

**MUSEUM MANAGEMENT JOINT WORKING PARTY held at the SCHOOL ROOM SAFFRON WALDEN MUSEUM at 7.00 pm on 23 MAY 2002**

Present:- Councillors D M Miller, D J Morson and A R Row (Uttlesford Members); Ms S Kirkpatrick, N B Newman and E Planterose (Museum Society Representatives).

Officers in attendance:- M T Purkiss and Ms C Wingfield.

**MM1 SIR HENRY MARKING**

The Working Party stood in silent tribute to Sir Henry Marking who had recently passed away. He had been a long-standing patron of the Museum.

**MM2 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN FOR THE MEETING**

It was agreed that Councillor A R Row be appointed Chairman for the meeting.

**MM3 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mrs J E Menell and Mr A Watson.

**MM4 NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The notes of the meeting held on 7 February 2002 were received, confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**MM5 BUSINESS ARISING**

**(i) Minute MM18 - (i) Church Street Entrance**

It was noted that the works to the Church Street entrance had now been completed. However, the latch on the pedestrian gate was sticking and the matter would be taken up with the Property Services Section of the Council.

**(ii) Minute MM18 - (ii) IT Issues**

As reported at the previous meeting, IT issues from the previous year had been resolved and the Curator reported that the networking of the laboratory was being investigated, which would be of considerable benefit to staff. The trench for the fibre optics cable required Scheduled Monument consent.

**(iii) Minute MM18 - (iii) Blocked Gutters**

The Curator said that the contractors had carried out a complete clean of the gutters at the end of the winter and this had improved the situation considerably. Mr Newman said that this good work needed to be maintained.

**(iv) Minute MM18 - (v) 50 Castle Street**

Mr Newman confirmed that the Museum Society would support a review of the rent for the parcel of land at 50 Castle Street and asked that the Council should undertake this review.

**(v) Minute MM18 - (vi) Commemorative Tree**

The Curator said that she would shortly be making an application for Scheduled Monument consent concerning the planting of a Hornbeam and the placing of a plaque in memory of Malcolm Adams who had been the Museum Society's Treasurer and a desk volunteer.

**(vi) Minute MM20 - Corporate Entertainment**

The Curator said that the Council would be pursuing targeted publicity in relation to the use of the Museum for corporate entertainment events. Mr Newman said that a group of architects would be visiting the town shortly and it was confirmed that their attention would be drawn to the Museum. It was generally agreed that the lack of catering facilities at the Museum was a restraint on bookings for corporate events.

MM6

**REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE MUSEUM SOCIETY  
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

Mr Newman reported on the last meeting of the Museum Society Management Committee. He said that the current secretary had tendered her resignation and the Society were looking at a joint post so that half of the time would be spent dealing with the lecture programme and the other half on secretarial work.

The draft accounts had been submitted by David Lang and Mr Newman paid tribute to his work in relation to these matters. A Best Value meeting was to be arranged in the near future. He said that the Society were still concerned at the problems with the Newport store. The Society had offered funds towards more documentation. He said that the last lecture had been very successful and had brought in many people. The Society would give publicity to similar events in the future.

Councillor Row said that he had visited the Newport store and shared the concerns at the condition of these premises. Councillor Miller felt that flooding would be a regular problem with the store. The Curator confirmed that she was still making efforts to identify an appropriate building somewhere in the District. A previous approach to English Heritage to enquire about displaying horse drawn vehicles in Priors Barn, Widdington had not been successful.

MM7

**CURATOR'S REPORT**

The Curator said that the Best Value Challenge Event had been held last week. Mr Planterose said that the event had been very useful and had demonstrated the enthusiasm which many people had for the Museum. He stressed the importance of providing somewhere to serve refreshments at the Museum, but was aware of the limitations on space. It was recognised that if

the storage problem could be resolved, this would assist with the matter. Mr Planterose also felt that better signposting to the Museum would be of great benefit. It was noted that the County Council were undertaking a review of signs within Saffron Walden and the opportunity would be taken to remind them of the importance of signs for both the Museum and Bridge End Gardens. Ms Kirkpatrick also felt that the Challenge Event had made people aware of the value of the Museum and the excellent level of service it provided.

The Curator reported that due to the floods last Autumn at the Newport store, the total cost of this building to the Museum service for the financial year 2001/02, had been approximately £7,000, of which £4,000 was directly attributable to the flood (about £2,000 on repairs and replacement of equipment and £2,000 staff time so far on clearing up the aftermath) and £3,000 on rates, electricity and alarm systems.

In relation to staffing, the Curator reported that Julia Bazley, the Documentations and Exhibitions Officer had returned to the Museum on 6 May 2002 for two days a week. The other three days would be covered by Shirley Miller.

In relation to the grounds, it was noted that a section of the castle grounds wall had been damaged during building work at 54 Castle Street. The Curator had drawn this matter to the attention of an inspector from English Heritage and it was also agreed that Uttlesford Planning Services would be made aware of this matter.

The Working Party agreed to the loan of 16 ancient Egyptian objects for a temporary exhibition at the Epping Forest District Museum at Waltham Abbey from August to October 2002.

The Working Party were particularly pleased to note the amount of outreach work carried out by Museum staff. A talk had been given to Saffron Walden Methodist Wives on Famous Queens and the Curator had given a talk on the history and the development of the Museum "A World of Discovery on Your Doorstep" to the Wendens Ambo, Stansted Evening and Hatfield Broad Oak WI's, the Hadstock Society, Great Hallingbury History Society and Takeley Wives. The future exhibitions programme included an exhibition of recently conserved objects from the collections incorporating a spectacular selection of items from all around the world, the Japanese Samurai armour forming the centrepiece (1 June – 3 September). The Quaker Walden – to coincide with the Friends' School Tercentenary (14 September – 3 November) and Treasures of the Earth featuring minerals, meteorites and moon rock from 16 November until March 2003.

The meeting ended at 8.00 pm.