

# Future of Town Centre & Local Economy – Public Meeting

## Note of points raised

Held in Market Hall, Saxmundham, 7 p.m. Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> November 2018

### THEME 1 - THE OFFER

1. **What sort of shops, services, community facilities etc. would you like to see in the town centre and the High Street?**
  2. **Lots of people use the supermarkets; how do we attract them to use the High Street too?**
  3. **What would make the town centre more attractive, for the local community, businesses, and for visitors?**
- Not many shops have access to pavements, so pavement cafes would be difficult.
  - We need different types of shops such as:
    - Antique shop
    - Attractive and popular restaurants such as Pizza Express and Prezzo
  - Some shops/services aren't open at weekends making things difficult for people who are working or children in school. We have old fashioned opening times.
  - What about the derelict shops? – Who is responsible for the shop opposite Fishers?
  - What about the ruined buildings down the alley way?
  
  - We would like to have;
    - A major hardware/DIY store NB with all the new housing being built.
    - A better pharmacy with more extensive stock.
    - A mummies and buggies café
    - A bistro.
    - Long stay parking
  
  - The High Street shouldn't try to compete with the supermarkets but should complement them.
  - Take advantage of booming population to attract national chains.
  - Don't rely on retail
  
  - We need a decent pub that young people want to go to.
  - A café
  - Cocktail bar
  - Antique shop
  - The old bank has a garden- could it be developed as a café and a gym
  - We need a gym
  - We need performance spaces and somewhere to watch and support young bands.
  - The crux is to attract entrepreneurs. They need to be persuaded that Saxmundham is attractive and accessible.

- The Town Centre must be fit for purpose
- Pop up events
- Business rates are low – we need to let potential small businesses know about this as this is attractive!
- We need to flag up that parking is free from 10-12 on market day.
- We need somewhere to buy children's clothes and shoes.
- We ought to block off the High Street one day per week for the market like we do at Christmas.
- Should reimburse parking fees for local customers.
- Loyalty cards from stores
- Ages of Saxmundham residents – who is the High Street aimed at?
- The White Hart looks better now its been painted. It needs to be occupied with something use=full like B and Q, hotel, restaurant, theatre or cinema
- More car parking
- Independent shops cannot compete due to high overheads.
- New hall renovated and renewed facilities. Market Hall, Street Farm and Gannon Rooms all need renovation.
- Outdoor culture – there's nowhere to sit outside other than Costa, the Bell and Waitrose. Could there be tables and chairs outside the Market Hall.
- The station is not being utilised at all it could be a great community facility.
- If entrepreneurs are to invest you need to minimise their personal risk – or get something back.
- Sax has businesses but there needs to be something that is community led. Renovating the Market Hall would generate a buzz
- Yoga
- Small artisan shops and delis
- Pub
- Farmers market
- Free parking on market days needs flagging up
- Café in the Gannon rooms or police station.
- Use empty shops to advertise e.g. for RSPB to maintain an aura of life in the High Street.
- Coffee shop in the middle of the High Street.
- Good restaurant
- Boots
- Cinema
- Do something with all the derelict shops

## THEME 2 - THE STREET SCENE

4. Should the High Street and/or other streets be pedestrianised? Or made one-way with wider pavements? Or...?
5. What should be done with the station, and the area around it, to make it a more attractive entrance to the town? Are there other key sites or areas for development or improvement?
6. What should we do about access and transport to and from town centre for all? Can we improve cycle and walkways?

- Saxmundham Station is the gateway to an AONB, but it is derelict and unwelcoming.
- We are concerned about congestion on the High St. and the free- for- all with regard to parking. Could deliveries to shops be scheduled for particular times?
- Pedestrianisation would make the High Street more attractive but there are also negatives.
  
- The car wash site could be better used.
- The Gannon Rooms are depressing.
- We are the entry point for Snape and Aldeburgh but the walk down from the station is depressing and station Approach needs improvement all round.
- Pedestrians should have priority on the High Street.
- There should be WCs for people waiting for trains.
  
- What about the empty and derelict buildings
  
- The High Street is dangerous and uncomfortable to walk along.
- Make it a pedestrian priority zone
- Vehicles above a certain tonnage not allowed.
- Can't restrict delivery times – it won't work.
- Station, Gannon Rooms, Market Place and High Street should form a Golden Triangle.
- The community should be involved in getting it going
- Examples from Holland and Germany of prioritising pedestrians.
  
- Saxmundham looks lovely when the hanging baskets are out – then it goes drab and there's a grey feeling.
- The area around the station needs improving.
- The police station car park should be for the public.
- We need cycle paths from Benhall to Saxmundham (noted these are in the 1<sup>st</sup> draft local plan)
- We need cycle paths from Kelsale to Saxmundham, too!
  
- All the pavements on the roads leading down to the High Street are narrow and often only on one side of the road. It is difficult and dangerous to walk or cycle into the town.
- More priority for people on foot or cycling.
- The renovation of the White Hart might improve things.

- Pedestrianise the High Street then do up the smaller roads leading to it.
- Station needs to be rebuilt to be more welcoming.
- People who fill up the parking spaces are people working in the town rather than residents.
- The narrow road between Flicks and The Store needs to be controlled by traffic lights and single alternate line working. This would allow the footpath to be widened. It's dangerous as it is.
- Spring colour from hanging baskets needs replicating out of season. More colour needed in the town
- If the High Street is pedestrianised you need a ring road.
- The police station could be a car parking site
- Widen pavements
- Signs – to the high Street etc.
- Pedestrian priority
- Need an attractive street scene
- Don't allow large HGVs
- Slow down traffic with wider pavements and parking bays – Halesworth has a good set up.

### **THEME 3 - THE POTENTIAL**

#### **7. What's the scope (and actions) for developing tourism in the town?**

#### **8. What can we do generally to promote business and enterprise in the town, plus access to employment?**

#### **9. Other proposals to make a successful town centre?**

- We should engage an urban designer and employ a town centre manager
- We need to promote the High Street. Maybe schools and supermarkets could help.
- High Street signage could be better.
- Bring in an urbanisation expert to look at how to slow traffic down rather than stop it.
- Saxmundham needs to look attractive.
- Advertise Saxmundham
- The website needs improvement.
- Saxmundham News ought to go to Benhall.
- Better sign posting
- New residents should get an information pack.
- We need a 3D tourist information board.
- Cycle lanes and wider paths as far as surrounding villages.

- Advertise Saxmundham more
- How much money is available from SCDC for businesses.
- Development of Carlton Park
- A12 three villages bypass and a north east road would help access and congestion problems.
- Better publicity for events on boards and website
- B1121 Sax to Benhall needs wider pavement and cycle way.
- Review parking throughout town
- Improve links between new developments and town centre,
- Update sign posting; there are still bus station signs
- Business rates are too high
- Better transport
- Urban designer
- Friends of Saxmundham
- Revamp the website
- Circulate special map of the High Street highlighting the different shops.
- Get people to use the High Street – educate them
- Don't do it all at once – stage it
- Create things for younger people and involve them