Resource Centre. One of these was on land at Clavering owned by Councillor E C Abrahams.

*Councillor Abrahams declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this matter and left the room while it was being considered.*

The Chairman then referred to two existing barns on land owned by Councillor Abrahams that had been offered as a potential site for the Resource Centre. He had inspected the site together with the Council's Architect and Property Advisor and it appeared to be suitable for the purpose. A feasibility report would be prepared for the next meeting of the Resource Centre Project Team.

In answering questions from Members, the Chairman said that he was satisfied that all suitable sites in the district had now been identified and investigated. Concern was expressed that the Clavering site was in a relatively remote rural area and was possibly on the fringe of reasonable accessibility for visitors. The Curator confirmed that officers shared some of these concerns particularly from the viewpoint of staff working on their own in a remote location. A realistic expectation was that the Resource Centre should be sited a maximum of twenty minutes travelling distance from Saffron Walden and the Clavering site was on the edge of what might be considered as a reasonable travelling distance.

At this stage of the discussion Councillor Abrahams was readmitted to the meeting.

There was overall agreement that the Council should focus on option 3 as the most likely method to encourage support for a viable Heritage Lottery Fund bid to build a Resource Centre. Members also discussed the basis for employing a fundraiser and it was agreed that it might be appropriate for this to be, in part, incentive based. It was also clarified that the cost of the consultants' report amounted to £27,500 of which £24,500 would be provided from the HLF grant and £2,000 from the Museum's Revenue Budget. The remaining sum of £1,000 would be met from other budget provision.

In conclusion, Members expressed appreciation of the Museum Curator's efforts in continuing to pursue this project and agreed that the attendance at last night's consultants' presentation had been extremely disappointing. The Chairman said that Members who might be in a position to have to decide funding for the Resource Centre project should first be fully aware of all the relevant factors identified in the consultants' report.

RESOLVED that option 3 identified by the Consultants be chosen as the Committee's preferred option in relation to the proposed Museum Resource Centre, that is to build a new Resource Centre and to create two posts of collections officer and outreach officer to develop new links with identified audiences, subject to the availability of Heritage Lottery Funding and to the removal of other obstacles.

CL57

## **MULTI-CULTURAL FESTIVAL**

The Leisure Manger presented a report updating Members on the progress that had been made towards the development of a multi-cultural festival in the district during 2005. The Committee had already agreed to the principle of holding such a festival and the new Multi Agency Steering Group had now agreed that it would take place on 18 September 2005 at Audley End House which had been donated for the occasion by English Heritage. A sum of £5,000 had been earmarked as a contribution towards delivering this event . It was now intended that the Steering Group should form a community partnership under the name of "Uttlesford Cultural Partnership".

The Chairman reminded Members that the original intention of the festival had been to forge links with hard to reach groups among the many ethnic communities represented in the Uttlesford area but that the response had been limited. The festival had been conceived as a way of attracting some of these hard to reach groups so that more permanent links could be established.

It was noted that a similar event had been held in Maldon during September and this had proved to be relatively successful. It was hoped that it would be possible to employ a temporary member of staff to continue work after the festival took place to build on the contacts that would be made.

Reference was also made to the potential use of the Council's web site in providing links to other web sites to help achieve some of these objectives. It was agreed that the Council's existing web site had a great deal of scope for improvement in this respect and that the focus of attention in the coming weeks and months should be on promotional activities.

RESOLVED that progress made towards organising a multi-cultural festival in the district be noted, that existing and new contacts be pursued to establish a fruitful dialogue, and that the existence and work of the Uttlesford Cultural Partnership be endorsed.

CL58

## **CULTURAL TOURISM**

A report was submitted about the development of the INSITE project intended to promote cultural tourism in Essex. The principal aims of the project were to develop Essex as a cultural destination of choice, and develop the capacity of Essex local authorities to deliver ambitious partnership initiatives. This would be funded from contributions from East England Arts and would utilise three years worth of contributions for the whole of Essex as match funding to raise a larger pool of money towards achieving these aims.

Members were supportive of this project and wished to ensure value for money for the Council's annual contribution of £2,500.

RESOLVED that the development of the INSITE Cultural Tourism Project in Essex, utilising funds from contributions over a three-year period on a match funding basis, be supported.

CL59

### **LEISURE CENTRE'S CONCESSION CARD SCHEME**

The Leisure Manger reported further on the development of the Concession Card Scheme, as negotiated with Leisure Connection Limited, for use in Leisure Centres throughout the district. The card had been launched in the spring of 2004 and provided access to all three Leisure Centres for residents in receipt of either income based Job Seeker's Allowance, Income Support, Working Tax Credit, Housing Benefit or who were disabled. The take up of the scheme had been disappointing, as only six cards had been purchased to date.

Members expressed a variety of concerns about the way in which the scheme operated and the pricing mechanism that had been used. A number of suggestions were made as to how the scheme could be made more attractive to potential customers, including more off-peak use and greater promotion towards potential target groups. It was hoped that many of these concerns could be raised at the proposed meeting with David Steel and at future PFI Contract Liaison Meetings with representatives of Leisure Connection Limited.

RESOLVED that the report be noted and that Members support the aim of more intensive marketing of the Concession Card Scheme in future, the results of which would be reported back in due course.

CL60

### **LAST MEETING OF COMMITTEE**

The Chairman thanked Members and officers for their helpful contributions to the meetings of the Committee held during the past year.

The meeting ended at 9.00pm.