



Sawbridgeworth Annual Town Meeting 2024

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972
ANNUAL TOWN MEETING 2024

FOR THE PARISH OF
SAWBRIDGEWORTH
(including SPELLBROOK)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT

The Annual Town Meeting for Sawbridgeworth and Spellbrook will be held at The Council Offices, Sayesbury Manor, and Bell Street. Sawbridgeworth on **Monday 18th March 2024 at 7.30pm.**

Local Government electors for the Town are entitled to vote at the Meeting which is also open to the public.

The business to be transacted at the Meeting will be as follows:

1. Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 3rd April 2023.
2. Matters Arising from those Minutes.
3. Report by the Town Mayor on Town Council activities in 2023/24
4. Report by the Town Clerk on the Council's budget for 2024/25.
5. Receipt of Trustee reports from the Hailey Centre and the Sawbridgeworth Young Peoples Recreation Centre.
6. Reports from other local bodies;

309 Squadron ATC, Bowls Club, Cricket Club, Central Surgery Patients Group, Eco-Audit Working Group, Friends of Pishiobury Park, Girlguiding Sawbridgeworth and High Wych District, Great St Mary's Church, Homes for Ukraine Support Group, Local History Society, Memorial Hall, Police, Reedings Junior School, RHSO, Rotary, SECC, Scouts 1st Sawbridgeworth Scouts Group, Sports Association, Sustainable Sawbridgeworth, Tennis Club, The WI, Town Twinning Association, Travel Challenge.
7. Report on the Town Action Plan.
8. Consideration of Resolutions for which written notice has been received.
9. Open Forum for electors to raise any other matters.

Cllr Ruth Buckmaster
Town Mayor
5th March 2024

Sawbridgeworth and Spellbrook

Annual Town Meeting

MINUTES of the Annual Town Meeting of Sawbridgeworth and Spellbrook held at The Council Chamber, Sayesbury Manor, Bell Street, Sawbridgeworth, Herts at 7.30 p.m. on Monday 3rd April 2023.

Present: Cllr Greg Rattey (Town Mayor) Chairman;
15 Local Government Electors for the Parish of Sawbridgeworth and Spellbrook, (including 10 other Town Councillors).
Town Clerk Christopher Hunt, Events Manager Joanne Sargent, Finance Manager Lisa Dale.

The Town Clerk welcomed those present to the Sawbridgeworth Annual Town meeting, following this, it was explained that this was not a meeting of the Town Council but of the people of Sawbridgeworth and Spellbrook. An explanation was made regarding the pre-election period of sensitivity and the meeting is to show the achievements of the local groups in our town and pass factual information regarding ongoing events.

23/01 Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting

Resolved – that the Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 3rd April 2022 be confirmed as a correct record.
[prop Cllr Ruth Buckmaster sec'd Cllr Furnace]

23/02 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising from those minutes.

23/03 Report by the Mayor on Town Council Activities in 2022/23

The Mayor, Cllr Greg Rattey referred to the national events such as the Platinum Jubilee and the passing of Her Majesty the Queen, the Kings proclamation and the civic events held locally to mark these events. He referred to the events held in the town and the success these have had, with many people attending Fun on the Field, Travel Challenge, Community Connections and the Christmas lights switch on.

23/04 Report by the Town Clerk

The Town Clerk, Christopher Hunt, reported on the Council's Accounts to 31 March 2023.

23/05 The Mayor invited Trustee Reports from Town Charities:

Cllr Angela Alder, Chair of the *Hailey Centre* report was attached to the agenda and no questions were raised.

Cllr Ruth Buckmaster, Chair of the Sawbridgeworth Young Peoples Recreational Centre report was attached to the agenda and no questions were raised.

23/06 The Mayor invited the Clerk to read out highlights from local bodies

The following reports were received and copies made available for attendees to the meeting.

309 Squadron ATC, Bowls Club, Cricket Club, Central Surgery Patients Group, Eco-Audit Working Group, Friends of Pishiobury Park, Girlguiding Sawbridgeworth and High Wych District, Great St Mary's Church, Homes for Ukraine Support Group, Local History Society, Memorial Hall, Police, Readings Junior School, RHSO, Rotary, SECC, 1st Sawbridgeworth Scouts Group, Sports Association, Sustainable Sawbridgeworth, Tennis Club, The WI, Town Twinning Association, Travel Challenge.

Two members of the public raised matters;

- The Central Surgery Patients Group leaflet "When the clocks go back" and AGM on the 11th May at 7pm if people want to attend to have their say.
- The Tennis Club, are now playing Pickle Ball, a game that has spread from America and is ideal for younger and older community members to play. Membership to the club is encouraged for both this game and for tennis.

19/07 Report on the Town Action Plan 2022-2023

Appendix I

The Town Clerk reported that the Town Action Plan 2020/24 had lost its aims due to covid and the development of the new housing and its community. The plan also did not run in line with the councillors elected period and as such a fresh consultation and action plan will be completed after the elections this May.

An area that was highlighted from the previous action plan was the requirement for a town centre focal point and the progression of the Jubilee Gardens had taken a leap forward due to extra funding received from the UK Prosperity Fund. £50,000 had been awarded and adding to the project earmarked reserves, made the total money available to £80,000.

19/08 Resolutions for which written notice had been received.
None received.

19/09 Open Forum

The following questions were raised by members of the public.

Q. The concerns were raised regarding the Wrenbridge development and the request to change conditions to allow HGV's to travel through Sawbridgeworth. Are the Council doing anything

regarding this.

A. The Clerk stated that the Council is aware and this had been debated at a recent meeting and objections to this change in planning had been taken on by individual town councillors. Cllr Furnace's objection had been reported on in the Bishops Stortford Independent.

Cllr Eric Buckmaster stated he had been in touch with highways regarding the roadworks and some of the repairs could be linked to the closure of the M11 and the HGV increase use of the roads through the town had damaged the infrastructure.

Q. Will there be any dialogue between the council and Network Rail due to the plans to increase in the frequency of the Stansted express. Also why is the road surface so bad at the crossing and why don't Essex highways deal with the spring under the road prior to repair.

A. The Clerk stated he regularly reports the road condition to Essex Highways through the website and the more complaints they receive the more likely proper attention will be given to the issues there. The road has been re-laid in Spellbrook Lane East at the crossing and it may be that the Station Road crossing may be next.

***Action** – The Mayor to write to Essex Highways regarding the condition of the road at the rail crossing on Station Road.

***Update 5/4/2023** Email sent to Peter Massey (Head of Highways, Essex County Council) by the Clerk and the Mayor Cllr Rattey copied in requesting a permanent road repair is made at this location.

Q. Is there monitoring equipment for pollution related to the high volume of traffic through the town.

A. The Clerk stated the council is aware and members are looking at an anti-idling campaign and handheld testing equipment is being delivered for use initially by schools. The readings can be collated and forwarded to the County Council to identify the issues and address them accordingly.

Q. What is happening to West Road as the current road is in an appalling condition.

A. Many complaints are received regarding this location and Councillors are addressing matters almost daily. Time has been spent to liaise with developers and Highways and local community members are encouraged to liaise with their councillors to raise concerns which they can take forward in their role. The A1184 and West Road junction will be upgraded at the conclusion of the development and it is hoped West Road would be also.

Q. Will any money be made available for local sports clubs from the developments in the town.

A. The money from the developments has been earmarked for different projects in the town and sports club representatives are

encouraged to liaise with councillors to ensure their voices are heard. Cllr Eric Buckmaster highlighted that there are issues with the money being received from developers as the costs of materials and labour

Q. How do we contact our councillors.

A. The Clerk stated that emails for individual councillors are on the website and messages can be forwarded from staff in the town council offices.

Members of the public can also attend town council meetings and ask questions which are recorded and actioned from these.

Q. With the development of the Gilston site will money be invested in health provision.

A. Cllr Eric Buckmaster raised that Ruth Buckmaster objected to the current development due to the low level of funding on health provision but the plans were passed.

Q. How has this meeting been promoted as I have lived in the town for years and wasn't aware of it.

A. The clerk stated that he sent out requests to more organisations this year, advertised on the council website and placed posters up. He hopes that people attending will also promote the meeting and over the next two years develop the meeting with the community speaking more about the successes in the town.

Q. I am concerned regarding the recent climate change weather conditions and how messages re flooding are promoted.

A. The Clerk explained the recent flooding was region wide and not just related to the Sawbridgeworth infrastructure.

Q. Do Councillors ask the drainage companies to maintain the infrastructure.

A. The Clerk stated that councillors do liaise with departments and companies. The Mayor and Clerk met with the local water provider following the burst main at the end of Bell Street. This has opened better communication lines so we are aware of the closures and reasons behind them. Cllr Buckmaster has liaised with contractors to the South of the Town and it is sometimes a capacity of the system that cannot cope or maintenance issues where drains will need clearing.

Q. Who is responsible for the paths as regularly they flood in West Road and mud has appeared in Station Road.

A. The Clerk responded that Highways are responsible for paths as well as roads and the Rangers did clear the mud the other week due to the danger it posed but regular complaints should be recorded on line with the highways department.

Q. What has happened to the bin at the exit to the Bell Street car

park

A. The Towns Project Manager stated a new one is waiting to get fitted as one was fitted but complaints were received due to its position. This has been discussed and the position agreed and contractors will complete the work soon.

There being no other questions the Mayor closed the meeting and thanked everyone for attending. This was met with a round of applause.

The Annual Town Meeting closed at 8:15pm

THE HAILEY CENTRE

REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2023/24

Objects and Powers

The Trust is established for the benefit of older people in the Parish of Sawbridgeworth with the object of improving their quality of life.

This past year has seen slight fluctuations regarding attendance at certain events mostly due to health issues for some of our clients and sadly also deaths and changes by way of some going into long stay accommodation. However, the programme of events is gradually returning to the previous schedule. The following numbers are for the whole year.

- The staff served a total of 3,830 delicious, nutritious and tasty meals during the year pleasingly slightly up on last year. In addition to the Monday, Wednesday and Friday formal lunches this year we introduced the Thursday café style meal which is proving very popular with our visitors. Unfortunately, we had to increase the cost of meals due to external pressures, but we are pleased to say that all recipients felt it was good value for money and continued to attend. The Saturday morning service had to be reduced to the first Saturday in the month due to staff availability.
- Weekly activities included – Chair based Yoga, Pilates, Yoga, Bingo, Whist, and Hertswise, (the dementia group), Tea mornings Monday and Fridays.
- Monthly activities include Shopping Bus trip to Brookfield in December. The STC minibus has not been used since December due to maintenance work and the price increase. The Cinema facility is only used between March and September. The Quiz on the last Wednesday in the month continues to be well supported. The Chiropodist holds 2 sessions per month and is fully booked for every session. The Hearing Aid volunteer attends once a month and provides a much-appreciated service.
- service for our visitors.
- External users include Slimming World, Pilates, Sawbridgeworth History Society, Town Twinning, a Bereavement café, a Scrabble Club, a Ladies group, technology support and U3A Gardening groups am and pm and U3A Singing Group.

In the late summer of last year, the Trustees decided to enlarge the building and were granted planning permission to do so in November. However, on reflection, they made the unanimous decision to refurbish and upgrade the Centre instead. Internally it was looking tired and uninviting to our users and in need of an urgent refresh.

Our plans include completely upgrading the lighting and heating systems, plastering the walls and redecorating them – they are currently exposed breeze block and painted magnolia. The carpets will be replaced with parquet effect flooring, the windows will be given a more modern look with one new large window in the main hall. The toilets are being redesigned to accommodate those users with wheelchairs and the kitchen cupboards replaced and reorganised as appropriate. The counter area fronting the hall will be remodelled to provide a more attractive and practical space for visitors. The two cupboards in the main hall will be removed and one rebuilt externally but with the access from the hall. The main entrance will be cleared with a glass partition to give a more open and welcoming appearance. All the furniture, tables and chairs will be replaced with more appropriate furniture. The rear patio area will be grassed with attractive plant pots and the rear fence replaced with railings to complement the rear of the adjacent Council offices.

The serving Trustees are:

Councillors – Mr. Eric Buckmaster }
 Mr. Salvatore Pagdades } four year terms until May 2026
 Mr. Steve Smith }

Community – Mrs. Angela Alder – Chairman }
 Mr. Colin Gill – Hon. Treasurer } three year terms until 2024
 Mrs. Debbie Dyball } resigned January 2024
 Mr. Ross Leary }
 Mr. Rob Robinson }

Honorary Minute Secretary Ms. Nickie Hancock

The Trustees were very sorry to receive the resignation of Mrs. Debbie Dyball and wish to record in this Report our grateful thanks for her very considerable contribution to the work of the Charity.

The Trustees are very grateful to the Town Council for the grant towards the cost of utilities and to Hertfordshire County Council Social Services for its grant towards staffing costs. We are pleased to report our continued good relationship with Town Council Officers which has enabled the Centre to utilise the Council Chamber for some fund-raising events.

The Trustees gratefully acknowledge the generous donations during the year from relatives, friends and local businesses which help to keep our running costs down and continues to keep the Centre a welcoming, attractive and vibrant place to visit for the older people of Sawbridgeworth. Trustees are very fortunate in having an excellent Honorary Treasurer who keeps a tight control on expenditure.

We are blessed with an enthusiastic Manager who has developed a well-honed and happy team due to her excellent leadership qualities. Our employees have the option to join the pension scheme if they wish and Trustees are grateful for the expertise of our Hon., Treasurer, Mr. Colin Gill, who has ensured we are legally compliant with a properly validated Pension Scheme for Centre employees.

Trustees wish to acknowledge with grateful thanks the valuable contribution of the volunteers who give so much help and support to the Centre. The Trustees would also wish to place on record thanks to the staff and especially to the Centre Manager who has provided a welcoming smile and a listening ear during these past few difficult years. It is also my very real pleasure to place on record my thanks to my fellow Trustees for their support and input throughout the year. Their individual contributions are too many to itemise here but very much appreciated by staff, users and myself as Chairman.

Angela Alder
Chairman of the Board of Trustees
March 2024

SAWBRIDGEWORTH YOUNG PEOPLE'S RECREATIONAL CENTRE MANAGEMENT
COMMITTEE

(CHARITY NUMBER 302466)

REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2023/24

Objects and Powers

The purpose of the Centre is to help and educate the children and young people of Sawbridgeworth through their leisure time activities. So to develop their physical, mental, and spiritual capacities that they may grow to full maturity as individuals and as members of society and that their conditions of life may be improved.

The Management Committee meet throughout the year during the period covered by this report and has dealt with matters relating to the efficient running of the Centre as and when they occurred.

The management Committee consists of the following individuals:

Cllr R Buckmaster – Chair

Vice Chair – vacant

Mrs G Hawkins-- Secretary

Cllr R Smith - Treasurer

Mr C Chester

Ms L Rodriguez

Cllr A Parsad-Wyatt

Cllr N Parsad-Wyatt

Mr R Furber

Mrs L Hughes

Ms K

Plus two Leventhorpe students

Centre Manager Mrs H Verity

At last year's AGM our long-standing committee member and vice chair Angela Alder stood down from the management committee. Angela had been involved with the Bullfields Centre and Sypro for over 50 years. She passionately believed in the benefits that play and recreational activities had on young people and worked tirelessly to improve the facilities for the youth of Sawbridgeworth. Angela will be very missed at

Bullfields and the committee. Cllr A Furnace and Mr D Role also stood down and were thanked for their work for the Centre.

We welcomed new members R Furber, L Hughes and a leader from Youth Create.

Our Centre Manager has proved to be an invaluable asset to the team. Mrs Verity is efficient and proactive. Ensuring any problems are quickly dealt with.

The Centre has had new CCTV cameras and lights added to the building to improve security. The committee work constantly to improve the centre for all its users.

The number of our regular and long-term hirers has increased with only Thursday evenings available. The hirers include high wych preschool, Kumon Maths, Clubercise, Graham School of Dance, Woodturners, Kung Fu and Youth Create. Saturday afternoons and Sundays are for occasional hire. We have welcomed the Repair Café and recently Sawbo Sales to the Centre.

The film club has put on showings for Leventhorpe students and the scouts and can be hired by other users. The hall has been used for quiz nights and parties.

We also ran a 'Cooking Club' with the help of a grant from Clarion Housing. A group of young people took part, some of whom were referred by the Family Service, while others were local. It was very popular during the winter months but not as much during the warmer weather.

Unfortunately, the Youth Service no longer run a club for the young people at the centre but instead provide activities during the summer holidays. A play scheme was held for two days during Christmas holidays which was well attended.

The Centre had two planning applications approved. The first to replace the old original radiant heaters with air source heat pumps. External s106 money has been found to pay for the installation of the pumps which we hope will be carried out this summer.

The second approval is to build the extension to increase capacity for early years and youth. The estimated cost of the extension has doubled in the past few years. As the s106 money allocated to this project is now not sufficient external funding is being sought.

The Financial Balance January to December 2023.

Bank Name	Bank Account	Opening Balance 1st Jan 2023	Closing Balance Dec 31st 2023	Difference
Community	20-36-98 90818755	14,513.06	14,058.30	-454.76
Business Main	20-36-98 13954331	50,791.42	36,411.04	-14,380.38
Business Other	20-36-98 90173193	1,880.53	1,903.17	22.64
			Total Y2Y	-14,812.50

The balance is £15k down on last year but that is due to architect and planning permission costs.

I was contacted last year by a parent of a young boy who took his life. This boy had lived near Bullfields and often used the park. His mother has started a Charity called Legends of the Bench. Her aim is to put benches all around the country. The benches are engraved with 'someone is always listening', and they have QR codes with access to phone numbers and help lines for people to contact if they need help. The bench is lit up to be seen at night. We are privileged to have the first Bench in the Bullfields field.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the committee members for their continued hard work and support for the Centre. We look forward to another successful year.

Cllr Ruth Buckmaster Chair

March 2024

SAWBRIDGEWORTH TOWN COUNCIL

PAPER FROM THE TOWN CLERK

TO: MEMBERS OF PUBLIC
FROM: CHRISTOPHER HUNT
SUBJECT: BUDGET 2024-25
DATE: 11TH MARCH 2024

Purpose of the Budget

The Council must set a budget for the forthcoming year. From this is derived the Council's precept demand which East Herts District Council must collect on our behalf. Therefore, it must realistically reflect the Council's plans and ambitions for next year.

Objective

This budget has been compiled to maintain community services such as community transport, allotments, cemetery, completing projects such as the Jubilee Gardens. All these services will add value to the town with a view to maintain and improve community and business cohesion.

Overview

'Referendum principles' refer to the power of the government to require a local referendum if an authority sets council tax or a precept deemed an 'excessive' increase by the government. Referendum principles have been set by the government every year for principal authorities, and major precepting authorities, but have never been set for town and parish councils. It is 'in expectation that parish and town councils continue to show restraint when setting their precept figures.

Consideration must be made in respect to the demands placed on the Town Council to provide both statutory services and community-based projects and events including the expanding events such as the river day. The expansion of any managed land and associated assets, such as the Great St Mary's Church grounds maintenance, allotments from the West Road developments and the Jubilee Gardens Project, all will need to be factored when budgeting.

Sawbridgeworth Town Council will receive funding from this precept demand from East Herts Council, support previously received from EHDC in relation to community transport has again created a void that will need budgeting for to maintain this service to the community. Any change in our precept demand must be seen in the context of the reduction of services from the district council which directly affect the town.

As a principle:

- All anticipated expenditure is included
- Only realistic income is included

Assumptions

There are several specific assumptions which are annotated on the schedule attached; but there are some overriding assumptions that have been adopted in the preparation of this proposed budget:

STC will budget to continue its range of activities and wherever possible enhance them for the benefit of the community. These are generally in line with the objectives identified in the Town Action Plan.

Policy Decisions

There are a number of policy decisions that must be made in order to validate the proposed budget and they fall under a number of headings:

- **Establishment**

Remuneration will be limited to the nationally negotiated increase which has been budgeted at 5% from 01 April 2024. There are no current plans to alter the establishment staff numbers but only to increase one member of staffs working hours to manage further exploration of purchasing a new electric bus and expanding the service and hire capability for community groups.

- **Finance and Policy**

There are several points to consider:

- The training budget has been decreased as the Clerks and staff training is up to date with current requirements.
- A rolling programme of updating office IT will continue with desktops phased out and replaced with laptops to allow for agile working and reduce the number of computers to be maintained overall.
- Web-site development has been reduced as the website has received a significant update to allow staff to update quickly and more frequently with current information.
- Precept increase for the tax base for a band D equivalent home is 4.95% in line with the current demands and cost of living increases.
- There will be no New Homes Bonus, Section 106 income or income from asset sales.
- Election expenses have been increased due to the 2023 election and by election.

- **Estates**

There are three areas for consideration.

- The Civic Centre including the police suite –The police lease finished in July 2023 and it was decided this was not being renewed. This reduces the need for heating and ongoing maintenance as it is now used for storage and meeting room/office.
- The Hailey Centre - town council's responsibility is for external decoration and maintenance. We continue to do this and due to

the age of the building and increasing maintenance required earmarked reserves have been increased.

- External Storage – this is being reviewed and alternative storage as per the police office report above and West Road allotments is being sought to reduce current costs.

- **Amenities**

There are four main areas to be addressed:

- Allotments – always managed at a loss but are legally required to be made available to the community. Water charges are charged out at actual cost to each site and are being increased where demand and cost is increasing. No plans to increase rent charges as we are in line with our neighbouring towns.
- The Cemetery remains a source of income and plaques and tree purchasing are becoming more popular to commemorate loved ones.
- West Road play area has not required any new items or repair from any criminal damage but the current wood equipment is getting old and as such budgeted money will be earmarked for reserves allowing money to be available when required.
- Orchard Management – the responsibility for the town council limited to meeting the conditions of our licence. This to undertake an annual cut of the orchard itself and the adjacent meadow, we need to budget for two maintaining cuts per annum as a minimum to keep to a manageable condition.

- **Operations**

There are a number of areas to consider:

- Bell Street Conveniences – these continue to generate an income through the payment on use. The rangers now complete daily cleaning and budgeting for repairs placed in reserves. No recent damage has occurred over the winter school holidays.
- Lawnmower – the current larger lawnmower is old and a replacement is being budgeted for and sits in current reserves when needed.
- Ranger – the costs of the Town Rangers continue to be split 50/50 between the cemetery and general operational matters. This presents a realistic view of the cost of operations and the profitability of the cemetery.
- CCTV – the costs of managing the CCTV system is an annual maintenance and replacement contract. There are plans to expand the system along Bell Street as all old cameras and the new repeater post has been fitted allowing this expansion.

- **Events**

The council have maintained the regular events and footfall is increasing due to popularity. Budgeting has been increased due to hire, staff overtime and advertising costs.

- Fun on the Field – returned 2022 and was very popular with a high number of attendees, improvements and increase in the number

of stalls may rise costs as well as first aid requirement, commercial refuse bin, field hire etc.

- Christmas Lights Festival – this event has gained a very creditable local following and the event in 2023 was very successful and returning the event to a Saturday increased the footfall. Costs have been increased to cover stage, sound and lighting for the event as well as first aid, waste and gifts for the children.
- River Day has seen a real increase in popularity and for the first time appears on the budget to cover initial expenditure for toilet hire, advertising and refreshments but should be at zero cost through refreshment sales.

- **Projects**

- Jubilee Gardens – this is a project continues to develop, this will be the fifth year of budgeting of £10k per annum, match funding has been ringfenced and at the time of writing authorisation of initial plans is being sought from EHDC to move to final consultation and planning application.

- **Civic Events**

The council's contribution to civic events remains static costs include:

- Remembrance Day – production of service sheet and managing logistics running up to the day and during the event.
- Mayors Civic Service – liaison with the churches and produce the programme of events.
- Mayors Civic Dinner – the mayor's formal dinner and which reciprocates the civic dinners arranged by our neighbouring towns and the district and county councils.

- **Community Buses**

The council operates the Sawbobus community bus and a hire fleet of two minibuses for local groups.

- **Sawbobus**

For Sawbobus has completed its second year with minimal funding but an increase in sponsorship and the donation from passengers of £1 per day to use the service.

The town council budget reflects the support to maintain this service debated by councillors. The second bus is held as a replacement for the Sawbobus when off the road for maintenance and repairs but also is an asset for hire by local groups to generate a further income towards the Sawbobus project.

While preparing the budgets it came to light that 1151/700- STC Subsidy (Sawbobus) had been incorrectly accounted for for a number of years (since 2021).

While preparing the budgets it came to light that 1151/700- STC Subsidy (Sawbobus) had been incorrectly accounted for a number of years. The budget is an Income budget of £15,000 in 2023/24 but no income has ever been received on this code. It looks like it was meant

to be the amount that STC subsidised the service. Which is actually the net outcome figure (Total income – total expenditure)

There is currently £87,944 in earmarked reserve EMR320 for a replacement bus. This will increase to £97,944 at the year end if the £10,000 budgeted in the current year is needed to purchase the new bus. This is felt sufficient for a new bus therefore, in the 2024/25 budget no amount has been budgeted to be earmarked and £5,000 has been budgeted to be taken from Earmarked reserve 320 to balance the budget and offset the £15,000 reduced income budget.

- **Reserves**

Reserves are predominantly earmarked for several projects, Jubilee Gardens, new bus, replacement lawn mower, cemetery development, elections and repairs for the war memorial. This with the general reserve will £269,995 with the investments at year end. This figure may increase depending on income in the last quarter of this financial year.

In summary

Income will be enhanced by:

- The cemetery.
- Obtaining grants wherever possible
- Sponsorship

Expenditure will be contained by

- Reducing subcontracted work
- Explore new storage options.
- Reducing budgeted funds for office improvements as majority are completed.
- Fixing utility costs for the civic centre

Reserves will be managed close to the recommended levels by

- Setting a balanced budget
- Applying any proceeds from excess of income over expenditure

Proposed Budget

The proposed budget contained in the attached schedule suggests:

Precept for 2024-25 of £452,775 (2023-24 £428,824)

This is an increase of 4.95% (£5.21) on Band D equivalent housing, equating to £2.12 per week or £0.30 per day

Actions for Members

The detail of the budget can be fine-tuned, but there are a number of areas for members to consider in coming to the budget debate:

- Do you want to continue with the current level of services?
- Will the budget stand up to scrutiny?
- Are you happy to justify the budget to precept payers?

309 (Sawbridgeworth) Squadron Report Sawbridgeworth Annual Town Meeting 2023

When do we meet: Tuesdays & Fridays, 19:15 – 21:45hrs
Where do we meet: 309 Squadron ATC, Cutforth Road, Sawbridgeworth, CM21 9EA
Find out more: www.raf.mod.uk/aircadets/
How to join: [Complete sign-up form here](#) or email us on oc.309@rafac.mod.gov.uk

Over the last year 309 (Sawbridgeworth) Squadron of the RAF Air Cadets has got back to what we do best. After the challenges of 2020 and 2021 we have been able to restore the full cadet experience and offer the young people of our town an unrivalled pastime.

Many of the achievements of our cadets in 2022 were unprecedented, with several 'firsts' for the Squadron.

One of our senior cadets won the prestigious award for 'Essex Wing Cadet of the Year', meaning she fended off competition from 1,000 other cadets around Essex to be chosen as the best in the Wing. She has subsequently been nominated for the national level competition, so is one of only a few cadets being considered for the award of best cadet in the United Kingdom. A remarkable achievement, and one we are extremely proud of as a Squadron.

Many of our cadets have enjoyed domestic and international camps in places such as RAF Boulmer, RAF Brize Norton, RAF Syerston, the Peak District, and even a trip to Ypres in Belgium to take part in the Remembrance service at the Menin Gate. More camps are planned for this year, including for one very lucky cadet who has been selected for the International Air Cadet Exchange and will enjoy a fully funded 2-week trip to Australia!

Core to what we do in the RAF Air Cadets is flying and we were pleased to be able to return to offering flying and gliding opportunities, with several flights for our cadets over the course of the year. Other aeronautical experiences included a behind-the-scenes trip to Stansted Airport's Air Traffic Control Tower, career talks from aviation professionals, a front-row seat at the Royal International Air Tattoo, and places on the National Air & Space Camp which included an exclusive 'Industry Day' for cadets to find out more about careers in aviation.

For the first time one of our cadets was selected to attend the Qualified Aerospace Instructors Course, an extremely prestigious national course offered to only a small number of cadets from around the country, which provides specialist aerospace training and opportunities. Having also attended the national level Air Cadet Leadership Course and won the 'Best Cadet' award, this cadet has been busy!

It was also a successful year for Duke of Edinburgh Awards in the Squadron, with cadets successfully completing Bronze, Silver and Gold level awards after some especially challenging expeditions across the country.

In summary it has been a fantastic year for the cadets of 309 Squadron, and of course none of that would have been possible without the commitment, professionalism and brilliance of our volunteer staff team. They selflessly volunteer their time to provide the young people of our community with valuable skills and unforgettable experiences, and they deserve the highest of accolades. We love welcoming new members to the team, so do get in touch if you're interested in getting involved.

With even more to look forward to, 2023 is already shaping up to be another great year at 309 Squadron and our cadets will undoubtedly continue to represent the best of our community. Venture Adventure.



Patient Group Annual Report: We, the Patient Participation Group, are your link between the Patients of Central Surgery and the Surgery itself. Using feedback from you, we aim to help the Surgery work as well as it can for Patients, Doctors and Surgery Staff. We are the vehicle for Patients to make positive suggestions to the practice via our dedicated email address on our monthly Newsletter and to put forward patient preferences when appropriate. Some members of the Patients' Group also meet with other surgeries in the area as well as with external organisations, such as Carers in Herts, the Integrated Care Board

We met 11 times in the past 12 months and held an Annual Meeting at the Memorial Hall in May. This year's Annual Meeting will be on May 9th, at 19:00 in the Memorial Hall. All patients are welcome.

Patient Group Newsletter: The Newsletter that you receive each month comes from your Patient Group, via Central Surgery. Some of the issues that we have highlighted during the past year have been promoting the use of Online Consultation and the NHS App; advising when covid boosters, shingles vaccinations, 'flu vaccinations etc. are available; explaining Social Prescribing; given advice to Carers; reminded patients about holiday medication and promoted Pharmacy First. If you have signed up for text messaging, you should receive the Newsletter as a text message. It is also available on the Surgery website.

After the Clocks go Back: In October 2023 we produced our second and bigger version of this booklet and this has been well received within the community. I would like to extend a huge thanks to Jo and all at Sawbridgeworth Town Council for their support with producing and distributing this booklet. Jo even managed to secure funding to help with the printing costs so that hard copy could be left in local shops and with local organisations such as the Hailey Centre, the Memorial Hall and within the Town Council. I would also like to thank all those venues in the Town and our local Churches, who have promoted the booklet as well as the contributors. Early indications are that it could be bigger still this year! It is something that I am very proud of.

Electronic Patient Survey: for the first time this year we have been able to survey patients thoughts and ideas electronically, thanks to Tim Johnson who has recently joined our group. This has meant that instead of receiving 90 responses, as we did last year, we have to date received nearly 600. Please remember to fill in your copy before our annual meeting. You can find links in a text message that you should have received from the Surgery or via the link on the monthly Newsletter.

Eco-Audit Working Group, Sawbridgeworth Town Meeting, 18 March 2024

For further details contact Cllr Annelise Furnace

The Eco-Audit Working Group brings residents and councillors together to discuss, action and promote sustainability across the town. It was formed in January 2020 to follow up recommendations in 3 Acorn's eco-audit and develop new initiatives to involve the whole town. The Group reports into STC's Amenities Committee and full minutes are available in the Amenities packs <http://www.sawbridgeworth-tc.gov.uk/town-council/meetings/agenda-meeting-archive>

Plan to update eco-audit with a view to establishing a net zero target

STC has been awarded an EHC grant to help fund an update of the Town Council's eco-audit covering buildings and operations. We expect this to be done by 3 Acorns again. It will show any progress on reducing greenhouse gas emissions since 2020, and provide guidance on cutting our carbon footprint further with a view to moving to net zero emissions by a particular target date.

Citizen Science Group

This spring's focus led by Bob Reed is to look at green spaces in Sawbridgeworth including trees, wildflowers, and hedges, as well as the brook in West Road play area (in terms of water quality and development impacts) and provide a series of recommendations.

River Day on 3 June 2023

Held jointly with the Canal & River Trust, this was our second annual celebration of the river and associated wildlife, with attendance up on the year before. The Trust's boat trips proved particularly popular, along with canoeing sessions supported by Whoosh, and pond dipping with the Citizen Science Group. Volunteers from Hertfordshire Boat Rescue, Hertfordshire Police and Sustainable Sawbridgeworth also attended.

Air Quality

STC responded to EHC's Air Quality Action Plan consultation and attended the informal discussion held with around 30 residents on 14 January 2024. A real time air quality monitor since has been installed on the A1184 and we are awaiting details on how residents can access the data.

It remains unclear how many HGV journeys the Wrenbridge logistics centre will produce, depending on tenants and nature of their business. STC has asked to be included at the next meeting of the Countryside community group.

Energy Hub

STC is working with two new EHC officers on providing residents with home energy efficiency advice. A mobile hub will be used to demonstrate renewable energy products such as solar panels and heat pumps, as well as give residents the opportunity to speak with others who have experience in making their homes more energy efficient.

A few words from Great St Mary's

We ended 2023 on a high with a number of very well-attended services and events. As well as our Christmas services, our *Festival of Light* - which has now become an established part of the town's switching on of the Christmas lights - saw the church once again bathed in candlelight. An Advent Lunch, with very attractive raffle prizes, raised money in aid of *The Children's Society*, and this year we also held our very first Christmas Tree Festival. It featured over 30 imaginatively decorated Christmas creations submitted by many of the town's schools, organisations, groups, and businesses. The winning 'tree' - a conical staircase of wood - was cleverly built by members of 1st Sawbridgeworth Mohawk Cubs.

If that was an excellent seasonal celebration of our wider town community, the year began with a parish trip to Windsor where, as well as lunch and shopping in the town, we were treated to a tour of St George's Chapel within the Castle, before ending the day with choral evensong sung by the chapel choir.



Only a day later, we said a fond farewell to a dear friend - Revd Debbie Hore - whose time as our Associate Minister came to an end with a buffet lunch. Such has been Revd Debbie's impact on people's lives over her six years with us - not least during the difficult days of the pandemic - that an array of people from the church and beyond attended. After the speeches and the cutting of a splendid retirement cake, Revd Debbie and Richard her husband were presented with various presents, including a framed photograph of the church at sunset.

Also moving on was our tower captain, Clive Moore. Clive has retired after an incredible 46 years of service - though his enthusiasm for bellringing is undiminished.

Later in the year, we once again hosted our mayor's civic service, the St George's Day Parade service, and the town's Remembrance Sunday service. We also welcomed the planting of a tree in the churchyard to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Sawbridgeworth Town Twinning Association.



May saw the coronation of King Charles III. In celebration, we held a packed out bring-your-own lunch in Church House, before we assembled in church for a splendid civic service of thanksgiving. It was also a pleasure to be able to bless a new commemorative kneeler, stitched by Hazel Mead. Also blessed on another occasion was a coloured glass image of the Holy Spirit, made and given to us by retiring PCC member, Mark Hemsley.



It's been a busy year - not least as we've continued to develop our relationship with our local church school in Spellbrook and welcomed many from our other schools and badged organisations. But it's also been a joy as our Lay Reader Di and I have ministered to a church family with such love and enthusiasm in its heart, and a desire to serve our wonderful town.

Yours in Christ,

Fr Simon

Vicar, Sawbridgeworth

SAWBRIDGEWORTH HOMES FOR UKRAINE SUPPORT GROUP

Report to Annual Town Meeting 18 March 2024

Ukrainians started arriving in Sawbridgeworth in Spring 2022 under the Government's 'Homes for Ukraine' Scheme. Gary Hanson, the Minister at the Sawbridgeworth Evangelical Congregational Church, immediately offered access to the church premises to support our guests and that support continues.

Ruth Armistead recruited and coordinated a team of English language teachers and English lessons began in May 2022. Lessons have continued weekly, covering anything from pronunciation and general conversation, letter writing and email, to common social situations such as job interviews or shopping. We also arranged a conversation evening where our visitors were able to meet locals over a meal, after which, at ten-minute intervals, they would move to a new table to converse with a different person or couple. We have also held several bring and share suppers, where we enjoyed Ukrainian specialities prepared by our guests. We had a visit from our local PCSO, who brought along a police car and some interesting equipment. Some of our ladies also had the chance to spend time at the Town Council offices.

Our guests have had a good introduction to English culture and traditions, including cooking such delicacies as pizza, flapjacks, pancakes and mince pies together, celebrations of Guy Fawkes Night with toffee apples and sparklers, Christmas carols, Easter, the Coronation, Burns Night, Shrove Tuesday and Chinese New Year, along with parties, summer gatherings and a typical English afternoon tea.

Ukrainian culture was not forgotten either, including three vigils to remember the situation in Ukraine as well as a concert by the Kyiv Accordion Duo which raised almost £2,000 for the United 24 Charity, and a coffee culture talk in March this year by one of our guests. We also held events, with typically around 50 guests, to celebrate Independence Day on 24 August and Dignity and Freedom Day on 19 November.

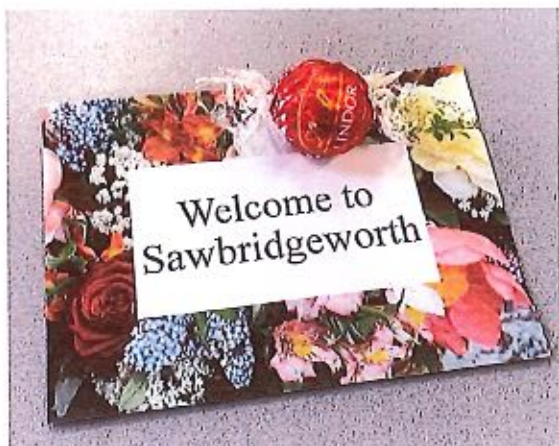
Everyone enjoyed the Christmas Party and the many opportunities to chat informally. Each child was given a handmade Christmas stocking containing, among other things, sweets, chocolate, nuts, satsumas and sunflower seeds. As the BBC was following one of our families, the Christmas Party featured on the BBC Look East News two days before Christmas last year.

Of the 70 guests we have welcomed so far, some have moved on to other places, a few have returned to Ukraine, but most have stayed in Sawbridgeworth, which they tell us they value very highly because of the friendly and welcoming environment there is here. There continue to be new arrivals and so we will continue offering English lessons as long as there is a need.

Ruth Armistead's work was recognised by the *Bishop's Stortford Independent*, when she received the Unsung Hero award. We were also visited by the High Sheriff of Hertfordshire and were commended for our work in supporting our guests from Ukraine.

Thanks are due to SECC and Gary Hanson, to our Town Council and Herts County Council for their ongoing support.

Ruth Armistead/David Royle 03/03/24





Report for 2023

A very informative start to the year with an evening of uniform and equipment 1914 – 1945 ably modelled and described by Richard Knight. Ken McDonald then took us on a stroll through the Hundred Parishes with very descriptive slides and encouragement to go on some of these walks. John Rider led a very popular walk around the town and these will be continued. A very interesting evening by Tim Howard-Smith learning about the Malting families of the town. The True Story of the Boat that Rocked, Radio Caroline, giving us an insight into its trials and tribulations was explained to us by Ray Clark, who worked on there. The Inns and Out of Pub Names by Mark Pardoe had us puzzling over some of the names and their origins. In November we welcomed back Mark Smith who took us behind the scenes of The Antiques Roadshow and how long it takes to make the programme.

Theo worked diligently throughout the year and produced a superb High Wych Photobook which sold out as soon as it was published and has now been reprinted.

We had stalls at the May Fayre with a churchyard walk led by Liz Waugh, and Scarecrow Festival which were successful for sales of books and gathering information and ideas from visitors.

To celebrate the Coronation of King Charles 111 a kneeler was made and placed in Gt.St.Mary's Church to recognise this historic event.

A wreath was laid on the anniversary of the Cambridge Road bombing in 1940 although John Liddell was unable to join us on this occasion.

Nostalgia Day was again successful although without its founder David Mead but his jeep found its way to the Airfield Memorial for one last time. A wreath was laid at the Memorial. With superb entertainment by Diverse Performing Arts, over £700 was raised for the Royal British Legion.

Poppies were also placed on Commonwealth Graves in Gt.St.Mary's churchyard and of others who were killed in WW1 and 2; also a wreath laid on Remembrance Day.

A seat in Jubilee Gardens in memory of Wally Wright is still being pursued and a history competition for young people is in process.

We have held four member meetings during the year but these have mainly been attended by committee members and only one or two other members so we need to look at whether this is still worthwhile. We will in the meantime publish a newsletter and see how this is received.

POW camp at Hatfield Heath is still the subject of planning permission which would signal its demise and we have written in support of these historic buildings remaining and being restored

A great deal of work has been done by Victoria to redesign our website and have our posters of a uniform likeness and we hope that will be rolled out in 2024.

At the turning on of the Christmas Lights we had a stall to sell our publications and we also took part in the Christmas Tree festival in Gt.St.Mary's Church where we displayed information on our variety of books.

Preliminary meetings have taken place to start our Sawbridgeworth Photobook and it is hoped that this may be published in 2024 with other plans are for a book on WW2 and a calendar or notelets.

Further information www.sbwhistory.com

Hazel Mead

Chair

SMHT – 2023 Chair Review



Overview

A successful year, hall users, hirers, attendances to functions, discounts to other charities maintained and a successful May fayre. Capital work, we installed Solar Batteries in February and started the hall expansion in July with a completion target in the summer of 2024. The project is significant, almost doubling the existing hire space, without increasing footprint. The expansion project will temporarily wipe out all of our reserves and will need to have a small loan to complete the fit out.

Financial

Final figures for 2023 are not finalised yet, we can only look at cash in bank situation

Cash in Bank

31st Dec 22 = £242k

31st Dec 23 = £204

Capital spend

	<i>£k</i>
Solar batteries	20
Legal fees on project	7
Paid out to project builder	<u>127</u>
Total	154

	<i>£k</i>
Cash in Bank	204
Capital	154
Grant	<u>-72</u>
Total	286

Trading Surplus / loss indications + £44k in line with previous years

Regular activities

Occupancy rate, over 90%

Events in the hall

We ran all our regular events to support the community music, cinema etc. The largest event was Uncle Funk raising < £5k and planned again in 2024

May Fayre

The May fayre was very successful, we are planning to continue the event for 2024, this is an ad hoc arrangement reviewed each year. It is an event that we do not raise money for ourselves it is purely for the benefit of other charities and associations and the residents in the town.

Future

Complete expansion, consolidate our financial position by building back our reserves.
Expanding room hiring and build on community services.

Extension Project

A substantial increase in Sawbridgeworth Community Facilities

What will we get

- 100% increase in hire space of 200sqm,
- 3 rooms, inc tech centre
- Access - Ability lift and two new staircases

Costs

£400k Build

£30k Fit out cost

How is it being funded?

Grants

Queens jubilee fund £72k

East Herts levelling up fund £45k

Stansted Airport £5K

Total £112k

Reserves

£288k, some assumed from operating surplus of 2024,

Loan

£30k

It is tight!

Project Time line

Plan official opening sept ~ soft opening before this.

Annual Town Meeting 18th March 2024.

Sgt Crow introduction

SNT rebranding to NPT.

Apologies from PCSO Collins who is unable to attend this evening.

NPT remains at same strength; the CC and PCC remain committed to neighbourhood policing which is positive for the team. This year the team has seen PCSO Higham depart and replaced by PCSO Collins. The NPT at Bishops Stortford have gained one full time PC, and we have several student officers on attachments with the NPT who bring with them a wealth of knowledge and experience, every officer participates towards the town priority and regularly patrols hot spot areas.

Community engagement events are continuing with PC Marshall and PCSO Collins, these are published via OWL and our social media pages, there is also a poster in the Town Council reception detailing the times and locations of events in April and May.

This year has seen a small decrease collectively across all crime types, the decrease is just over 10%, this figure includes a reduction in burglary dwelling offences by almost half in comparison to the same period last year.

The current policing priority ends 1st April, this has seen traffic operations take place as well as regular speed enforcement at hotspots as identified by the community. Overall, during the priority we have seized four vehicles, reported six drivers for road traffic offences and issued three traffic offence reports for no insurance. Work is already underway on gauging opinion and reviewing crime statistics for the next priority.

NPT continue to work closely with Essex on cross boarder criminality, and recently we were involved in an operation with Essex and the Met during which ten vehicles were recovered by police including one stolen vehicle, a number of stop searches were conducted and there was an arrest for the offences of PWITS class A and TOMV. Plans are underway for further operations of a similar nature.

PC Marshall and PCSO Collins are continuing to work with partner agencies at a number of events including love parks, travel challenge week, and community connections, as well as working with schools for regular assemblies with students and working with schools around the safety of parking at drop off and pick up. We have recently undertaken some events with colleagues from EHDC which include joint patrols in open spaces, we have a few more of these events booked as we enter the spring.

Mini police is continuing in Sawbridgeworth following the completion of a recent programme at Reedings School, we hope to start another programme with a local school before the end of this academic year.

The local team have been dealing with an increase of concerns raised by members of the public regarding dangerous dogs and suspected XL bullies, recently in the town a DDA warrant was executed by PC Marshall with the assistance of ROST/ DD team. This has resulted in it being concluded the dog seized was a banned breed, it remains in police kennels whilst an investigation takes place by PC Marshall.

We would like to ask the councillors to encourage people to report things to the police, we are aware that incidents get discussed on social media platforms, but we do need matters to be reported via the correct methods for the police to commence any action. We would be grateful if this could be pushed as much as possible.

In 2023, the Town Council chamber was made available for emergency services to use as an RVP for a large scale search for a high risk missing person, mid shires search and rescue were able to use the chamber as a base for the coordination of searches, we also plan to use the chamber for briefings when doing cross border work with Essex, given its location it is ideal for our cross boarder work and we are very grateful to the clerk for allowing us the use of this space.

Good news

During a recent community voice event PC Marshall and PCSO Collins sighted and identified two males responsible for a business robbery that had occurred the previous day, both males were arrested, charged and remanded by police. At court the following day both males were remanded to HMP awaiting trial at St Albans Crown Court in April.

The Town Council CCTV has recently assisted with providing two vehicle registrations plates which have led to positive action on two offences, we are grateful for having this available to us.

We are looking forward to continuing to work with the Town Council and all staff for the upcoming year!

Reedings School Report for the ATM 2024

Reedings has been working with our local school's offers in an effort to encourage more considerate driving from our parent community and local community. Bullfields gets very busy, as do most schools, during drop off and collection times. The police have worked with children who have created a poster to share some of their views on the issues outside of school. They have also liaised with Eric and Traffic Officers to deter dangerous and inconsiderate parking. Parents park in passing places and also allow children to get out of their cars next to the crossing, which causes some drivers to overtake onto the crossing. We would love to have a lollipop person, but know this position can't be filled. The level of support we have received from the council, police and traffic has been excellent and we are really grateful.

We are finding it hard with the new housing as we are being approached to take extra children over our PAN of 30 and Hertfordshire have recently removed the £750 price cap on dealing with families appealing to gain a place, despite there not being any. Each appeal costs around £300 if it gets to final stages and the complexity of dealing with these means schools are unable to deal with these in house. We felt this was a local issue to be aware of.

Aside from that Reedings is doing brilliantly well and has recently won an award for attendance that's above national - which is great as we know our children are happy and love to come to school!

Chair RHSO report for AGM

Thank you everyone for attending the AGM.

The year started with a very successful Wassail. The ground was very muddy but everyone enjoyed the evening. We had the usual refreshments of hot drinks, mulled cider and apple juice, with the cider proving very popular as usual. This year we also provided savoury snacks as well as the cakes. All the volunteers work very hard to make this event the success it is.

We held juice stalls in Bell street throughout the year to raise funds. March juice stall was cancelled due to bad weather but we held sales in June and December. The May fayre is a fantastic community event bringing together many community groups and commercial businesses. I feel it is very important that we attend these community gatherings to promote the Orchard and publicise it, to encourage more people to volunteer and get involved. It is in this way we can try to ensure the continuation of RHSO.

This year we trialed a new event, Family picnics in the Orchard. We were very lucky with the weather as it turned out to be a perfect day. We didn't sell any hot drinks only juice. But think that we should next time. There were approximately 50-70 people in various groups. Everyone I spoke to thought it was a lovely day and something that should be repeated.

We had a presence at the allotment show and sold some juice. As usual the Scarecrow Festival was very busy. It is now held on the playing fields rather than the church grounds. This makes it harder work for us as we can't leave the juice on site overnight.

Unfortunately before this years Apple Day there was a lot of unauthorised fruit picking. Obviously in the past when people have helped themselves to a few apples so it has not been such a problem. But this year there was large organised picking witnessed. I received many reports of people being seen in the orchard with ladders and pickers, stripping many of the trees. Consequently we are not able to offer the Cox Bramley variety this year as it was the Bramley apples that were taken.

This years Apple day was a warm sunny day that generated a large turnout of the community. Even with a lot of trees stripped it was a very successful day with enough fruit for over 1000 bottles of juice picked.

One of the concerns of the group is the long term sustainability of the orchard. To this end a small group met and drew up a plan for new plantings at the far end of the site. Some of us met with Peter Laws and Paul Read for their expert advice on what to plant and where. It was decided to start the planting with some new varieties of plum trees. Obviously only Rivers varieties. These have now been ordered as it takes time to be grafted. We look forward to planting them next autumn (2024). This is part of the 300th Anniversary of Thomas Rivers that will take place in 2025.

All these events and the monthly maintenance takes a lot of time and effort from all the volunteers. Without all of you there would be no orchard so I would like to give a huge thanks to all of you. Thank you.

Chair Ruth Buckmaster

Sawbridgeworth & District Rotary



Reg Charity Trust: 802915

Rotary in Sawbridgeworth is much smaller than you would imagine. A handful of people who stay in touch by meeting once a fortnight for a coffee or a meal as part of an international movement trying to do good in the world and locally. You are welcome to join us. You may have heard of our past highlights – four fishing boats and nets in 2004 for Tsunami-hit fishermen, Shelterboxes, the bus shelter in the Co-op car park, contributions to The Polio Plus campaign to eradicate polio worldwide.

Motto:
"Service
Above self"



And you will have certainly heard of Rotary's Carols on Fair Green on Christmas Eve. Our thanks go to our volunteer helpers from the community, the Vicar of Great St Mary's and Choir, The Town Council, and the Residents of Fair Green. Please consider volunteering for this event which helps make Sawbridgeworth special. Call/text 07770 978256



Last Christmas Eve:
£1,000 for Herts Vision Loss,
£1,000 for the Herts Hearing
Advisory Service
£450 for other Rotary projects
THANK YOU!

12 months at SECC

Over the last 12 months we, as one of the town's local Churches, have continued to serve, help and care for people.

Over this last year we have continued with our community work, aimed at helping any who are finding things difficult.

Our 'Pop-Up Shop' remains a work we are committed to and one that is clearly needed and so to reflect this, the name was changed to something more permanent sounding: 'Community Food Hub'. We have worked harder at spreading the word via a dedicated Facebook group, links with CAB and by appealing to local shops and organisations for donations.

The response from the town has been, as expected, wonderful and generous!

Alongside this we still run 'Make Lunch', every Wednesday of every week of school holidays. 'Make Lunch' provides warm and healthy meals for families whose budgets are stretched. We have been running this for 7 years and count it a privilege to host.

The Church does more than these, of course, with our weekly youth club 'The Zone', parenting courses, services at the Hailcy centre to name a few.

As this report goes out, we have just marked the second anniversary of the Ukraine invasion and, as a Church, we have stood publicly with our Ukrainian friends to show solidarity and care. Many Church families have hosted Ukrainians, we have arranged events and support and host the weekly lessons in our Church hall.

SECC will continue to stand with Ukraine.

As a group of Christians, our times to gather in worship are central and vital to who we are and inspire us to care for the community, as we put our faith into practice. We have had some wonderful Sunday Church services and special times of friendship and family at the Church.

Going forward, we are committed to being a light in our town, living out our faith in a public way, showing the love of God, seen in Jesus Christ. We will continue to help where we can.

As we have continued many of our regular works, we have been working hard on our building project. We are planning on redeveloping part and rebuilding part of our site, to ensure better access for all, a more environmentally friendly building and one that will enable us to serve Sawbridgeworth in a better and more effective way.

SAWBRIDGEWORTH SPORTS ASSOCIATION

For Newcomers to Sawbridgeworth

The SSA was formed in 1922 at the instigation of Sir Arthur Cutforth, an Auditor, who lived in Sayesbury Manor – back of what is now Bell St Car Park. He had correctly perceived the need for the various local Sports Clubs to have security of tenure. Accordingly in conjunction with other local dignitaries he masterminded the acquisition of the 6 acre field behind Bell St for Cricket, Bowls and Tennis Clubs, putting the land into Trust. Similarly in 1925 Sir Arthur personally bought another 6 acres of surplus housing land at Crofters West Rd for the Football Club, which then managed to repay him and the land was put into Trust.

In brief the Association is administered by a Committee of 2 representatives from each Club, 7 Independent members, President, Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary. There are 4 Trustees.

Time passed and Sawbridgeworth grew in size, the SSA looked around in the 1980's for extra land, however it soon became apparent that the owners of every field around Sawbridgeworth had signed up options with housing developers for what is happening now or about to happen.

When large developments occur the Developer has to put aside money into a fund for improving local facilities – Section 106. The SSA have tried to get allocations of this money for example to help towards an artificial surface for Football Club. However the Councils have ignored the existence of the SSA for their own preferences. The latest housing development application did surprisingly include provision for extra sports land but this was withdrawn at the last minute, no surprise here

The clubs are completely autonomous, the Association just maintaining hedges and common areas other costs are shared with the Clubs.

This provision of Sports facilities costs the Ratepayers nothing.

.

The Clubs are in good order and are keen to recruit new players, supporters, spectators of all standards, ages and sex .

The Bowls and Cricket seasons are about to start

The Tennis Club has installed a new Pickleball Court and open days for this soon

Further details are on the individual Websites of the Clubs

Sawbridgeworth Tennis/Bowls/Cricket/Football/United Services Club,

Steve Hyam
Sec SSA

Sustainable Sawbridgeworth report, Annual Town Meeting, 18 March 2024

Sustainable Sawbridgeworth promotes activities and policies that have a positive impact on our local environment and beyond. Formed in 2019, the group acts as an 'umbrella', supporting a range of well-established events in Sawbridgeworth as well as newer ventures. It has a Facebook page with over 260 members, and is currently working on a dedicated website.

Sustainable Sawbridgeworth has become a Friends of the Earth member as a Local Action Group. It has appointed a Chair and Treasurer, and has a core team that meets regularly to plan and organise activities. In terms of funding this year, a successful application to The Co-op was made providing £1,000 plus vouchers to support ongoing activities.

Events over the past year include:

- **Repair Café** – celebrating its first birthday in July, this initiative is going from strength to strength with slots fully booked, and has inspired a Bishop's Stortford version.
- **Tidy Up Sawbridgeworth** – with three sessions a year, this continues to be extremely popular with April's event attracting around fifty litter pickers.
- **Thermal Imaging Camera loan scheme** – a partnership with the library is now in place for lending out a thermal-imaging camera to monitor household energy efficiency.
- **Sawbo Sales** – the first event this February was an enormous success bringing together buyers and sellers of children's pre-loved clothes and toys, and attracting one hundred people.
- **Vertical Gardens** – a workshop on practical solutions to grow more produce at home.
- **Christmas Lights** – organising a project for local children to create lanterns from recycled materials for the Great St Mary's Church display, and running a sustainable decorations workshop.

The group has campaigned on the following issues:

- **Clean air** – group members created pollution maps for HCC by walking routes with monitoring equipment and has forged close links with Leventhorpe School on anti-idling measures. It meets regularly with EHC and HCC officers to discuss ways to improve air quality in the town, and ran a stall and conducted anti-idling leafleting for Clean Air Day last June.
- **Walking and cycling** – continuing to push for a Local Walking & Cycling Infrastructure Plan, the group has been a major contributor to EHC's consultation to make sustainable travel easier.
- **Wrenbridge** – writing to EHC about the logistic centre at St James and failure of local opposition to prevent the expected movement of HGVs through Sawbridgeworth, the group continues to push for ways of mitigating the impact.
- **Local produce** – the group has met The Co-op's regional Member and Community Relations Officer to discuss stocking local fresh produce, in-store recycling and stalls at the store.
- **Stalls** – these were held during the year on pollution, sewage in rivers, food waste, no-dig gardening and energy saving at the May Fayre, River Day, Gardens & Allotment Show, Christmas Lights and in Bell Street.
- **Holding councils to account** – the group asks questions at council meetings to keep environmental issues at the forefront of the local agenda.

For anyone interested in getting involved, please contact sustainablesawbridgeworth@gmail.com, or send a message via our Facebook page.



SAWBRIDGEWORTH TENNIS CLUB 2024

EXCITING DEVELOPMENTS.

Pickle Ball is the fastest growing sport in the USA. If you can, go onto Amazon Prime or You Tube to see Pickle Ball in action.

Pickle Ball is tennis, badminton, and table tennis all rolled into one.

It is fun and a good game can be had no matter your skills.

We are very fortunate to have a coach, Mollie Kubrick - Fenney who competes at international level.

We have 4 courts so there is plenty of room to play.

If you join the tennis club, you have automatic entry to play Pickle Ball or you can just join the Pickle Ball section. For details just Google Sawbridgeworth Tennis Club.

Our Tennis section continues to provide plenty of play for members.

Why don't you come and join us.

Sawbridgeworth Town Twinning Association

REPORT TO ANNUAL TOWN MEETING 18 MARCH 2024

2023 was a good year for STTA as we celebrated our 50th anniversary. Highlights:

- **QUIZ 18 FEBRUARY:** more than 100 people attended the quiz at the Memorial Hall.
- **MAY FAYRE SUNDAY 30 APRIL:** the stall sold out of brie and baguette. We gave out a lot of leaflets and there was interest from visitors to the stall.
- **VISIT TO BRY-SUR-MARNE 18-21 MAY:** A delegation of 12 travelled to Bry-sur-Marne to join the 50th anniversary celebrations with our two twin towns. On arrival we attended a tree planting ceremony (a symbolic elm) with speeches by the three mayors, including our own mayor, Cllr Ruth Buckmaster.
- **PHOTOBOOK:** this collection of photographs of Sawbridgeworth was put together by Chris Armistead, to mark our 50th anniversary. We gave copies to our hosts and Twinning contacts from Bry-sur-Marne and Moosburg. The high quality A4 hardback book is available for £15 per copy: **64 pages and over 100 recent traffic-free colour photographs.** Please click the link below to order a copy or contact us at sawbridgeworth.towntwinning@gmail.com. Delivery is free for Sawbridgeworth addresses. Order at <https://stta.sumupstore.com/>.
- **THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION ON 29 SEPTEMBER:** 57 present and former twinning members joined us at the Hailey Centre, including Tony Dodd, who made the initial connection with Bry in 1973, when he was Chair of the Urban District Council. Four former Chairs: Valerie Bright, Eugene Keddy, John Marshall, and Jeremy Dickson, were also there, as well as Brenda, the wife of the late Jack Lynch.
- **VISIT FROM BRY 15-18 SEPTEMBER:** 30 guests visited us to help celebrate our 50th anniversary. We dined at Villa Italia, after a formal welcome in the Hailey Centre, and on Sunday we went to Cambridge for a guided tour and an afternoon cream tea in the Varsity Hotel, 60 of us all told! On Monday morning we planted a commemorative tree in Gt St Mary's churchyard, an environmentally friendly bird cherry. Father Simon blessed the tree and our twinning links. Photobooks were presented to Father Simon, Laure Roger and our mayor, Cllr Ruth Buckmaster.
- **VISIT TO MOOSBURG, 19 TO 22 OCTOBER:** a party of 12 visited Moosburg, our first visit since 2019, our fourth in all. On Saturday we went by coach to Passau, where three rivers converge: the Danube, Inn and Ilz. Saturday was spent with hosts. On Sunday morning, some of us went on a guided visit of the remains of the Stalag VIIA prisoner-of-war camp, which housed 70,000 inmates from many countries and the memorial erected by the town council.

- **PRESENTATION AT REEDINGS SCHOOL 18 November:** I gave a presentation on Town Twinning to two classes of Year 4 children.
- **TOWN REMEMBRANCE DAY SERVICE 12 NOVEMBER:** I laid a wreath as usual.
- **CONVERSATIONS:** we continue our French and German monthly conversation groups, usually with representatives from each twin town.
- **PUBLICITY:** look out for our articles in the *BS Independent*, *High Wych Link* and *Flyer*; we also have a Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/537455026663868/> and a new website: <https://www.sawbridgeworhtowntwinning.co.uk/>

David Royle
Chairman STTA 2/03/24

Sawbo Travel Challenge & Town Walk – 25 to 30 September 2023

For further details contact Cllr Annelise Furnace

The town's primary schools and STC held a very successful Town Walk at the end of the Sawbo Travel Challenge week.

Five schools took part in the week-long initiative and results showed sustainable journeys (across four schools) improved by 22%, ranging from 6% in one school (where sustainable journeys are already high) to a massive 65% improvement in another school – amazing results that show this week really works!

A steady flow of families attended the Town Walk – thanks to the community groups (Evangelical Church, Rotary Club, Sustainable Sawbridgeworth and the WI) that looked after the stops, and the Hailey Centre for refreshments.

Organisations held Community Connections stalls in the car park. This included a joint stall by EHC and HCC on clean air campaign, which saw strong interest in air quality maps plotted with data collected by Sustainable Sawbridgeworth members, as well as receiving lots of pledges from families, many focused walking and cycling more often to school rather than taking the car. This is a great example of bringing different tiers of council together.

The event was attended by local MP Julie Marson, the High Sheriff of Hertfordshire Liz Green, Sawbridgeworth Town Mayor Cllr Ruth Buckmaster, and Sunny the Sawbosaurus, the Town Council's sustainable mascot.



the WI

INSPIRING WOMEN

Sawbridgeworth Evening WI are a group of friendly, welcoming ladies who meet every 3rd Tuesday of the month, 7.30, at the Sawbridgeworth Memorial Hall. After a short business section, we listen to a speaker for about ¾ hour, then time for tea and a chance to chat.

This past year, we have had speakers on a varied range of subjects. History gave us talks by local experts on the POW camp at Hatfield Heath, The History of Eastern Lodge, and Sworders 200 years and Counting. Talks about personal lives were, How I Turned my Life Around (Tracy Mackness), A Day in the Life of a Train Driver and David Royal's view of Ukraine. Gardening was covered by a trip to Copped Hall and a talk by a fellow member about Interesting and Amusing Things Seen in Various Gardens. Music gave us a talk and demonstration by Welwyn Harmony - a ladies Capella group. (Historically, the WI are known as singing their theme of Jerusalem at their meetings. We may sing at our AGM but not every month!) At our AGM in May, the members voted for the National WI to back a campaign for supporting Women and Girls with ASD and ADHD.

Every group of ladies need time to socialise!

We do have time after the speaker, but other occasions were programmed in. Last year, in September, we had a popular social evening, where the ladies were speed dating..... not to meet a partner but to get to know each other better. At the end of July, we had a catered lunch at the Cricket Club, and our December meeting was a Christmas Meal in the Memorial Hall. Monthly, a group met at the Queens Head for lunch, and a Saturday morning walk was planned, depending on weather. If inclement, a walk to the local coffee shop was deemed necessary!

Our Dorothy Riding Cup baking competition was in February. A chance for the cooks amongst us to show their skills. This year the popular recipe was a Blueberry, Lemon and Almond Bake, which was judged on presentation, colour, texture, and taste.

A love of gardening was demonstrated with the planting of the flower beds by Bell Street Car Park. This had been problematic with the disappearance of plants, and the battle with extreme heat and dry conditions.

During the hot summer, we started knitting winter adults hats for the homeless. Together with members of the public, and support by Greg Ratty, the mayor, we produced over 160 hats. These were mainly distributed to local homeless charities.

At the Great St. Mary's Sculpture Festival, a group built a lady out of grasses and plants, though she did keep falling over! September brought the Community days at the Hailey Centre where we were represented, and supported the Walk to School week.

This coming year we hope to have more fascinating speakers to educate and entertain. Visitors to our meetings are always welcome. (£4) If you would like to find out more about your local WI, please email sawbridgeworth.evening.wi@gmail.com