

# **Sawbridgeworth and Spellbrook**

## **Annual Town Meeting**

**MINUTES** of the Annual Town Meeting of Sawbridgeworth and Spellbrook held at The Memorial Hall, The Forebury, Sawbridgeworth, Herts at 7.30 p.m. on Monday 12 April 2010.

**Present:** Cllr Mrs Angela Alder (Town Mayor) Chairman; 26 Local Government Electors for the ward of Sawbridgeworth and Spellbrook, (including 8 Town Councillors). Eleanor Patmore H&E Observer, Town Clerk Richard Bowran, Admin Officers Sue Adams and Laura Shepherd.

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.

### **10/01 Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting**

**Resolved** – that the Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 14 April 2009 be confirmed as a correct record.

### **10/02 Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising from those minutes

### **10/03 Report by the Town Mayor**

The Town Mayor, Cllr Mrs Angela Alder, reported on the Activities of the Council in 2009/10

My duty is to give a report on the activities of the Council during this past year which has been one of significant change in our working practices and areas of responsibility.

The first major change was the relocation of the office from the health clinic in The Square to temporary offices in Bell Street pending the building of the new civic centre. The most immediate effect of the move was to make the Council more visible and accessible and enabled the Council to include tourist information in the front office for the first time.

The Town Ranger continues to be an invaluable and indispensable resource for the town. The Town Ranger undertakes many tasks many of which are not strictly the responsibility of our town council but wherever possible these jobs are done to maintain a pleasant environment for residents.

During the year the Town Plan has been completed and the Council wishes to acknowledge with grateful thanks the many contributions from a dedicated group of participating residents. The Plan is very detailed in its assessment of the future vision for Sawbridgeworth. An abridged version was delivered to every household and business. Copies of the Progress Report are available on the table by the door. I would like to highlight a few examples demonstrating the Council's commitment to making the plan work for residents.

In the case of the withdrawal of the SW1, 2 and 3 bus service subsidy by

Hertfordshire County Council the Town Council took urgent action to ensure that it would not impact too severely on residents, particularly in the Bullfields area and while not in a position to fund fully a complete replacement it negotiated a grant from EHC. The Council, in collaboration with Bishop's Stortford Mini bus Trust, the County Council and Bishop's Stortford Town Council SAWBOBUS was established and runs for four days a week. It is the intention of the Council to provide a six day service once funding has been identified.

Short term parking in Bell Street. The Highways Joint Members Panel was due to receive the outcome of the study undertaken by Hertfordshire Highways on 26 April. We have just learned that this meeting has been postponed due to the general election in May.

The Knight Street pedestrian crossing has now been completed and a feasibility study under way for a safe crossing at Spellbrook.

The Mobile Police Station is now a regular feature around the town in advertised locations.

The Council has identified a site for a new scout hut.

Working with Hertfordshire Highways, the Council has provided 12 new finger posts highlighting the town centre and pedestrian routes.

The Council has sold an area of contaminated land unsuitable for use as allotments to provide funds to build a new civic centre.

The Council is still looking for a suitable site for a skate park.

Progress report is: *Was tabled at the meeting.*

We have increased the number of floral displays and have budgeted for even more this year. I would like to couple this with our appreciation for the efforts of local publicans for beautifying local hostleries. The Town Council are now also maintaining the planters at Bell Street and London Road.

During this year the Council published and distributed to every household the first edition of the quarterly Town Council Newsletter. This has been approved by the Hertfordshire Quality Standards Committee and is an important step towards achieving Quality Council status.

The Council bought the red K6 telephone kiosk on the corner of West Road for the sum of £1 and converted it into an information point. This purchase brought some light hearted banter at Council meetings but it has more than proved its worth inasmuch as our Town Clerk Richard entered it into a BT sponsored competition and while not winning we were awarded a £500 community prize for what we had done. This little pot of money will be used for the benefit of community groups who will be able to loan any tools we may buy in the future.

As an approved consultee on planning matters the Council has considered 103 such applications. While for the most part we are in agreement with decisions made by the Planning authority i.e. East Herts Council there are times when we do not agree and consider their decisions to be contrary to

the best interests of our town and its environment.

The Council is responsible for the Town Cemetery and we have many applications for burial within it. While none of us is exactly queuing up to get in those families who do wish to have their loved ones buried there are very pleased with the peaceful ambiance of the area and the well maintained state of the grounds. The Council is currently extending the road within the complex and has allocated an area for green burials. This work is self financing from income. As required by law the Council had a presence at 33 funerals.

Over the last couple of years we have seen the revival of the Sawbridgeworth Allotment Association Autumn show and seen the enthusiasm of the allotment holders in competing at the Show. This revival has been due to the energies of a few, inspiring others to participate. This year the Council let 11 plots to people on the waiting list. The list now contains at 34 names. One of the initiatives the Council has taken with regard to trying to meet the growing demand for allotments has been to allocate half plots and this has worked well. The Council wishes to acknowledge the dedication of the allotment holders in managing their plots and the mutual benefit to be gained from working together the Council with the Allotment Association.

As I mentioned earlier the Council took over the running of SAWBOBUS on 1st November last year and since that time 2,759 passengers have used the service which annualised is likely to result in 8,250 people using the bus at its current usage rate.

While shopping habits have undoubtedly changed quite significantly over recent years there is still a niche market here in Sawbridgeworth for that unique brand of small business. During this last year I have opened three shops and there are now fewer empty ones than previously. I also had the pleasure of opening the new 100 seat stand at Sawbridgeworth Football Club and the Rock band franchise at Bullfields.

The organisation of the Farmers' Market has been successfully managed by the Sawbridgeworth Town Partnership since its inception 3 years ago. The Town Council has now taken on the responsibility for future markets. The Council wish to place on record its appreciation of the work of the STP in establishing a popular, vibrant and successful market here in our town. Thousands of people have visited to buy locally sourced food and practically every voluntary club and group has had the opportunity to run a coffee stall for the benefit of their club funds and over £6,000 has been made by these groups in the three years of the market's existence.

We cannot, and should not, pretend that everything is perfect but issues like antisocial behaviour, and facilities for young people can be tackled by adopting effective strategies to combat crime and disorder. However, with goodwill and cooperation between generations much can be achieved. A recent example of this was a party given by students of The Leventhorpe School for a group of older residents which was enjoyed by both givers and receivers of the hospitality. We are rich in the quality of all our local schools with excellent teaching staff in all institutions.

The new Ducking Green Children's Centre, funded by the Primary Care Trust and based in the child Health Clinic will serve Sawbridgeworth and

the Hadhams providing a much needed resource to young families as it caters specifically for the under fives age group.

Sawbridgeworth is a small town with many attractive architectural features and many ancient monuments, however, we must not become wedded to the past but move forward and embrace change with confident enthusiasm to make our town an even more desirable place in which to live and work. The Town Council is here to listen to the concerns of residents so please communicate with us either by calling in the office, by email or via our refreshed web site or even by the old fashioned method of a letter in the post but please do sign letters so that we can let you know the outcome of any particular complaint or concern you may have cause to report.

In conclusion I would like to thank our hard working staff under the leadership of Richard Bowran our Town Clerk. This year we have seen an increase in our staffing numbers to handle the additional work load, a direct outcome from the consultation process for the Town Plan. I would also like to thank my fellow Councillors for their dedication and valuable contributions at Council meetings and add to that the Council's appreciation for the contributions from our County councillor and District Councillors who keep us informed of developments as they affect our residents.

I would also like to thank Terry, our road sweeper for the excellent job he does in keeping the centre of the town clean and litter free. He always seems to be on duty and I do wonder whether he ever stops long enough to sleep.

**The report of the Town Council was accepted.**

**10/04 Report by the Town Clerk**

The Town Clerk, Richard Bowran, reported on the Council's Accounts to 31 March 2010. *Attached as Appendix 1.*

**The Tabled Report of the Town Clerk was accepted**

**10/05 The Mayor invited Reports from Town Charities:**

**Cllr Angela Alder, Chairman** of the **Hailey Day Centre** reported that unaudited accounts had been tabled. *Attached as Appendix 2*

The objectives of the centre are to improve the quality of life for older people. Trustee John Hills died during the year and has been replaced by Paul Reed. Activities have included Quizzes, cinema, silver surfers, and visits to the House of Commons, Bury Christmas Market, Harlow Greyhounds, a Garden Centre and Public Houses.

We now provide lunches on 3 days a week, we have refurbished the kitchen, installed gas central heating. We receive funding from HCC Adult Care Services East Herts District Council, the Town Council and Budgens have nominated us as their chosen charity.

Liz Ironsides has moved away and been replaced by 2 ladies of a job sharing basis. We have between 250 and 300 visitors each week.

**Mr Ron Alder, Treasurer** of the **Sawbridgeworth Young Peoples Recreational Centre** reported that the unaudited accounts had been

tabled and a full report submitted. *Attached as Appendix 3*  
The objectives of the centre are to help the development of young people. Main activities have been Young Footballers, School of Dance, Pre School Group, Karate, Rock School Franchise and Aspects Playschemes. A new fence has been erected round the young people's play area, litter picking had improved the area, potholes in the car parks have been filled, the Evangelical Congregational church have tidied up the car park. However casual hirers are less than last year, we have suffered vandalism to the roof and we need funds to develop the outdoor play areas.

**County Councillor Roger Beeching** – congratulated the Town on all its achievements over the past year.

**PC Tina Mustoe** – reported that there were now 3 PCs and 1 PCSO allocated to Sawbridgeworth. Crime levels were down from last year, right across the spectrum from criminal damage, burglaries and violent crime. There is some doubt about the future of the police station in the town.

**Mr Vic Johnson** – of the Bullfields Allotment Association announced that they would be starting to keep chickens on a trial basis which would be a mixture of rescue and pure animals.

**Mrs Di Kitson** reported that Sawbridgeworth United Charities met 6 times during the year and had been able to help with all but one of the applications made to them for assistance.

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

**Mr Joseph Fitzgerald, Chairman of the Sawbridgeworth Town Partnership** gave a report on the year's activities, this is:  
*Attached as Appendix 4*

**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 Way and tabled his report on the maintenance of the town's footpaths.

**Mr John Rider** reported on the activities of the **Allotment Association**. The Allotment Association has enjoyed a good year working with the Town Council on mutual interests concerning the Towns Allotments. Our Association is nearly 100 strong.

We have had a very successful Annual Horticultural Show;

We have had Community projects such as:

- the planting up of an old canoe with daffodils by the Scouts;
- volunteer work to improve the car park and river banks to ease flooding;
- many Community get togethers;
- improving and vibrant allotment plots that are all being fully used;
- plans researched for further environmental projects such as the keeping of chickens and bees.

We have had real support especially from the Town Clerk, his staff and Cllr

Buckmaster. Here's to next year that promises to be even better.

**7/08 Resolutions for which written notice had been received**

None had been received

The Meeting closed at 9.15pm

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_

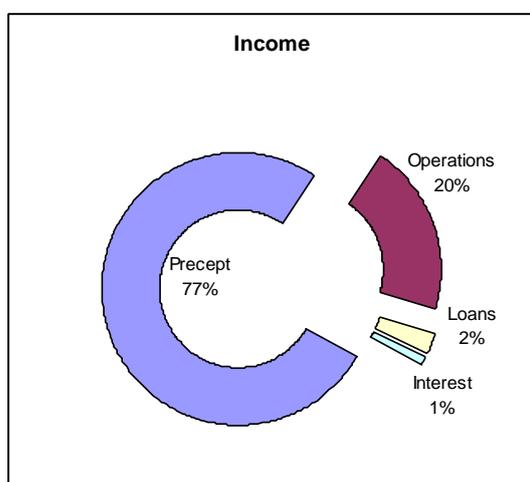
## Appendix 1

### CLERK'S REPORT TO THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING 12 APRIL 2010

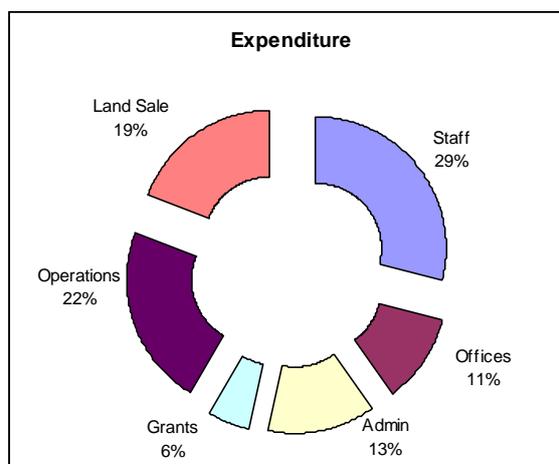
At the Annual Town Meeting the role of the Clerk is to report on the finances of the Council for the year just ended.

In the year 2009/10 the Town Council maintained its Precept demand at the same level as for the previous year at £145,000.

The Council also derives income from its operations for the benefit of the community, such as the Town Cemetery, the four allotment gardens and the Community Bus service. It has also received repayments against the community loans it has made and some small amount of interest on cash balances. The Council's total income for the year was £190,638.



Income is shown in this diagram. The Council is aiming to develop Operations Income to minimise the need to raise the Precept.



We have used the available resources in the way shown in the diagram on the right.

We spent a total of £218,681 this year.

Staff costs amounted to 29% of this; we took on one additional administration officer to handle the web-site, newsletters, management of the community bus and as a receptionist for our new Bell Street location.

Our operations costs included management of the Town Cemetery, the four Allotment Gardens, the Community Bus Service (Sawbobus), the Town Ranger, provision and maintenance of floral displays and the Christmas Lights.

Our administration costs included our responsibilities as a Statutory Consultee on planning matters, the production and publication of the Town Action Plan, Town Council Newsletters, subscriptions, insurances and other matters relating to the administration of the Council including meetings, committees and representation on outside bodies.

The Council made grants and donations totalling £15,000 to seven different local organisations during the year.

The excess of expenditure over income of £28,000 is entirely attributable to costs associated with preparing for sale the land adjacent to Millfields. This has been met from reserves and the reserves will be reinstated when the land sale is completed in mid-May 2010. This expenditure and projected income was budgeted in the year just completed; regrettably delays experienced at County and District Council level caused the sale to be put back by over six months, and completion now falls into the new financial year.

Proceeds from the land sale, as previously reported, are earmarked for the development of a new Civic Centre for the town.

## Appendix 2

### FRIENDS OF THE HAILEY DAY CENTRE SAWBRIDGEWORTH

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENT ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2009

	Note	2009 £	2008 £
<b>RECEIPTS</b>			
<i>Events</i>			
Outings		3,587	4,003
Various other activities		27,680	14,942
Transport provided		2,974	2,001
		<b>34,241</b>	<b>20,946</b>
<i>Fund Raising</i>			
Grants and Contracts		23,284	15,707
Hiring out Day Centre		4,733	4,291
Craft Sales		1,214	1,289
Donations		924	5,370
Lottery		9,733	7,990
Sales of diaries and cards		723	820
Other fund raising activities		3,448	2,373
		<b>44,057</b>	<b>37,840</b>
<i>Financial</i>			
Interest		17	501
Miscellaneous		534	16
		<b>551</b>	<b>517</b>
		<b>78,850</b>	<b>59,303</b>
<b>PAYMENTS</b>			
<i>Events</i>			
Outings		2,842	3,613
Various other activities		13,563	7,325
Transport provided		2,798	1,899
Lottery		8,160	6,240
		<b>27,363</b>	<b>19,078</b>
<i>Support</i>			
Admin staff salaries		28,405	19,219
Staff training		243	408
Repairs and Maintenance		2,750	2,084
Equipment rental and supplies		1,534	1,765
Utilities and insurance		3,231	3,265
Miscellaneous		259	15
Petty Cash		0	73
		<b>36,423</b>	<b>26,830</b>
<i>Equipment</i>			
		<b>16,081</b>	<b>3,697</b>
		<b>79,868</b>	<b>49,604</b>
EXCESS OF RECEIPTS OVER PAYMENTS for the year		<b>-1,018</b>	<b>9,699</b>
Cash funds brought forward		32,140	<b>22,441</b>
Cash funds carried forward		<b>31,122</b>	<b>32,140</b>

## Appendix 3

SYPRC has had an active year, with a continued number of youth related hirers enjoying the benefit of the Centre and its field.

A new and welcome addition has been the erection of a smart, new fence around the young children's play area. The project has been funded by the Grassroots organisation. Our Town Ranger has been busy keeping this area and the rest of the field regularly litter picked, which is all making for a pleasant environment for mothers with young children to enjoy.

Recently, Cutforth Road, which runs adjacent to the Centre, has been repaired by Herts Highways. During these workings the gang were able to use the site for storage of equipment and materials and as reciprocation we were able to get the pot holes in the Centre car park repaired by the workers free of charge. Additionally, the Committee would like to thank the Evangelical Congregational Church whose volunteers tidied up the whole car parking area and cut back overgrown shrubbery on site.

As far as hirers go we still profit from a variety of regular users. Young footballers are present on the field and in the Centre's regular hirers include the Graham School of Dance, Sawbridgeworth Pre-School Nursery, Karate and Youth Group. The latter we hope to be able to offer an additional night to in the very near future. A new user has been the Rock School franchise on a Tuesday night, which has been well received.

"Aspects" remain active in running both a half term and summer play scheme across a broad range of age groups. Casual hiring for parties etc. has been a little disappointing this could be due to the economic downturn. The Committee hopes for an upturn in both casual and regular use in the new financial year.

We hope next year to be able to pursue the Committee's plans to convert the shower block in to a brand new workshop activity area this will be available for local youth groups as a "drop in" facility, for up coming young bands to practice and for a dance venue as requested via consultation with the young people, etc.

We would also like to expand the outdoor play areas to create some more challenging and adventure based activities for the use by the older children of the town. These plans will require grant based funding and the Committee remains dedicated to sourcing all funds from wherever available.

Unfortunately, we have suffered some vandalism to the Centre roof although this was mostly covered by insurance.

We look forward to the Centre's continuing success and growth in the coming years ahead.

Cllr. Steve Butler  
Chairman, SYPRC  
April 2010

## Appendix 4

### Sawbridgeworth Town Partnership Report to the Annual Town Meeting 14<sup>th</sup> April 2010

#### Intro:

The Sawbridgeworth Town Partnership (STP) established in 2007 has as its key aims:

- ☼ To carry out improvements to the appearance, the attractions and increase the economic vitality and vibrancy of the town looking forward three to five years.
- ☼ It takes into account the needs of customers, employers, retailers, business interests, freeholders, the local community and local authority.
- ☼ It aims to reinforce the identity of Sawbridgeworth as a market town.

#### STP Structure

There have been no structural changes in the STP organisation in the last year. The Board of 6 members [2 Community, 2 Council, 2 Business] has functioned very well and has met on a regular basis.

Jennifer Rolph appointed as STP coordinator in Sept 2008 on a one year contract had her term extended by 6 months until March 31<sup>st</sup> 2010. This role, to bring together and drive forward the identified projects in the STP Business Plan and to identify funding opportunities has worked very well. STC office accommodation for Jennifer Rolph was no longer possible when the STC moved to its new premises in Bell St. We express our deep gratitude to Jennifer for the successful achievement of many of the original aims of the STP in the last 18 months.

#### STP Achievements - Milestones 2009/2010:

##### Business

Finalised STP contribution to the Economic Development section of the Town Action Plan,

Sawbridgeworth 'Independents' Week where STP led initiatives with late shop openings;

Empty Retail Spaces displays about local community groups to raise awareness of local causes and opportunities. Temporary museum and other exhibitions (Fairtrade) to improve the overall look of our retail centre and support local business

Sawbridgeworth wide environmental friendly shopping bag distributed.

6 x Business Briefings Circulars sent to majority of Town and Maltings Businesses.

Intercounty sponsored articles promoting positive aspects of the town sent to all households, with regular articles, pictures and positive news stories in local media.

**Local Community Groups** have been given a website presence and promotional opportunities that they could not do by themselves, with instantly recognizable logos:

Children & Families, Interest Groups, Young People, Green Sawbridgeworth, Charities & Trusts & Sports Clubs. Providing direct support and free promotion for SBW based groups and their staged events. Free Training given to update their web

presence along with professional quality photographs to help them raise their profile and attract new members.

### **Website**

The sawbridgeworthonline website continues to grow in popularity with just over 62,000 pages actually viewed Jan to Dec 31<sup>st</sup> 2009. Funding and site development secured 2 years.

Sawbridgeworth **HEALTHY EATING Project** is underway- delivered in Mandeville school between March-May this year, is set up as a pilot and it is hoped will be used as a format to take into other primary schools in East Herts. Brian Rochester supported by the STP volunteers thanked for all the extra walks with participation of local schools.

### **Fairtrade**

Work continues on moving the town towards achievement of Fairtrade status with support from the STC and a spread of interest from community, church and business. Volunteers have been secured for the Fairtrade group, Event staged in February in Fairtrade fortnight with Budgens. More businesses starting to show support. Empty Shop Window' Project now features town Fairtrade theme and more events to be staged.

**The Farmers' Market** was successfully managed by Gillian Melling for 10 months and as she has completed her term the Board of the STP express their thanks to the Town Council for taking over responsibility for organising the Farmers' Market going forward.

Financial support for charity groups in Tea & Coffee Stall at the Farmers' Market continues.

Evidence based paper submitted to EHDC scrutiny committee on Councils' markets policy.

**STP Review** of the 3 Year Business Plan has been completed. It lists all the achievements of the STP and how the concept of a town partnership fits to a town like Sawbridgeworth. It also provides templates and road map for those wishing to carry on the work of the STP

### **Miscellaneous**

The STP acted a support vehicle for grant for town Photography Project, now underway.

The STP welcomes the finger post direction signs to and from the town station. After 3 years and 3 months several STP Board members including the current chair have indicated their wish to step down and the search and appeal is on for replacement Board members. The STP Board requires drivers and people who carry out actions rather than those who occupy a seat.

### **Funding from STC:**

The STP is grateful for the grant of £2000 received from the Town Council in FY 2009/10

The breakdown of spending follows below.

The Chair of the STP continued through the year to file reports monthly to the STC through the nominated Council Representatives on the Town Partnership



### STP Financial Statement OVERALL SUMMARY

	INCOME	EXPENDITURES	TOTAL
<b>SAWBRIDGEWORTH TOWN COUNCIL</b>	<b>£2,000.00</b>		
<b>COSTS</b>			
Meeting venue hire		£40.00	
Marketing		£160.00	
Operational expenses		£1,152.00	
Website maintenance		£648.00	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£2,000.00</b>	<b>£2,000.00</b>	<b>£0.00</b>