

Sawbridgeworth and Spellbrook

Annual Town Meeting

MINUTES of the Annual Town Meeting of Sawbridgeworth and Spellbrook held at Church House, Vantorts Road, Sawbridgeworth, Herts at 7.30 p.m. on Monday 14 April 2008.

Present: Cllr Roger Beeching (Mayor) Chairman; 29 Local Government Electors for the ward of Sawbridgeworth and Spellbrook, (including 8 Town Councillors). Cty Cllr A.D. Dodd, D Cllr N Clark, Eleanor Scotchbrook H&E Observer, Town Clerk Richard Bowran, Admin Officers Gill Abbott and Sue Adams.

The Chairman welcomed those present to the Sawbridgeworth Annual Town meeting and explained that this was not a meeting of the Town Council but of the people of Sawbridgeworth and Spellbrook.

08/01 **Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting**

Resolved – that the Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 10 April 2007 be confirmed as a correct record.

08/02 **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising from those minutes

08/03 **Report by the Town Mayor**

The Town Mayor, Cllr Roger Beeching reported on the Activities of the Council in 2007/08

The year started with 3 experienced councillors, 3 second term councillors, 6 new councillors and a new town clerk. Most councillors were now champions of particular areas of interest. He thanked all councillors for their support during the year.

The Mayor also thanked retiring finance officer Malcolm Sowter for his contribution over the last five years and said that in the future he would be helping out on specific projects.

He thanked administrative officers Sue Adams and Gill Abbott for ensuring the smooth running of the Council's office.

He also thanked new Town Clerk Richard Bowran who has more than lived up to his promise, and in particular he commented on the sensitive manner in which new practices and changes had been introduced, and on the networking skills that had enhanced the Town Council's activities in the District and the County.

The Mayor said that he had represented the town in many functions throughout the year and had formed strong bonds with neighbouring mayors and Towns.

The Mayor said that the town is there to be fostered and highlighted the Town Partnership and the work of Joseph Fitzgerald who was the prime instigator of the highly successful Farmers' Market. The Town Council will continue to support their work.

He also singled out the work of the local Police team consisting now of 2 Police Constables, 2 Police Community Support Officers and 2 Special Constables.

The Mayor highlighted a number of areas of Town Council activity:

- **Planning.** As a Statutory Consultee, STC this year considered 155 planning applications. In 104 cases the STC recommendation agreed with the EHC decisions, in 33 cases STC disagreed and there are 18 cases outstanding or going to appeal.
- **Town Cemetery.** Revised regulations have been introduced, charges revised, regular inspections introduced, health and safety matters attended to and maintenance improved. New signs sponsored by Mastersons are being installed.
- **Allotments** we have worked with the Allotment Association and users, provided skips, introduced new tenants, made a grant for machinery and let Plot 31 for subdivision and use by young people
- **Footpaths** Cllr Brian Rochester has ensured through his efforts that we have the best footpaths in the county; he has also introduced walks in the area but more guides are needed. The West Road recreation area is well used
- **Grants** totalling £14,590 were made to 8 local organisation during the year
- **Leventhorpe Pool** has been sponsored for Sunday swimming
- **Millfields** the site has been cleared and we await s106 agreements
- **Library site** plans are progressing for a green building
- Town Plan
- **Harlow North** the Town Council has opposed this development which is seen as an environmental disaster which has taken scant regard to the infrastructural implications
- **Stansted G2** the Town Council has also opposed this development although it appears that the democratic process in this regard is not working well.

For the future the Mayor highlighted planned activity in several areas:

- **Leventhorpe Pool** continuing support for Sunday swimming and working to ensure Sawbridgeworth is not disadvantaged by the new EHC Leisure Contract.
- **Civic Centre** continuing to work with Herts County Council to provide a new library, police shop, citizens advice bureau, tourist information centre and council offices for the town
- **Town Ranger** seeking to appoint a person to carry out all those miscellaneous functions which always seem to be outside the remit of other agencies
- **Harlow North and Stansted Airport** continue to oppose these major schemes which appear to threaten the quality of life of Sawbridgeworth parishioners
- **Christmas Lights and Hanging Baskets** continue to provide these visual amenities and aim to develop them within the confines of the Council's resource
- **Citizen of the Year Awards** continue to highlight the achievements of those special people in our community

The report of the Town Council was accepted.

08/04 **Report by the Town Clerk**

The Town Clerk, Richard Bowran, reported on the Council's Accounts to 31 March 2008. *Attached as Appendix 1.*

The Tabled Report of the Town Clerk was accepted

08/05 **The Mayor invited Reports from Town Charities:**

Cllr Stan Dixon Vice Chairman of the **Hailey Day Centre** reported that unaudited accounts and a report on the year had been tabled and that he would answer any questions. *Attached as Appendix 2*

Cllr Derek Filler, Chairman of the **Sawbridgeworth Young Peoples Recreational Centre** reported that the acoustics improvements has now been installed and were a success, that lighting had been improved and that the external boardwalk had been removed. For the future the next major project is to be to convert the unused changing rooms into a new meeting room and facilities to accommodate Youth Create. He noted that vandalism was still a problem at the Centre. He singled out for mention the tireless work for the centre by Joanne Kenny and by Cllr Angela Alder. Cllr Filler said that unaudited accounts had been tabled and that he would answer any questions. *Attached as Appendix 3*

Some discussion ensued on the revenue stability of the three main charities in the town, the Hailey Day Centre, the Young Peoples Recreation Centre and the Memorial Hall, bearing in mind the reliance upon grant income in each case. And in particular with regard to the personal liability of the Trustees in the event of financial deficiency A Resolution in respect of this would be proposed at the appropriate point in the meeting

08/06 **The Mayor invited other reports:**

County Cllr Tony Dodd reported that grants for the elderly and special Christmas funding had been continued in the year

District Cllr Nigel Clark reported that brown bins had been introduced for the disposal of garden waste and plans for kerbside collections for recycling plastic waste. He mentioned the Town Council's support for the Leventhorpe Pool. The Esbies public enquiry which will generate new enforcement notices in due course. The impending decision by the Highways Joint Members Panel on the possibility of a Zebra Crossing for Knight Street, And he emphasised the importance of producing a town plan to feed into the East Herts Council Local Development framework.

Cllr Roger Beeching reported that the **Sri Lankan Orphanage** project was now virtually complete and that a final tranche of funds had been remitted and now produced a useful base monthly income for the orphanage.

Mr. Peter Reed reported on the **Sawbridgeworth Memorial Hall** saying that there had been the addition of some new users. Hertfordshire Real Ale Society had selected the Hall as the venue for their Annual Beer Festival. Refurbishment works had started creating a new furniture store which freed up areas for other activities such as the new short mat bowling facility. The bar has been renovated and has new management, licensing arrangements now permits the sale of alcohol which has made the venue more attractive for functions. The management team have raised and invested a total of £120,000 over the last seven years to improve the Hall. This has been appreciated by the users.

Several comments were made on the essential nature of the voluntary work which made many things in the town possible. Additional mention was made of the achievements of the local ATC Squadron and the impending start up of a Youth Council in the town.

Cllr Brian Rochester, (Hon. Footpaths Officer) gave a very full report covering the work that had been carried out on the Town's Public Rights of

Mrs Gill Hawkins reported that **Youth Create** was all about young people volunteering. That the Herts Young Person of the Year Award had been won locally. That they had been working with Hertfordshire Connections which was aimed at people who were falling out of the education system.

Mr Ron Alder reported that the **Football Club** was very active and that there were major plans pending for the development of the club's facilities

Mrs Val Bight reported that the **Town Twinning Association** was growing, that more young people were being involved and that the next visit to Bry was scheduled for 19 September 2008.

7/07 **Resolutions for which written notice had been received**

None had been received

Mr Peter Reed put forward a resolution asking that:

"Having regard to the three major Charitable Trusts in Sawbridgeworth; the Friends of the Hailey Day Centre (1030820), the Sawbridgeworth Young People's Recreation Centre (302466) and the Sawbridgeworth Memorial Hall (302465); that Revenue Stability within those organisations is of paramount importance and that their financial affairs should be monitored to guard against long term problems of continuity"

The meeting agreed that the Resolution be put and the Mayor said that it would be brought to the attention of the Town Council

The Mayor then announced a small exhibition of themes for the Sawbridgeworth Town Action Plan and encouraged all those present to visit it and register interest in the project.

The Meeting closed at 8.50pm

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

Appendix 1

SUBJECT: CLERKS REPORT ON ACCOUNTS TO THE TOWN'S MEETING

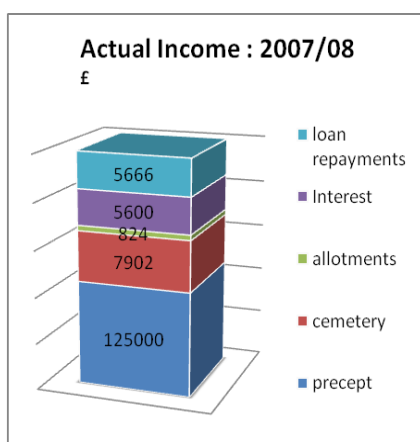
DATE: 10 APRIL 2008

Thank you for welcoming me as your Town Clerk this year. My role at this meeting is to report on the financial affairs of the Town Council.

At the end of the financial year on 31 March 2008 the Councils cash balances were:

Current accounts:	£ 12,178.22
Community Loan Account:	£ 9,940.47
High Interest Bonds:	£ <u>69,300.00</u>
Total:	£ 91,418.69

The Council's Income for the year came principally from the parish precept, but in addition to that small surpluses were made on the management of the Town Cemetery and the Allotments. We received interest on our investments and loan repayments came from SYPRC and the Cricket Club.



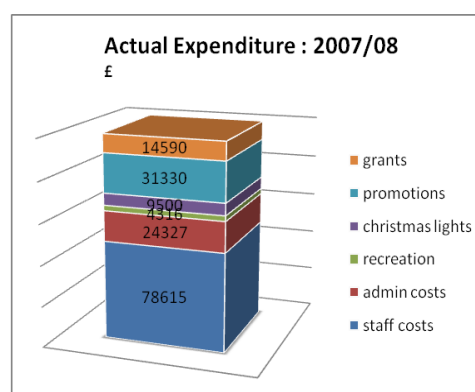
The pattern of income from regular activities is budgeted to be in the same proportions in the year 2008/09.

The major project for this coming year is the anticipated sale of surplus allotment land near Millfields and the application of those funds to create the proposed new library and civic centre in

The Forebury. We will not be replacing the Finance Officer who retired at the end of March, but will use the savings to pay for a handy man and thus reduce our cost of contractors.

We applied our income for the benefit of the Town as follows:

Grants to local organisations, including the Guides, the Allotment Association, the Citizens Advice Bureau, Herts/Essex Air Ambulance, the Town Partnership; Great St Mary's Church Trees and three of the many Charitable Trusts in the Town; Promotional activities last year were predominantly preparation works for the sale of surplus allotment land; Christmas lights display and street decorations; Recreation - which has included the subsidy to keep the Leventhorpe Pool open on Sundays; and the cost of enabling the Council Office to support the running of the Town Council and these activities.



Finally I am pleased to report the Council's Accounts for the years 2005/06 and 2006/07 have been signed off after a delay caused by additional work the external auditors carried out in response to questions raised in a previous year.

Appendix 2

FRIENDS OF THE HAILEY DAY CENTRE						
SAWBRIDGEWORTH						
RECEIPTS AND PAYMENT ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2007 (unaudited)						
					2007	2006
			Note		£	£
RECEIPTS						
Events						
Outings					2509	5704
Various other activities					5928	6828
Transport provided					1418	1135
					9855	13667
Fund Raising						
Grants			3		12315	10700
Hiring out Day Centre					3739	3667
Craft Sales					985	1492
Donations			4		5168	2113
Lottery					1411	
Sales of diaries and cards					301	155
Other fund raising activities					1660	2143
					25579	20270
Financial						
Interest					602	310
Refunds					72	
					674	310
					36108	34247
PAYMENTS						
Events						
Outings					2662	5207
Various other activities					2783	2402
Transport provided					1124	986
					6569	8595
Support						
Admin staff salaries					12385	10940
Staff training					140	153
Repairs and Maintenance					1506	2856
Equipment rental and supplies					1261	932
Utilities and insurance			5		3762	3439
Miscellaneous						257
Petty Cash					362	
					19416	18577
Equipment						
			6		11032	2454
					37017	29626
EXCESS OF RECEIPTS OVER PAYMENTS for the year					-909	4621
Cash funds brought forward					23349	18728
Cash funds carried forward					22440	23349
Approved by the Trustees on _____ and signed by _____						
Chair Person						

Appendix 3

Sawbridgeworth Young Persons Recreation Centre			
<u>Income and Expenditure Account 2007</u>			
		2007	2006
Income			
	Lettings (Regular)	14,737.91	13,878.05
	Letting (Occasional)	1,319.50	3,003.33
	Rent Receivable	-	397.95
	Grants Received	5,079.00	33,465.68
	Interest receivable	48.42	137.40
		<u>21,184.83</u>	<u>50,882.41</u>
Expenditure			
	Wages	1,282.25	1,575.50
	Carriage	-	-
	Insurance	1,806.76	1,632.88
	Light, Heat, etc	1,055.48	4,166.18
	Cleaning	3,822.97	7,109.62
	Reps & Maintnce	2,306.17	5,500.14
	Service Charge	400.62	748.25
	Printing Postage & Stationery	2.04	299.55
	Telephone	102.90	107.76
	Depreciation	1,044.00	-
	Bank Charges	-	-
	Equipment Purchased	1,069.62	30,261.09
	General Expenses	31.40	74.68
	Interest Payable	118.80	118.80
		<u>13,043.01</u>	<u>51,594.45</u>
	Net Surplus / (Deficit)	<u><u>8,141.82</u></u>	<u><u>(712.04)</u></u>
<u>Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2007</u>			
General Reserve			
	Brought Forward	272,621.96	273,334.00
	Net Surplus / (Deficit)	8,141.82	(712.04)
	Carried Forward	<u><u>280,763.78</u></u>	<u><u>272,621.96</u></u>
Represented By:-			
	Assets		
	Premises	260,655.00	260,655.00
	Playground Equipment	14,598.55	15,642.55
		<u>275,253.55</u>	<u>276,297.55</u>
	Less		
	Long Term Loan - STC	(4,833.16)	(6,833.08)
	Current Assets		
	Debtors	-	-
	Deposit Account	2,788.00	2,739.58
	Current Account	8,455.39	3,170.41
		<u>11,243.39</u>	<u>5,909.99</u>
	Less:		
	Creditors	(900.00)	(2,752.50)
		<u>(900.00)</u>	<u>(2,752.50)</u>
		<u>10,343.39</u>	<u>3,157.49</u>
		<u><u>280,763.78</u></u>	<u><u>272,621.96</u></u>