

SAFFRON WALDEN INITIATIVE LIMITED
A company limited by guarantee. Registered Number 03340325

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE COMPANY
HELD AT THE LIBRARY, SAFFRON WALDEN, ESSEX
AT 8PM ON 15TH NOVEMBER 2007**

The following Members present at the meeting signed the attendance sheet:

Pamela Bray; Richard Bray; Raymond Coleman; John Collins; Pam Collins; Annis Cove; Ginny Eley; Martyn Everett; Dorothy Free; Gertrud Hill; Ros Hyde; Ray Jones; Stephen Jones; Chris Knight; Helen Larsen; Lucy Pemberton; Jackie Plaister; Michael Plaister; Dominic Ready; John Ready; Peter Riding; Sue Rooney; Peter Sanders; Anthony Skipper; Shelagh Skipper; Gordon Smith; Jennifer Taylor; Roger Taylor; Job Tissot; Sue Ullstein; Keith Vines; Iris Weaver; Nigel Weaver; Barbara Wilcox; Barry Wiseman; Susan Wiseman; George Wombwell; Maggie Wombwell; Tony Woods

Apologies for absence were received from:

Rebecca del Tufo; Gail Ellisdon; Catherine Flack; Paul Gadd; Maggie Garland; Paul Garland; Charles Goldie; Janet Greenland; David Hoy; Diana Hoy; David Jarrold; Janet Jarrold; Brian Porter; Jill Porter; Sarah Saward; Donna Sharp; Michael Swindlehurst

Peter Riding was in the Chair and a quorum was present

1. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 15th November 2006

On the proposal of John Ready and seconded by Stephen Jones it was unanimously agreed that:

The Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Company held on 15th November 2006 were a correct record (with "George Smith" being corrected to "Gordon Smith") and approved for signature by the Chairman.

2. Matters arising from the Minutes

There were no matters arising

3. Chairman's Report

Peter Riding reported that the Board had met five times in the previous 12 months. The other Directors were Catherine Flack, Chris Hingston, Helen Larsen, Stephen Jones, John Ready, Barbara Wilcox (who was also the Vice Chair) and George Wombwell. A year ago membership had stood at 147 individual members and 60 business members. There were now 168 individual members and the Business Forum, with over 70 members, has recently become a separate legal entity. Last year Peter had said that the job of the Initiative was to make things happen, but not necessarily to run everything ourselves. One good example he gave was the Saffron Screen cinema which the Initiative helped to launch and which now runs itself most successfully. An example this year would be the Business Forum which the Initiative played a key role in launching and supporting and which is now running its own affairs. A future example might be the Food Fair. Next year we are planning to run a 2 day Summer event on the Common and a 1 day Autumn event in the Town Hall and it is possible that at some point in the future the Food Fairs might be run by an independent group.

There are other projects that the Initiative had been responsible for co-ordinating and looking after the finances but which had involved many other people and organisations. Last year Peter announced that the Initiative had just received a grant of £21,000 from the Local Heritage Initiative for a new Town Trail. The group that worked on this project for 18 months included the Market Towns Project Officer, the Uttlesford Tourism Officer and the Saffron Walden Town Clerk as well as representatives from the Blue Badge Guides, Uttlesford Access Group, Saffron Walden Library, Fry Art Gallery and Saffron Walden Museum. The group also included local photographer Gordon Ridgewell and local architect and Initiative Director, John Ready. The free trail leaflet and pavement plaques had been recently launched and the new car park maps and town pictorial guide were well advanced. The Town Trail had proved to be an excellent model of community partnership working.

Another major collaborative project this past year had been the fingerposts and street furniture. Through Sarah Saward, the Market Towns Project Officer at the time, the Initiative received grants from Action for Market Towns, the ECC Market Towns Fund and Saffron Walden Museum totalling £35,800. These funds had been used to design, manufacture and install 8 fingerposts around the town centre (of which 6 were

already in place), purchase 6 seats which had been fitted in Market Place, 3 benches which had been fitted in Swan Meadow Coach Park and on Common Hill, a new Town Council notice board which would be fitted to the side of the Town Hall, recessed lighting for the fountain in the centre of Market Place, various bollards for future use in the town centre, a new double map holder to replace the existing commercial map holder at the Common Car Park, a new sign for visitors on the gates of Rose & Crown Walk when it is closed, and a new road sign giving direction to Swan Meadow when the Common Car Park is full. Again, many people and organisations have been involved with these projects but the main voluntary work had been carried out by John Ready, and the main commissioned work had been carried out by David Riches, a local graphics designer.

For the past 2 years Peter had reported on the Town Centre Improvement Plan devised by John Ready. It was accepted by the last Town Council and the last District Council and the cost of £70,000 had been set aside by Essex County Council who would do the work. However, at the local elections last May there were major changes in the composition of the Town and District Councils and the Town Council in particular felt that they wanted to consider other options. The result has been that the Town Council will shortly be distributing a consultation leaflet asking the public which of 4 possible options they prefer. One of these options is John's scheme, one is to do nothing, and the other options are to extend the current Market Day closure arrangements for 1 more day or for 4 more days. The Initiative has also played a part on the Saffron Walden Town Centre Management Working Group where we had instigated action to change the roads signs for Swan Meadow Car Park and had stimulated an investigation into the reasons for the poor state of the pavement in the south part of the High Street.

A very different project which did not involve any involvement from local Councils was the WALDEN 1647 project. A small group consisting of Martyn Everett, Gordon Cummings, Elaine Corke, Alan Mclean and Peter had planned it over 18 months and the funding had come from grants from the Big Lottery Fund and ECC's Arts in Essex fund. This was a major project to organise and Peter was proud that the Initiative was able to help the town celebrate such a significant historical event in such a spectacular way. A possible future project for the Initiative, working with the Saffron Walden Arts Trust, might be fund raising for a large bronze sculpture by the artist Maggi Hambling. The Town Council would shortly be sending out a press release to ask the public for feedback on the sculpture proposal, which could be erected in Dorset House Gardens close to St Mary's Church. If the answer is "yes" then the task will be to try to raise up to £200,000 from outside organisations and individuals.

Peter mentioned briefly the events Helen Larsen and others had organised for Members in the past 12 months. These had been a presentation by Uttlesford planners, a cheese and wine social, a tour of St Mary's Church, a visit to the Palace of Westminster, a tour of the Saffron Walden Mazes and a visit to a re-cycling centre. Events which the Initiative had organised for the community in the last 12 months had been Late Night Christmas Shopping, Walden 1647, the annual Litter Pick, the Food Fair on the Common, the Dance in the Square and the first Open Day for local Clubs and Societies called Showcase 2007. The last thing to report was on the Initiative's website which can be found at www.swinitiative.org. This was started by Catherine Flack and then taken over on a voluntary basis by David Anderson Associates and then Peter had recently taken it over as he wanted to add a lot of new information.

Finally, Peter recorded his thanks to our Accountants, Shipleys LLP, who did our accounts for no charge; Market Towns Project Officer Sarah Saward and, since she went on maternity leave, Pamela Kennedy and then Bruce Tice; Jeremy Rose who took on the day-to-day running of the Business Forum; Maggie Wombwell and Helen Larsen who organised the Hanging Baskets in the town this year; the Board of Directors - Catherine Flack, Chris Hingston, Stephen Jones, Helen Larsen, John Ready, Barbara Wilcox and George Wombwell; the Company Secretary, Charles Goldie; and the Treasurer, Pam Collins, who has had to cope with an exceptional number of cheques to pay in and cheques to sign this past year.

MEMBER SUGGESTIONS

These included re-instating a Farmers' Market in Saffron Walden and contacting Essex County Council to establish a policy for painting their metal lamp posts black.

4. Report by Barbara Wilcox, Chair of the Saffron Walden Partnership Board

The Saffron Walden Partnership Board was established in 2005 to steer the work of the Project Officer in implementing the Saffron Walden Healthcheck. It has 2 representatives from each local authority (Town, District and County Councils) and 4 nominated by the Initiative, currently Catherine Flack, Stephen Jones, Howard Rolfe, and Barbara Wilcox.

The year has seen significant changes in Board membership and staffing. Board Members Sarah McLagan, Cllr Martin Savage (UDC), Cllr Stephen Jones, Cllr Barbara Hughes (SWTC) and Keith Blackburn (ECC) have been replaced by Helen Rodgers, Cllr Heather Mason, Cllr Bob Eastham, Cllr Keith Eden, and Philip Wilson. For continuity, the Initiative had asked Stephen Jones to stay as a representative for the Initiative, replacing Isobel Grayson, who had had to resign because of personal commitments.

The Project Officer, Sarah Saward, went on maternity leave in March 2007 and has now resigned. Pam Kennedy was recruited to cover for her, but left in July, to be replaced by Bruce Tice. Suzi Clarke, who had been employed as a part time Administrative Officer, left in April. Despite lobbying, Uttlesford District Council have not replaced this post.

The main work of the Board during the year has been to complete the review of the Healthcheck, which was published in 2004. The review resulted in a list of 34 possible activities for the project officer to take forward. The Board then identified 3 areas for future focus:

- The transport needs of young people in rural areas of Uttlesford
- New arts/leisure/civic space
- The working relationship between UDC/SWTC, SWI and parishes

However, in view of the financial situation at Uttlesford District Council, the immediate focus of the Board is on identifying projects and resources to support the continuation of the post beyond March 2008.

Barbara said that she wanted to place on record her thanks to members of the Board and staff and in particular to past staff and members of the Board: Keith Blackburn, Suzi Clark, Isobel Grayson, Barbara Hughes, Pam Kennedy, Sarah McLagan, Martin Savage, and Sarah Saward.

5. Financial Statements and Directors' and Accountant' Reports for the year ended 31st March 2007

The meeting received and considered the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2007 and the Directors' and Accountants' reports on those Statements and noted that there were inconsistencies between the 2006 and the 2007 Detailed Income and Expenditure Accounts due to different headings being used and in the 2007 Detailed Income and Expenditure Account the income amounts for the Late Night Shopping and for the Dance in the Square needed to be adjusted.

On the proposal of Barbara Wilcox and seconded by Chris Hingston it was unanimously resolved:

That the Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2007 and the Directors' and Accountants' reports thereon be adopted and approved.

6. Election of Directors

The following Directors elected at the Annual General Meeting in 2006 offered themselves as candidates for re-election:

Catherine Flack, Christopher Hingston, Stephen Jones, Helen Larsen, John Ready, Peter Riding, Barbara Wilcox and George Wombwell

Other candidates for election were:

Ginny Eley

On the proposal of Gordon Smith and seconded by Anthony Wood it was unanimously agreed:

- (A) That the appointment of the candidates for re-election and election be decided by a single resolution, and
- (B) That Ginny Eley, Catherine Flack, Christopher Hingston, Stephen Jones, Helen Larsen, John Ready, Peter Riding, Barbara Wilcox and George Wombwell be elected Directors of the Company to hold office until the next Annual General Meeting.

7. Appointment of Accountants

It was unanimously agreed:

That Shipleys LLP be re-appointed accountants of the Company to hold office until the conclusion of the next Annual General Meeting.

8. Vote of Thanks

The Chairman proposed a vote of thanks to the Library for hosting the Annual General Meeting.

The meeting closed at 9.05pm