

**SAFFRON WALDEN TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE held at  
4.00 pm at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN on  
8 FEBRUARY 2006**

Present:- Councillor S C Jones – Chairman.  
Councillors P Boland, R F Freeman, A J Ketteridge and  
V J T Lelliott.  
Elisabeth Blackie, Sarah Saward and Alex Stewart – Uttlesford  
District Council, Catherine Flack and John Ready – Saffron  
Walden Initiative, Councillor David Rhodes and Malcolm White –  
Saffron Walden Town Council.

**SW1 APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor M A Hibbs.

**SW2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor S C Jones declared an interest as a member of the Saffron Walden Initiative Board and the Saffron Walden Partnership Board.

**SW3 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 3 June 2004 and the notes of the meeting held on 9 December 2004 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to the reference in Minute SW12 to Market Road being amended to read Cross Street.

**SW4 PEDESTRIAN FRIENDLY MEASURES IN THE MARKET SQUARE**

John Ready gave an update on the proposed pedestrian friendly measures in the Market Square. He said that the funding had been provided by Uttlesford Futures and there had been a public exhibition and presentation. A survey had also been undertaken and questionnaires had been sent to fifty local businesses. He said that a key part of the scheme was for part of Market Square to be permanently pedestrianised whilst retaining adequate parking and providing for the free flow of traffic. This part of the scheme had been costed at £60,000 and it was unlikely that funding would be provided by Essex County Council. John Ready said that other funding opportunities had been looked at including lottery funding.

Councillor Freeman said that he had looked at the possibility of funding through Section 106 Agreements and felt that there might be an opportunity when the site next to the former White Horse Public House was developed.

Councillor Ketteridge said that the scheme for the Market Square would require planning permission and consideration would need to be given as to which organisation would take the project forward and commission the work.

Councillor Boland said that he did not support the proposal put forward at the meeting and felt that there would still be a conflict between pedestrians and parked cars. Councillor Freeman said that he had sympathy with this point of view but felt that a planning application should be submitted so that the traders and the local community had an opportunity to consider the merits of the scheme. Councillor Ketteridge said that it was important that any alterations to the Market Square did not damage the character of the area which attracted visitors in the first place.

Malcolm White suggested that the reaction of the local community and traders could be tested by extending the current closure on Tuesdays and Saturdays (between 10.00 am and 4.00 pm) to additional days. He said that this would be a relatively low cost way of providing an opportunity of assessing the impact of providing a pedestrian friendly area in the Market Square. He concluded that there was still a question mark over the political will of the three local authorities to moving this scheme forward.

Catherine Flack suggested that if a planning application was submitted, it should be put forward by the Partnership Board and this view was supported by the Group.

Following further discussion, it was

AGREED that the proposals be considered by the North Area Panel at its meeting on 28 February 2006.

SW5

## **UDC PARKING REVIEW**

Sarah Saward reported on the results of a survey which had been undertaken to establish the parking habits of workers in the town and their awareness of season tickets and to see the extent of the use of Swan Meadow car park.

She said that the results indicated that the main purpose of visits to Saffron Walden was shopping; and most shoppers, as well as workers, parked in Waitrose Car Park. Most people did not park in Swan Meadow because they perceived it as being too far out of the town centre, but just over a third said that they would park in Swan Meadow if it was cheaper or free. However, just under a third also said that nothing would persuade them to park there. The survey illustrated that parking charges did affect the length of stay in the town and visitors were conscious of time for fear of getting fined.

The results of the survey had been considered by the Transport and Highways Committee and Alex Stewart said that the recommendations of that Committee had now been implemented with the exception of improved signage which was underway.

Catherine Flack suggested that the Business Forum should look at the issue of how long people stayed or would like to stay in Saffron Walden. In answer to a question from Councillor Ketteridge, Alex Stewart confirmed that the revenue received for public parking in the Council Offices did not cover the costs involved.

John Ready suggested that further consideration should be given to free parking in the Council Offices and in the third bay at the Swan Meadow car park.

## SW6 **SIGNAGE**

Elisabeth Blackie gave an update on the Tourism Signage Project. She said that the provision of brown tourist route signs had been costed and an order had been placed. However, the Highways Department had not given consent for signs to be placed on the A11 and the A120 and an appeal had been lodged against this decision. It was hoped that the other signs would be in place by the end of March 2006.

## SW7 **PUBLIC REALM STRATEGY**

Sarah Saward gave a brief presentation on the Public Realm Strategy and a summary of the work carried out by the QuBE.

QuBE had submitted a first draft report that was currently being reviewed by the Management Committee. In the report they:-

- provided a background of public realm and policy associated with the public realm;
- provided a good understanding of the town's history, landscape, land uses, access and movement and detailed six different character areas of the town;
- reviewed the current status of the public realm;
- recommended principles and specific elements for the public realm strategy for Saffron Walden;
- applied these principles to three case studies:
  - Swan Meadow to Market Square
  - Church Street
  - George Street
- drew conclusions and made recommendations of how to take this strategy forward including recommendations for funding.

Sarah Saward said that she would provide a further report for the Working Group at its next meeting.

## SW8 **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

A report on suggested terms of reference, reporting procedures and membership would be considered at the next meeting.

SW9

## **FUTURE MEETINGS**

Whilst it was generally agreed that 4.00 pm was a convenient time for the meetings of this Group, it was important to ensure that the agenda was kept to a reasonable length as many of the representatives had other evening commitments.

The meeting ended at 5.55 pm.