

**SAFFRON WALDEN MUSEUM/UTTLESFORD MUSEUM SERVICE
RESOURCE CENTRE PROJECT TEAM HELD AT 2.00 PM IN THE
MUSEUM SCHOOL ROOM ON 1 OCTOBER 2004**

Present:- Councillors D J Morson, J P Murphy and A R Row and
David Demery, Sarah Kenyon, Sarah McLagan, Mick Purkiss
and Carolyn Wingfield (Uttlesford District Council)
David Haylock (Saffron Walden Museum Society).

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor M A Hibbs and
David Laing (Saffron Walden Museum Society).

2 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 20 August 2004 were approved as a
correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3 BUSINESS ARISING

(i) Minute 3 (ii) – Draft Publicity

It was noted that production of the publicity leaflet had been put on hold
pending further decisions regarding the Resource Centre.

(ii) Minute 6 – Newport Site

David Demery reported that he had met with representatives of Newport
Parish Council on site to discuss the proposed Resource Centre. However
the submission of the planning application had now been put on hold.

(iii) Minute 9 – Matching Funding

Carolyn Wingfield reported that she was awaiting a response from BAA
regarding a meeting to discuss the funding of the outreach worker.

4 OUTCOME OF COMMITTEE DECISIONS

Councillor Morson reported that the Community & Leisure Committee had
resolved that subject to the approval of the Resources Committee a capital
contribution be made of the minimum amount of £60,000 to attract Heritage
Lottery Fund Grant.

However, when the recommendation had gone to the Resources Committee,
it had not been approved. The Resources Committee had made a number of
decisions including the setting up of an officer/member working group with the
full support of the Museum Curator and with the full involvement of the Saffron
Walden Museum Society to evaluate options for securing the long-term

financial viability for the Museum in Saffron Walden and a museum service for the District as a whole. The Committee also authorised the Community and Leisure Committee to draw up £30,000 from reserves or other available budgets as identified by officers in consultation with the Leader of the Council, the Chairman of Resources and the Chairman of the Community and Leisure Committee to support this study.

Councillor Morson said that these decisions did not solve the storage problem and had reopened the uncertainty over the long-term future of the Museum. He added that it was difficult to ask others to put money into the project unless the Council had done so. However, he considered that the £30,000 allocation could be better used to attract other sources of funding.

Councillor Murphy said that he was annoyed that the revised motion at the Resources Committee had not been the subject of prior consultation and he thanked those Councillors who had supported the original proposal to make a capital contribution of £60,000. He felt that some Members were under the impression that the Committee was being asked to commit the full long term funding of approximately half a million pound.

Sarah McLagan suggested that any study should consider the storage issue and the question of whether the Museum was viable without an adequate Resource Centre. She added that it was possible that the financing of a Resource Centre with a Heritage Lottery Fund Grant could be less for the Council than that required just to provide adequate storage.

Carolyn Wingfield said that she had spoken to the Heritage Lottery Fund and they had confirmed that they would be prepared to delay the full grant application, but had stated that the Audience Development Grant must be spent within 12 months.

David Demery referred to the suggestion that a site at Golds Nurseries would be suitable. A paper was circulated clarifying the feasibility of this suggestion and it was suggested that this be circulated to all Members of the Council. It was noted that if the Council used a unit at Golds Nurseries, it would have to pay either through a book transfer or a void, in any case, the current lease expired in 2009. Therefore, it would be a very expensive option for only a short-term solution.

In the meantime the Project Team asked the Museum Curator to proceed with the publicity leaflet, and investigate matching funding from other organisations.

Councillor Row said that it was essential that a way forward was found and following further discussion it was

RECOMMENDED that

- 1 the Community and Leisure Committee be asked to confirm the Resource Centre Project Team as the relevant group to pursue and evaluate options for securing the long term financial viability for the Museum;

- 2 the brief of the Resource Centre Project Team be extended to enable it to consider all options including the storage issue and the viability of the Museum without a Resource Centre.

5 **AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT**

Carolyn Wingfield reported that the specification had been sent to eight companies and responses were required by 8 October 2004. She added that a lottery visit would be made on 21 October 2004 to the Museum and she would take the opportunity to discuss the Resource Centre project with the HLF representative.

6 **STORAGE FEASIBILITY STUDY AND ESTIMATES**

Carolyn Wingfield reported that the first draft report had been received from the consultants concerning the internal fixtures and fittings for a proposed Resource Centre. She said that the cost was in the region of £98,000 which was within budget and it would also be possible to make further savings by amending the specification.

7 **GENERAL ISSUES**

Sarah Kenyon asked Members whether they felt that the decision of the Resources Committee had been due to misconceptions about the museum service in relation to its national and local archives. Councillor Morson did not feel that this was the case and felt that it was more related to concerns over the Council's long-term financial commitment.

David Haylock emphasised the importance to any town of a good museum service and suggested that further studies needed to be made which could lead to the provision of better facilities such as a teashop on the Museum site.

8 **NEXT MEETING**

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held at 2.00 pm on Thursday 11 November 2004 in the Museum School Room.

The meeting ended at 3.15 pm.