OLD SHREDDED WHEAT FACTORY SITE, WELWYN GARDEN CITY

OUTLINE PROPOSAL FOR THE INCLUSION OF A COMMUNITY FACILITY

"THE THREE MAGNETS CENTRE"

The Three Elements:

Visitor Reception and Information

Garden City Studies

Community Space

Welwyn Garden City Community Trust CIO

Registered Charity Number 1162280

Visitor Reception and Information (VRI)

At present there is no facility providing comprehensive local information to visitors (and residents). There are some small leaflet displays at the train station, across the way at Campus West and the library, and at the Borough Council Offices.

With the approaching centenary in 2020 particular efforts will be made to raise the profile of the town both at home and abroad The result, it is hoped, will be an increase in the number of visitors coming to the town both from within the UK and abroad, which will launch and sustain a new visitor economy for the town.

The main role of the VRI element is to create a first port of call for tourists/visitors by providing them with a friendly welcome, the information they seek and the promotion of local services and attractions to encourage future visitation.

The range of visitor services might include:

- Local information, including maps and brochures about facilities, attractions and places of interest
- Information and bookings for events and 'what's on'
- Transport and travel information, including local bus and rail timetables
- Help with booking accommodation
- 'Discover Deals' and other money-saving offers and discounts
- Telephone and on-line access to the Borough and County Councils

In due course, a VRI element could also sell a range of quality gifts and souvenirs, including postcards, books, maps and exclusive items.

Garden City Studies (GCS)

Apart from providing a statement of pride in the Town, the GCS element would

- Illustrate the town's international importance
- Recognise its contribution to town planning
- Provide an opportunity for people to discover its history and relevance via static and variable displays from both local and external sources, such as WGC Heritage Trust, Letchworth and possibly some European 'Garden Cities/Suburbs'
- Highlight the ideals of the town's founders
- Provide a resource and a base for urban design and ecology studies with links to the WGC Library Local Studies unit, Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies, The Town & Country Planning Association, University of Hertfordshire and Oaklands College

The GCS element would achieve this through

- Spaces for a permanent and temporary exhibitions
- A history archive based on material gathered by the WGC Heritage Trust from its various projects , including the numerous audio recordings
- A reference, learning and research resource
- Audio-visual interactive displays

In due, course, it may be possible to transfer some material on deposit from County Hall.

Community Space (CS)

Well designed and well managed community space bring people together. In this case the provision of community space would also provide a valuable focus for the proposed new development, as well as providing a facility for the whole Town.

The CS element should include

- An affordable meeting room
- Flexible space within the gallery for a range of uses
- Facilities for physical activities
- Allotments

'An integrated whole'

This proposal is for an integrated community facility. Apart from the specific areas set out above, the facility could be a base for:

- Guided and non-guided walking tours, heritage trails
- Workshop events, talks and lecture programmes, various exhibitions and displays
- Visits by overseas Schools of Urban Planning, local authority planners, commercial planning consultancies, schools and colleges
- Oral history projects
- A summer school

It could also be a key on-line access point providing

- A website of resources on Welwyn Garden City, the garden cities and town planning movement, and wider issues
- Opportunities for information and discussion
- Access to garden city and planning archives

It would also be an appropriate base from which to help organise and celebrate the Town's centenary.