

THE HARPENDEN SOCIETY COMMITTEE MEETING
Monday 10 May 2021 at 7.00 p.m. by Zoom video conference
MINUTES

1. Present (by video)

Phil Waters (PhW), Harry Downie (HD), Alan Jackson (AJ), Ron Taylor (RT), Hester Gabbutt (HG), Alan Bunting (AB), Penny Ayres (P), Paul Gardiner (PG), Karl Wingfield (KW), Jeff Phillips (JP), Ian Barrison (IB) and Bob Fletcher (RF).

2. Apologies for absence

These were received from Chris Armitage (CA), Anne James (AJa) and John Lowe (JL).

3. Past Meeting Minutes

Minutes of the meeting on 15 March 2021, previously circulated, were approved as a true record.

4. Matters Arising from Minutes

(a) None.

5. Treasurer's Report

(a) HD reported that he nearly all subscription income for the year has now been received. Due to the pandemic, expenditure will be lower than usual this year. There is currently around £20K in the bank.

6. Secretary's Items.

(a) RF reported that Liz Trounce, the Society's library co-ordinator, has decided due to personal circumstances that she cannot carry on in the role when the library re-opens after the lockdown. Also, out of the 22 volunteers that were active in March 2020 before the pandemic only 8 have positively said they are ready to return. As it was thought that the Society would not be able to recruit a replacement co-ordinator and sufficient volunteers to replace those who have left in time for the library's re-opening it has been reluctantly concluded that the Society cannot continue to run the Wednesday afternoon volunteers' service for the time being. It was agreed that when the pandemic is fully over and a reasonable time period has passed the Society will investigate whether it is possible to recruit sufficient volunteers to re-start the service.

(b) A discussion took place about possible future public meetings. The subject of the September meeting is still hoped to be the state of the Local Plan. The councillor responsible for the planning portfolio will be approached once he has been appointed. IB suggested that a public meeting on "integrated health care" could be held later in the year or early in 2022. IB also mentioned that a Harpenden resident was an expert on air pollution and maybe would be prepared to give a presentation on this subject at a public meeting.

(c) It was also proposed that a meeting on parking could be held including the state of the pedestrianisation of the town. Possibly a representative of the Nickey Line and someone to talk about footpaths and cycling could also be include.

7. Chairman's Items.

(a) PhW proposed that the Society should hold a reception for the library volunteers later in the year (possibly in July) to thank them for their services. A reception for the newsletter distributors was also discussed.

(b) PhW reported that he had made contact with several Harpenden organisations to discuss co-operation. David Rankin of the Greenbelt Association was keen to collaborate with one of his major issues being the funds necessary to employ a planning consultant to work on the response to the next version of the Local Plan when it is eventually issued. It was thought that the Society may be able to contribute to this if the requirement was just for a small number of the consultant's time. The Society has initiated contact with the Hitchin Forum, we already have a close relationship with the

History Society, The Harpenden Trust are ready to explore areas of co-operation, KW is our main contact with LADACAN.

- (c) A discussion took place about the town's conservation area. Various planning applications have highlighted the need for this to be looked at again. **Action HG to explore if a small team can be brought together to look at this together with HTC.**

8. Membership Secretary's Items

- (a) The Membership Secretary's report has been circulated to committee members. HG proposed that a small team consisting of HG, PhW RT and RF should look at how we can improve our recruitment of new members. **Action HG to arrange meeting.**

9. Newsletter Editor's Items

- (a) The Spring newsletter has now been issued.
- (b) AB proposed that short biographies of the new committee members should be included in the next issue. AB will progress this. **Action AB.**

10. Publicity Officer's Items

- (a) Report circulated to committee members.
- (b) RT will circulate the "Beginner's Guide to saving the planet" for comments before it is issued. This guide is currently planned to be ready during the week beginning the 17th May.

11. Awards.

- (a) PA had to depart the meeting early. RF will contact PA to investigate the state of the 2020 Awards.

12. Working Group Reports

- (a) **Community Safety:** The Community Safety report had been circulated by PG.
- (b) **Environment:** It was reported that two people had left HTC. It is not sure if they are being replaced.
- (c) **Transport:** The Transport Report had been circulated prior to the meeting. It was reported that the Twenty is Plenty campaign to reduced speed limits around the SADC district was starting to gain some momentum.
- (d) **Education:** Nothing to report this time.
- (e) **Health & Social Welfare:** IB reported that he would contact Sarah Camplin, the commissioning lead for adult community services, to try to find out what progress has taken place and what are the future plans for the for the Red House site. IB also reported that the results of the consultation about the re-development plans for the three hospitals in West Herts were now in. One major issue was that the consultation showed that people who were not resident in Watford did not want the redevelopment to be centred on Watford, which was thought to be a poor site, with major accessibility problems. This is probably not what the redevelopment team wanted to hear. The feeling of the meeting was though that this finding will be ignored as it seems clear that the plans are not open to renegotiation. It was noted that Harpenden was lucky in that we were less dependent on the West Herts hospitals as many residents chose to go to the Luton & Dunstable hospital for their treatment.
- (f) **Built Environment:** The Built Environment report has been circulated by JL.
- (g) **Economic Activity:** RT reported that Santander was closing. This leaves a big site empty in the centre of Harpenden. It was mentioned that the Nat West site is still not occupied.
- (h) **Arts, Leisure, Entertainment (ALE):** AJ reported that he would explore if the timing was now right for an Arts user group meeting as the commencement date for the new Arts Centre is getting closer.
- (i) **Sports:** Nothing to report.

13. **AOB**

(a) It was proposed that the next meeting should be held “in person” assuming that the release from lockdown plan does not change.

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

Committee Meeting dates: 12 July, 20 Sept, 15 Nov, 17 Jan 22, 14 March 22

Public Meetings: non currently scheduled

15. **The meeting closed at 9:00 p.m.**