

Sawbridgeworth Town Centre Partnership

Minutes of Meeting

22nd February 2007

Those present:

Cllr Angela Alder	Meeting Chairperson	Partnership Councillor
Cllr Brian Rochester	Town Council	Partnership Councillor
Simon Dennis	Dennis Butchers	Partnership Business
Paul Gravelle	Budgens	Partnership Business
Kay Allington	All About You	Partnership Business
Nicky Needham	Business	Partnership Business
Fiona Wootton	Goose Fat & Garlic	Partnership Business
Don Patel	Tuck Shop/SBA	Partnership Business
Gillian Melling	Resident	Partnership Community
Chris Carter	Resident/Country Markets	Partnership Community
Chrissy Young	Resident/All about You	Partnership Community
Joseph Fitzgerald	Resident	Partnership Community
Lyndon Wootton	Goose Fat & Garlic	
Gary Needham	Resident	
Eileen Evans	Daisy Roots	
Ben Poole	Resident	
Penny Poole	Resident	
Monya Billing	Stort Valley Project	
Tony Darkinson	Resident	
Charles Wall	Leventhorpe School	
Carole Wall	Resident	
Kate Hazlehurst	King William IV	
Stephanie Newman	Resident/Grassroutes Soap	
Gill Hawkins	Secretary of SBA	

1. 1. Welcome

This meeting of the Sawbridgeworth Town Partnership (STP) was opened by Angela Alder who welcomed the large attendance (24 persons) and again many new faces from Business and the Community.

2. Apologies

Alison Frost, Lesley Hines, Dianne Clark, Cllr Roger Beeching, Michelle Gravelle
Paul Pullin EHDC, Peter Scally, Nicola Burdett, Sarah Lilly & Mandeville School

3. To approve notes from January 17th 2007 Meeting

Notes circulated to participants of that meeting were agreed as a correct record of the meeting.

4. Matters Arising

Item 4. Constitution of Sawbridgeworth Town Partnership (STP) Clarification and advice had arrived on the minimum voting requirements and quorum from Democratic Services, EHDC. The proportionality yardstick was discussed; the Economic Adviser from EHDC would not have a vote. The Town Centre Manager (once appointed) would be an employee of The Partnership (STP) and would not have a vote.

The minimum membership mix that is required to be present for voting on Partnership decisions was agreed unanimously as follows:

3 Members of the Business Sector

2 Members of the Community

1 Town Councillor

The Quorum for a valid meeting of the Partnership to take place is 6.

The Constitution is now finalised.

Partnership Members & Working Groups

There was a recap and clarification of the Partnership structures, membership and the various Working Groups agreed at the previous meeting for those who were new to the group. It was reiterated that this is a '**Partnership**' in every sense of the word, a consensus of the willing, working positively towards a common goal. Everyone is expected to contribute. It is open to all newcomers from Business or the Community who can participate by joining the Working Groups.

5. Report from Working Groups

Joseph Fitzgerald thanked all the participants who returned the completed 'Topics for Business Plan', 22 forms went out, and 17 valid returns were made. This was an excellent result and it made the selection of topics for prioritising so much easier and the Business Plan Group were quickly able to do the analysis.

Business Plan (BP)

Charles Wall reported on progress with getting the BP of the Sawbridgeworth Town Partnership on the rails. Priorities for STP are:

- 1) 1) Economic vitality;
- 2) 2) Promotion (of the Sawbridgeworth offer);
- 3) 3) Establishing STP as a brand;
- 4) 4) Community and Culture;
- 5) 5) Environment

The Working Groups were asked how they can best contribute to the STP priorities.

CEW had taken the STP aims and objectives to Leventhorpe School and reported on his success at harnessing a team of Business oriented staff and students to the enterprise. CEW outlined how ICT, Business Studies, Student Council and Geography students

might get involved and contribute towards the development of the STP Business Plan.

This was very well received as most of those attending were unaware of the kind of resources that could be tapped into and utilised to achieve objectives on both sides.

All working groups were asked to invite members of this team to attend their meetings in order to shape the Business Plan. (Email CEW on c.wall@leventhorpe.herts.sch.uk)

Tourism

Gill Hawkins is the spokesperson and she reported on the work to date in drawing up our Tourism Objectives These include promoting Sawbridgeworth as an enjoyable visitor destination by improving and developing sustainable and accessible shopping, leisure, business and heritage attractions, providing all visitors to SBW with timely, accurate information in a manner they wish to receive it. To increase footfall & capitalise on other attractions.

She explained some of the practical steps that could be taken with improvements in signage, linking up with British Waterways Board and preparing for increased visitor numbers in 2012.

She explained that the value of tourism was not only monetary and how visitor numbers would fit in with other developments in the region.

Farmers' Market

Lesley Hines is the spokesperson and she was unable to attend at the last moment. The group reported their Objectives which included the following;

To add to the variety of retail offer in the town. To highlight SBW as a gastro and tourist destination, Promoting local food and reducing food miles, Keep shoppers in SBW

To increase the footfall in the town by using a specific event as a visitor attraction.

To restore the identity of SBW as a Market Town.

The group will continue to develop their plans to secure permission to hold a market, sign up producers and when those steps are in place to promote to the public. This will be an event that will require all businesses to get involved in raising the profile.

Retail

Don Patel spoke on behalf of the retail group and explained their findings to date. Their main objective is to Revitalize the local Business Community & Increase Footfall

Other identified strategies are to address the issue of Rates Discounts, encourage landlords to join the retail group, encourage Local Community to shop locally & encourage more diversity of shops.

Lengthy discussion followed on these last two points and the Retail group are working on surveying the local community or their retail wants and needs and in the same process using shop promotions and initiatives to get the local community and visitors to get more engaged in the town. Suggestions for monthly flyers and coupons were put forward and discussed and these initiatives need the widespread support and direct involvement of retailers.

Various suggestions were made regarding the improvement of communications to the local community regarding the retail offer of SBW

Further discussion centred on car parking, where Angela Alder reported that there will probably be some short stay spaces allocated in the car park, and a reversal of the direction of flow in and out of car park. It was also

suggested that Church and Town should be made bigger to allow more advertising, or a monthly town magazine should be produced, similar to that in Church Langley.

Health, Social & Leisure:

As a result of the Topics for BP - Survey analysis, this group henceforth will be known as **Community and Culture**. To date they have initiated group contact and a formal meeting has not been possible due to school breaks and the fact that some members are on other Working Groups.

This provided the right moment to redefine the groups and participants who had over committed stepped back and new members were co-opted. The updated list of participants of all 5 Working Groups will be circulated soon.

The practical work in the groups and the real progress made with identifying objectives to date was highlighted by Angela Alder as a real achievement for the Partnership in its early infancy.

6. STP next steps:

Each Working Group will now need to set up a series of meetings to agree, formalise and firm up their Action Plans (JF to circulate template for action plan). Each group spokesperson should try and coordinate this. All Actions Plans and all group progress should be fed into the Business Planning Group.

The development of the STP Business Plan by the 16th of April is a key milestone

During this important planning phase the need was emphasised to be well structured, very clear and have well defined objectives with realistic and achievable outcomes. The groups need to be very specific about what they want and in tune with the objectives and requirements of any grant giving body.

Kate offered to carry out research on the internet into Town Partnerships. Once our Business Plan is developed it would be worth asking representatives from other successful Partnerships to talk about their experiences.

7. Procedure to elect STP officers

Joseph Fitzgerald asked those present to consider a procedure to elect STP Chairman, Deputy, Treasurer and Secretary. We could do this at a meeting in the near future or we could postpone it for some months until the Partnership had settled into a working routine and members had become more familiar with roles.

There is a requirement to elect an interim Treasurer and an appeal was made to see if we can acquire the assistance of one of the Financial Services organisations who could support the Sawbridgeworth Town Partnership (STP) in this valuable way.

8. Any other Business

Meeting dates should be set for regular intervals for the rest of the year and a proposal will be made.

9. Date & Venue of next meeting.

Is set for Thursday 22nd of March at 7.30 Venue to be confirmed.