

**MUSEUM MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP held at THE SAFFRON WALDEN MUSEUM at 6.00 pm on 13 DECEMBER 2007**

Present:- Councillor R P Chambers (Uttlesford Members), D Laing, E Planterose and R Wallace (Museum Society).

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

**MM19 CHAIRMAN**

In the absence of the Chairman it was agreed that Councillor Chambers would chair the meeting.

**MM20 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors E C Abrahams, K Eden, D J Morson and S Schneider and from J Bullen.

**MM21 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 30 August 2007 were received, confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**MM22 HERITAGE QUEST CENTRE PROJECT/HLF APPLICATION**

Carolyn Wingfield reported that the application had been submitted to the HLF in September and had been acknowledged. A new case officer had been appointed and it was likely that a site visit would be made by a consultant and the HLF case officer in the New Year.

She reported that progress had been made on the ENTRUST registration and with the grant applications to the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation and The Pilgrim Trust. A number of other grants were being pursued and public donations were continuing to be received. She also reported that a fund raising event was planned for 29 February 2008 at St Marks College aimed at business and individual donors and the Museum Society had offered £500 to fund the event.

She also reported that a planning application had been submitted for land adjoining the Heritage Quest Centre site and this proposed a different road layout to that originally planned and would have implications for the centre. She said that representations had been made to the planning department.

Councillor Chambers referred to the Council's current financial situation and the implications this had for a number of services. However, he paid tribute to Carolyn Wingfield who he said was one of the best museum curators in the country and said that the Council would work hard to try to keep the Museum on course.

MM23

## **HERITAGE QUEST TRUST UPDATE**

David Laing reported that the problems with the registration of the Heritage Quest Centre Trust Ltd with the Charity Commission were unlikely to be overcome.

The Society had therefore agreed that, in order to move things forward, it was necessary for the Society to change its status to that of a limited company and register with Companies House. The Society had also confirmed that for the project to go ahead it was essential for the Council to gift the land for the Heritage Quest Centre to the Museum Society which would then lease it back to the council at a peppercorn rent. He said that a resolution to recommend this course of action would be considered at a special general meeting on 4 January 2008.

David Laing also reported that ENTRUST had confirmed that they could see no problem in the power and objectives proposed.

Councillor Chambers said that it was likely that the Council would look favourably on the proposals to gift the land to the Society and to put the Heritage Quest Centre Trust Limited into liquidation.

MM24

## **RETIREMENT OF EDUCATION OFFICER AND RECRUITMENT**

Carolyn Wingfield submitted a draft report which she intended to submit to the Community and Operations Committees in January 2008 concerning the recruitment of a new Education Officer. Councillor Chambers apologised that due to the current financial situation the Council had put a freeze on recruitment to all posts. Whilst he was aware that this post brought in an income, in the short term, there was no option but to include recruitment to this post within the freeze.

Richard Wallace said that the Society would have concerns about the loss of income if this post was not filled and, in the short term, it might be prepared to fund the post. David Laing added that the Society would need to look at the salary scale and on-costs and asked whether it would be possible for a member of the Society to cover the post in the short term. Carolyn Wingfield reported that the current cost of the post was £22,400 per annum including on costs and confirmed that whilst volunteers could supplement staffing arrangements they could not replace staff.

It was agreed that the matter would be discussed by the Trustees and the Curator would amend her report which would be submitted directly to the Finance and Administration Committee at its meeting on 31 January 2008.

MM25

## **REPORT OF THE SAFFRON WALDEN MUSEUM SOCIETY**

Richard Wallace reported on the meetings of the Management Committee on 18 October and 4 December 2007. In particular, he referred to the proposed fund raising event on 29 February 2008 and to the development of the

monthly lecture programme which was helping to increase recruitment to the Society.

In answer to a question from Councillor Chambers, the Curator explained the current proposals for the future of the Castle which would assist in making the Museum more attractive to visitors.

**MM26 CURATOR'S REPORT**

Carolyn Wingfield submitted the quarterly report for the period from July – September 2007. She updated members with progress on the horse drawn vehicles at Priors Hall Barn and the review of CCTV coverage at the Museum. She reported that the cost of the CCTV upgrade was £2,200 and the Society had agreed to fund this item.

She reported that visitor figures were slightly down, but it was likely that there would be positive news regarding school visits, due mainly to the 'Partners in Time' project.

**MM27 MICK PURKISS**

The Chairman reported that this would be the last meeting attended by Mick Purkiss and Members thanked him for his support and wished him well for the future.

**MM28 SEASON'S GREETINGS**

The Chairman extended Season's Greetings to members, officers and members of the Museum Society.

The meeting ended at 7.15 pm.