



Council 28 June 2011

CABINET MEMBER REPORT TO FULL COUNCIL

Written report by Cllr Sara Mildmay-White, Economy & Asset Management Portfolio

Portfolio includes:

- West Suffolk House;
- Economic Development;
- Tourism and Tourist Information Centres;
- Town Centre Management (Bury St Edmunds);
- Rural Economy;
- Markets;
- Property Services;
- Facilities Management (including printing);
- Estate Management;
- Asset Management; and
- Economic Partnerships.

Highlights

- ◆ A new ten day business event from 13 to 23 September 2011 is being organised.
- ◆ Work starts soon on refurbishing the Haverhill offices.

1. Economic Development

1.1 Business 2011

A 10 day event called *'Business 2011'*, running from Tuesday 13 to Friday 23 September 2011, is being organised by the Borough Council with several partners, including MENTA, Hethel Engineering Centre, Bury Free Press, Bury St Edmunds and Suffolk Chambers of Commerce and West Suffolk College. There will be many different business events at different locations during the ten days, including the annual MENTA Trade Fair, the Bury Free Press B2B exhibition, Chamber events and business workshops run by the College. The centre piece will be the Exhibition of Advanced Manufacturing and Engineering, which this year is being held at The Apex after being at Hethel Engineering Centre for the past few years.

2. Tourism and Tourist Information Centre (TIC)

2.1 Events

Armed Forces Day is on 25 June in the Abbey Gardens. Highlights will include an apache helicopter, spitfire fly-past and a full entertainment programme for the whole family. The TIC worked with other organisations to put together a whole weekend programme of

entertainment for Armed Forces Day raising money for *Help for Heroes* charity. The Christmas Fayre is not until the end of November 2011 but it is already almost full with no more space in most of the venues.

2.2 TIC

The TIC was very busy over the Easter and bank holiday periods. Income was up by approximately 40% mainly because of sales of royal wedding souvenirs and extra tours. The TIC has put together an evening guided walk programme which includes new walks ending in different cafes or pubs for refreshments. Highlights include a '650th Anniversary of the Magistrates' walk, an 'Ask the Gardener' tour and St Johns Street tour. The TIC has taken over the bookings for the Unitarian Meeting House and is actively promoting this as a venue for different activities. Bookings are going very well and the TIC has had some very positive feedback.

3. Bury St Edmunds Town Centre Management

3.1 Whitsun Fayre

This year, a Whitsun Fayre replaced the former Flower and Continental Market and attracted crowds of people. Several Bid4Bury members took up the offer of a free stall to promote themselves to the visitors and many did a roaring trade. A mini-farm was an especially big huge hit with visitors of all ages as it boasted a pony, pigs, lambs, goats, rabbits and chicks. The event was preceded by a competition to find ten royal or wedding-themed 'treasure' items displayed in the windows of shops and businesses in the town centre and the winners received their prizes at the Fayre.

3.2 St John's Street Fayre

The long-established St John's Street Fayre joined forces with the St John's Centre on 18 June 2011 to provide a varied programme of events including food and general stalls, samba bands, Morris Dancers, a BMX museum and entertainment for children. The St John's Centre celebrated its official opening day and the 170th birthday of the building by holding a Victorian Day, with live music, craft stalls, displays about the building's restoration and history and a recreation of a Victorian classroom.

3.3 Forthcoming events

The annual Motorsport Day event will be held on Sunday 17 July 2011 on Angel Hill. The first Churchgate Street Community Event is being held on Saturday 23 July. It is being organised by the Churchgate Area Association and includes businesses in Hatter Street and Whiting Street. The Tour of Britain Cycle Race is coming to Angel Hill on Saturday 17 September at 11.00am.

3.4 Street Rangers

The team of Bid4Bury street rangers has increased to four, which allows them to provide greater coverage across the town. They have been working with the public to reduce the level of litter and have the power to issue a £50 fixed penalty ticket for those who refuse to pick up the litter they have dropped. They have also been trained to remove graffiti from buildings and signs.

3.5 New Shops

Several new shops have opened in the town centre in recent weeks, including Monty's Cakes at 30 Buttermarket, Millie's children's clothes at 27a Buttermarket, Mistral (ladies fashions) at 2 Buttermarket, Wilkinsons on Risbygate St, a new womenswear shop in 17 Langton Place, Piran vintage furniture at 17 St John's St, Moza Indian takeaway on St Andrew's St South, Engrave Cut and Copy at 20 St John's St, Together Property at 1 Churchgate Street and the YMCA charity shop in 32 Cornhill. The opening of Wilkinsons was especially welcome as the unit is a large one which had been vacant for some time. Several shops have moved within the town, including Specsavers to Buttermarket, @ home to unit 1, Cornhill Walk, Thing-Me-Bobs to units 2-3, Cornhill Walk and Sew Creative to Hatter Street.

4. Markets

4.1 General

Meetings with the Market Traders continue in order to implement the recommendations of last year's Markets Review. The recycling and waste initiative continues to deliver both financial and environmental savings through recycling cardboard. A part-time Business Development Officer was recently appointed to develop a business plan, improve the marketing and raise the profile of the markets. The Markets Forum met on 24 May 2011 with an agenda including an update on the waste recycling operation; gas main update; recruitment update; bag for life progress; end-of-year financial overview and feedback from St John's Street traders.

4.2 Bury St Edmunds

Traders have benefitted from fair weather and the seasonal influx of coach parties. New stalls include a very well presented crepes trailer, a hot panini stall and a children's clothing stall. A new Bury St Edmunds Market Officer has started work.

4.3 Haverhill

Trade has remained consistent against last year and there are some new stalls including a cycle repair and sales stall and a candy floss and confectionery stall. Waste Management and Markets staff recently met traders to develop a waste recycling operation mirroring that in Bury St Edmunds.

5. Property Services

I am pleased to report that there are increasing signs of business activity with new lettings. 2 and 10 Hollands Road, Haverhill have been let for storage and company expansion. The last remaining craft units at 6 Elseys Yard, off Risbygate Street, Bury St Edmunds have been let to a local artist and two units at Severn Road, Bury St Edmunds, have been let to a new catering business and to allow another occupier on the same site to expand.

6. Asset Management

6.1 Hamlet Croft, Haverhill

Following the successful completion of the Haverhill Community Football Project, Hamlet Croft's former grounds have been marketed as a residential site. Hamlet Croft is an allocated site in the Local Plan for 100 new houses. Interest in the site from house builders has been high, and the Borough Council has been able to select Bloor Homes, who will soon be applying for planning permission for a development that will include around 30 affordable housing units. Subject to obtaining planning permission work will start on site in early 2012.

6.2 Haverhill Offices

The 'mini West Suffolk House' project is going well at the Haverhill Offices. A contractor has been appointed to refurbish and alter the offices and work will be underway shortly. As with our main offices, they will be owned jointly by the Borough and Suffolk County Councils and all running costs will be shared equally. New ICT facilities will ensure that the building can be used flexibly, with hot desking where possible. Our councils are again being innovative in providing a town centre location. This will encompass the services of our two authorities and also those of four voluntary organisations, which will have enormous benefits to our mutual customers. This arrangement will also provide long term cost savings through sharing.