

**SAFFRON WALDEN TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT GROUP held at
3.00 pm at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN on
5 MAY 2004**

Present: - Councillor S C Jones – Chairman.
Sonia Church-ECC Highways; Daphne Cornell-SW Town
Council, Tricia Halford – UDC, Rubina Kirmani - UDC; John
Reddy- SW Initiative, Jeremy Pine-UDC; Peter Riding-LA 21;
Les Scott- UDC, Alex Stewart-UDC and Malcolm White-SWTC.

SW 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATION OF INTEREST

An apology for absence was received from Chris Stonham – EEC Highways.

SW2 PROVISION OF PARKING FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The Group discussed the report submitted to the Environment and Transport Committee on 2 March 2004. The report referred to the parking problem for “Blue Badge” holders (people with disabilities) within the Controlled Zone. Allocated Blue Badge parking bays were available in King Street, but these were not accessible after the road closure on market days (Tuesdays and Saturdays).

The Group noted that the allocated Blue Badge parking in King Street was often abused due to a current lack of enforcement of the restrictions. Once the District Council took over this responsibility following decriminalisation later on in the year, availability would improve.

The Group considered options to reserve one or two parking bays for Blue Badge holders in front of the Library and the marked taxi rank in Market Street, which would require relocation of the taxi rank. The Group did not favour allocated Blue Badge parking in the four corners of the existing parking area in Market Square, as these spaces would not be available on market days.

The allocation of more Blue Badge parking in the Rose & Crown car park was also discussed. The Group was informed that Boots plc owned the freehold of this car park, which was operated under agreement by the District Council. Whilst it was felt that the freehold might agree to additional Blue Badge parking, there would be a loss of revenue to the District Council. Furthermore, the extra spaces created in the car park would not be as convenient as others in and around the Controlled Zone.

It was RECOMMENDED that the following be given further consideration:

- 1 Providing additional spaces for Blue Badge holders at the taxi rank in Market Square and outside the library;
- 2 The feasibility of allowing Blue Badge holders vehicular access within the Controlled Zone on market days.

SW3

PEDESTRIANISATION/SEMI PEDESTRIANISATION

One of the actions in the District Council's Quality of Life Corporate Plan was to explore the use of innovative approaches to Urban Design and traffic engineering such as Shared Space Zones on existing urban centres. A preliminary investigation was required for Saffron Walden by 30 June 2004, with a detailed plan, if appropriate, by 31 December 2004.

The Group discussed the options for pedestrianisation/semi pedestrianisation of King Street and Market Place. Pedestrianisation could enhance the value of the town as a tourist attraction and as a place to live and work. A feasibility study was required which should include research of the experience of other similar towns with pedestrianisation schemes. Essex County Council indicated that it did not have the funds to carry out such a study and, in any case it would be better if any proposals came from local residents and business community. The County would be able to evaluate and cost any proposals, which would require its agreement especially if they affected the strategic road network.

It was possible that funding for a study could come from Uttlesford Futures, and a bid would be prepared. The Group would arrange another meeting to discuss various options like who would manage the feasibility study process and what would be the role of the various parties.

The feasibility study could look at whether the residents want pedestrianisation and for how many days of the week, also how the local business would be affected by pedestrianisation. The Group agreed that if complete pedestrianisation was considered then access ought to be available for Blue Badge holders and for loading and unloading for traders.

In response to a query the Group was informed that the County Council was responsible for making traffic control orders but any suggested changes to the order could not be made until after decriminalisation in late 2004. The District Council would be responsible for enforcement of any traffic control orders made by the County Council.

The Chairman said that the feasibility study should look at safety, signing and traffic management issues.

The Group agreed that

- 1 the process of consulting the traders on effects of pedestrianisation be carried out by the Town Council;
- 2 a bid for funds be made to Uttlesford Futures for a feasibility study for pedestrianisation.
- 3 The LA 21 and S W Initiative groups look at the issue of pedestrianisation in town centres of other similar towns and report back to the next meeting.
- 4 A preliminary study should be carried out of the need for pedestrianisation and its financial implications.

SW4 **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 3 June 2004.

The meeting ended at 4.00 pm.