

# **Saffron Walden Museum Society**

## **Report to Museum Management Working Group 13<sup>th</sup> December, 2007**

The Management Committee met on 18<sup>th</sup> October and 4<sup>th</sup> December, 2007.

### **Museum Society Status**

Registration of Heritage Quest Trust Limited with the Charity Commission has been pursued vigorously and at length. However, the Society has recently taken advice regarding the likely success of this route and now believes the difficulties involved are unlikely to be overcome.

The Management Committee on 18<sup>th</sup> October therefore decided that, if the development of the Heritage Quest Centre was to continue, this project would need to be moved 'in-house' thus reversing the decision on 12<sup>th</sup> July, 2007 (Minute 1068) that the Society should await the legislation regarding charitable limited company status expected in 2008. Tony Watson (Legal Consultant) advised, in preparation for this move, that it was necessary for the Society to change its status to that of a limited company and register with Companies House, which would limit liability for individual Trustees. A Special General Meeting (SGM) of members would be required to change the membership association into an incorporated association. A draft Memorandum & Articles of Association had been prepared by Tony Watson and David Laing, circulated and outline discussion undertaken.

It was also confirmed that for this project to go ahead, it was essential for UDC 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.

The future of the Heritage Quest Trust Ltd. was discussed at the meeting of the Resource Centre team on 27<sup>th</sup> November.

A further meeting of the Management Committee was held on 4<sup>th</sup> December, 2007. The draft Memorandum & Articles were discussed further. The re-structuring would involve the existing Executive Committee becoming the Board of Directors, whose members would also be the Trustees. The current Management Committee would become non-executive committee. Board members, Officers and non-executive committee members would be elected at the Annual General Meeting. It was not envisaged that this change in structure would affect the arrangements with UDC.

A Resolution to recommend this course of action to the Special General Meeting was put forward and passed unanimously. A date for the SGM was set for 8.00 pm on Friday, 4<sup>th</sup> January, 2008 at the Museum. It was hoped that members of the Museum Management Working Group would be able to be present at this meeting.

### **Museum Security**

Members will have seen a report by the Curator of the recent episode which has caused the CCTV coverage in the Museum to be reviewed. The Management Committee has agreed in principle to the immediate up-grading in the number of cameras to the maximum compatible with the system, for which it will be responsible financially.

### **Fundraising**

The fundraising group has been receiving advice from Dipak Mistry, Head of Arts & Business East, and is now preparing the groundwork for their approaches. A generous donation of £10,000 from Saffron Walden Town Council has been much appreciated.

The Museum Society is planning to hold an elite social event on the evening of Friday, 29<sup>th</sup> February, at St Mark's College; so far, three of the Appeal's Patrons have confirmed they will attend so that would-be donors will be encouraged to support the appeal.

### **Showcase 2007**

The Museum Society supported Showcase 2007 in September. The stand was manned by a number of Museum Society members throughout the day. It was the busiest stand and created substantial interest as a result of a 'Call my Bluff' style quiz set up with the help of the Curator and her colleagues. This was completed by 110 people in all and the first two correct entries, of which there were only ten in all, received prizes from the Museum Society. The stand was supported by a range of publicity material for the Museum and the Society, and six people applied to become members of the Museum Society during the event.

### **Events programme**

The Society's regular talks on a range of interesting and informative topics continue with increased audiences, some as many as 82 people. A visit to Kentwell Hall, Suffolk, was made in July on one of their Tudor re-enactment days and this was much enjoyed by a party of over 25 members, friends and guests. One of the most unusual features was the Camera Obscura - a small building in which the use of lenses was demonstrated.

A visit is also in preparation to The Terracotta Army exhibition at the British Museum; this will be on Tuesday, 19<sup>th</sup> February, 2008, for a maximum of 34 people. This event has already been over-subscribed with a number of names on the waiting list.

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