

THE HARPENDEN SOCIETY COMMITTEE MEETING
Monday 16 September 2019 at 7.30 p.m. at The Friends Meeting House
MINUTES

1. **Present**

Phil Waters (PhW), Alan Falconer (AF), Chris Armitage (CA), Harry Downie (HD), Alan Jackson (AJ), Paul Gardiner (PG), Ron Taylor (RT), Alan Bunting (AB) and Bob Fletcher (RF).

2. **Apologies for absence**

These were received from John Harris (JH), John Lowe (JL), John Davis (JD), Hester Gabbutt (HG), Penny Ayres (PA) and Tim Riley (TR).

3. **Past Meeting Minutes**

Minutes of the meeting on 15 July 2019, previously circulated, were approved as a true record.

4. **Treasurer's Report**

(a) HD presented the current accounts (previously circulated). The Society's finances are sound.

(b) It was agreed that the Treasurer should have an informal discussion with John Bristow (Treasurer of the Harpenden History Society) regarding the possible development of an investment strategy for the Society.

5. **Secretary's Items**

(a) RT has arranged for a St Alban's architect, Geraint John, to talk about developments in architecture at the Society's public meeting on the 25th Sept.

(b) A public meeting with our MP, Bim Afolami, has been arranged for the 27th February 2020.

(c) It was agreed that if an election is called in the Autumn the Society should hold another hustings meeting.

(d) Other possible public meeting topics were the new Arts Centre (how the town's arts groups work more closely together) but this was not thought to be possible until more progress has been made. A date in January or February 2020 is possible.

(e) Another possibility for a public meeting is to invite Cllr David Williams to talk about the Herts Corporate Plan

(f) RT presented several design approaches for the new Society logo and got approval to take these to the next stage by working with a professional designer. A discussion was held about a new strap line but no consensus was agreed. The committee needs to vote on the proposed options. **Action RF to arrange this.**

(g) The new Society brochure got general agreement and needs to be taken to the next stage. It will not be able to finalise this until the new logo is fully designed and approved. **Action HG to continue the brochure work.**

6. **Chairman's Items.**

(a) Katherine Warington school: PhW reported that the new school started in the Law Building at the University in Hatfield nearly two weeks ago. There are nearly 180 pupils and approximately 20 full and part time staff in post. The Sports Hall, which has been equipped with classrooms and specialist space for the year 7 intake is due to be handed over on the 25th September and it will be fitted out over the next two weeks. The pupils take a residential next week and will occupy the school from Monday 30th September. There are new bus services to serve the school which will also start on that day. The rest of the school will be complete by June 2020.

7. **Membership Secretary's Items**

- (a) HG, who was not present, has been "cleaning up" the membership database removing leavers and members that have not paid and cannot be contacted.

8. **Newsletter Editor's Items**

- (a) Next issue now being planned.

9. **Publicity Officer's Items**

- (a) Report circulated to committee members.
- (b) RT reported that he had a meeting with Carl Cheevers Friday Sept 6 to see if HTC would support the concept of a Christmas promotion for retailers. A positive reaction was obtained but only limited financial support of £500. The retail trade will need to contribute individually and RT has spent some time chatting with local businesses, many of whom expressed interest. National/regional chains have declined though (Space NK, TUI, Mint Velvet, M&CO, AGA, Brayleys). Given our objective of supporting a thriving High Street RT requested that the Society add £500 to the funding which will help to encourage others to join (This was approved). On a positive note RT has secured media support from; What's On Christmas Guide, Forum Magazine, and Mum's Guide to Harpenden plus Harpendia. RT will be sending a proposal document to local businesses very shortly asking for their commitment with a fee of £50 and contribution to a prize fund. Obviously the amount of funding confirmed will determine what can be produced.

10. **Awards**

- (a) A proposal was made that the Society awards should be extended to include activities that enhance the community and/or the environment of Harpenden. This was agreed.

11. **Working Group Reports**

- (a) **Community Safety:** The Community Safety report had been circulated to committee members prior to the meeting.
- (b) **Environment:** The Environment Report had been circulated to committee members prior to the meeting. JD reported that Luton Airport management, in cahoots with the Planning Authority (Luton Council), are attempting to do away with the night noise controls which were imposed, as a Planning Condition, by the Council when, against a lot of opposition, the Airport sought permission for a near-doubling in passenger throughput 4 years ago (making a six-fold increase since the late 1990s expansion). SADC has recently circulated some local Councils for their reaction and JD wrote a script for Harpenden Rural PC (being on the 'front line') to send off in response. There have also been letters & articles in the Herts Advertiser. As so often in the aviation industry, JD wouldn't be overly surprised to see them 'win' which will inevitably lead to an increase in night flights which doesn't bode well for their further proposed major expansion from the early 2020s
- (c) **Transport:** The Transport report had been circulated to committee members prior to the meeting. The HTC parking survey is closing on the 19th September. Herts CC have just issued a bus usage survey with an 8 weeks response time.
- (d) **Education:** See the Chairman's report of the Katherine Warington school. It was reported that the proposal for the Harpenden Academy to become a feeder school to Sir John Lawes had been approved although there were some objections.
- (e) **Health & Social Welfare:** A meeting has been arranged by the CCG to present the current plans for the Harpenden Memorial Hospital on Tuesday the 17th September
- (f) **Built Environment:** The Built Environment report had been circulated to committee members prior to the meeting. Concern was expressed about what will happen to the mountain of soil in Rothamsted Park. Will it be used to flatten the football field or will it used for other landscaping work in the park **Action: JL to ask for information from SADC.**

- (g) **Economic Activity:** The Economic Activity report had been circulated to committee members prior to the meeting. It was reported that the Director of Rothamsted was leaving and it is reported that he will be replaced by his deputy – Ms Angela Karp. It was reported that several shops including Waitrose have got a large number of staff vacancies due to difficulties in recruiting lower paid workers in Harpenden.
- (h) **Arts, Leisure, Entertainment:** The ALE report had been circulated to committee members prior to the meeting. A discussion was held on a possible public meeting to discuss the usage of the new Arts Centre. A discussion was also held on the naming of the new centre with a possibility of having a competition, including school children, to name the centre.
- (i) **Sports:** No report as there is now a vacancy for this position.

12. **AOB**

None.

13. **Dates of the next meetings:**

Committee Meeting dates: 18 Nov, 20 Jan 20, 16 March 20

Public Meetings: 25th September, 27th February 2020

14. **The meeting closed at 9:45 p.m.**