

**MUSEUM MANAGEMENT JOINT WORKING PARTY held at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 7.00 pm on 31 OCTOBER 2002**

Present:- Councillors Mrs J E Menell and D M Miller (Uttlesford Members); N B Newman, E Planterose and A Watson (Museum Society Representatives).

Also present:- Councillors R J Copping and M A Hibbs.

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

**MM8 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN FOR THE MEETING**

It was agreed that Mr N B Newman be appointed Chairman for the meeting.

**MM9 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D J Morson and A R Row.

**MM10 NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The notes of the meeting held on 23 May 2002 were received, confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**MM11 BUSINESS ARISING**

**(i) Minute MM5 - (i) Church Street Entrance**

It was noted that the works to this entrance had now been satisfactorily completed.

**(ii) Minute MM5 - (iii) Blocked Gutters**

The Curator said that works to clear the gutters at the Museum would be undertaken shortly.

**(iii) Minute MM5 – (iv) 50 Castle Street**

A review of the rent for the parcel of land at 50 Castle Street was now in hand.

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

Mr Newman reported that the Museum Society Management Committee had met on 24 October and had considered the Museum Association's new Code of Ethics 2002 and suggested that the Joint Working Party should adopt this. It had been a requirement of Museum Registration that the Museum's governing body adopted the Museum Association's previous ethical codes, which the new code now superseded.

RECOMMENDED that the Joint Working Party endorses the Museum Association's model Code of Ethics.

He reported that the present exhibition entitled "The Friends School and Quaker Walden" had met with great acclaim and recognised what had been achieved by the Quaker and Non Conformist Movement and, in particular, the Gibson family. Two graphic panels from this exhibition would be transferred to the permanent gallery.

Mr Watson referred to the Best Value Review of Leisure Services insofar as it related to the Museum service. The proposals from the Member Reference Group had suggested action which was required of the Museum Society. The Society were agreeable to most of the areas for action but it was not appropriate for the Society to make an annual contribution towards the maintenance and repair of the Museum buildings and data protection issues would need to be resolved in relation to the database of season ticket holders before this item could be acted upon. The introduction of a corporate membership category would require a change in the Society's constitution which would need to be agreed by the Society's AGM (next due June 2003).

It was understood that the Community and Leisure Committee would be considering the budget at its meeting on 5 November and some Members expressed concern of how this could be undertaken in advance of the Best Value Review final report.

Mr Watson also presented a paper on a meeting he had held with the Treasurer of the Museum Society concerning the organisation of the Society. It had been agreed that the number of officers of the Society could be increased to include a membership secretary, volunteer organiser and an events organiser and that there should be greater publicity to promote the Society's events and promote the Museum. These issues would be considered at the Society's Annual General Meeting in June 2003.

Mr Newman also suggested that the Council should consider renaming the Museum as the Uttlesford Museum so that the service it provided to the whole of the district would be recognised. Councillor Miller had some reservations about changing the name as Saffron Walden Museum was known worldwide.

The Curator reported that it had not been possible to plant the commemorative tree because of the dry spell at the beginning of the Autumn and it was hoped to plant this in November.

Mr Newman said that the Annual General Meeting had been very well attended and had included excellent presentations by the staff of the Museum.

Mr Newman said that he had had discussions concerning the possible use of the cellars at the King Edward VI Almshouses for storage of Museum artefacts. Some capital cost would be involved to deal with problems of damp and the positioning of pipes. However, the area would provide a large amount of space and would be far preferable to the current Newport facility. The Curator would investigate the potential use of this site. She added that she was hoping to make progress on the use of a site at Stansted Airport as a Museum resource centre.

In answer to a question the Curator said that the issue of corporate membership and hospitality would be pursued in the New Year as part of a broader marketing strategy.

MM13

## **CURATOR'S REPORT**

The Curator submitted her quarterly report for the period July-September 2002. In relation to management issues it was noted that the Society was prepared to fund the cost of a new freezer and an associated alarm. The Working Party noted recent acquisitions and were particularly pleased with the acquisition of a Tudor oak standing cupboard which had received much publicity. The Working Party was also pleased to note that there had been an increase in the number of visitors to the Museum compared to the same period in 2001. Details of recent events at the Museum were noted and an exhibition by Gerald Lucy entitled "Treasures of the Earth" would run from 16 November until March 2003.

In relation to outreach work, Councillor Copping acknowledged the support which Dunmow Museum received both through outreach and professional support. However, he said that, at the meeting of the Community and Leisure Committee on 5 November, the Dunmow Museum and the Maltings were in danger of losing funding of £3,000 from the Council which could result in the closure of the Museum and the Maltings.

Mr Newman also stressed the importance of a holistic approach to the Museum service and asked that the Best Value Reference Group take this issue on board. He also suggested that representatives of independent museum and gallery partners in Uttlesford (Great Dunmow and Ashdon Museums, Fry Art Gallery) might be invited to attend the Joint Working Party.

The meeting ended at 7.55 pm.