



Proud of the Past - Excited about the Future

NEWSLETTER

March 2018

This is to bring you up to date on the various activities of the Initiative since the last Newsletter in March 2017. It has been another busy year for the Initiative.

First there were the events arranged specifically for Members - a guided tour of the Guildhall at Finchingfield; a visit to the Saffron Walden Museum new store at Shire Hill; a visit to 25-27 Church Street, Saffron Walden which is being restored; a tour of Waterbeach Waste Management Park; a visit to the Uttlesford Foodbank in Shire Hill; a visit to a modern, diversified Family Farming Business; a tour of St Mark's College at Audley End; a talk at the Annual General Meeting by Trevor Osbourn, vice-chairman of Saffron Walden University of the Third Age; a visit to the Saffron Walden Alms Houses.

For the wider community - in April Chris Knight arranged a slide show by Bruce Munro of bygone eras in and around Saffron Walden; in June Jacqui Portway organised a Music Saturday in the Town Centre with buskers and other entertainers; in August Jacqui Portway and Peter Riding organised a very popular fifteenth Dance in the Square; in December it was the Late Night Christmas Shopping event; in January there was a Social Quiz in the King's Arms organised by Barbara Wilcox and Ginny Eley, and in February Sue Ullstein arranged a talk on how to be a Dementia Friendly Community.

The Late Night Shopping event last year was combined with the Christmas Lights Switch On and, for this, the Initiative worked closely with the Town Council. Patrick Hawke-Smith organised all the charity stalls and Jacqui Portway organised the many entertainment events paid for by the Town Council.

Throughout the year Chris Hingston, has continued to organise monthly *Saffron Business Friends* networking meetings in the King's Arms with a wide range of guest speakers.

In the autumn of 2017 the Initiative tried to start an Afternoon Dance Club but it did not attract enough dancers to make it worthwhile continuing.

In January 2018 the Initiative produced a Street Name Signs Survey which showed that 20 signs needed repairing or replacing and another 25 needed cleaning up. The survey was handed over to the Town Council to follow up with Uttlesford District Council and Essex Highways.

In 2016 the Initiative worked closely with Essex Record Office to have an oral history Listening Bench installed next to the Museum building. Since then the Bench has been used at least 4,000 times.

In August 2016 a new maze at Swan Meadow was launched at the Maze Festival. It was co-ordinated by John Ready who created a strikingly original design for children and visitors. Due to extended dry weather in the 2017 spring and early summer, around 70 plants had to be replaced. By the autumn it had become clear that it was becoming impossible to remove all the weeds and so the Board decided that the plants should be replaced by slate flakes. The strongest plants were put into pots and have all been found new homes.

In 2014 the Initiative arranged the design and installation of 6 Blue Plaques in the town with an accompanying leaflet available at the Tourist Information Centre. John Ready is now researching the options for another 6 plaques, with one possibly at St Mary's Church in connection with the 1647 Debates and another at the location of the old Rose and Crown Hotel.

In 2015 the Initiative launched Welcome Packs for new residents to the area and John Ready has continued to distribute these through Estate Agents and the Tourist Information Centre.

Saffron Walden Initiative is registered as a Company Limited by Guarantee which means that we are a Company with no shares and so can be regarded as a non-profit making organisation. The Board is elected by the Members. There are currently 191 registered Members.

As a Member you can participate in the activities of the Initiative by suggesting new community projects, member visits and talks and by volunteering to help with organised projects and events. We are always keen to attract new members so members are encouraged to try to recruit friends by bringing them along to events.

For the record, the Directors elected at the 2017 Annual General Meeting were: Patrick Hawke-Smith, Chris Hingston, Chris Knight, Jacqui Portway, John Ready, Peter Riding and Cindy Whife. The Membership Secretary is Susan Wiseman.

Peter A Riding

Chairman

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