

Sawbridgeworth Town Centre Partnership
Minutes of Meeting
10th May 2007

Those present:

Cllr Angela Alder	Meeting Chair	Partnership Councillor
Joseph Fitzgerald	Resident/Community	Partnership Community
Cllr Brian Rochester	Town Council	Partnership Councillor
Simon Dennis	Dennis Butchers	Partnership Business
Chrissy Young	Resident/All About You	Partnership Community
Monya Billing	Resident /Stort Valley Project	
Cllr Joyce Vincent	Resident/Town Council	
Charles Wall	Leventhorpe School Resident	Meeting Host
Carole Wall	Resident/Community	
Stephanie Newman	Resident/Grassroutes Soap	
Lesley Hines	Resident/Community	
Nicky Burdett	Resident/Community	
Dianne Sutherland	Resident/Leventhorpe School	
Keith Jacques	Jacques & Associates	
Gill Hawkins	Youth CREATE	
Nigel Clark	EHDC Councillor	
Sara Evans	Resident/Community	
Julia Argent	Resident/Community	
Mike Grace	MG Graphic Design	

1. 1. Welcome

This meeting of the Sawbridgeworth Town Partnership was opened by Angela Alder who welcomed the many new faces from the resident /community. Leventhorpe School were thanked for hosting this meeting.

2. Apologies

Paul & Michelle Gravelle, Cllr Roger Beeching, Christina Fonseca, Kay Allington, Nicky Needham, Gary Needham, Lyndon & Fiona Wootton, Gillian Melling, Paul Pullin, Eileen Evans, Ben Poole, Penny Poole, Sarah Lilly, Lynda Sands

3. To approve Minutes of March 22nd 2007 Meeting

Minutes previously circulated to participants of that meeting were agreed as a correct record of the meeting. Minutes of that meeting and Agenda for this meeting are not printed out as they are circulated by e-mail and are available to download from www.sawbridgeworth.com
 Paper copies are available on request for those not on the internet.

4. Matters Arising from last meeting

A proposal to place a telephone mast on London Road [brought to the attention of the STP at a previous meeting] has since had its planning application refused.
 No other matters arising that are not already addressed in the working groups reports.

5. Report from Working Groups

Retail (RWG)

Chrissy Young reported on the actions and achievements of the Retail Working Group since the last STP meeting.

Coupon Scheme was launched to coincide with the Farmers' Market and the first 10 businesses taking part were listed, the scheme had met its target dates and despite the promised offers of help not materialising when it came to delivering the coupons door to door, the majority of the 3000 coupons were delivered. Some coupons were delivered in tandem with Farmers' Market leaflets which is exactly the type of synergies within the STP we wish to capitalise on.

Chrissy stated that it was hoped to encourage many more businesses to get involved next time to coincide with the July Farmers' Market.

Mike Grace made the point that the delivered coupon sheet was not of very high quality and could easily be binned. He stated that graphics/artwork and quality of paper and printing were of lesser quality. In response it

was clearly pointed out that the coupons scheme had achieved all its targets in the extreme short time to get retailers signed up, in the very limited funds available up front and delays in getting approval for the £106.00 (approx) printing costs from the SBA.

With serious commitment from all retailers it was agreed it would be possible to have a higher quality coupon sheet next time.

STP & Retail Website, Chrissy reported on the general progress on the development of the website and Joseph used slides to demonstrate the latest progress.

Pictures of premises have been taken, Map alteration & map licences are underway, the draft content of top pages is already outlined, Space and Domain name to be purchased

The Funding for set up and year one is agreed by EHDC. The pros and cons of available domain names that the STP can use were discussed and preferences were expressed for [sawbridgeworthonline](#) versus [sawbridgeworthlife](#). Further feedback will be sought on these names.

When mock up is ready we will show what is possible and this will be taken to businesses to get their support. Keith Jacques asked if there were plans to incorporate the Maltings in the site and it was agreed that we would look for a special solutions for the Maltings, in view of the fact that many of the businesses were housed inside a large building and a picture of an individual shop front was more of a challenge.

Tourism

Gill Hawkins gave a report on the work to date in the group with special emphasis on **Signage**. The group had recently audited the state of signage in the town and the following short term priorities were ready to take forward.

1. On entering SBW from the south an approach sign announcing to town centre.
2. South to North near top of Bell St - sign for Shops and Centre
3. North to South near top of Bell St - sign for Shops and Centre
4. East to West on Station road – a finger sign L for Shops and Centre (pedestrians)
5. Approaching top of Station road L sign for Shops and Centre (motorists)

The above priorities will be put to Hertfordshire Highways and it was suggested that a petition may be needed to escalate the priority. If for example we can get a sign included for a facility like The Library at this stage we will also do that.

6 & 7. A finger sign at rail station towards town centre & the reverse in the town centre for the station. This priority will be put to One Rail Company.

8 & 9. A finger sign at the Stort River towards the town centre and the reverse in the town centre for the river. This priority will be put to British Waterways Board.

Regardless of the alternative views to these priorities we now need practical help to take these proposals forward to the authorities for action, the time for endless debate on this critical issue for the viability of the SBW Town Centre is long over. We need volunteers who are prepared to roll up their sleeves.

Millennium Video

Mike Grace is currently looking at a proposal to re edit some of the relevant parts form this video made in 2000 to help in the promotion of the town centre through the STP website or as a CD. It is hoped to have a finalised proposal to discuss at the next meeting of the STP in June.

Farmers' Market

Lesley Hines gave a full report on the first major STP success of the 'big event' on Saturday 5th of May in Bell Street Car Park. Slides with footfall counts and pictures from the market were presented.

- • The Marketing and Press support with pre and post coverage was top notch.
- • Signs and banners were produced for us for free by Wright and Co and KGS signs of SBW and we recognise their positive contribution to our success.
- • The Producers all showed up, brought some excellent products sold out after a few hours (170+ dozen eggs) and every producer signed up for the next market.
- • Before and during event footfall surveys were presented and with 326% increase in numbers on Bell Street the evidence in numbers as to the impact this market has on town centre vibrancy is plain for all to see.
- • This was borne out by the fact that cafes were overrun; Simon Dennis Butchers and organisations such as Hailey Day Centre had bumper takings, queues formed at the many cash machines (a Sawbridgeworth rarity).
- • The market logistics [which started at 5.30 am and finished at 6pm when the last posters were taken down] ran to plan with the minor exception of an internal communication error at the Doctors surgery.

- • The FM Working Group are very grateful for the practical support on the day from Gill Hawkins, Roger Beeching, Gillian Melling, Charles and Carole Wall, Kate Yarnold, Fiona Wootton and Nicky Burdett for her opening remarks.
- • Special thanks on the day to the 'opening ceremony' team: (Scarlet, Olivia, Rebecca and supporters)

The take home message from this event shows what can be achieved to revitalise our town, when instead of endless talking about something we just get on and do it.

Community and Culture.

[Supporting our community and encouraging positive use of leisure time]

This Working Group is still in the formation stage and Carole Wall has taken a lead with getting some movement. There is a need for some meetings to take place and identify some of the objectives that can be tackled.

Clubs and sports group require motivation to get interested and involved in the STP.

Environment.

Stephanie reported on progress from meetings with Alan Trebby,

[To promote environmentally sustainable practices within Sawbridgeworth]

The key actions to achieve the above objective were.

- Encourage local buying and selling.
- Ensure retail and amenities in Sawbridgeworth are accessible to all
- Promote walking, cycling, enjoyment of Sawbridgeworth's natural beauty and footpaths.
- Encourage exercise and sport in Sawbridgeworth
- Encourage recycling and efficient use of energy and resources
- Look at ways to improve traffic flow through the town.

There is a need to recruit more volunteers to this group as we start to tackle some of the objectives.

6. Business Plan of the STP 2007-2010

This was a main item on this agenda as the draft was now ready for consultation by STP board members, the working groups and everyone in our town who has an interest.

Charles introduced the work done so far and said ownership of this plan is with the STP and everyone involved has a responsibility to ensure we work towards the achievement of the objectives set. The document nicely sets out the purpose of the BP, a who is who & what we are about, our core values, before going on to present a summary of each of our 5 key theme areas and initiatives. The appendix section provides the detailed action list and timescales etc. The single aim on vitality and vibrancy has been condensed into a single statement entitled:

"Positively promoting our town through partnership"

It was clear that meeting participants needed time to absorb the detail and so the document now goes out for comment and constructive feedback.

The key objectives have not been handed down or set out for us by anyone externally; this BP is a summary of the discussions within the Working Groups kindly put together for us by Charles Wall and Leventhorpe School. This is a living, evolving document and we all have a duty to keep it so.

7. Election of Officers – proposal

The election of key positions to the board of STP remains outstanding. Those present at the meeting were asked to consider positions [chairperson, deputy and secretary] that they might wish to be nominated for.

The role of chairing the meeting was discussed and as a learning organisation we looked at the proposal to rotate the chairing of this meeting between the 3 main Partnership groups for 2 consecutive meetings per group. Those present were encouraged to put themselves forward for this 'rotating chair' role.

Proposal was not voted on as there were insufficient business retail members present.

8. Any other Business

A question was raised about the current status of the Town Council in view of the fact that no elections had taken place and the lack of information about how an individual could become a Town Councillor. Angela Alder explained the situation about the lack of people coming forward for election. The previous councillors who had put themselves up for election were forming the new town council and were co-opting people who expressed an interest. Despite the fact that the town council notice board in the car park is constantly vandalised, concern was expressed on how the Town Council disseminates community relevant information in a wider and timely fashion.

Letters received, of support for the STP and the success of the Farmers' Market were read out from EHDC leader Tony Jackson, Cllr R. Beeching, Cllr N. Clark and Chief Executive Ann Freimanis.

The last item under any other business was a 2 slide presentation on the concept of Town Partnership and the need to maintain the momentum built up over the previous six months. The emphasis now needs to move from talking about doing to the actual practical implementation of some excellent initiatives; regardless of whom we have to cooperate with we need to find a way to move things forward.

Recently a group within the STP put 2,500+ customers on the streets of SBW and this is a marker of the potential we can achieve, which is borne out by the evolving strapline for the STP: **“Positively promoting our town through partnership”**

9. Date & Venue of next meeting.

Is set for Wednesday 20th of June at 7.30 - same Venue unless otherwise advised.