

**SAFFRON WALDEN TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP  
held at 1.30 pm at FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE HIGH STREET SAFFRON  
WALDEN on 11 JANUARY 2007**

Present:- Councillor S C Jones – Chairman.  
Councillors R F Freeman, M A Hibbs and A J Ketteridge.  
John Ready and Peter Riding – Saffron Walden Initiative,  
Malcolm White and David Rhodes – Saffron Walden Town  
Council,  
Barry Drinkwater and Kevin Cordall – Uttlesford Licensed  
Operators and Drivers Association.

Officers in attendance:- E Blackie, M Cox, M Hardy, S Lock, J Pine, S  
Saward and L Scott – Uttlesford District Council. C Stoneham –  
Essex County Council.

**SW38 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors P Boland and  
V J T Lelliott.

**SW39 DECLARATION OF INTEREST**

Councillors Jones, Freeman, Hibbs and Ketteridge declared personal  
interests as members of Saffron Walden Town Council.

Councillor Hibbs declared a personal prejudicial interest in the item referring  
to Hill Street as he was the architect for the site. He would leave the meeting  
for the consideration of this item.

**SW40 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 24 October 2006 were approved as a  
correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**SW41 BUSINESS ARISING**

**(i) Minute SW33 – Bridge Street**

It was reported that discussions had been taking place with Highways with  
regard to extending the weight limit which would redirect HGV's from the High  
Street.

**(ii) Minute SW36 – Update to repairs to the Cross Street Culvert/Hill  
Street Works**

Councillor Hibbs said that he had heard comments from members of the  
public that the recent works to the culvert had been carried out quickly and to  
a high standard. He asked that these comments be passed to the contractors

concerned. Chris Stoneham said that the repairs to George Street would take place on one Sunday in March and the road would be closed on that day.

Peter Riding asked if the widening of the Cross Street pavement was being considered at this stage. He was advised that this could form part of the second phase development of the White Horse site but a detailed costing would be required

**ACTION:** Chris Stoneham and John Ready to prepare options and costs for the widening of the pavement at Cross Street.

Peter Riding asked as to the progress of updating the signage for Swan Meadow car park. Chris Stoneham reported that the signage had not yet been updated as there was a need to survey the existing signage and draft new designs. His aim was for the work to be completed in this financial year. Councillor Freeman said that it was very important that this was completed as the signage greatly affected the use of the car park.

**ACTION:** Peter Riding to forward Swan Meadow signage photographs to Chris Stoneham

SW42

## **MINUTES OF THE NORTH AREA PANEL**

Members considered the Minutes of the North Area Panel meeting held on 28 November 2006 and noted those items which had implications for the Working Group.

It was reported that a further letter had been received from County Councillors Chambers and Bass in respect of the proposal to switch off street lighting during night time periods. The comments still did not address the safety concerns and the objection to the proposal was upheld.

SW43

## **REVIEW OF THE MARKET SQUARE WORKS**

John Ready presented the updated plans for the Market Square scheme. Chris Stoneham said the scheme was now nearly ready to submit to the Department of Transport, subject to resolving some technical drainage problems at Market Street/High Street.

Following concerns from the Access Group the crossing point had been relocated to between the two arcades. Sue Locke was happy with this change and with the two disabled bays that had now been provided on market days. She asked that sufficient room for prams and wheel chairs be made available behind the new proposed seating in front of Eaden Lilley

Barry Drinkwater commented on the new proposals and was disappointed that no places had been provided for taxis in Market Street that would be accessible on market days. He said that the loading bays (L5, L6) were not heavily used on a market day and asked if, on those days, the spaces could have dual use. However Murray Hardy clarified that a designated Hackney Carriage Rank could not legally be shared.

Barry Drinkwater also said that he would like further consideration to be given to providing a taxi rank in the High Street adjacent to the current bus interchange.

Councillor Freeman queried the rationale behind the additional disabled parking spaces in the scheme and was advised that this had been one of the first suggestions put forward when the proposals had been first aired.

Members appreciated that taxis were used by people that had difficulty walking and would therefore like to seek a compromise and provide spaces for both disabled parking and taxis on market day. John Ready said that there might be scope to provide 2 taxi ranks outside the White Horse Public House on Market Street if the pavement was widened and a drop kerb put in. However Chris Stoneham said that this would add additional cost to the scheme and would need investigating as to the services at the site.

Councillor Hibbs said that the greatest demand on Market day was for disabled spaces, then taxis, with less demand for loading and the scheme should reflect this.

Barry Drinkwater's preferred option was to remove the part time bollards on Market Street to allow traffic to access up to Market Square. This would involve taxis reversing into a pedestrian area and the group felt this would be too dangerous. Barry Drinkwater was also very interested in the provision of a taxi rank outside the White Horse

In respect of the provision of a taxi rank on the High Street, Richard Freeman said he would ask this to be brought up as an item at a future meeting of the Licensing Committee. Murray said that this option would only be pursued by licensing authority if all parties, including the Highway Authority and the Town Council were in agreement.

The group then discussed possible configurations of the parking spaces and eventually agreed the following layout for the Market Square.

Spaces D10 and D11 be designated as taxi ranks.

Spaces LB5 and LB6 be designated as disabled spaces.

The 2 spaces originally allocated for taxis be designated as loading bays.

#### ACTION

- 1 The plans be amended to include the above proposal for the allocation of spaces.
- 2 The option for a taxi rank outside the White Horse be investigated.

The final draft would be sent to all members of the working group and then forwarded to the Department of Transport for approval.

SW44

## **FINGER POST SIGNAGE**

Sarah Saward said that the Saffron Walden Health Check had identified that there were too few directional signs to assist visitors to the town. A working party had been set up to look at the positioning and design of the signs. They would aim to assist visitors arriving at the 3 main car parks to get to the main attractions. It was suggested that there should be 10 signs and the preferred locations and the proposed wording on the sign were explained to the group. The group agreed in principle to the proposals. Jeremy Pine suggested that the signs should include walking times or distances. Councillor Hibbs requested that a sign be added directing visitors back to Fairycroft car park.

Catherine Flack and Helen Richards then addressed the group about possible design options for the new signs. Helen Richards had experience in design and had been looking at existing signs and design features in the town to form a basis for ideas. There were many options to consider, traditional or modern and the use of colours and icons.

Sue Locke commented that a mixture of upper and lower case letters was preferable for visually impaired people. Malcolm White said the signage in Saffron Walden had just evolved over the years and this had given Saffron Walden its unique character. He was concerned that a decision on the preferred future design might lead to uniformity.

The next stage would be for a professional to work up some possible designs and to come back to the Working Group for further discussion.

SW45

## **PUBLIC REALM STRATEGY**

Sarah Saward said that the need for this strategy had arisen from the Health Check as there were a number of recommendations for improvements to the Public Realm. The study had been drafted by a consultancy firm and presented a number of design principles that would act as a standard for work in Saffron Walden. The document was currently out for consultation to a number of local and regional groups. Members were asked to bring their questionnaires to the next meeting, at which time a summary of the other responses should be available.

SW46

## **HILL STREET IMPROVEMENTS**

It was reported that the planning permission had been issued and the Section 106 agreement had been signed to release the £20,000 for the Hill Street Improvements. The money would be transferred to the County Council and Chris Stoneham would liaise with District Council officers to ensure that it went towards the intended project.

Malcolm White was concerned about any proposal to narrow Hill Street, as this was a through road and when the scaffolding had been up there had been two major hold ups which had led to grid lock in the town. John Ready said that a crossing of Hill Street, outside Waitrose was necessary as this area

was very well used and should be more pedestrian friendly. It was suggested that work take place to improve the crossing points but not to widen the pavement. This would allow disabled parking to continue on the road behind the pinch points.

ACTION: John Ready to prepare a plan for discussion by the Group.

The meeting ended at 4.00 pm.