

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 13 April 2015.

Present: Cllr Eric Buckmaster (Town Mayor) Chairman; 13 Local Government Electors for the Parish of Sawbridgeworth and Spellbrook, (including 8 Town Councillors). Michael Jarvis H&E Observer, Town Clerk Richard Bowran, Town Projects Manager Joanne Kenny.

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

He also explained that because of the forthcoming elections he was in "Purdah" and the report on the past year's activities would be delivered by the Clerk.

15/01 MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

Resolved – that the Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 14 April 2014 be confirmed as a correct record.

15/02 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising from those minutes

15/03 Report by the Town Clerk

The councils business is overseen by a number of committees:

Finance and Policy Committee oversees:

The creation of **Budgets** and the financial management of the council.

Personnel matters including staff appointments and appraisals and setting the establishment levels of the council.

Policy matters including keeping abreast of current legislation and the democratic process.

Amenities Committee oversees a number of key activities:

Allotments -120 plots over 4 sites. The waiting list is down to under a dozen thanks to a policy of dividing plots into what tenants feel is a manageable size.

Cemetery – 43 interments were carried out during the year and many memorial stones and benches installed. Recently May Slater, the first lady mayor of the town council was interred in our cemetery.

Floral displays – were widely admired last summer and we plan to do something similar this year.

Playgrounds – we continue to manage the West Road play area and contract with the Young Peoples Centre to look after their play area

Highways Together – along with several other councils across Hertfordshire, we have pioneered a new relationship with Herts Highways to enable local councils carry out work that the Highways

authority is unable to undertake. This has included looking after Footpaths, cleaning road signs, maintaining planters and similar tasks which are important to local people.

Approach Signs – new approach signs have been installed which have given a much clearer indication of where our retail centre is located.

Sawbobus continues to provide a much valued service to a section of the community who would otherwise be isolated.

A new **Dial-a-Ride** service now operates for appointments at our local hospitals

Our two Hire Minibuses are available to accredited groups in the town

Planning Committee

The Committee considered **127 planning applications** this year and provides valuable input to the Planning authority giving them local opinion as well as a considered view on whether applications are consistent with the adopted plan

New EHDC system has just been introduced a consequence of which means that the town council no longer receive paper plans for parishioners to look at. It's all gone on-line and we will be acquiring appropriate equipment so that we can continue to serve the public.

District Plan – we have contributed to the District Plan and will continue to do so representing the views of parishioners.

Neighbourhood Plan – the committee considered there was no financial advantage in investing in the production of a Neighbourhood Plan. Instead we will continue to work towards producing a new Town Action Plan.

Events

Fun on the Field – this event was inaugurated in 2014 as a joint venture with Herts Police. It attracted a huge crowd and it will be repeated in June this year.

Leventhorpe Proms – last year we again provided support for the summer promenade concert at the school which has proved to be very popular.

Christmas Lights – in 2014 we broke all records again with an estimate of 4,000 attendees. The new format, created partly because of problems with obtaining a road closure, worked well but the sheer numbers we are attracting means we have to refine the format for 2015.

Civic Dinner – the last formal event in the civic year was a resounding success and featured the final performance of the Glambusters.

Projects during the year

CCTV, called for in the last Action Plan to give reassurance to parishioners has now been installed giving coverage of the centre of town and has helped the police on a number of occasions.

The new **Town Sign**, situated in the reinstated London Road planter, has been admired by all and has become a feature of the entrance to the town.

These projects have been funded by a town centre enhancement grant from the District Council but planned and executed by the town council.

The Rivers Heritage Site and Orchard group has come together, with the support of the town council, to ensure that this vital and historic asset is maintained.

Future Projects

Bell Street Conveniences; we have been working with EHDC for over a year to get improvements to the facility. Progress has been slow but we are determined to see this project through as the current facility has been the subject of innumerable complaints.

Town Green development; we are also moving forward with this project, are having preliminary surveys done with the objective of getting it adopted as a project by the District Council. The aim is to provide a community space and a focal point on a patch of land which has become sadly neglected.

WW1 Displays, we have worked with "Herts at War" as part of a WW1 project and we will be hosting a display in the council chamber later this year.

The Farmers Market, which has been run by the town council for the last six years has seen a decline in attendance by both traders and visitors. It has been the focus of some opposition in the town and we have been inhibited from innovative new traders by the terms of our licence from the District Council. A market will return however, but in a different format, and will probably be event based on several occasions throughout the year.

Survey

The fact finding survey, which has been carried out on-line and through the questionnaire in the Newsletter is now closed and has provided opinion on a number of issues facing the town. Copies of the results are available in this room, and it will also be published on the council's website. It will provide the incoming council with food for thought and future action.

Finally, on 07 May, as I am sure you are all aware, there are **elections** for councillors to serve on the Town Council for the next four years. Nominations closed last Thursday and we have been advised that there are 15 candidates for the 12 places on council. Therefore there will be a poll on Election Day.

The report of the Town Council was accepted.

14/04 Report by the Town Clerk

The Town Clerk, Richard Bowran, reported on the Council's Accounts to 31 March 2015. *Attached as Appendix 1.*

The Tabled Report of the Town Clerk was accepted

14/05 The Mayor invited Reports from Town Charities:

Cllr Angela Alder, Chairman of the **Hailey Centre** reported on activities for the year. *Attached as Appendix 2.*

Cllr Derek Filler, Chairman of the **Sawbridgeworth Young Peoples Recreational Centre** reported on activities for the year. *Attached as Appendix 3.*

14/06 The Mayor invited other reports:

Cllr Andrew Wincott, Trustee of the **Memorial Hall** reported on activities for the year. *Attached as Appendix 4.*

Mr Rob Richardson, Chairman of RHSO – reported:

That a new management committee took over the task of looking after the site in May 2014 after the demise of the previous group.

The main regular activity has been regular monthly maintenance days. These are attended by varying numbers and more volunteers need to be recruited.

The main events in the year are the Apple Day and the Wassail evening. These are attended by up to 100 people.

15/07 Resolutions for which written notice had been received

None had been received

15/08 Open Forum

There being no other business the meeting was closed.

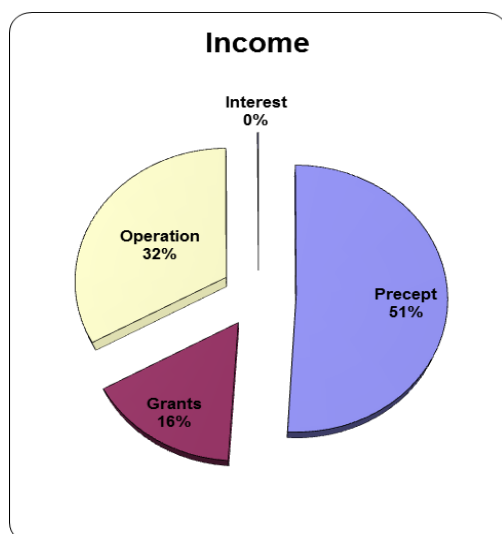
The Meeting closed at 20:10

Signed: _____

Dated: _____

Appendix 1

CLERK'S REPORT TO THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING 13 APRIL 2015



In the year 2014/15 the Town Council's Precept was £223,746, this was 51% of the Council's total income.

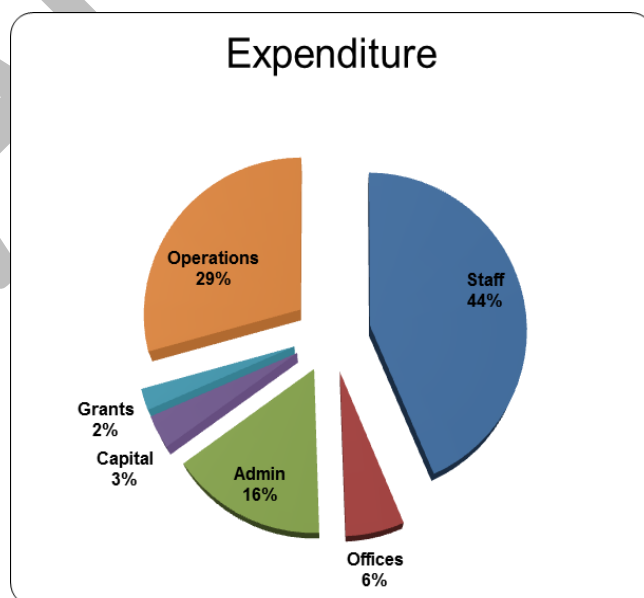
The Council derives other income from its operations in the town, such as the Town Cemetery, the four Allotment Gardens and the Community Bus services. Income relating to these other activities amounted to £215,109; and so the Council's total income for the year was £438,855. The Council is aiming to continue to develop Operations Income to minimise any increase in the Precept.

We spent a total of £455,594 this year.

Staff costs amounted to 44% of our expenditure; we have two full time employees, three part time administration officers, the town ranger, a handyman and two part time bus drivers. All other services are carried out by contractors.

Our operations costs were 29% of our spend, and included management of the Town Cemetery, the Allotment Gardens, the two Community Minibuses, recreation areas, footpaths, the Town Ranger, provision and maintenance of Floral Displays, grants to various organisations and the Christmas Lights.

Our administration costs at 16% of the total included our responsibilities as a Consultee on planning applications and matters relating to the town, removal of Fly Posting, Town Council Newsletters, Civic Events, Community Transport, Floral Decorations, Promoting the Town, subscriptions, insurances and our duty to provide Democratic Services including meetings, committees, elections and representation on outside bodies including liaison with the County and District Councils.



Support for the one hour free parking scheme in Bell Street accounted for a further 4% of our total expenditure and our accommodation costs amounted to 6% of the total.

During the year, the Council continued the operation of Sawbobus, now in its fifth year. This has been financed by grants from EHDC and EFDC; support from HCC and from commercial sponsorship. It started a Dial-a Ride service providing a link to hospitals in Harlow and Bishops Stortford. It managed the Farmers Market which will be revised in 2015/16 to be a community event, and the two Community Minibuses, both of these activities are self-financing although take up significant administration time.

The Town Council continues to step in to preserve services to the community when other organisations are unable to continue.

The Council made grants totalling £5,000 to seven different local organisations during the year, these were the Citizens Advice Service, Friends of Sawbridgeworth Neuro Centres, Gt St Marys Church, Sawbridgeworth Congregational Church, High Wych Pre School Nursery, Herts Police and the Rivers Nursery Site and Orchard Group. In addition it made donations totalling £5,000 to support the activities of the Town Twinning Association, the Hailey Centre and the Young Peoples Recreation Centre.

The shortfall £16,739 which was principally due to covering for a staff member who has been on long term sick leave since September 2014 has been taken from our general reserves.

For this coming year the precept has been held at the same level as last year at £223,746. Since the town's housing stock has increased this amounts to decrease of 3p per week for a Band D household.

Appendix 2

HAILEY CENTRE

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING 14 APRIL 2014

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.

The Board met on four occasions during the period covered by this report and has dealt with matters relating to the efficient running of the Centre including reviewing the health and safety policy, financial management arrangements, staffing and safeguarding issues and rates of pay. The Management Committee has also met four times and has made various recommendations to the Board to enhance the smooth running of Centre activities.

The serving Trustees are:

Councillors – Mrs. Angela Alder - Chairman)
Mrs. Pat Coysten) four year terms May 2015
Mr. Peter Mitchell)

Community – Mr. Eric Buckmaster)
Mr. Colin Gill – Honorary Treasurer)
Mr. Tony Fitch) three year terms
Mr. Ralph Reed – Deputy Chairman) May 2017
Mr. Steve Robertson)

The Trustees are very grateful to the Town Council for the grant towards the cost of utilities and to Hertfordshire County Council and Community Services for its grant towards staffing costs. During this year the Board was grateful for a grant from East Herts District Council towards the cost of the new extractor cooker hood which was essential in order to obtain the required certification for the cooker itself. The Board gratefully acknowledges the very generous donation from the family of a regular visitor who expressly remembered the Centre in her Will. Contributions from all sources of financial support is much appreciated which helps to keep the Centre a welcoming, attractive and vibrant place to visit for the older people of Sawbridgeworth. The Board is very aware of the pressure on local authorities and makes every effort to control expenses as well as fund raising for the benefit of the users of the Centre. The Board is fortunate in having an excellent Honorary Treasurer who keeps a tight hold on expenditure.

The new Sawbridgeworth Town Council offices, now attached to the Centre, has opened up new ways of co-operation to the mutual benefit of both by shared use of the facilities which this year included an early morning breakfast served in the Centre prior to the Act of Commemoration of the start of WW1. The Centre was again able to hold the Christmas Fayre, Summer Fete and

Art and Photography Exhibition in the Council Chamber with refreshments in the main hall.

As last year I am able to report continuing success of the catering at the Centre and we fully acknowledge that it is very much due to Mrs. Gill's catering expertise and the wonderful support she receives from the volunteers who assist her with food preparation. The volunteers also provide a waitress service week in and week out. Without our volunteers the Centre would not be able to survive. I am delighted to report that on a recent inspection by the Environmental Health Officer we have retained our five star rating for our catering service.

The Management Committee has met regularly throughout the year and offered sound and practical advice to the Board which has been warmly received and acted upon.

One of the important issues the Board addressed this year concerned facilitating easy access to the Centre for our visitors with mobility scooters. With some adjustments to the back gate and rear entrance people with mobility issues can now access the building independently. The alterations have also enabled those visitors coming from a south easterly direction to gain entrance without going round the whole building.

In April the Board organised the annual "Thank you" lunch for our wonderful volunteers which was well attended by the volunteers plus their partners or friends. Mrs. Gill and her family cooked and served the delicious meal much to the enjoyment of all.

Centre activities throughout the year have been well supported and the outings and events enjoyed to the full by Centre users and their friends. The Centre provided 5,050 lunches this year and 160 seats on food shopping trips. Unfortunately lack of volunteer drivers has forced the Centre to limit the number of trips to once a fortnight. The Centre users had 10 days out and 2 holidays. The use of the community bus this year has declined also due to lack of volunteer drivers and people are now making their own way to the Centre independently or by using Sawbobus managed and staffed by Sawbridgeworth Town Council. We still cater for those with specific transport needs either by volunteers picking them up or by use of taxis.

The Centre continues to run two keep-fit sessions, on Mondays and Tuesdays each week with a full complement of participants. The Photography sessions on a Wednesday morning and the Silver Surfers on Thursday mornings are both "manned" by volunteer instructors and all slots filled. The Whist, Bingo and Art sessions along with craft and decoupage are also fully supported.

The Quiz, Film show and Musical afternoons continue to prove highly popular and profitable events. The new Camera Club has just celebrated its third birthday and continues to go from strength to strength. Apart from the fun and pleasure the members derive from the Club itself, where they have been out and about taking photographs, some of which have been used as front covers for our monthly Newsletter, they have assisted with the fund raising activities

at the Centre. Many of the Centre users have taken advantage of the Camera club to have their pictures taken for bus passes or passport renewals.

The usual fund raising events such as the May Fayre, Summer Fete and Christmas Fayre together with the various raffles throughout the year and the monthly Farmers' Market have all contributed to the vitality of life at the Centre. All these activities have increased not only the income but raised the profile of the Centre and what it can offer to older people in Sawbridgeworth.

The visiting Chiropodist delivered 459 treatments this year, the Hearing Aid Specialist had 120 consultations. Their attendance at the Centre on a regular basis and their professional expertise is very much appreciated by the people they serve.

In January the Centre held its annual New Year celebration lunch at the Hunters' Meet at Hatfield Heath which was delicious and we were pleased to have the Mayor of Sawbridgeworth as our special guest enjoying the occasion with us. The function was a huge success and attended by a hundred regular users of the Centre. As well as our now annual New Year lunch the Centre has special lunch events to celebrate occasions such as Mothering Sunday, Valentine's day, Easter, Father's Day, Halloween and our own Christmas lunch in the Centre. Mrs. Gill pulls out all the stops to produce an excellent Christmas meal and even recruits her family members to do the waitressing!

The Centre has received regular press coverage over the twelve months giving a positive picture of a Centre for older people being active, leading fulfilled lives and enjoying themselves with much of this attributable to our present and former Managers with their vision for engaging older people in a proactive role.

The Board wishes to acknowledge with grateful thanks the valuable contribution of the volunteers who give over 1,000 volunteer "man" hours per month to the running of the Centre and without whose willing help the Centre would not be the vibrant and happy place it is today. The Board would also wish to place on record its thanks for the efforts of staff who provide a friendly and welcoming environment for all visitors and users of the Hailey Centre throughout the period of this report. On a personal note I would like to thank my Deputy Chairman and all the volunteer Trustees for their help and support throughout the year.

Thank you

Angela Alder
Chairman of the board of Trustees
April 2015

Appendix 3

SAWBRIDGEWORTH YOUNG PEOPLES RECREATION CENTRE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING 13 APRIL 2015

REPORT FOR THE YEAR 2014/15

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 met only once 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. D. Filler – Chairman | (Appointed May 2012) |)Town |
| Cllr. Mrs. A. Alder – Hon. Secretary and Vice Chair | |)Council |
| Cllr. T. Reeks | |)Appointed May 2014 |
| Cllr. Mrs. R. Buckmaster | |)Appointed Sept 2013 |
| Mr. R. Alder – Hon. Treasurer | |) Appointed |
| Mrs. G. Hawkins | |) by the Town |
| Mrs. J. Kenny | |)Council |
| Mrs. L. Mott | | |
| P.C. Ray Larcombe – Police representative | | |

Mrs. L. Dale – Centre Manager attends all Management Committee Meetings, manages the hall bookings, deals with problems, oversees the cleaning and sends out the invoices. She is paid a small honorarium.

The High Wych Pre-school Nursery continue to hire the Centre from Monday to Friday during school term time. The Management Committee is delighted to report that the Pre-school Nursery in its Ofsted report was categorised as Excellent.

The Management Committee is pleased to record the high level of hiring of the Centre which enables the Committee to finance additional facilities.

The plan to alter the current changing rooms into a large workshop space has been on hold for some time, however, it is hoped to make some progress towards adapting this area during the coming year. The Management Committee will be having discussions on the various options open to them for better utilisation of this space. The Committee is pleased to continue to provide parking space for the Town Council's buses.

We have again suffered vandalism this year and it is a troubling symptom of the times and needs constant vigilance on our part. The Management Committee took the decision in the autumn to suspend the Youth Group from use of the Centre until a Code of Conduct could be agreed with the young people and youth group leaders. The Centre re-opened to the Youth group in February and I am pleased to report that no untoward incidents have occurred to date. Firm action will be taken by the Committee against anyone committing an offence. Litter is another ongoing problem which despite providing additional litter bins is a continuing battle to keep the field clean.

The Summer Play Scheme was fully booked for every session and was once again well supported. The Summer Play Scheme will again take place this year and we are pleased to be able to keep the cost at last year's price of £5 per child per session. We have kept the daily charge at the same rate so that our local children can benefit from a safe and secure well run play scheme and parents can have full confidence when sending their children to attend a professionally managed scheme.

The play equipment has been well maintained throughout the year and we are grateful for the regular inspection and litter picks carried out by the Town Ranger. During the year the Committee felt compelled to erect a barrier onto the field in light of local itinerant invasion of open land when we feared the playing field might suffer such an invasion.

The junior section of Sawbridgeworth Town Football Club continue to play regular football matches on the field which we are pleased to encourage as part of keeping our young people fit and healthy with regular physical activity. However, the Committee is encountering problems with the pitch at the top end of the field due to water logging which is probably due to the three large houses built on Cambridge Road. Sawbridgeworth Town Football Club has agreed to improve the drainage in that area to make the pitch useable for the younger players who currently cannot play there safely due to the pools of water. The Management Committee intend to upgrade the equipment in the small children's gated area by laying down a concrete area with road and hop scotch designs to develop eye coordination and provide an opportunity for road safety training by the pre school nursery staff. We also hope to install a small round about for the younger children to play on.

The standard of cleaning in the hall, kitchen, toilets and other areas has been well maintained thanks to Mrs. Dale the Centre Manager.

In conclusion the Management Committee wishes to record its grateful thanks to the Town Council for the generous grant towards the cost of utilities and especially for the allocation of funding for the Play Scheme.

Derek Filler
Chairman
April 2015

Appendix 4

SAWBRIDGEWORTH MEMORIAL HALL TRUST TRUSTEES' REPORT TO THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING 13 APRIL 2015

Sawbridgeworth Memorial Hall Trust



Hall goes from strength to strength

SMH continues to go from strength to strength and 2014 was a year of consolidation following the completion of the major refurbishment works to the structure of the building and upgrading of internal facilities. The communities in and around Sawbridgeworth can now be rightly proud that they have at their disposal a substantial high quality building for public use and private hire.

The recent refurbishment was made possible by the grant funding from STC to meet the urgent repair needs of the building. But an equal part of the current success is due to the continuing hard work of a core number of highly dedicated Trustees and 'Friends' who between them invest their own time to organise a wide range of community focused events.

During 2014 the Trustees was Chaired by John Rider took over when the previous Chair Anna Brown moved away and retired in late 2013. John has a long association with SMH and thanks go again to John for his expert leadership through to the Nov 2014 AGM where he stood down as Chair and Peter Lee was elected as the current Chair. Over the past three years Peter has been a driving force in the implementation of the refurbishment projects and so it is fitting that he should now Chair the Trust. It would be an omission not to single out for special mention Patricia Lee our Booking Manager, who also provides considerable day to day support in many ways. Appreciation also goes to Liz Hall who launched Saplings which is now run by Patricia Lee and Linda Burns.

Other Current Trustees - Co-opted and Appointed:

- Cat Lamont
- Dave Paterson
- Andrew Robinson

- Ria Dongworth
- Andy Dongworth
- Hazel Mead
- Andrew Wincott
- Secretary – Claire McDonald
- Accounts - Dongworth Associates.

Appreciation also to Ray Young, who helped Peter Lee with many of the refurbishment implementation works who stood down as a Trustee at the 2014 AGM.

Community Activities

2014 saw a varied range of activities laid on with the objective of appealing to as wide a cross section of the community as possible. Apart from regular user groups and private hire activities, a number of annual events again marked out the calendar: The hall was open for the May Fayre and Food Festival designed to integrate with other Town activities and hosted successful Sawbrideworth's Got Talent competition, Art Exhibition and Model Railway Exhibition. The 3rd Annual Commemoration/Nostalgia day was again a huge success in drawing together all age groups and was this year augmented with a remarkably authentic construction representing a WW1 trench. Plans are already forming for a 2015 event with a Cockney theme and the active involvement of all the Town's local primary schools.

In both 2014 and 2015 the Civic Dinner in aid of charity was hosted by STC Mayor in the SMH to great success, where the scale and facilities were fully utilised for this leading event in the local calendar.

In addition to these annual activities, regular community activities such as Saplings and Coffee and Bounce continue to be held on some weekdays.

One major initiative this year has seen the running of a pilot programme of fitness activities for the over 50's. This is in association with EHC under a Sport England programme. The programme started in Jan 2015 and has been well attended with a variety of activities: indoor bowls, table tennis, petanque, yoga and multi-activity.

SMH has also hosted a very well attended meeting of the Village Halls Network, an initiative started by EHC to facilitate the sharing of ideas and experiences between volunteer organisations.

On New Year's Day this year, a ceremony was held to commemorate the 65th Anniversary of the Hall with the unveiling of a new stone adjacent to the entrance.

Further improvement works

In addition to the building fabric there is continual need to undertake repairs in such a large building. Special mention should go to Hazel Mead who secured funding from Viridor to enable the car park to be re-surfaced and from Stansted Airport for funding stage and wall lighting enhancements. Some

other notable enhancements during the year are: the renewal of 200 chairs, automatic linkage of the heating system to the booking diary and purchase of a projector and fixed screen. In keeping with the car park enhancement, our thanks should also go to County and District Councillor Roger Beeching for finally persuading Highways that one of the car park exit crossover should be remodelled to allow better access.

Finances

Profit and loss account for year ended 31st Dec 2013

| | 2013 £ | 2012 £ |
|------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Gross income | 38,544 | 28,803 |
| Admin expenses | (26,014) | (25,512) |
| Operating Surplus | 12,530 | 3,291 |
| Interest receivable | 17 | 14 |
| Surplus on activities | 12,547 | 3,305 |

Accounts are produced by Dongworth Limited and registered with the Charities Commission.

Looking to the future

The Trust is constantly seeking new ways to serve the community and has recently held a very successful early evening family disco. This is likely to be developed into a regular event with a BBQ supplementing the summer events.

The care and maintenance work on the building is of course on going and the Trustees have future plans to enhance the Entrance porch/lobby area and install security access controls. The stage facilities, flooring and curtain are next on the agenda.

The very latest enhancement to SMH has seen the installation of a large scale Photovoltaic solar roof installed by the local firm Viking Solar Ltd. This has been funded by the SMH and will provide a guaranteed income of around £3k from Gov't for each of the next 20 years to supplement income streams.

Andrew Wincott
Appointed SMH Trustee for STC
Monday April 13 2015