

**MUSEUM MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP held at
SAFFRON WALDEN MUSEUM at 6.00 pm on 9 SEPTEMBER
2009**

Present: Councillors K L Eden, D J Morson and S V
Schneider (Uttlesford Members), D Laing, P
Salvidge and T Watson (Museum Society).

Officers in attendance: C Wingfield (Curator) and C Roberts
(Democratic Services Officer).

**MM8 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF
INTEREST**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor R H
Chamberlain and J Bullen.

MM9 PREVIOUS MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 16 June 2009 were
received, confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct
record.

MM10 REPORT OF SAFFRON WALDEN MUSEUM SOCIETY

The Working Group considered the report of the Museum
Society.

David Laing informed the meeting that he had recently returned
the new agreement for the revised lease of the Museum and
Schoolroom premises to the District Council to enable the
Museum to claim relief from business rates on those premises.

In answer to a question the Curator explained that this rate relief
arrangement would save the Museum about £20,000 a year. A
business rate saving would be available in the same way on the
new Heritage Quest Centre premises when complete.

The Chairman added that this was particularly pleasing since
the benefit of the relevant business rate funds would otherwise
be directed outside the District.

MM11 CURATOR'S QUARTERLY REPORT

The Group considered the report of the Curator covering the
quarter ending June 2009. She commented further as follows:

- **Grounds and Castle site** – an update was given on the progress of works to the Museum site. Removal of the big tree behind the Museum fire escape was imminent. English Heritage had priced essential works to the Castle and would be prepared to offer a grant towards these works subject to match funding being supplied by the Council.
- **Sutton Hoo visit.** Members of the Museum Society had visited the site at Sutton Hoo where the Museum's Sword was on display.
- **Collections and Research :- (i)Len Pole's ethnography project.** A bid had been made for funding in the order of £10,000 to extend the work of Len Pole by making connections between the Saffron Walden Museum and other museums and developing a travelling exhibition "Stories of the World".**(ii) Insurance.** John Dutton's work in valuation of the ceramics and glass collection had paused but was due to resume shortly. Carla Purdue and Lynn Morrison were now working on refreshing the Ceramics displays.
- **Education, events and outreach**
- It now seemed likely that there would be no permanent Learning Officer until next year, with consequent lapse of visits from schools based activities, income and teaching. The Curator explained measures being taken meantime to preserve educational activities as far as possible, and added that the current Learning Officer's departure was due to her husband's promotion to work elsewhere.

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The Chairman thanked the Curator for her full and excellent report.

MM12

HERITAGE QUEST UPDATE

The Curator gave a verbal update on the Heritage Quest Project and the involvement of Sainsbury's.

Architects had drawn up specifications which were to be checked at a meeting next week. The Curator had analysed potential effects of the delay on current funding offers and was personally approaching funders to explain the current position and elicit the best outcome. Loss of one particular offer seemed likely but Sainsbury's had been informed that delay would place £250,000 of funding at risk and they had said that they would meet the cost of losses.

Members discussed the advisability of different forms of land ownership in this context. (At this point the Chairman of the Group declared an interest in so far as he was a Member of the Development Control Committee.)

Members felt that whilst there was no policy objection or public feeling against the project, the planning timescale was challenging, posing a real risk of loss of funders, and that Sainsbury's would not guarantee such losses.

The Curator continued that if Sainsbury's involvement called for different site dimensions alterations might be required to the plans. It was important that Sainsbury's appreciated the overall authority of the Museum's Architect in all decisions regarding the site and that any car park provision for the store was not in landscape terms inappropriate to the policies of the Museum and its funders. The Sainsbury's scheme did however provide much improved access and approach for the Heritage Quest Centre.

In answer to a question the Curator gave an interesting and informative account of the history of the Fry and the Sainsbury families, which had in the past been linked by marriage.

The Chairman thanked the Curator for her report.

MM13

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be Wednesday 4 November at 6 pm in the Council Offices, Saffron Walden.

The meeting ended at 6:40 pm.