

SAWBRIDGECWORTH TOWN COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL Minutes

of the Meeting of Sawbridgeworth Town Council held at the Council Offices, Sayesbury Manor, Bell Street, Sawbridgeworth at 7.30 pm on **Monday 27 July 2015**.

Those present

Cllr Angela Alder
Cllr John Burmicz
Cllr Pat Coysten
Cllr Don Hall

Cllr Heather Riches
Cllr Tom Reeks - chair
Cllr David Royle
Cllr Mike Shaw

In attendance:

Cty Cllr Roger Beeching
R Bowran - Town Clerk

11 members of the public
Joanne Sargant – Town Projects Manager

Welcome by the Deputy Mayor, prayers were read by Cllr Angela Alder

15/41 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Adamopoulos, Cllr Eric Buckmaster and Cllr Ruth Buckmaster.
Cllr Mortimer was absent.

15/42 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

To receive any Declarations of Interest by Members.
There were none

15/43 PUBLIC FORUM

To receive representations from members of the public on matters within the remit of the Town Council.

The mayor's response to representations made concerning parking and empty retail units in the town are attached as Appendix A.

Mrs Hazel Mead. Raised the issues of clearance of FP27 which had not yet taken place and the footpath adjacent to the old bottle dump.

Clerk responded that FP27 would be followed up. The other footpath is identified as the responsibility of EHDC and this also will be pursued.

Mrs Monya Billing. Raised the issues of a raised pavement slab by the London Road planter and flooding at the West Road junction.

Clerk responded that the issues would be reported and resolved.

Mr Derek Filler. Raised the issues of attendance by councillors at events: Civic Service – 5; Fun on the Field – 4 and Music in the garden – 0. He noted that one councillor had not put himself forward for any committee membership, he further commented on the standard of dress of councillors at meetings and also that it appears that “if you don't do anything, you'll get elected”.

Mr Norman Manion. Commented that the mayor had done a good job of sorting out the street lighting issues in Saffron Gardens. He mentioned that the failure to clarify the “in and out” situation at Saffron Gardens was putting children into danger. He noted that he

had been campaigning for speed limits to be imposed since 2012. He advocated a “citizen’s patrol” to monitor speeding. He commented that the fact the two councillors had transferred allegiance from Independent to Conservative at the last elections was a “reach of etiquette” and should be looked into.

Clerk responded that he would consult with the Acting Returning Officer for his view on the matter.

Mr Tony Vidler. Complained about proposed parking restrictions in The Orchards. He pointed out that new housing and parking restrictions in Station Road had moved cars into The Orchards. The restrictions would remove 12 car parking spaces. He regretted there had been no response from EHDC to the request for a residents parking scheme. He stated that residents had not been consulted about proposals.

Clerk advised that it was a County Council issue and that a consultation was currently taking place. Comments were welcome to assist the decision making process.

Ms Caroline Bannister. Complained about drunkenness in The Orchards and vehicles obstructing movement. She also commented on rats emanating from Budgens car park.

Mr Tony Vidler. Commented that the rats appeared to come from overflowing food waste bins on the trolley park in Budgens car park.

Clerk responded that he would contact the owners of the store.

Mr Norman Manion. Commented that he thought that the town council was non-political and that is the way it should stay. He suggested that the new councillors should declare what they were going to do for parishioners.

Ms Caroline Bannister. Commented that the new Town Action Plan should address these issues and those relating to the number of empty shops in the town.

She was advised that issue had been opened up at the last meeting of the council which had been attended by 29 parishioners.

Cllr John Burmicz. In response to earlier comments said that he had stood as a Conservative and had lobbied hard. He gave reasons why he had not been able to attend some events, mainly due to other fund raising commitments. He further commented that Members should be judged by their actions in doing something for the town rather than their sartorial elegance.

Mr Derek Filler. Commented that parish electors should be voting for people and not political parties in town council polls.

15/44

MINUTES

Resolved: To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Town Council held on 29 June 2015 (M02)
[prop. Cllr Alder; secd. Cllr Burmicz]

- 15/45 PLANNING COMMITTEE**
Received and noted: the minutes of the Planning Committee Meetings held on:
- 29 June 2015 (P02)
 - 13 July 2015 (P03)
- 15/46 AMENITIES COMMITTEE**
Received and noted: the minutes of the Amenities Committee Meeting held on:
- 13 July 2015 (A01)
- 15/47 MAYOR'S CORRESPONDENCE/COMMUNICATIONS**
 To receive Mayor's appointments and communications which were presented *in huis absentia* by the Deputy Mayor.
- I'd like to thank the guide leaders for their excellent afternoon tea following the civic service. Thanks also to those members who were able to attend.
- During July I attended the opening of a new enterprise in Sawbridgeworth, the Centre for Wellbeing, on London Road. I wish them every success.
- I went to do some work on the garden of a Sawbridgeworth resident under the Operation Stomp Scheme. I received a letter of thanks from one of the neighbours.
- Councillor Gary Jones, East Herts Executive Member for Economic Development came here for a meeting with local retailers. This followed the representations made at last month's Council meeting. My response to those representations is in this evenings agenda pack for receipt by members. The Town Clerk has also invited one of the local commercial landlords for a meeting to discuss challenges that may exist in filling empty premises.
- My next fund raising events will be the movies with the mayor event on 11th September starting at 7:30pm in Bullfields Park, then a quiz night to be held on 24th October at Bullfields Centre.
- 15/48 REPRESENTATIVES REPORTS**
 To receive representatives reports from:
- County Councillor Roger Beeching MBE JP BDS deferred his report to the next meeting of the council.
 - District Councillor Eric Buckmaster reported:
 - We held a successful launch of Time Banking here in Sawbridgeworth. My thanks go to councillor Alder for her role as local champion.
 - Get Park Active 2015 at Pishiobury Park, Sawbridgeworth – 12noon to 3pm on Thursday 30 July
 - District Councillor Angela Alder reported:
 - Attending all the meeting of committees to which she had been appointed.
 - Joint Strategic needs Assessment (JSNA)
 - Other Representatives:
 - Cllr E Buckmaster for **RHSO**. Maintenance morning will be next Sunday at 10:30 am. Chairman Rob Richardson has developed a new website which will be populated

over the coming weeks and months and contain details of future events. The web address is rhso.co.uk

15/49 MEETING DATE

Resolved: That the meeting of the Council and the meeting of the Planning Committee scheduled for Monday 28 September 2015 be changed to Tuesday 29 September 2015. [*prop. Cllr Alder; secd. Cllr Burmicz*]

15/50 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Discussed whether to produce a Neighbourhood Plan and advised Members of a presentation by EHDC arranged for 07 September to explain the implications.

15/51 GRANT APPLICATIONS

To consider Grant Applications from:

- Sawbridgeworth Girl Guide Hut £500
[prop. Cllr Alder; secd. Cllr Riches]
- Southbrook Allotment Association £500
[prop. Cllr Coysten; secd. Cllr Royle]
- Bullfields Allotment Association £500
[prop. Cllr Alder; secd. Cllr Coysten]
- Sawbridgeworth Camera Club £497
[prop. Cllr Shaw; secd. Cllr Royle]

15/52 CLERK'S REPORT

Received and noted: the Town Clerk's report, *this is attached as Appendix B*

Noted that the three remaining councillors will attend the next new councillor training session in September. Clerk answered questions on the functionality of the town's cctv system and on the "sensitive streets" initiative.

15/53 TOWN PROJECTS REPORT

Received and noted: the Town Project Manager's report, *this is attached as Appendix C*

Noted the success of recent events. Projects Manager answered questions on initial thoughts about the replacement for the Farmers Market.

15/54 DEPOSIT & CONSULTATION DOCUMENTS

There were none to be reported.

15/55 FINANCIAL REPORT

Noted: The current Financial Report

15/56 ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

Noted and Approved: Accounts for payment

Meeting closed at 20:55

The next meeting of the Town Council will be held at 8.30 pm on Monday 7 September 2015 in the Council Chamber at Sayesbury Manor, Bell Street Sawbridgeworth

Response from Eric Buckmaster Town Mayor to the Presentation by retailers to Sawbridgeworth Town Council Public forum on 29th June 2015

Overview: I should like to thank all of those who attended the meeting on 29th June to share their views and raise concerns regarding the current economic status of our town. I'm sure everyone appreciates the scale of the problem and recognises that there will be no instant remedies. However I can say on behalf of the town council that we are committed to exploring options for improving the economic vibrancy of the town. This will involve the town council working together with residents and retailers and partners across the district and county. In this report I shall try to answer those questions as raised as far as I am able at this time. The key thing I want to stress is that we need to make Sawbridgeworth a more attractive destination for shoppers. My responses will be in bold. I will then briefly outline a couple of examples of what the Town Council has been doing to enhance the town centre and then suggest strategies for future engagement with residents and retailers to seek solutions.

Q .We are aware of a growing social media campaign which has been focussing on the empty retail units in Bell St and its surrounding areas. We also have concerns that Sawbridgeworth is no longer a thriving shopping area as it once was and we have spent some time discussing the historical reasons for why this might be. Rather than spend a lot of time going through why we think things have gone wrong and looking backwards, we have come up with a series of questions which we would like Sawbridgeworth Town Council to take forward on our behalf.

1) PARKING

We are aware that Bishops Stortford has parking bays on North St which offer a limited amount of free parking.

- a) What is the EHDC rationale behind allowing this in Bishops Stortford but not all towns in East Herts? We have always been told that it cannot be done on Bell St, yet there are no parking restrictions on Sundays? We feel that 20 minutes on-street parking on weekdays would be adequate for Sawbridgeworth and would have the additional benefit of reducing traffic speeds on Bell St without the cost of traffic-calming measures.
- b) Why are Saturdays and Bank Holidays considered different from Sundays as regards parking restrictions on Bell St? Is this simply a case of nothing being done to change the byelaws or is there a valid reason for the difference?

Response:

As councillor Roger Beeching said at the meeting he had previously explored options for parking bays in Bell Street. The difficulty is around doing so within safety guidelines. Here is an extract from the previous investigation by Herts County Council Officers " The road widths measured at regular intervals along Bell Street all fall below 5.5m, the minimum road width recommended for the safe provision of on-street parking whilst maintaining unimpeded passing traffic flows. There is no viable scope to provide additional road width along Bell Street due to the already narrow adjoining footways and close proximity of the building frontages, with the exception of a section of footway outside the bank which could be considered for localised road widening to accommodate a possible two new parking bays. This provision would

however be subject to detailed investigations and the presence of Statutory Undertakers underground utilities may prove expensive to negotiate. Observations have determined that contraventions of the existing waiting restrictions have led to instances of both obstructions to pedestrians and vehicular traffic alike, to a degree where pedestrians are clearly vulnerable to passing traffic. Parking in the same manner, although at a time that is outside of the period of operation of the single yellow lines, would create similar conflicts, and the presence of 'Keep Clear' markings at some access points would suggest that parking has already hampered certain turning movements.

Of course we are all aware that drivers continue to park in Bell Street for quick access to shops. Loading and unloading for commercial purposes is permitted. The current guidance from East Herts is that Civil Enforcement Officers will observe for up to 5 minutes to be sure that the activity being undertaken is loading and unloading before issuing a ticket.

Sawbridgeworth town centre is relatively well off in terms of nearby car park provision. Following dialogue with retailers three years ago the Town Council agreed to subsidise the car parks by providing the first hour free. This continues to be in place for this fiscal year and is currently funded directly by East Herts Council. The current national policy to which East Herts adheres is that there is a ten minute period of grace at the end of the paid for parking period in the car parks.

Parking policy and charges across the district are due to be reviewed and the needs of Sawbridgeworth is a worthy topic of conversation with the Executive member of Economic Development at East Herts, Gary Jones.

2) MIX OF BUSINESSES AND CONTROL OF CHANGE OF USE

It seems that recent business openings have been more of what we already have and that some of these have required applications to EHDC for change of use.

- a) Does EHDC have a policy of keeping retail space as retail as we have seen some recent conversions to residential?
- b) Does EHDC have a policy to encourage / enforce mixed retail use so we can enjoy a varied and unique shopping offering? Does EHDC consult with the town council or town representatives about change of use?
- c) How does EHDC use its position to influence private landlords to ensure a mixed retail offering?

Response:

There are policies in the Local Plan (2007) relating to shopping and town centres as there will also be in the emerging new District Plan. Here is an extract from the existing plan:

STC4 Shopping Frontages – Smaller Centres

(I) Within the existing main commercial frontages of Sawbridgeworth, Buntingford, and Stanstead Abbots and St Margaret's, as defined on the Proposals Map, and listed in Appendix (III) to this Local Plan, a range of uses will be encouraged within Use Classes A1 (Shops), A2 (Financial and Professional Services), A3 (Restaurants and Cafes), A4 (Drinking Establishments), A5 (Hot Food Takeaway), D1 (Non-Residential Institutions) and D2 (Assembly and Leisure). (II) Within these centres a sustainable level of shopping facilities will be maintained and proposals for development or change of use from Shop

(A1) to Non-Shop (non-A1) uses will not be permitted, where this would result in an excessive concentration of Non-Shop uses.

Questions had also been raised previously concerning the number of premises under the ownership of a particular company and whether or not Business Rate Relief applied to those premises. I had taken a look at the empty premises in Bell Street, Knight Street, and the Square. The numbering is not always obvious but I identified 15a Bell St; 21; 23; 47; 49 to 51; Next to 3 the square; 3 church St; 5 & 7 knight St. My research at East Herts indicated a variety of owners but that three of them were in the ownership of one company. Forebury Estates subsequently announced that number 47 Bell Street is now let as a book shop.

With regard to Business Rate relief the response I received from East Herts Officers is that empty shops receive a 100% discount for 3 months only, and then the full charge is due. However exceptions to this rule include listed properties and properties with an RV below £2600, where the discount remains indefinitely.

In Terms of what influence East Herts has in mixed retail usage the Local Plan states that 'Diversification may be less realistic in the smaller centres, particularly where there is a concentration of residential units within the centre. Nevertheless a range of units will be encouraged where these will add to the overall vitality and variety of the centre'. As we have seen in recent years there have been huge pressures on shopping centres owing to the proliferation of out of town offerings and the large increase in internet and digital shopping. Private landlords will therefore be presented with a more limited choice of potential users. We have witnessed then the growth in number of those businesses that still require the physical presence of the customer such as hairdressers, beauty salons, and for the night time economy restaurants and pubs, although the number of pubs in Sawbridgeworth has decreased.

3) NEW COUNCILLORS

Following the recent elections, we have some new councillors and some who have been re-elected. We understand that all the portfolios have been allocated so now is the time to find out who we need to speak to in order to start things moving for Sawbridgeworth.

- a) Who is the ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT COUNCILLOR?
- b) Is it possible to arrange a meeting between interested parties in Sawbridgeworth, a representative from Sawbridgeworth Town Council and this councillor? The meeting should have a clear agenda so that it avoids becoming just another talking-shop.

Thanks for listening; we look forward to hearing the responses to these questions and moving forward together towards a more vibrant Sawbridgeworth.

Response:

Gary Jones is the Executive Member for Economic Development in East Herts and he also includes parking in his portfolio. He has agreed to meet retailers and residents at a date and time of mutual convenience. Gary will be interested in the views and experience of retailers and this could inform future policy decisions. While an important topic I would like to strongly urge all concerned to look beyond just the matter of on street parking in Bell Street. There will be contrasting views among residents on this matter. The subject of economic development is very much wider than this single issue and I believe that implementation of this request

would have a marginal impact on the wellbeing of our town centre. There is much, much more to do than that.

Town Council Activities:

What has the town council been working on to improve the town centre to encourage visitors?

There are some initiatives which can be reviewed in more detail in the minutes but briefly they are:

Repurposing/landscaping of green in front of doctors surgery. This is a useful open space, owned by East Herts council, which could be opened up and improved to enable greater public use for leisure and town events without encroaching on existing parking spaces. The Town Council has been in discussion with East Herts as to what can be achieved in terms of design.

In addition to the above the Town Clerk and Projects Manager are reviewing possible regular events/markets to replace the Farmers Markets that recently ceased owing to declining visitors. Residents and retailers and the voluntary sector could work with the town council to assess the most viable activities in conjunction with promotions in the retail outlets in Bell Street. There could be some creativity here that would bring more people in to town.

An essential improvement would be to refurbish/renovate the public lavatories in Bell Street car park. There is funding from East Herts and the potential for the Town Council to maintain/clean. The final decision depends on agreement between the two parties on design.

A key service to the town is the Central Surgery. There are plans for expansion with a number of quite complex issues still to resolve. The existing surgery site freehold is with East Herts. I have been liaising with East Herts officers to formulate mutually agreeable commercial terms for the continued use of the site as part of the enlarged premises.

Next Steps:

Town action Plan Committee comprised of residents, retailers, and councillors will be reformed and resumed, hopefully this month. This is a wide ranging plan including many aspects of the town including community safety, access to open spaces and leisure, community transport, housing, and of course economic activities. It could highlight priorities that come under the remit of the Town Council and other authorities and agencies in partnership. Economic development could feature high on the list.

Finally, In view of the potential for housing development in Sawbridgeworth coming from the emerging District Plan the Town Council will consider the possibility of undertaking a Neighbourhood Plan which could set out key aspects of any development including design and access.

**Eric Buckmaster
Town Mayor, Sawbridgeworth Town Council,
July 2015**

Town Clerks Report

Allotments

- Monthly inspection carried out
- Significant weed clearance at Bullfields.
- Tree surgery under way at Bellmead.
- Landlord's Meeting to be established.
- New representative for Vantorts site
- Autumn Flower show will be resurrected in September.

Bus Shelters

- Cleaned and maintained, hanging baskets installed

Car Park Subsidy (First Hour Free)

- Now taken on by EHDC

Cemetery

- 26 Interments managed in 2015 to date
- Significant tree surgery carried out
- Hedge removal works to be carried out after complaints by a neighbour.
- Road ways resurfaced with 59 tonnes of pea shingle – usual complaints!
- Service development by utilising council chamber for secular services – now to be debated at Council meeting on 07 September

Chamber Utilisation

- See cemetery service development above

Community Transport - Sawbobus and Minibus Hire

- Sawbobus will continue to operate through the A1184 road works, July scheduled works did not take place – no further advices received.
- Dial-a-Ride service provided; 25 so far this year.
- EFDC confirmed £1,000 and ECC confirmed £4,000 grants for 2015/16

Consultee on all matters relevant to the town

- HCC consultation on “Sensitive Streets” – A1184 is flagged as a Grade 2 street from 08:00 – 18:00

Crime Prevention Initiatives

- CCTV; recent incidents: images captured of LCV causing damage to railings and forwarded to Ringway for recovery action; images captured of perpetrators passing off fake £50 note.
- Police Liaison, noted that our current cover is one part time PC. Full time PC has been transferred away and two PCSO’s are currently both on leave.

Democratic Services

- Electronic distribution not approved so paperwork systems being reviewed.
- Health and Safety procedures being revised and reviewed
- Annual Return produced, subjected to internal audit and prepared for external audit, approved by council and sent recorded delivery to BDO.
- Council constitution and protocols in phased production

Farmers Market

- See Project Manager’s report

Fly Posting

- Continued surveillance and unauthorised advertising removed.
- Authorised charity banners installed and removed in a timely manner.

Grants to voluntary organisations

- Next round due to be considered in July. Applications already received from two of the allotment associations and Sawbridgeworth Camera Club.
- Appeal from CAB for further help as potential grant funding reduced after change in council’s grant policy

Hanging Baskets and Planters

- London Road planter maintained and watered on a daily basis.
- Hanging Baskets, approach sign planters and direction post baskets installed throughout the town, sponsored by Oakridge Nursery.

Hertfordshire Highways

- Highways Together pilot project. Invited to present to launch event on 29 June. Feedback given to County Officer.
- Sign cleaning, sign removal, footpaths clearance, town sign erection and gardening works carried out.
- Herts CC invoiced for local agency work. Now are querying item on invoice relating to investigation HCC liability for clearance of Scholars Walk footpath.

Neighbourhood Plan

- Members indicated a need for a Neighbourhood Plan
- Presentation to be made to STC on 07 September – decision to be made by council at end of September.

Planning Matters (acting as a consultee)

- 22 Applications considered since the beginning of the new term.
- 6 apparent contraventions of planning system reported to EHDC enforcement officers for action
- Coming to terms with a seriously flawed EHDC planning notification system.

Projects

- Bell Street Conveniences; ongoing dialogue with EHDC since October 2013 over refurbishment and maintenance responsibility.
- Town Green; ongoing dialogue with EHDC since January 2015 over project to revitalize area as a community hub and town centre focus.

Publicity/Information:

- Annual Report; published at Annual Town Meeting; report to be included in next newsletter.
- Newsletter; four editions published annually; next edition due by end of July.
- Town Guide;
- Website; new site managed by two staff members.

Promoting the town

- See Project Manager's report

Recreation Areas

- Bullfields, vandalism to litter bins, fabric of building
- West Road issues with one piece of equipment

Rivers Heritage Orchard Group

- See Project Manager's report

Staffing

- Gill Abbott remains on long term sick leave
- Tracey Dobinson now working half shifts on Sawbobus
- Frank Gowen acting as a relief driver.
- Karen Ashton accepted a three month extension to her contract to job share with Tracey Dobinson for community bus driving / reception duties.

Town Action Plan

- Secretariat managed on behalf of the town
- New round of meetings scheduled for Monday 03 August

Town Ranger & Groundsman

- On summer hours from 01 June to water plants
- Height of grass cutting season, Rangers tools budget committed to purchase of a second hand mower.

- Contract grass cutting and litter clearance for SYPRC
- Contract plant watering for Eastwick and Gilston Parish Councils.
- Contract grass cutting for RHSO Group
- Some relief community bus driving

Training

- Next round of new Councillor training is on 24 September 2015
- All minibus drivers to be put through HCC training course

DRAFT

Town Project Manager's Report

Civic Events (promoted by the Mayor)

- Civic Service - Sunday 12 July 2015, 3pm at Great St Mary's Church. Thank you to all that attended. Thank you for apologies from Cllr Reeks, Cllr Mortimer, Cllr Hall and Cllr Adamopoulos.
- Mayor's Charity Fund raiser – Outdoor Film Night at Bullfields, Family Event. Friday 11 September 2015. Ticket enquiries are to be emailed to info@sawbridgeworth-tc.gov.uk (Please see poster on reverse)
- Quiz Night – 24th October 2015 – Bring your own drinks and nibbles – Ticket Price £5 per person. Enquires to info@sawbridgeworth-tc.gov.uk
- Christmas Disco for under 15's – Leventhorpe School (TBC) Friday 11th December 2015 6pm to 8pm
- Civic Dinner – Saturday April 9th 2016 at Sawbridgeworth Memorial Hall.
- Spring Duck Race – Date TBC.
- Annual Civic Awards and Presentation of Mayor's Charity cheque to Sawbridgeworth & High Wych Girl Guiding. Friday 20th May 2016 (7pm)

Other Civic Ceremonial Events

Town Projects Manager assists with the organisation and the civic ceremonial aspect of this visit. This includes liaising with retail and businesses to open their shops on the Sunday morning to welcome our visitors by dressing their shop windows etc.

- Bry-sur-Marne Town Twinning - Families and visitors will be arriving on Friday 18th September. Families will be collected from Leventhorpe School, they will then be hosted by the Town Council with welcome drinks in the Chamber from 6.30pm.
- Saturday – Day out in London with host families – Evening dinner at the Memorial Hall.
- Sunday – Lunch at The Hailey Centre & Town Council Chamber and departure at 1pm

Community Events

- Fun on the Field; in partnership with Hertfordshire Police. This year was another outstanding success despite the rather dreary weather, held on June 14th 2015; now a regular community event with dog show; fairground; fire service; police service; charity stalls; Bar-B-Q and other Refreshments. Proposed date for this event in 2016 is Sunday 12th June.
- Christmas Lights/Trees: Planning already under way, including police liaison, applying for road closures. Heart Radio's Martin & Su have been booked to perform MC for the entertainment stage.
- The children's Christmas competition (Jack and the Beanstalk) will take place. 1200 entry forms are distributed to all of the Junior / infant Schools in the town. In order to attract more participation this year we are going to place a competition post box into each school. We have a very low return for completion entries and are hoping that this will encourage more children to enter. In conjunction with this we run the

Badge Competition and last year's winner will have their picture printed onto badges that will be given out on Friday 27th November by Father Christmas.

Promoting the town

- Researching a replacement community event for the Farmers' Market is well underway. Visits to continental markets in Enfield and Saffron Walden for observation have been carried out. A Meeting with France at Home would be our preferred option, however the representative has confirmed that Town Green (in its current format) and Fair Green are not suitable locations. Continued research will continue to source a location that would attract footfall to the Town Centre and assist with the vibrancy and development of the main shopping offering in the town.
- Bullfields is an ideal location for the French market and early discussions are in place with our main sponsor Oakridge Nursery to consider a Spring Flower Show and market combined.
- Tourism agenda – the group that was headed up by an officer at EHDC has now disbanded. EHDC currently do not have any plans to meet with regards to this topic.

Rivers Heritage Orchard Group

- The group are taking a steady approach at present until they are fully established. Apple day and Wassail will still take place and Town Projects Manager will be overseeing the logistical aspect of the group holding events from an insurance and health and safety perspective. Future promotional activities will be established as the group settles into a regular routine with maintenance etc.