



Abstract of the

**SAWBRIDGEWORTH
TOWN ACTION PLAN**

2009 – 2013

« By the Community : For the Community »

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INTRODUCTION

Sawbridgeworth Town Plan *By the Community – For the Community*

This is an abstract from the full Town Action Plan. Full copies are available at the Town Council Offices in Bell Street or can be seen at the Library. Full copies have been sent to participating organisations, the County and District Councils and the actions from the Plan will be discussed annually at the Town's Meeting held each year in the month of May.

What is a Town Plan

As you may know, we are in the process of putting together a Town Plan. You may not however have the first idea what it is all about. Town Plans are a Government initiative arising from the 2000 Rural White paper; to date over 3,000 villages have produced one. In the impenetrable language of the bureaucrat these are "holistic documents [which] comprise the socio-economic and environmental issues of a community and their proposed remedies. In plain English, it is an opportunity for the whole village to influence the way in which Sawbridgeworth develops.

As we are already discovering, merely preparing the document is bringing together many people from all walks of life, and refreshing the sense of community spirit. If this is the only benefit of the Parish Plan it must surely still be viewed as a success. We hope however that the Plan will achieve much more.

The Plan is intended to be an evolving document, outlining how we would like to see the village develop over the next ten years. It will include an action plan detailing how these developments can be achieved. Once finished the Town Plan will be a document of reference for local government, including the Town Council.

However this is most certainly not just about roads and houses. The plan will cover all aspects of village life ranging from local businesses, provisions for the young and elderly, all the way to street furniture, wildflowers, verges and ponds.

What is going to happen?

Several questionnaires have been produced over the years and a Community Voice Meeting in 2008 also gathered some views and opinions. Working groups from the Community will analyse these and formulate the way forward. These will form the basis of the Action Plan and the full report will be ready some time around the end of this year or the beginning of next.

Why is It Important?

This plan is an opportunity for everyone to have a say in the development of all aspects of community life in Sawbridgeworth. Some of the ideas for development we can implement ourselves, such as starting up a new club or society that proved popular in the survey. Other findings will have an important influence on decisions made by the Town Council and possibly even the District Council. It is therefore important that the Town Plan represents the views of as many parishioners as possible~

THE TOWN OF SAWBRIDGEWORTH

Sawbridgeworth is a small, mainly residential, town in Hertfordshire on the Essex border, situated between



Bishop's Stortford and Harlow.

Sawbridgeworth is four miles south of Bishop's Stortford, twelve miles east of Hertford and nine miles north of Epping. It lies on the A1184 and has a railway station that

links to Liverpool Street station. The river Stort flows through the east of the town, past the Maltings (now a small business and residential area). Nearby towns and cities: Bishop's Stortford, Harlow. Nearby villages: High Wych, Spellbrook, Much Hadham

The Manor of "Sabrixteworde" (one of the many spellings previously associated with the town) was recorded in the Domesday Book. After the Battle of Hastings it was granted to Geoffrey de Mandeville by William the Conqueror. Local notables have included Sir John Leventhorpe, who was an executor of King Henry V's will, and Anne Boleyn, who was given the Pishiobury/Pishiobury estate, located to the south of the town.



Much of the picturesque town centre is a conservation area; many of the buildings date from the Tudor, Stuart, and Georgian periods. Great St. Mary's church was originally built in the 13th century

(although a church on the site existed in Saxon times) and includes a Tudor tower containing a clock bell (1664) and eight ringing bells, the oldest of which dates from 1749.[1] Ralph Jocelyn of Hyde Hall, who was twice Lord Mayor of London in the 15th century, is buried here; images of many of his family and other locals have been engraved on brass, and hence the church is popular for enthusiasts of brass rubbing.

The town's prosperity came from the local maltings, owned by George Fawbert and John Barnard; in 1839 they set up the Fawbert and Barnard charity to fund local children and their education, funding a local infant school that still exists today

Apart from the historic nature of the town, attractions include local river cruises in the summer and two annual

fairs held on Fair Green on St George's Day and the Feast of Saint Dionysius.

The Lordship of Sawbridgeworth includes the following estates: Sayesbury, Pishiobury, Gilston, Eastwick Hall, Overhall, Giffards, Shingle Hall and Tedmanbury

Pronunciation. The name of the town is now almost universally pronounced in the obvious way, but this was not always the case. In the Middle Ages it is believed to have been pronounced "sapsert", and since then the pronunciation has varied to include "sapsa", "sapster" and "sapsworth", and even until the Second World War was pronounced "sapsed". Current residents often use the casual name "Sawbo".



Politics and local government Sawbridgeworth is administered by East Herts District Council. The local Town Council currently has 12 councillors, covering both Sawbridgeworth and Spellbrook. Sawbridgeworth is twinned with: Bry-sur-Marne in France (1973)

Parliament: it is in the Hertford and Stortford constituency. Since the election of May 2005 Sawbridgeworth is represented by Mark Prisk, a Conservative The village of Lower Sheering in Essex adjoins Sawbridgeworth, east of the railway station, along the Hertfordshire - Essex border. It shares the same postal code as Sawbridgeworth, although for local government purposes it comes under the Epping Forest district of Essex, with the Member of Parliament being Bill Rammell (Labour).

Education: Sawbridgeworth has a secondary school, the Leventhorpe School, which also offers a public swimming pool and gym. There are also three primary schools and one infants school in Sawbridgeworth.

Sport: Sawbridgeworth Cricket Club is one of the leading cricket clubs in the south of England, fielding seven senior sides and seven colts sides, from ages nine to fifteen. The 1st XI plays in the Home Counties Premier Cricket League, and the other league sides play in the Hertfordshire Cricket League. The main ground is Town Fields, situated behind Bell Street. The second ground is at Leventhorpe School. Sawbridgeworth also has a football, tennis and bowls club.

OUR SIX BIGGEST CHALLENGES

IDENTIFIED FROM THE PUBLIC CONSULTATIONS HELD ON THE PLAN.

- 1. ROADS AND TRANSPORT**
- 2. PLAN HOUSING SENSIBLY**
- 3. CAR PARK CHARGES**
- 4. SUPPORT FOR VOLUNTARY SECTOR**
- 5. SUPPORT FOR LOCAL BUSINESSES**
- 6. PROVISION OF A REPLACEMENT SCOUT HUT**

TRAFFIC & TRANSPORT ACTION PLAN



Sawbridgeworth is well served both from a public transport perspective. As well as having relatively easy access to major roads and motorways. The key transport issues that this plan will consider are:

- Public Transport
- Cycling & Walking
- Roads & Parking

Public Transport in Sawbridgeworth is relatively good with varied rail, bus and coach links both locally and into London.

Rail services are frequent and are used by much of Sawbridgeworth's population as the main option for commuting into London, and other local centres. Whilst these services are fast and generally reliable, the cost of travel and over-crowding are critical issues.

Bus and coach services are varied. However the bus and coach services in Sawbridgeworth are limited. North-south services are well served like the trains, but east-west services are sparse. Bus fares are also expensive, and some services too infrequent. Coach services are sparse but provide a useful alternative commuter route into London

The key recommendation of this plan in the area of public transport should be to encourage greater usage of our public transport options, as this would have the following beneficial impacts for the town:

- To reduce the town's carbon emissions
- Greater usage of public transport encourages greater investment and expansion of public services
- To reduce car traffic and associated effects e.g. noise, congestion, and pollution

Recommended Actions:

To achieve this, the Sawbridgeworth town action plan would encourage the following recommendations:

- A single leaflet and or website detailing all available transport options

- Increased information on timetables and fares
- Lobbying for lower fares and improved service frequency with all public transport providers
- Improved information for the Town's citizens on the benefits of using public transport
- Feasibility study for funding community transport

Cycling & Walking

Sawbridgeworth is a compact town ideal in many respects to encourage walking and cycling. The town is surrounded by and criss-crossed by many public footpaths, as well as river towpaths. Sawbridgeworth is also very fortunate in having a dedicated and hard working Footpaths Officer, which makes a tremendous impact on the access to and quality of our local footpaths

There are however critical issues preventing more walking and cycling activities taking place:

Few dedicated cycle paths (all outside of the town)
Few facilities for storing bikes especially in the Town centre
Very busy roads which can discourage both cycling and walking
Few disincentives to making short journeys by car

The key recommendation for the Sawbridgeworth Town Action Plan in respect to cycling and walking should be to;

Reduce the number of short car journeys and encourage people to walk or cycle.

Recommended Actions:

Work with local partners e.g. highways agency, EHDC etc, to identify opportunities for more cycle paths or to make roads safer/more pedestrian friendly

- Provide secure bike racks in the centre of town e.g. Town car park
- Publicise all local footpaths, showing travel times by foot/cycle and health benefits of walking and cycling
- Consider prevention of parking and set down close to schools, and/or encourage walking/cycling to schools
- Undertake a feasibility study of pedestrianisation of Bell Street.

Roads & Parking

There are a number of key issues relating to roads and parking:

- The main road through Sawbridgeworth (A1184) is extremely busy, even in 1988 the number of vehicles using this road was 22,000 a day, which was close to the level of traffic before the M11 opened!
- Parking charges in the town are generally unpopular

- Parking illegally (and legally) makes access through some roads e.g. Knight Street, difficult and potentially dangerous for pedestrians as well
- Very little parking for Sawbridgeworth station and the businesses in that area
- Poor quality of roads, potholes etc
- Speeding e.g. High Wych

Lack of crossings e.g. Knight St

The key recommendation for the Sawbridgeworth Town Action Plan in respect to roads and parking should be to have a strategic plan which would be used as a key part of consultation with key stakeholders.

WORKSHOP WISH LIST – Items for future inclusion in the Action Plan

- **Change the layout of the Bell Street car park – reverse the one way system**
- **Consider the introduction of parking disk permit system**
- **Stop parking in the Crofters - obstructing emergency vehicles**
- **Seek funding from Uttlesford DC and Epping Forest DC to support local bus**

CRIME & DISORDER ACTION PLAN

POLICING & CRIME



Sawbridgeworth as a locality is very lucky to be an area with one of the lowest crime rates. In fact the crime rate in the Sawbridgeworth area is at an all time low when comparing it to the previous three years.



The neighbourhood police team at Sawbridgeworth is keen to communicate with their neighbourhood in as many ways as possible and have set up a diary of Mobile

police station surgeries for the area to assist in this. Home visits to help individuals understand a number of crime prevention tactics are also provided where requested.

The team at Sawbridgeworth also regularly runs a local operation to tackle crime and disorder and have been joined on these operations by members of the town council recently where they can not only give their input but also get an insight into how the neighbourhood policing team works.

All parties recognize the importance of local issues being dealt with in partnership and to this end the Neighbourhood policing team have regular meetings with town council, local housing associations, local businesses and other partners.

The local community priorities for Sawbridgeworth are:

Alcohol/drug abuse

- Burglary
- Parking issues
- Speeding/driving issues

The key recommendation for the Sawbridgeworth Town Action Plan in respect to policing and crime is as follows:

- To continue to work with our neighbourhood police team to support the excellent work that they undertake in keeping crime in Sawbridgeworth as low as present
- To encourage the mobile police station to be present at town events e.g. farmers market thereby increasing the numbers of visitors and improve awareness of policing issues in Sawbridgeworth

- To consider increased publicity of police services and possibly crime figures through the planned town newsletter
- To ensure that other parts of the STAP provide the right support for crime prevention and reducing anti-social behaviour, i.e. night-time economy, youth facilities

- To ensure that current police numbers are not reduced

WORKSHOP WISH LIST – Items for future inclusion in the Action Plan

- **Early intervention support for young people**

AMENITIES & FACILITIES ACTION PLAN



Sawbridgeworth has many amenities and facilities to serve social and recreational needs of the community as well as the more fundamental needs provided by the emergency services that are occasionally required.

Many of the social and recreational amenities are provided by voluntary groups, often Charitable Trusts, who carry the responsibilities of managing, organising and financing their particular organisation. The continued existence of such amenities depends on the support given by the community itself, through participation in the activity or assisting with the continuity and development of a particular organisation.

The several thriving sports clubs that serve the Town are managed through the club membership and financed largely through membership fees. The continued success, growth and development of the clubs depends on the enthusiasm and input from existing and future members.

Finance for projects to enhance or modernise the facilities of any voluntary run amenity is not necessarily readily available from central sources, but must be financed through grants and further finance raised in the community.

Current ongoing or future projects for specific clubs or organisations are shown in the table.

Further medical and emergency facilities are provided through a variety of partnerships, Primary Care Trusts, County Council and Local Authority. Changes sought to such services need to be negotiated with the authority concerned, and are normally negotiated through the Town Council.

Voluntary Organisations

Many of the Amenities and Facilities serving Sawbridgeworth and the surrounding District are provided and serviced by voluntary groups. Many are organised in Charitable Trusts, with volunteers taking on the commitment of managing the organisations as well as the responsibilities as trustees.

Each organisation requires an appropriate location where its members can meet to participate in the specific activity of that organisation. Some organisations and clubs have facilities which are set aside for their members' exclusive use, while other organisations manage facilities which are available for hire by other organisations as well as for their own use.

Voluntary Organisations with Facilities for Hire and use by other organisations

Sawbridgeworth Memorial Hall Trust

The Memorial Hall is located in The Forebury and is a Charitable Trust and is owned by the Charity Commission.

The stated Object of the Charity is the provision and maintenance of a Village Hall including use for meetings, lectures, classes and other forms of recreation and leisure-time occupation, with the object of improving the conditions of life for the inhabitants of the area.

The Memorial Hall has served as the Village Hall for Sawbridgeworth since 1950 and is the only facility available for hire at all times. It is currently used for a wide range of activities. Its large size permits use for many public meetings, clubs, exhibitions, private anniversary parties and charitable fund raising activities.

The Hall is managed and administered by trustees under a Scheme set down by the Charity Commission, and is financed and maintained through income from lettings of the Hall. Since 2001, the trustees have been pursuing a major refurbishment of the Hall, financed through funds raised from the community and grants. The refurbishment has yet to be completed, which can only be commissioned when the necessary finance is raised.

Sawbridgeworth Young People's Recreational Centre

The Sawbridgeworth Young People's Recreational Centre is situated off Bullfields, with entrance into the grounds from Cutforth Road. It is a further Charitable Trust operating under a Scheme set down by the Charity Commission in 1969.

The objectives of the trust are the provision and maintenance of a recreation ground and playing field for the benefit of youth of either sex resident in Sawbridgeworth who have not attained the age of twenty two years.

The amenity houses two football pitches of suitable size for youth teams which are used by junior teams from the Football Club. The grounds also include play equipment, which has recently been greatly improved by the addition of new play equipment and is now much used by the young people of Sawbridgeworth.

A portion of the land has been leased to the ATC for its exclusive use. A further portion was taken in 1996 for the construction of the Bullfields Centre, which is available for hire for youth activities under the terms of the Scheme.

The facility is financed through regular lettings of the playing fields and Bullfields Centre, plus rent from the lease on the ATC building and through grants for improvements to the facilities.

The Hailey Centre

The Hailey Centre is located within the Sayesbury Manor complex off Bell Street. The organisation is run by Friends of the Hailey Centre, which is a further Charity run by volunteers.

The original stated objectives of the Charity are for the relief of the elderly and in particular to support The Hailey Centre for use for the elderly of the Parish of Sawbridgeworth, with the object of improving the conditions of life for the

citizens. These objectives have been modernised to state that The Hailey Centre maintains an open door policy.

One of the main functions of the Centre is the operation of a 'Drop in Centre' for people over age 55 for 6 mornings per week plus specific activities in the afternoons, with the Centre serving as a meeting point and providing much needed activities for the older people in Sawbridgeworth and District. The centre organises various activities, including keep fit classes, art and craft sessions, luncheons once a week, transport and outings to places of interest.

Finance to run the Centre comes through the efforts of the volunteers/trustees that manage it. Currently the Centre is in receipt of a substantial grant from Adult Care Services, but also receives income from hiring of the Centre when not required for the daily scheduled activities, craft sales, donations and other fundraising activities organised by the volunteers.

Facilities of other organisations available for limited hire

Church House
Parish Room
Leventhorpe School
Reedings School
Mandeville School
Cricket Club
Football Club

Societies organised on a voluntary basis

1st Sawbridgeworth Scouts Group
Girl Guides
Youth Create
The Friends of Great St. Mary's Church
Sawbridgeworth Evening Women's Institute
Rotary Club
Sawbridgeworth & District Council for Voluntary Service

1st Sawbridgeworth Scout Group

The 1st Sawbridgeworth Scout Group provides young people of all abilities with the opportunity to learn about and enjoy a wide range of activities while, at the same time, develop self confidence, leadership and responsibility through participation. Activities include camping, hiking, orienteering and other challenging outdoor pursuits for the older Adventure scouts. The Group totals 130 persons (girls and boys) ranging in age from 6 to 25 years. Different sections meet on specific nights of the week and participate in various activities at the weekend. In order to function, the Group requires its own Scout hut for the regular meetings, with store for the equipment for the different activities and located to be readily accessible for all users.

The Group has operated in Sawbridgeworth since 1908 and for the last 50 years on the site in Springhall Road. The land is leased to the Group, but now the current landlord has

planning permission to develop the site and so the Group has to relocate if it is to continue to serve the Sawbridgeworth community in the future. While the lease term has not quite expired, a clause prevents the Group from building a new hut on the same site. After 100 years of use, the existing buildings are in poor condition and could easily become unfit for purpose. Extensive renovation of the existing buildings is uneconomical with an expiring lease, especially as the existing landlord is offering financial assistance to build new facilities elsewhere in Sawbridgeworth.

The project to find a new location has been running for 9 years and needs urgent resolution to prevent the loss of the Scout Group after 100 years of service to the youth of Sawbridgeworth.

Public Conveniences

There is only one public toilet in Sawbridgeworth, situated in the Bell Street car park.

Facilities of the single public toilet have been reduced over past years, and now comprise only a single 'Unisex' toilet with one WC and one hand basin for all users, male, female and disabled – child and adult. A fold down baby changing unit is also fitted within the single room. The facility is clearly designed to minimise risk of vandalism.



The single toilet is under the control of East Herts District Council, and is maintained and serviced by contractors. The facility is open Monday to Saturday from 7.00am to 6.00pm.

Comments have been received, both about the adequacy of the facilities and standard of maintenance, especially on 'Farmer Market' days, when many visitors come to the Bell Street car park and seek use of the public convenience.

Local Facilities Recreational Grounds

These provide recreation areas for children, consisting of play areas and play ground equipment. Six areas currently exist in various parts of Sawbridgeworth which are owned and maintained by different bodies.

Sawbridgeworth Young People's Recreational Centre

Situated on the corner of Cutforth Road and Bullfields. The facility is a registered Charity with Sawbridgeworth Town Council serving as the Trustee and operated through a management committee.

West Road Site

Situated on the south side of West Road. The area comprises a fenced area with play equipment for young children, set in a well maintained grassed area.

The area is owned and maintained by Sawbridgeworth Town Council.



Vantorts Open Space

Situated behind housing on Vantorts Road and the Sports Association ground (Cricket Club) and is approached via a footpath

leading from Fair Green to Springhall Road.

The area is owned and maintained by East Herts District Council. The area is currently in poor condition, with only very basic play equipment, and EHDC have considered renovation projects for the area.

Old Bowling Green



The area is situated between Sheering Mill Lane and Great St. Mary's churchyard. It comprises further play equipment for young children set in a grassed area. Responsibility for maintaining the area is that

of East Herts. District Council.

Two Fields in Pishiobury Park

Two fields at the end of Springhall Lane, running towards the river Stort are being made available for recreational purposes. The fields form part of Pishiobury Park, which is owned by East Herts District Council.

Arrangements for use and management of the area are currently under discussion.

Kick about area behind The Crest

The area is situated on land to the west of The Crest.

The area originally formed part of Thomas Rivers Nurseries which were sold some 21 years ago. Ownership of the Kick-About area was granted to East Herts District Council for a limited period which terminates in 2009, and reverts to the original purchaser of the Thomas Rivers' land.

Maintenance of the area is currently the responsibility of EHDC for provision of grass cutting and supplying goal posts in the play area.

Discussions are on-going with the land owner after 2009, seeking continued use of the area as a Kick-about area and its retention as an important recreational facility in that area of Sawbridgeworth.

Local History

Mr. Wally Wright is the local historian and also a member of the Bishop's Stortford Local History Association. (Contact telephone 01279 722557). A comprehensive book on the history of Sawbridgeworth, written by Wally Wright, can be obtained from Sawbridgeworth Library or Rhodes Museum in Bishop's Stortford.

Historical documents are archived in various locations. Some are held at Rhodes Museum (contact 01279 651746). Further information can be found at Hertfordshire County Records Office in Hertford, with local search facilities at Bishop's Stortford library.

The archives for Thomas Rivers' Nursery have been placed in Church House, which can be viewed by appointment.

Library

The library is located in The Forebury. It is a County Library, maintained and serviced by Hertfordshire County Council. The library is open only at certain times (Monday to Saturday) – opening hours being displayed in the front window.

Plans have been drawn up for the incorporation of the library within a new Community Centre on the present site. These plans are on-going at the present time.

Emergency Services

Fire Service

As with other Towns in the area of similar size, Sawbridgeworth has one unmanned fire service station, which is situated in Station Road. The service is retained by Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue service on a 24 hour basis and accessed via a 999 call in case of emergency.



Police

An unmanned police station exists at the corner of Cutforth Road and London Road. Policing of Sawbridgeworth is now operated from Bishop's Stortford police station. Sawbridgeworth has been assigned two police constables and two police community officers to service the needs of the area. Requests for service should be made to Bishops Stortford.

Ambulance and Paramedic Service

Requests for emergency medical attention should be made through a 999 call, stating the emergency service required and providing essential information. The request and information are assessed and the most appropriate medical service is activated to attend.

Paramedics are based in Sawbridgeworth who can usually attend very rapidly to assess the situation and provide necessary medical attention and/or provide help before an ambulance arrives should such be necessary for treatment in hospital.

The Ambulance service for the area is provided by Herts and Beds Ambulance Trust and Essex Ambulance Trust.

Town Twinning Association

Since 1974, Sawbridgeworth has been twinned with Bry-sur-Marne, a town comprising of 16,000 inhabitants, eight miles east of Paris. The Town Twinning Association is a voluntary organisation which is partly self-financing through fund-raising activities and also receives the support of grants from Sawbridgeworth Town Council. It aims to promote friendship between the two towns and encourages the growth of mutual understanding of social, cultural, educational and all other aspects of day-to-day living in the twinned communities.

Visits normally take place every year, alternating between Bry-sur-Marne and Sawbridgeworth, and include time with the host family plus an excursion and an informal dinner. We also encourage young people to take part in activities connected with our twinned town e.g. musical concerts, football tournaments.

You do not have to speak French to join the Town Twinning Association! Membership is free and open to all residents of Sawbridgeworth. You just need some joie de vivre, a little je ne sais quoi, a dash of adventure, a willingness to experience a different way of life and a commitment to having fun. In order to join, please contact the Town Clerk, who will put you in touch with the current Chairman. Full details of the Town Twinning Committee are to be found in the local library along with copies of recent Town Twinning Newsletters.

Sports Association – Football, Cricket, Tennis and Bowls

Sports Association

The Sawbridgeworth Sports Association was formed in 1921 under the guidance of Sir Arthur Cutforth to provide sports facilities for troops returning from the First World War. The Association administers to four sports clubs and also includes the United Services Club, although this Club acts as an independent body with its own trustees.

The Sports Association has the role of Executive Committee over the four sports clubs providing facilities for football, cricket, tennis and bowls. The Executive Committee

comprises four elected trustees, to serve as President, Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer of the Association, plus 2 members from each of the 4 clubs, 7 independent trustees and a member of Sawbridgeworth Town Council.

The Executive Committee is the landlords of Townfields, where the cricket, tennis and bowls clubs are situated, and Crofters, where the football club is located. As landlord, the Executive Committee is responsible for tax on the land and the cost of insuring the buildings and contents of the four clubs.

Contacts for the Executive Committee are Barry Leslie (Secretary) on 01279 724452 or Bob Hoskins (Treasurer) on 01279 424726.

Each of the four clubs is autonomous, responsible for financing its own activities, maintenance of grounds and facilities which are largely achieved through membership fees and fund raising activities. Major improvements to club facilities, of which there have been many in recent years, are achieved through grants and fund raising by the individual club committees with occasional assistance from the Executive Committee.

Sawbridgeworth Football Club

The football club's ground is situated in Crofters. It is a highly active and successful club with a 1st team in the Essex Senior League, a senior Reserve team, a Ladies team and runs Sawbridgeworth Junior Football Club playing 15 junior teams each weekend in season.

A major problem facing this successful club supporting many teams is the number of playing pitches available at any one time, requiring use of other pitches in the surrounding district. A plan to acquire more land for enlarged facilities for all sports clubs had to be abandoned 4 years ago, when the area sought became designated for other developments. A 5-year plan is now under way seeking to raise the necessary finance to rebuild the club house and facilities on the current Crofters ground.

Contact: Chairman – Steve Day - 07802233994

Sawbridgeworth Cricket Club

The club's ground is located in Townfields. The club is successful and active, with the 1st team playing in the Senior Herts League and also has 5 further senior teams playing each week in season. The club also hosts 200 colts, playing local matches, with coaching arranged with all local schools.

Match facilities on Townfields are limited with the large number of teams and an arrangement was reached with Leventhorpe School to lay a further cricket square with practice nets for joint use. The club's pavilion on Townfields has recently been developed to serve as a venue for many functions.

Contact: Andrew Meadmore 01279 652371

Sawbridgeworth Tennis Club

Courts for the club are also located on Townfields. The club employs a professional coach and enjoys a high standard of play with a full membership. The number of juniors in the club exceeds 100, with coaching supplied by the professional.

Facilities at the club have been upgraded over recent years with all- weather courts throughout and flood lighting to provide for play throughout the year.

Contact: John Burlison 01279 724186

Sawbridgeworth Bowling Club

The club's ground is also located on Townfields. A new bowling green has been set down following the award of a Lottery grant to the club. Club house facilities have also been greatly improved in recent years with a new kitchen and new changing rooms.

As a further successful sports club, the club has a team in the Herts and Essex senior league and plays other matches weekends in season. Individual members participate in teams in East Herts Bowling

Financing of the separate clubs

Each of the four clubs is autonomous and self financed to maintain its grounds and facilities. Necessary funds are raised through membership fees and social functions organised by the members and hire of premises where appropriate for other functions.

The major problem facing the clubs is the need of land for playing areas to expand activities, especially the football and cricket clubs with their large number of teams.

Amenities and Facilities for Sports

Angling

Opportunities for angling are available along the River Stort and its environs.

Sawbridgeworth AS Angling Club organises fishing on the River Stort – contact the Water Bailiff – John Armes 01279 723376. The Club also organises fishing holidays abroad.

Sawbridgeworth Angling Society enjoys a thriving angling scene with its own private lake situated just off the Hallingbury Road. Day tickets are available on the bank. The Society also runs an Annual Open Day plus a 'Get Hooked on Fish' scheme in conjunction with East Herts Council to encourage children to enjoy fishing. Contact for further enquiries is David Spears 07739 730948.

Swimming Pool at Leventhorpe School

The swimming pool is owned by Leventhorpe School. An arrangement exists between East Herts District Council and the school for use of the pool and an associated gymnasium

by the community outside school hours and in school holidays.



EHDC and Hertfordshire County Council share the costs of maintenance of the pool. EHDC are responsible for managing and operating the swimming pool and gymnasium for public use out of school hours. Until 2008, management of the Leventhorpe pool together with 4 other pools in the District for public use were managed under a contract with Stevenage Leisure. EHDC have placed a new contract to operate all 5 pools in the District with Sport and Leisure Management (SLM) – a company based in Leicestershire. The new contract runs from January 2009.

Sports Hall

As at September 2009, plans are in progress for the construction of a Sports Hall at Leventhorpe School. As with the Swimming Pool, the Sports Hall will be owned by the school and form part of the school buildings. The Sports Hall is primarily for use by the school, but planning involves use by the community out of school time, such as in evenings, weekends and in school holidays. The new facility will contain 4 badminton courts and other areas for possible use as a dance studio and gymnasium. The sports complex will also include a tennis court and a full sized Astroturf pitch.

The complex is being planned as a joint school/community project and is still at the planning stage. Administration arrangements for use of the facility by the general public have yet to be arranged.

Town Cemetery

The Town Cemetery is owned and managed by the Town Council. Its use is available to residents of Sawbridgeworth and, at a premium, to others. There are sections for full interments in the Lawned Area, for cremated remains in two areas with different styles of memorial and locations for memorial trees and plaques. It is planned to add a “green” area for meadowland burial in 2010. The Cemetery will be extended onto land already owned by the Council over the period to 2013.



WORKSHOP WISH LIST – Items for future inclusion in the Action Plan

- **Encourage an additional doctors’ practice**
- **Disabled access to recreation land**
- **Encourage clearance of permissive routes**

ENVIRONMENT ACTION PLAN

Crest “Kick about”

There appears to be no local ownership with regards to its current use and therefore its future. In better words there is not a designated local person named who looks after the interests of this highly used local play facility, predominately used by teenagers for kick about football activities. The site is also used extensively by families to play football, fly kites and model airplanes etc.

Currently, the site is maintained by EHC, but this agreement runs out in Autumn 2009.

Once this site is taken away from local families and teenagers it will be greatly missed, leaving the western side of Sawbridgeworth with very little for teenagers and families to do.

Rivers/Behind the Crest Site

There is likely to be a requirement for Sawbridgeworth to accommodate another 150 to 250 houses in the period of the new district plan. The site is currently designated Green Belt Land

The site is owned by EHC, but is under threat of housing development, as the original owner has a right to buy back the site in the time slot of April to July 2010.

RNSOG look after the interests of the River Orchard and adjacent meadow, but there is no local person or body who looks after the interests of the remaining land that runs behind properties in The Crest, Brook End and Gilders

Not including Rivers Orchard and its meadow, some 30 or so dog walkers use the site daily throughout the year

The site has a "Right of Way" that runs from Gilders to High Wych which is used extensively by families and ramblers.

There are other areas of the site where currently "Permissive" and "Beaten Track" walking routes are extensively enjoyed by dog walker, families, OAP's and Joggers alike.

Care of River & Tributaries

The water course known locally as Sawbridgeworth Brook runs from West Road in the North West of Sawbridgeworth discharging into the navigational River Stort in the South East

The water course is now showing signs of fatigue, with banks being eroded, the build up of detritus material beneath bridges and culverts etc. The list goes on. Over time the water course has had to cope with more and more volumes of surface water being discharged into it as it meanders down to the River Stort.

Whether it's due to climate change, who knows? The water flow is either famine or feast, so to speak. Through the spring/summer months, the water course tends to dry up, which in turn dries the banks right up to the brink of the banks on both sides.

During the autumn/winter months the water can reach 60cm to 80cm in depth and in some very rare cases, it will rear 90cm to 100cm. One of the reasons as to why the banks are eroding is over recent years, housing development.

A good example of this is where the water course runs along side Brook Lane. There is quite considerable erosion of the bank along this stretch. It is my belief that this is caused by high levels of water rushing through, washing away the shoulder of the brook as it does so. Where does this volume of water emanate from? The White Post Field Estate.

All of the White Post Field estates surface water is discharged at one point, just up stream from Brook Lane.

When the White Post Fields estate was being considered, then developed and finally completed, no consideration what so ever was given to the effect that the development would have on the well being of the water course.

Future development proposals should include a full consequence study that developments would have on all water courses. The cost of the development should then include enabling works to widen and strengthen water courses down stream of the development. The cost should also identify year on year annual budgets for water course preventative maintenance projects.

Why should developers pick up the cost? Well most, if not all of the Sawbridgeworth water course has either shared or out right Riparian ownership and responsibilities. Why should Riparian proprietors pick up the cost and be responsible for something not of their making.

From an environmental point of view, the water course is currently in quite good order; however, more should be done NOW with regards to annual preventative maintenance programmes.

Allotments

Sawbridgeworth has four Allotment Gardens at Southbrook, Bullfields, Vantorts and Bellmead. They are fully used, but efforts are being made to provide half plots to attempt to shorten the considerable waiting list



Vantorts



Bellmead



Bullfields



Southbrook

WORKSHOP WISH LIST – Items for future inclusion in the Action Plan

- **Improve general level of street lighting**

PEOPLE ACTION PLAN

SCHOOLS IN SAWBRIDGEWORTH AND SPELLBROOK

1. Leventhorpe School, Cambridge Road. foundation, specialist school, mixed sex
2. Fawbert and Barnard, Knight Street, infants community school

3. Mandevilles, West Road, mixed primary community
4. Reedings, Bullfields mixed primary community school
5. Spellbrook London Road CofE primary Gt St Marys

PLAY AREAS IN SAWBRIDGEWORTH

In Sawbridgeworth 19% of the population are under 16. There are six play areas within the town which contain play apparatus.

Vantorts Play Area

This is managed by East Herts and is for under 14s only. The play area is fenced and contains:

large slide
2 baby swings
2 full sized swings
1 springy horse
1 bench seat

None of the equipment is particularly up to date or exciting. There is also a grassed area next to the play area, plus two public tennis courts.

West Road Play Area

This is managed by Sawbridgeworth Town Council and is for ages 11 and under. There is a large grassed area, with a fenced area in the middle containing:

1 baby swing
1 springy sit on

Although the area is for children aged up to 11, the two pieces of equipment are suitable for younger children only. There is very little to attract the older ones, especially since ball games are banned.

Sawbridgeworth Young Peoples Recreational Centre (Bullfields)

The recreation ground and "Bullfields Centre" building are under the trusteeship of Sawbridgeworth Town Council and the trust documents state that the area is for the use of children up to the age of 21. The large grassed area has two marked football pitches, plus an unfenced play area with the following equipment:

zip wire

2 tyre swings
2 springy sit-ons
basketball net and kick wall
tornado (swivelling mushroom shape to hang on to)
1 dizzy disc
seesaw
climbing frame and large slide
smaller slide and walkway
2 seats

The range of equipment is comprehensive and caters for both young children and teenagers.

There is also a chat room shelter further down, on the east side of the field. There is no easy access to this, as there is no gate in the fence near the shelter, the nearest one being on the north perimeter.

Edens Mount

The play area behind Edens Mount is owned and maintained by East Herts Council. Equipment was revamped at the end of 2007 and includes:

2 baby swings
2 flat swings
1 double seesaw
a multi-play unit with a metal climbing wall, bouncy basket and banister slide
1 semi-circular seat

The equipment is up-to-date and caters for both younger children and teenagers.

Sheering Mill Lane (Old Bowling Green)

This play area is accessed via Sheering Mill Lane or through St Mary's churchyard. It is owned and maintained by East Herts Council and caters for the under 14s. Equipment is unfenced and includes:

2 baby swings
2 flat swings
Springy duck
Climbing apparatus

2 seats

There is also a large grassed area.

Kick about Area

There is a grassed kick-about area at the back of The Crest. None of the play areas were lit, so were not suitable for use after 4.30/5.00pm during the winter.

WORKSHOP WISH LIST – Items for future inclusion in the Action Plan

- **Investigate the provision of a Skate Park (on Bullfields?)**
- **Investigate a “Timebanks” initiative for skills sharing**
- **Create a “Firepit” and “BBQ area” in Pishiobury Park**
- **Allow ball games in West Road**

PLANNING & HOUSING ACTION PLAN

1. AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Sawbridgeworth being a category two village as designated in Policy HSG3 in the EH Local Plan second review, has to have 40% affordable houses in each development of 15 or over houses or in site with an area of more than 0.5 hectares.

However there is increasing pressure as land values change to provide funding for affordable houses and mechanisms must be in place to assess the viability of schemes where the developer informs EHCouncil this is an issue.

Statistics show the number of applications from builders to start new houses fell by 25% in the first quarter of 2008.

In the years 1991 to 2007 EH population grew by 14.5%.

The current approach to the provision for social housing engenders a number of issues that need addressing , low resident satisfaction, poor estate environments ,lack of tenant mobility , and increasing social polarisation.

These factors could well see the development of “sink estates” in the middle of private housing in the future.

2. STOP INFILLING

In EH district there are 12,000 houses needed by the edict of the Regional Plan between 2001 and 2021. This number excludes the , perhaps, 15,000 at Harlow North.

Of the 12,000- 8500 have already been allowed for in planning applications and designated sites. This leaves 3,500 houses for which at present no sites are recognised. Inevitably these will have to be either in one big new town or distributed around the Districts towns and villages in equitable numbers.

Therefore a certain amount of infilling to restrict expansion of the communities boundaries will be needed.

In recognising this we must ensure we keep good quality public open spaces , and to avoid where possible over intensification of housing on large gardens. That is not to put in say 10 to 15 flats on a plot that previously had one detached house on it , as is happening at present.

3. RIVERS / BEHIND THE CREST SITE

As can be seen above there is likely to be a requirement for Sawbridgeworth to accommodate another 150 to 250 houses in the period of the new district plan.

There is already planning permission for our present quota of 170 houses either granted or soon to be so.

Next year (2010) the lease of the land to the rear and enclosing the Rivers Hospital site , including the Orchard reverts to the owners at a fee of £1.00. There is almost certainly then going to be great pressure to build on this land. This may in some areas be inevitable. We must, however be on our guard to restrict the area of this building and for reasons stated before to ensure the Orchard remains an area of national importance, and other parts of the site are set aside for the open space enjoyment and recreation of the community of Sawbridgeworth.. Perhaps by section 106 agreement.

3A. Rivers Orchard - Fruit Trees and Meadow Area

Thomas Rivers, born in Sawbridgeworth in 1798, consolidated the reputation of the nursery that his grandfather founded. His major interest was the breeding and introduction of new varieties of fruit. He

was responsible for more than 75 different varieties including peach, nectarine, plum, cherry, apple, apricot and pear, the most famous of which is the Conference pear. Charles Darwin corresponded with him and sought his advice on a regular basis.

The nursery closed at the end of the '80s and 10 years later local people had successfully established it as a Community Orchard with large areas in fruit production. There is a renewed national interest in the preservation of traditional orchards and especially in local and heritage fruit varieties, long gone from commercial sale.. This orchard site is seen by national fruit experts as an important repository and is viewed as "The Holy Grail of English Fruit Production" by RHS Wisley.

The Rivers Nursery Site & Orchard Group(RNSOG) represents the interests of the community of the Sawbridgeworth area at large and all of the supporters of Rivers Nursery Orchard in particular in preserving the site as an historic orchard and a managed green space. The group has drawn up a set of action plans to address the many issues that threaten the future of this horticultural site and will seek the support of our local councils, key individuals and organizations as we aim to secure the Rivers Nursery Site & Orchard for future generations.

The declared aims of the group are:

- To preserve and revitalise the nursery and orchard site in line with best management practice of old/historic and community orchards.

- To formalise a lasting robust statutory protection of the site within current demarcation lines as mapped out in the Management Plan.
- To continue to develop the archive collection and find a permanent home, befitting its cultural, scientific, historic, local and national importance.
- The protection and preservation of flora and fauna.

4 Gilston Great Park

The Parish Councils of Eastwick and Gilston, Hunsden and Widford in their Parish Plans are incorporating the proposal of Gilston Great Park. This is a concept that is an alternative to 20,000 plus houses proposed on East Herts green belt land north of Harlow. There should be a united front between the Parish and Town Councils affected by the threat of this undemocratic and unsustainable build on our beautiful countryside. Therefore this Town Action Plan thoroughly endorses the Gilston Great Park proposal.

WORKSHOP WISH LIST – Items for future inclusion in the Action Plan

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SPELLBROOK ACTION PLAN

Spellbrook is a small village to the north of Sawbridgeworth but included within its geographical boundary. It has approximately 140 residents and about sixty houses including a short stay residential house for families and a separate three unit block for single homeless people.

While a comparatively small community it boasts an ancient public house The Three Horseshoes in Spellbrook Lane East, frequented by Charles II on his way to Newmarket races.

Spellbrook Primary School is the church School for Great St. Mary's parish and attracts children from the outskirts of Bishop's Stortford as well as from Sawbridgeworth itself. The present Headteacher has deliberately set out to emphasise the Christian ethos of the School and its association with its mother church in Sawbridgeworth. The Chapel of Ease in part of the school classroom had monthly Sunday services conducted by clergy from the parish church until 1968 when the new school building was erected and the Services ceased. The Chalice, cross and candlesticks are now held in Great St. Mary's Church.

Spellbrook has a number of industrial units, one being Hayters, an international company, manufacturing rotary grass mowers. The founder of the principle of rotary mowers, Douglas Hayter was a resident of Spellbrook and pioneered this form of grass cutting. It is one of the largest employers within the Sawbridgeworth Town Council area and, indeed, among the largest in East Hertfordshire District. A hydraulic platforms business, two car sales businesses, one with a popular car washing facility, a well established vehicle break down service, a garden machinery sales and repair business together with small one man independent business outlets all situated in Spellbrook.

There is an exercise gym which is well patronised by local people and from the wider community. All these various enterprises give testimony to a thriving business community giving employment to over three hundred people.

The old part of the school which included the Chapel, the Three Horseshoes and the Farmhouse on the crossroads are all listed buildings.

The street scene has remained relatively unchanged over the last fifty years apart from numerous road realignments, involving the demolition of the Greyhound Public House and two cottages on the corner of Spellbrook Lane East and London Road, the reduction of the brow of the hill outside the Primary School, safety barriers on the west side of the road and double white line marking along most of the main road (London Road) along which most residents live.

A current need is for a safe pedestrian crossing which is being sought via a feasibility study hopefully to be undertaken by Hertfordshire Highways Authority.

The village itself is surrounded by farmland and open countryside. The Stort Navigation runs on the eastern boundary connecting Bishop's Stortford and Sawbridgeworth via this waterway link. A well maintained tow path provides a pleasant walk to both town centres and this attracts many visitors during the summer months when there are a large number of long boats and canal barges using this mode of transport.

WORKSHOP WISH LIST – *Items for future inclusion in the Action Plan*

- **Change**

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN

Economic Development Background:

From an economic perspective the town offers a range of quality opportunities and experiences for businesses, visitors and residents. It is enriched by its residents who are, in general, friendly, educated, socially active and interested people. Sawbridgeworth is considered a little exclusive and although known as a historic market town it is an evolving place which seeks to move with the times whilst retaining its charming character and independence. There is a range of independent shops, some exclusive retail outlets, and a large supermarket which is well integrated in the community.

There is a large antiques base in the Maltings and a high quality Farmers Market has been established.



Perceptible weaknesses: Car Parking and charges. Some retail space empty. Decisions on 'Change of use' for retail space are not always logical. Not seen as a shopping location to travel to. Little room for expansion in terms of light-industrial business. Some areas need aesthetic enhancement.

Sawbridgeworth struggles to get a profile separate from Bishop's Stortford in many publicity opportunities

Competition: the two large towns Harlow and Bishop's Stortford which border Sawbridgeworth are a serious draw on shoppers and offer many more facilities than are possible in a town of our size. These factors include:

Large supermarkets, Retail parks including the offer of chain store furnishings, electrical and white goods, and DIY, Cinema, Theatre (Harlow) Museums, Markets (Bishops Stortford, Thursday and Harlow Saturday and Thursday)

Going forward:

There is an increasing interest in ethical shopping and locally sourced products. Our Farmers' Market responds to this demand as does the town's main supermarket. There is a homogenizing of town centres with large chain-stores dominating the high streets. In response to this trend Sawbridgeworth has an opportunity to maximise and expand upon its base of independent retailers and offer a different, niche shopping experience.

The Sawbridgeworth Town Partnership (STP), as a body of volunteers, has set itself aims as follows

- To create an environment in which businesses can thrive
- To increase the business offer of the town and broaden its economic vitality
- To promote Sawbridgeworth as an excellent place to live, work and visit

Obviously the STP is limited by both finance and the willingness of all stakeholders to support and promote its efforts whilst respecting the limitations of its voluntary status. The STP is keen to work with stakeholders and be a key partner in the survival, stability and preparation for a stronger future for Sawbridgeworth as the economy readjusts. The issues and suggested actions detailed in this document are realistically achievable but only with sustained effort and the securing of funding for projects and the relevant people to steer them.

WORKSHOP WISH LIST – *Items for future inclusion in the Action Plan*

- **To create an environment in which businesses can thrive**
- **To increase the business offer of the town and broaden its economic vitality**
- **To promote Sawbridgeworth as an excellent place to live, work and visit**