



Soham Town Forum, P.O. Box 21, The Pavilion,
Fountain Lane, Soham, Cambridgeshire, CB7 5PL

Tel/Fax: 01353 723472
Website: www.forum.soham.org.uk
E-Mail: info@forum.soham.org.uk

Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday 14th July 2005

Present

Robert Peacock (Soham Town Forum Chairman)	Alison Callaby (East Cambridgeshire District Council)
Rosemary Aitchinson (Soham Town Council Chair)	Lawrie Budd (Ely Standard)
George Ginn (Soham Town Council)	John Kirkham (Soham Town Council)
Anne Tuite (Soham Town Council)	Colin Fordham (East Cambs District Councillor)
Colin Palmer (Resident)	Robert Barnes (Resident)

Apologies

Pat Dutton (Health for Life Project)	John Powley (Cambridgeshire County Councillor)
Sylvia Riley (Resident)	Sheila Rayner (Resident)
Geoff Griggs (Soham Staploe Rotary Club)	Donna Martin (Soham Museum Project)

Resignations at this time

Maureen Dwyer (Soham Town Council)

Matters Arising

- No update on bus timetable on new bus stop – AC to raise with CCC
- Everyone agreed that the repainted town signs looked marvellous.
- Disappointed by number that attended town twinning but good contributions made.

Action Plan 2005/06

Lawrie, picking up on the older persons element of the action plan, highlighted a recent national pensioners conference which noted that older persons were often frightened to go out in the evening. Some discussion also about the number of events for the elderly. Although on discussion the Forum heard that there were regular coffee mornings on Tuesdays and a Salvation Army meal on Thursdays, and an active Over 60s group. VIVA was also available for all age ranges and hosted elderly persons drop ins. It was suggested that an Article in Soham Life mapping what was available should be a priority. On a related matter the group felt that the calendar in Soham Life should be larger.

Commons Enhancement Project – Rosemary updated that the Soham Nature and Conservation Society had been formed 'SNACS', and that an open public meeting with speaker had been held. A sub group had also been set up to look into funding.

Alison highlighted that Sally Bonnett, a member of the Economic Development Team would be supporting the Forum in developing some of the action plan projects, i.e. the Town Guide, a new Soham leaflet and the shop window scheme. Sally has had an initial discussion with the Ely Standard and ideally would like to meet with them and run through the options for production, as the town council have collated a significant amount of local information to inform such a guide it was felt to be of benefit to link up. Sally to make contact with John Kirkham to arrange to meet with the Standard jointly.

It was noted that earlier Business Plans had highlighted a £500 contribution to the VIVA centre, although this had not been brought forward to the most recent plan – to overcome this omission it was agreed that £500 would be transferred from the Youth Facilities allocation to the Viva Centre and the funds released to the committee.

JK flagged up that the Town Twinning Association may look to the Forum for funding/support.

Soham in Bloom

AC updated the group on the thoughts so far on this project which Sheila had kindly put together.

Even with admin help, pulling this together would need a team approach, we could form another sub committee from STF but that would require volunteers to step forward. Alternatively we could promote the concept within the town and ask for interested parties to come forward. An idea could be to develop a A4 size poster and ask local shops, etc, to display it, but it would have to make the point very clearly that no interest = no Soham in Bloom! Further press coverage to coincide with displaying the posters could be sought, and by using the 'drip, drip' principle, we might be able to stimulate interest.

We could also test out the idea of a Participating Residents Discount Scheme with local outlets for gardening materials. As well as encouraging participators, it would/could be an advertising/marketing exercise for those retailing plants and garden sundries etc, locally. Residents could tap into this discount scheme by producing evidence of residency in Soham, and hopefully traders would experience an increase in sales as a result.

Those present felt that trying to engage with those already involved in 'greening' Soham may be the best way forward – perhaps an article in Soham Life, and a letter to local businesses, allotment holders and people who already open their gardens to the public. It was also felt appropriate to try and engage the local schools and playgroups. AC highlighted that we need to map out what happens already and circulate some details of what the judges look for in a successful entrant. Linking with the Town Council and promoting Soham in Bloom as a two-year project with some mini events during 2006 would seem a good starting point, one such event could be a 'best street' award.

The general issue of greening the High Street was raised, and AC confirmed that some planters were to be installed which should hopefully contribute to this, although planting trees was unlikely to be feasible given existing underground services. Everyone felt that the hanging baskets had been expertly tended this year and that were the best so far.

Soham Life

Issue Number 2 has been published and Geoff has distributed free copies to key pick up points within the town as before. The Forum noted its congratulations to Lawrie and Geoff for pulling such an excellent project together. There was some discussion following on from the Town Councils request for further information re funding about the merits of paid versus free paper for distribution, however Forum members noted that they had listened to a presentation of what could be offered by the free press and felt that the balance of editorial and adverts was right in the Ely Standard proposal. It was agreed that AC would write to the TC to clarify why pump-priming money may be necessary – i.e. should insufficient funding from advertisements be forthcoming, the Forum hoped that the Town Council could be called upon to bridge the gap, it was suggested that the Town Council in that instance could be asked to place an advertisement. Hopefully of course this would not prove necessary but the Forum would hate to see the project falter given the success of the first two editions and the valuable community function that the publication serves.

It was suggested that the size of the Calendar be enlarged in future publications if possible.

REMINDER: Please send Articles for inclusion in the August edition to Geoff at jongriggs@lineone.co.uk or 62 Fordham Road, Soham by 4th August 2005 – for Publication 18th August 2005

Town Guide

Refer to earlier update under Action Plan Item, Forum felt that we should seek to launch the Guide at the Christmas Late night shopping event.

Festival

AC read out a brief update from Peter Beer, "The Festival Committee has now drawn up a reasonably firm programme, comprising 10 or 11 events in the week leading up to September 24th, which is Pumpkin Fair day. We are grateful for the support of ADeC, who have offered to stage a Youth Bands showcase event on Saturday 17th. Besides this we are planning classical, Brass and Folk Music; a performance by VIVA youth theatre; films and quizzes; a music and dance production by the Village College; a Ceildah and Dance on the final night." A provisional programme was circulated (attached). It was noted that the Film Show would not be going ahead although it was suggested that Cambridgeshire Library be approached to see if they could provide something from their archive.

It was also noted that Wicken Band could not participate in the launch event planned for the morning of the 17th.

Community Transport

AT advised that there were now 3 buses, 2 more part time drivers, and 400 members. Lots of excursions and dial-a-ride services have been developed. One such initiative is bringing people into Soham from Isleham and Wicken. Happy with progress so far but still trying to develop their offer. Reminder that group membership is £25.00 per year.

Soham On-Line

No update

Soham Community History Museum

AC updated that the Heritage Lottery Fund had verbally advised that they were excited about the project and that it will be formally considered during August 2005. The group have a need for a storage facility for the projector and laptop that a successful bid will fund as part of the project. Details of who is responsible for the Memorial was sought - and confirmed to be the Town Council and CCC Highways. Artwork proposed in the war memorial or hard surface adjoining – book sales may generate a more significant work and a street party is envisaged as a launch event. Some comments from the Forum that they were envisaging quite a major commemorative monument, there was also a suggestion from CF that a seating area at the Clinic should be pursued and the ditch filled in to facilitate this. Although it was acknowledged that there would be a need to rescind the existing public right of way and divert. Some comments about the maintenance of the footpath in this location.

Soham Association of Commerce & Trade (SACT)

No update – next meeting 19th July 2005 at Brenda's Flowers 7:30pm start.

Viva Community Centre

Few more users but not as many as they would like. Disappointed that not enough tickets pre-sold for cinema event – plan to re-launch in September. The Group want to get a manager in place as soon as possible to enable opening 5 times a week 10 til 13:00 and are seeking funding to enable this. Have had to divert money from other strands to employ a fundraiser to secure funding for the building as they only have one year remaining to do this.

Soham Revival

Nothing to update.

Other Items Discussed

- Donna had asked whether it was possible to invite a planning representative to the Forum to update on future development in Soham, she had also highlighted concerns re road congestion. It was highlighted that the Forum had been identified as a consultee in respect of the emerging local development framework.
- The STF open meeting it was agreed that we would invite someone from the Ely in Bloom campaign to share their experiences of the Ely campaign, ie lessons learnt and community benefits, as in previous years there will also be light refreshments and displays. Article for Soham Life.
- Launch of Twinning 27th July at 7:30pm venue - the Pavilion.
- A Town Plan for Soham, RA advised that the Town Council were keen to pursue a town plan and take the healthcheck research a step further, some discussion as to the form the plan would take and its relationship to the healthcheck and the local planning process.

Date of Next Meeting

Annual Open Meeting Commencing at 7.30pm on Thursday 1st September 2005 at The Viva Community Centre, Churchgate Street, Soham

Alison Callaby, Team Leader Town Centres
Telephone. (01353) 616386
E-Mail: alison.callaby@eastcambs.gov.uk