

**SAFFRON WALDEN TOWN CENTRE MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP
held at COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HALL, MARKET SQUARE,
SAFFRON WALDEN on 28 JUNE 2007 at 10.00 AM**

Present: - Councillor A D Walters – Chairman
Councillors D G Perry, J A Redfern, H S Rolfe and P A Wilcock
John Ready and Peter Riding – Saffron Walden Initiative
Councillor Heather Mason – Saffron Walden Town Council

Officers in attendance: W Cockerell, P Kennedy, S Locke, E O'Malley and R Pridham.

SW1 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S Anjum, D J Sadler, A C Yarwood and Malcolm White.

SW2 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 January 2007 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

SW3 BUSINESS ARISING

(i) Minute SW41 – BUSINESS ARISING – Update to repairs to the Cross Street Culvert/Hill Street Works

Peter Riding explained that he had forwarded Swan Meadow signage photographs to Chris Stoneham who has not yet got back to him.

(ii) Minute SW46 – Hill Street Improvements

John Ready explained that the plan was delayed at present, and was subject to agreement at the moment.

SW4 AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT WORKS, SAFFRON WALDEN

Will Cockerell explained that the Environment Committee received a report on the 23rd January 2007 which showed that there were 3 locations in Saffron Walden where levels of nitrogen dioxide exceeded national standards. The Committee had resolved to consult on the precise location of the boundaries of the proposed Air Quality Management Areas. At the last meeting the Environment Committee made the decision that the boundaries of the Air Quality Management Areas would be finalised as shown in the detailed assessment.

Once the orders had been made, Will Cockerell explained that the Council would be legally obliged to draw up an Action Plan in order to reduce pollution levels. He envisaged that a wide range of activities of activities both inside and outside the strict boundaries of the Air Quality Management Areas should

be considered including school and business travel plans, the sequencing of traffic lights, the movement of freight within the town centre, spot checks on vehicle emissions, the close scrutiny of new developments which could influence the amount of traffic within the town and local publicity campaigns to promote the use of public transport, cycling and walking.

Will Cockerell asked Members to consider how the action plan should be drawn up and who should be involved in the decision making process.

RESOLVED: That Will Cockerell puts together a proposed plan including views and ideas from schools, Essex County Council and local businesses near the hotspots which can be discussed at the next meeting.

Some Members were unclear on the location of the Air Quality Management Areas and Will Cockerell explained that the areas were as follows: -

- (i) The bottom of the High Street at the traffic lights
- (ii) Castle Street turning onto the High Street
- (iii) The Thaxted Road/Radwinter Road junction

Councillor Rolfe suggested that officers place two additional diffusion tubes both in the Market Square and the junction at the bottom of Debden Road which joins London Road as these were too heavily used areas by traffic and pedestrians.

ACTION: Officers place two additional diffusion tubes at Debden Road and the Market Square.

SW5 PEDESTRIANISATION OF MARKET SQUARE/KING STREET/MARKET STREET

The Chairman explained that this item had been placed on the agenda due to the change in Members on the Committee.

Councillor Rolfe expressed his concern that this had been a long and thought out process and that it would be a huge shame to start the consultation again. Councillor Walters said he did not disagree that a lot of work had gone into the plans but he felt the existing plan did not use the market square to its full potential and suggested that before the plans go ahead, it would be sensible to gain the views of the Town Council as its membership had also undergone some considerable change.

Sue Locke reminded the Chairman the obligation that the Committee has as a Local Government body to ensure that there is sufficient amount of disabled access in and around the town centre. The Chairman explained that he was well aware of this, and did not want to restrict disabled access and would like to ensure that the market square can be enjoyed by all visitors.

RESOLVED: That the proposed Market Square Plans are presented to the Town Council, allowing them to voice their opinion and to have their view on the alternative scheme of pedestrianisation.

SW6 HILL STREET IMPROVEMENT

John Ready explained to Members the undergoing plans to introduce safer pedestrian crossings in Hill Street, Saffron Walden. He said the new crossings would not interrupt the current flow of traffic as Hill Street was a main route through the centre and therefore a ramp arrangement, which would be easy for the eye to spot, would be an effective solution. He added that these were widely found in Ely and Hertford and had proved successful there.

John Ready distributed planned examples of the ramps to Members.

Members noted that the success of the ramp arrangement would largely depend on the discipline of the individual driver, and they questioned whether a pedestrian crossing would be far more suitable. John Ready replied that it is a courtesy crossing, but it is easy to locate and provides pedestrians with clear routes from parking into the town centre.

ACTION: Plans to be agreed by Highways, and then brought back to this Committee for recommendation to move forward.

SW7 FINGER POST SIGNAGE

Peter Riding explained that the project was progressing; fingerposts were due for delivery and at present there was nothing more to report.

SW8 CAR PARK SIGNAGE

Peter Riding reported that nothing further had been heard from Essex Highways, with regard to the 9 new signs for Swan Meadow which were now urgently required. Members stressed the importance of sorting the signage out for Swan Meadow car park as soon as possible.

ACTION: Chairman to follow up with Chris Stoneham at Essex Highways on his return from leave.

SW9 LITTER AND STREET CLEANING

Ron Pridham, Head of Street Services explained that a review of street cleaning was being carried out across Uttlesford.

Members asked how the July 1st Smoking ban would affect street cleaning, due to a lot of smokers now smoking outside and not discarding their cigarette butts properly. Ron Pridham explained that it was a fineable offence, as it becomes the licensee or businesses responsibility to discard litter. He explained that appropriate signage had been displayed, and that UDC

currently had 3 enforcement officers to enforce and direct businesses on how to co-operate with the new law.

ACTION: Keep Litter and Street Cleaning as an agenda item in the future, as Members felt that this problem needed to be looked out in more detail in order to find solutions.

SW10 ANY OTHER ITEMS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS TO BE URGENT

(i) Swan Meadow Advertisement

Members asked whether an advert for Swan Meadow car park could be placed in the local press as they felt that visitors to Saffron Walden had very little knowledge on the value for money and availability offered.

Ron Pridham suggested that this advertisement is sent once the new parking schemes are in place in Saffron Walden or once the signage for the car park has been approved.

ACTION: Pamela Kennedy to look at when the advertisement can go to local press in order to get the benefits of Swan Meadow across to visitors.

(ii) 'At any time' Signs

Peter Riding informed the meeting that there were a considerable number of 'At any time' signs that were no longer required and that Highways were aware. He suggested that SWI hand this matter over to the group.

The meeting ended at 12 pm.