

**Meeting of the SAFFRON WALDEN MUSEUM RESOURCE CENTRE
PROJECT TEAM held on 25 JUNE 2009 at 2.00 pm in the School Room,
Saffron Walden Museum**

Present: Councillors K L Eden (Chairman), D J Morson, R M Lemon and S V Schneider (Uttlesford District Council Members); and Mr D Haylock, Mr D Laing, Mr P Salvidge and Mr A Watson (Museum Society Ltd).

Officers present: Maureen Evans (Visitor Services Officer), Rebecca Procter (Democratic Services Officer), Carolyn Wingfield (Curator) and Phil Hunt (Engineering and Safety Officer).

MRC11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Sarah Kenyon. There were no declarations of interest.

MRC12 PREVIOUS MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 14 May 2009 were received, confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to the following amendment:

At MRC5, the sentence should state: 'It was noted that Tony Watson and David Laing were waiting to hear from Catherine Nicholson regarding details of ownership of the site.'

MRC13 HERITAGE QUEST CENTRE

The Curator tabled a report and gave a verbal update on progress on work at the site. Unfortunately a chalkpit had been found to extend under the site further than had been thought. Further surveys would be carried out in early to mid July, and only when the report was received could the options be fully considered. One possibility was to re-site the building a few metres forward.

Subject to Heritage Lottery Fund approval, a sum of £5K had been provisionally deducted from the contingency fund to cover additional fees which were likely to be incurred as a result of the discovery. The cost plan had been reduced to maximise the opportunities for securing a tender within budget. All figures were estimates at this stage, and were dependent on a number of factors, but primarily the difficulty of quantifying the additional work due to the buried chalkpit. The timetable was now subject to what was a rapidly developing situation, and had currently slipped by about 4 to 6 weeks.

The Curator said she regretted not having better news to report at this stage. She would be writing a holding letter to the matching funding bodies.

The following points were raised in discussion: which donations were dependent on adhering to the timetable; the risks of accepting a very low tender with an extremely low margin; the significant measures being taken to reduce the cost plan, such as cutting out the air exchange system from first-floor stores and part of the mobile shelving.

The Chairman thanked the Curator for her report and said the project was still feasible, although more stressful now. It was important to remain optimistic.

The Curator said the new HLF monitor, Martin Hall of Gleeds, Cambridge, was due to visit the site next week, and she would update him on these developments.

MRC14 **WALDEN CASTLE**

The Curator said a meeting had taken place with English Heritage, and a further visit had been set to look at fabric and structural issues. Barbara Bosworth would liaise with English Heritage officers in drawing up a draft programme of work needed, in readiness for any future funding that might become available. Matched funding was required for applications to English Heritage. It was noted the Castle was on the Buildings at Risk register.

MRC15 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Engineering and Safety Officer summarised the access situation at the Heritage Quest Centre site. Following negotiations, it had been agreed that for construction purposes access would be by the haul road through Granite's site. Responsibility for maintaining that route would rest with the HQC partners or their contractors. Once the building was ready, Granite would put in a 'temporary permanent' access through the service road which they would maintain until the final estate road was put in.

The negotiations had not encompassed landscaping.

The Chairman asked the Curator to keep the Project Team informed of developments. A meeting would be required as soon as possible once the report of the structural engineers was received in July, to be notified to the Group by the Curator.

The meeting ended at 2.40 pm.