

**SAFFRON WALDEN MUSEUM/UTTLESFORD MUSEUM SERVICE RESOURCE CENTRE PROJECT TEAM held at 2.00 pm in the MUSEUM SCHOOL ROOM on 5 APRIL 2006**

Present:- Councillor D J Morson (Chairman)  
Councillors J P Murphy and A R Row, Diane Burridge, Maureen Evans, Mick Purkiss, Carolyn Wingfield (Uttlesford District Council) and David Haylock and David Laing (Saffron Walden Museum Society).

Also present:- Martin Pratt of PHT Consultants.

1 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M A Hibbs, H B Hughes and S C Jones and David Demery, Sarah Kenyon and Tony Watson.

2 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 17 February 2006 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3 **BUSINESS ARISING**

(i) **Minutes 3** – Fundraising - Councillor Morson reported that he had spoken to Councillor Ray Gooding and would pursue the matter with the other County Councillors with a view to arranging a meeting to discuss fundraising initiatives.

(ii) **Minute 7** – Inside Out. It was noted that the filming at the Museum for the BBC programme Inside Out had gone very well.

4 **FORWARD PLAN**

(i) **PHT Consultants – feasibility study on income generation**

Martin Pratt of PHT Consultants explained that the feasibility study had been completed and had looked at the following areas:

- Potential for developing the Museum shop.
- Feasibility of developing on site catering.
- Developing licensing opportunities.
- Hire of premises and site events.
- Investigating opportunities for relocating the TIC.

He said that a market appraisal had been carried out and he outlined the current commercial constraints and market trends and set out the benefits of relocating the TIC to the Museum site.

He said that the following options had been evaluated:

Option 1 – do nothing.

He said that this was not a sustainable option and did not address the lack of Museum exhibition and storage space, the cramped visitor flow and need for investment. The current UDC subsidy of £278,000 would not be reduced.

Option 2 – low level development based on current space.

He said that this option would provide little opportunity for incorporating the TIC and there would be no scope for growth in visitor numbers. However, there would be the potential to increase income and the UDC subsidy would be reduced to £266,000. The cost of this option would be £10,000 - £15,000.

Option 3 – relocate TIC to School House.

He explained that the current TIC did not comply with the Disability Discrimination Act requirements. However, a site at the Museum would be a less accessible location and would result in the loss of the Museum's storage space and educational facility at the School House. This option did provide the potential to increase the number of visitors to the Museum by 25% and the UDC subsidy could be reduced to £260,000. The cost of this option would need further evaluation.

Option 4 – new build extension to Museum.

Martin Pratt said that the cost of this option would also need further evaluation. He explained that the extension could be used to provide new a reception area with combined TIC/café area or could be used to improve Museum exhibition facilities. He said that this option would enhance visitor numbers and facilities and would enable shared staffing between the Museum and TIC and would also maximise commercial benefits. This option would reduce the UDC subsidy to £246,000.

The Chairman thanked Martin Pratt for delivering a comprehensive report within a tough time scale and asked that copies of the report and the PowerPoint slides be provided to members of the project team.

## **(ii) Meeting with English Heritage**

Carolyn Wingfield said that a positive meeting had been held on 3 March with Debbie Priddy from English Heritage. It was clear from the meeting that the only acceptable extension to the Museum would be at the east end and English Heritage would be open to suggestions on improving access from Church Street. The problems with ivy on the Castle were also discussed and it was evident that this would need to be cleared several years before any work could be carried out to the structure.

## **(iii) Next Steps**

Councillor Morson said that at the next meeting the project team needed to be in a position to agree the way forward so that a proposal could go to the next meeting of the Community Committee.

# **5 HERITAGE QUEST CENTRE**

## **(i) Fundraising Update**

Carolyn Wingfield updated the project team on progress with fundraising and said that the total now stood at £26,275.50. It was noted that Essex Heritage Trust were willing to accept an application and an application would also be made to the Saffron Walden Herts and Essex Building Society. Landfill monies would also be targeted and officers would follow up some of the letters from Martin Shaw's list where no

response had been received. It was also suggested that greater use could be made of the BBC film for publicity and fundraising purposes and Councillor Murphy said that he would look at transferring this to a CD. David Haylock also suggested other approaches which could be followed up and said that he would pursue matters with the Chairman of the Community Initiative Fund. Officers would also look at a future fundraising activity which could be a wine event. The project team asked that BAA should now be pressed to provide the £32,000 which had been promised.

**(ii) Potential Trust Status**

David Laing said that Entrust would only consider an application for funding from a charitable trust and this would also enable gift aid to be claimed. He then summarised negotiations which had been held with the Council's legal officers concerning the setting up and administration of a trust. He said that the setting up of an individual charitable trust with the sole purpose of developing the Thaxted Road site and building a resource centre was the best way forward. The future of the trust could then be reviewed. He said that he would write to the Council's Head of Legal Services asking that a report on this matter be submitted to the Council Meeting on 25 April 2006.

**(iii) Other Matters**

Carolyn Wingfield reported that the Crime Reduction Officer for the Braintree Division had offered to give security advice regarding the resource centre and the Museum generally.

**6 NEXT MEETING**

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held at 2.00 pm on Friday 12 May 2006.

The meeting ended at 4.00 pm.