

Stock and Buttsbury Heritage Society

Business Plan

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Stock & Buttsbury Heritage Society Business Plan

INTRODUCTION

1. Summary

Stock and Buttsbury Heritage Society plan to purchase the freehold of the former Stock Library building from Essex County Council (ECC) so that it is available for the local community as a Heritage Centre.

Stock is a typical Essex village with a variety of period properties. It includes over 60 listed buildings, a central conservation area and is surrounded by green belt. There are a windmill owned by ECC, three churches, the Common where cricket is played regularly, and numerous well-maintained footpaths. Visitors are attracted to the five pubs, the Italian restaurant and the Hotel Spa. The village of Buttsbury and its seven manors are mentioned in the Domesday Book and are now mainly incorporated in the parish of Stock.

2. Objects of the Society

The objects of the Stock and Buttsbury Heritage Society are cultural and educational. The Society aims to promote interest in the local history, primarily of Stock and Buttsbury Parishes, and to provide facilities for cataloguing, recording and storing information and small artefacts for present and future residents and those people with ancestry linked to the parishes.

The Society aims to provide a forum for assisting members and all sections of the local community in tracing their family history and learning about the local history and to provide an educational resource for local schools and organisations.

3. Background

The Heritage Society was started in November 2006 by a small group of interested residents, who had been involved in previous local history exhibitions. They realised the wealth of historic material which existed in the village which was gradually being lost through lack of a central organisation for collection.

The Society established a formal constitution in January 2007. It holds meetings each month on family and local history in Stock Village Hall - attendance now averages 60-80, with over 100 when our patron, Lord Petre, was the guest speaker. This year, 2011, there are 108 paid-up members (£10/year). At each meeting, we charge £3 for visitors and £1 for members to include tea/coffee & biscuits.

The Society is recognised as a charity by the Tax Office and is now in the process of applying for full charitable status.

THE PROPOSAL

1. A Heritage Centre

The Society wishes to establish a Heritage Centre in the middle of the village. The Heritage Centre would store and display photographs, documents and small artefacts relating to Stock and Buttsbury which at present are housed in private homes. It would provide a catalogue of these items so that they would be available for research into local and family history by the village community via computer terminals. The Centre would be open to all and manned by volunteers from the Society and local community.

2. Site for a Heritage Centre

It is proposed to purchase the freehold of the former Library building from ECC for the village. The building has remained empty since autumn 2009 and was declared redundant by ECC during 2010.

A new Library has been built in the grounds of Stock C. of E. School, Swan Lane, and was opened in 2009. Previously, the Stock Library was housed in a building built in about 1926 as the first Telephone Exchange for Stock. As such, the building is of value as part of the heritage of the village. In the 1970s, a new Telephone Exchange was built (off Mill Road) and our local historian, the late Mr Donald Jarvis, was instrumental in having the building converted to a library owned by ECC.

The old Library building is ideal for use as a Heritage Centre as it is situated in the centre of the village, close to the main road (B1007) and therefore easily accessible to residents and visitors. It is next to the School, new Library and shops, and near to the restaurants and pubs.

The building, on conversion from Library to Heritage Centre, would not require a change of use. Both fall within Use Class D1 (non-residential institution).

The building comprises an internal area of approx. 20' x 10' plus entrance lobby, a very small office with wash basin, and a w.c.

This building is too small for meetings and the storage of the requisite number of chairs, a facility already provided by the Village Hall.

3. Activities in the Heritage Centre

The building would house the large number of documents and photographs which are at present un-catalogued in people's homes (including the collection of files prepared by the late Sheridan Dicks relating to the history of Buttsbury and the scrapbooks of the late Donald Jarvis dating back to 1918 and left to Stock Parish Council).

It would house and display small artefacts which are related to Stock and Buttsbury. Computer terminals would provide access to local history and family history information for research.

Workshops would be held to assist people in these objectives.

Villagers would be encouraged to come to record their memories.

There would be a changing photographic display to illustrate different aspects of the village and to reflect national or local events in cooperation with the School, Library and the numerous village organisations.

The Heritage Society would continue its close link with the current well-maintained Stock Village website

4. Access to the Building

The Heritage Centre will be staffed by volunteers (at least 2 at any one time), who will be trained to help visitors access the local history collections via our computer cataloguing system or search via the internet for their ancestors.

It will be open twice a week at first and specifically on the second Sunday afternoon in the month in the summer to coincide with the opening of Stock Windmill. Key-holders willing to answer queries and open the Heritage Centre at other times will be listed on the door of the building and in literature.

The building already has disabled access as required when it was a Library. This comprises a ramp and hand-rail leading up to the door and a bell to alert the person on duty to help with the doors.

EVIDENCE OF INTEREST

1. Local History in the Community

Attendance at exhibitions staged by members of the Heritage Society in the village hall have been high, with villagers visiting and returning with their family and friends:

1995 8th May - Celebrations for V.E. Day & the Parish Council Centenary

2000 6th & 7th May - The Millennium

2003 2nd, 3rd & 4th June - The Queen's Golden Jubilee - showing how Stock had changed in 50 years.

2008 8th & 9th November - 90th Anniversary of the end of WWI.

During the All Saints' Church Flower Festival in the last five years, the Heritage Society has staged an exhibition in the vestry. In 2011 this was in conjunction with the 1st Stock Scouts who are celebrating 100 years of scouting in Stock this year, and it has been displayed again at their celebrations.

After each of these exhibitions, photographs and artefacts have been returned to their owners and in many cases have already been lost to the village. Other items are still housed in residents' homes, and are only known about by a few people. All this information needs to be centralised so that it is catalogued and available to all.

Four members of the Heritage Society have published a book of "Eleven Walks Around Stock" which includes some of the history of the village. This was funded by the Parish Council. Over 800 copies have been sold at £2 each for the benefit of the Heritage Society. The same four members have produced a detailed map of the village on behalf of the Parish Council and the Parish Paths Partnership to be given away free.

One member has placed on the Stock website information from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission about the names recorded on our war memorial. A group of members then researched the connections to the village of the 40 names, for the 2008 exhibition celebrating the 90th anniversary of the end of WWI.

All the above work has been done on an entirely voluntary basis. Volunteers for stewarding exhibitions have always been forthcoming. Exhibitions have been free with a box for donations which have covered stationery & hall costs.

Approx 200 people signed a petition to support the use of the library building as a heritage centre at the Church vestry exhibition in 2008.

2. Genealogy

This subject is becoming increasingly popular. We have had enquiries from local people and from all over the world looking for graves and information about their ancestors who had some connection with Stock or Buttsbury. We had an enquiry from Alabama where someone has traced back to ancestors born in Stock in 1589.

One member has traced the ancestors of several local people for them.

We have held workshops in the library to help members get started with their family history.

PROJECTS

1. Current projects

Our meetings are videoed and converted to DVDs by the village webmaster. A copy is deposited with the Sound Archivist at the Essex Record Office. Further copies will be available for loan or viewing in the Heritage Centre.

We are collecting old photographs and documents relating to the area but at present these are housed in individuals' homes.

The 1901 census for Stock and Buttsbury has been transcribed to a computer database, and other censuses are in progress.

A computer catalogue system is being developed so that information in the form of photographs, documents and artefacts can be retrieved.

2. Proposed future projects

Exhibitions related to local & national events and in cooperation with village clubs.

Exhibition to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee (2012).

Exhibition of Sport in Stock to coincide with the Olympic Games (2012)

Cataloguing of documents, photographs & artefacts.

Recording memories of residents

Heritage Guided Walks around the village historic areas.

Further workshops for Family History research.

Co-operation with the school and library.

Publication of different aspects of the village e.g. schools, churches, shops, memories.

The Camera Club will be asked to photograph the graves in the 3 churchyards to be available for enquiries.

The Garden Club will be asked to look after the hedges surrounding the building and plant the window box thus providing publicity for the Club.

PUBLICITY

1. Heritage Centre

The project would be publicised with a long sign with "Stock & Buttsbury Heritage Centre" on the side of the building (subject to any necessary planning permission). It would be seen from the main road (B1007). Opening times will be on the side and on the entrance door.

Major funders will be shown inside the Heritage Centre.

2. Local Press

Articles about the project will be in the village magazine, Stock Press, The Journal (covering Ingatestone, Blackmore, Stock & Margaretting) and local papers (The Essex Chronicle, The Billericay Gazette).

3. Leaflets

Leaflets will be printed with opening times, address & map, and dates & subject of exhibitions. The logos of any major funders will be included on publicity leaflets where appropriate.

4. Posters

Posters about meetings and other events will continue to be printed and placed by volunteers on Village Notice Boards, in village shops, in Billericay Library & Cater Museum, in Ingatestone and by e-mail to Galleywood Heritage Centre, and on our village website.

FINANCE

1. Purchase

The purchase price quoted by Lambert Smith Hampton and ECC to us and to SPC is £34,000. ECC have requested we make our "best offer". We are applying for 25% reduction under the ECC's "Assisted Purchase Scheme" leaving £25,500 to raise. Volunteers are delivering an appeal to all households in the village and to our members for pledges at the beginning of October. We have applied for a grant of £10,000 from Essex Environment Trust. We already have funds of £6,000 available to support the purchase.

2. Repairs and Decoration

We have the free services of an architect and a surveyor within our membership. Most work will be done by volunteers.

3. Equipment

We have spoken to a number of other grant-giving bodies to help with the purchase of equipment.

4. Fixed Overheads

Services, such as cleaning and gardening, will be carried out by volunteers.

As a registered charity we will be eligible for reduced Council Tax.

Other expenses, such as insurance, security alarm and computer access, will be covered by income.

5. Annual Income

Income will be received from surplus from our monthly meetings, donations, charges from workshops, research and SPC for use as an office. Any shortfall will be made up with fundraising activities.