

**MUSEUM MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP held at the
SAFFRON WALDEN MUSEUM at 7.30 pm on 31 AUGUST 2006**

Present:- Councillor D J Morson – Chairman.
Councillor V J Pedder (Uttlesford District Council) and J Bullen,
E Planterose and R Wallace (Museum Society).

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

MM7 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R P Chambers and J I Loughlin and D Laing, A Watson and S Hollingworth.

MM8 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 1 June 2006 were received, confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

MM9 MATTERS ARISING

(i) Minute MM3 – Museum Service Forward Plan and Access Policy Statement

It was noted that the Museum Service Forward Plan and Access Policy Statement had been approved by the Council's Community Services Committee.

(ii) Minute MM6 – Curator's Report

The Curator reported that the application for grant aid under the Essex Initiative Fund would be considered by the County Council at a meeting in mid September. She also reported on progress of the East of England Hub and drew attention to the repainting and repairs which were taking place at the Museum and the school room.

MM10 HERITAGE QUEST CENTRE AND TRUST

The Curator reported that fundraising now stood at over £40,000 with a further £32,000 earmarked by Stansted Airport Ltd. She said that the next fundraising event was the wine evening which had already been sold out and would generate another £600 from ticket sales. She said that once the Trust had been established it would be able to apply for larger grants including a landfill tax grant. An article would be included in the next edition of Uttlesford Life.

She added that discussions were taking place with the Essex Wildlife Trust with a view to them becoming the independent trustee and a report would be submitted to the Council meeting on 17 October 2006.

MM11

REPORT OF THE SAFFRON WALDEN MUSEUM SOCIETY

Richard Wallace presented the report of the Saffron Walden Museum Society. In particular, he drew attention to the estimated costs which had been ascertained for additional signage and refurbishment of existing signs and said that the Society had earmarked £1,000 for this purpose. He added that a project officer was required and said that a survey should be undertaken to identify the most appropriate locations for signs. Edwin Planterose said that he had been a member of the Committee for 8 years and had repeatedly asked for a sign to be placed at the Church Street entrance and asked that priority should be given to this.

Carolyn Wingfield said that some work was already taking place with the Saffron Walden Initiative regarding finger posts and a heritage trail. Councillor Morson said that he was meeting with Council officers shortly and would discuss the issues raised at the meeting with a view to work being completed by the start of the next tourist season. A meeting to discuss progress would be held at the Museum at 4.00 pm on Tuesday 3 October 2006.

The Chairman also thanked the Society and its members for all their hard work and support.

MM12

CURATOR'S REPORT

The Working Group considered the Curator's report for the period April – June 2006. It was noted that the programme of repairs and repainting had commenced. It was also noted that the Hanwell monitoring system at the Newport store was working intermittently, but was providing data remotely on temperature and humidity in the store. The Curator added that these problems were being addressed. She had also met with the contractors concerning dealing with the ivy at the base of the Castle walls and Peter Riding from the Saffron Walden Initiative had been in contact as they were keen to help with fundraising.

The Curator reported that the purchase of a gold ring from Takeley was nearing completion with grant aid being provided by the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Headley Trust.

The Working Group approved the loan of Egyptian antiquities to the Hertford Museum, and the loan of a lace bark dress and brush to the British Empire and Commonwealth Museum in Bristol for one year only with a provision of a digital image of the cap in lieu of loan.

Richard Wallace said that he was pleased that visitor figures had increased and the events at the Museum had been well attended.

MM13

INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT – SAFFRON WALDEN MUSEUM

Councillor Morson referred to the report which had been considered by the Performance Select Committee on 9 August 2006 concerning this audit. The audit had largely focussed on financial matters and some weaknesses in internal control associated with the use of volunteers, volunteer management and income collection, recording, reconciliation and banking had been identified. He understood that Members of the Performance Select Committee had expressed concern at these matters and had asked for a further report which would be considered at the meeting on 15 November 2006.

The Curator reported that a number of the issues raised had already been addressed and pointed out that the overall conclusion in the audit was that no significant problems had been identified.

It was agreed that Councillor Morson would meet with Carolyn Wingfield, Diane Burrige and Maureen Evans to discuss the matter further so that the issues could be fully discussed prior to the report being prepared for the Performance Select Committee.

MM14

NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on Thursday 2 November 2006 at 4.00 pm.

The meeting ended at 8.55 pm.