

THE HARPENDEN SOCIETY COMMITTEE MEETING
Monday 15 March 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), Chris Armitage (CA), Alan Bunting (AB), John Lowe (JL), Anne James (AJ), Paul Gardiner (PG), Karl Wingfield (KW), Jeff Phillips (JP), Ian Barrison (IB) and Bob Fletcher (RF).

2. **Apologies for absence**

These were received from Penny Ayres (PA).

3. **Past Meeting Minutes**

Minutes of the meeting on 18 January 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 was currently forecasting a small surplus of around £150 for the current financial year. It was agreed that although the AGM for the 2020 financial year would not be held until September 2021 the 2020 accounts (which have been approved by the Independent Examiner) should be sent to the Charity Commission. **Action RF**

6. **Secretary's Items.**

(a) It was agreed that the AGM for the 2020 financial year should be postponed until September 2021 when it is hoped that it could be held in public.

(b) A discussion took place about possible future public meetings. It was agreed that all committee members will give this some thought and pass their ideas to RF. It was proposed that the subject of the September meeting could be the state of the Local Plan.

(c) RF proposed that the Society hold a Zoom based hustings for the upcoming County Council elections. Some committee members thought that this would not be widely attended and would create a precedent that would mean the Society would be expected to hold local elections hustings in the future. A vote took place and the proposal was defeated. Therefore, the Society will not hold a County Council election hustings.

7. **Chairman's Items.**

(a) PhW welcomed the new committee members. Karl Wingfield will be taking over Transport, Ian Barrison will be taking over Health, Jeff Phillips has agreed to become Vice Chairman, John Lowe has agreed to continue to help with planning applications and Anne James has agreed to provide advice on strategic planning matters such as the Local Plan. This leaves the Society with vacancies in Sports and Environment.

(b) It was agreed that the recruitment subgroup of PhW, HG, RT and Alison Steer should continue in this capacity.

8. **Membership Secretary's Items**

(a) The Membership Secretary's report has been circulated to committee members.

9. **Newsletter Editor's Items**

(a) The Spring newsletter is currently expected to be 8 pages.

(b) AB proposed that short biographies of the new committee members should be included. AB will progress this. **Action AB.**

10. **Publicity Officer's Items**

- (a) Report circulated to committee members.

11. **Awards.**

- (a) PA was not present. There was some uncertainty about the state of the nomination for the 2020 Awards. It is believed that nominations for the 2020 awards include the KW school and Hollybush Mews.

12. **Working Group Reports**

- (a) **Community Safety:** The Community Safety report has been circulated by PG. PG reported that there is a current wave of dog stealing. A new Chief Inspector has been appointed. Current priorities of the police in Harpenden seem to be speeding, anti-social behaviour in the park, fly tipping and parking near to schools.
- (b) **Environment:** The Environment Report had been circulated to committee members prior to the meeting. KW reported that the planning application to expand Luton Airport to 32M passengers will probably not be submitted this year although this has not been formally announced. It was agreed that the Society should try to support the St Albans Sustfest in a "light" way commensurate with our resources. **Action RT & KW to liaise to agree how we can support Sustfest.**
- (c) **Transport:** Nothing to report.
- (d) **Education:** CA reported that an article from the Head Girl at St George's had been received for the newsletter. AB is interviewing her tomorrow. The pupils are now back at all the Harpenden schools.
- (e) **Health & Social Welfare:** IB reported that West Herts were holding a consultation about the upgraded hospital service being planned for the area. IB stated that he thought the Society should be in favour of the proposals although there was an issue with the lack of public transport between St Albans and Hemel Hempstead. The consultation closes on the 24th March. PhW will include information on this consultation in his March chairman's email. **Action IB will send an email detailing the public transport concerns.**
- (f) **Built Environment:** The Built Environment report has been circulated by JL. JL reported that Jarvis were appealing against SADC's refusal of planning permission for a Care Home on the old Chelford Fabrics site. As we have submitted an objection to the original application we do not need to re-submit it. Jarvis will be submitting a detailed planning application for the Pan Autos site in the near future, currently only an outline planning application has been submitted. There was a short discussion about the changes to the Change of Use codes and the fact that Change of Use applications had not been submitted for several shop conversions in Harpenden High Street.
- (g) **Economic Activity:** The Economic Activity report had been circulated to committee members prior to the meeting.
- (h) **Arts, Leisure, Entertainment (ALE):** AJ reported that the Arts on the Common has been re-arranged for the 18/19th September. The new Arts Centre is now scheduled to be handed over to 1Life at the end of April 21. The Public Hall are currently being used as a Covid vaccination centre and will be for at least another 9 months it is believed so the re-development plans are currently on hold. AJ believes that SADC is proposing that underground parking will be provided on the re-developed site.
- (i) **Sports:** Nothing to report.

13. **AOB**

- (a) AJ proposed that the Society considers holding committee meetings by Zoom even after the pandemic is over. Committee members were requested to give this some consideration. It was agreed that a decision can be taken on this nearer the time.
- (b) John Davis, our long-standing 'Environment' member of the Committee, who was invited to join the Committee in 2000 for his experience as the LADACAN representative on the various Airport

Committees, a position he held until 2014, has circulated a thankyou note to all committee members for the Plaque and Newsletter appreciation, following his recent retirement from the Committee after many long years of service to the Society.

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

Committee Meeting dates: 10 May, 12 July, 20 Sept, 15 Nov, 17 Jan 22, 14 March 22

Public Meetings: non currently scheduled

15. **The meeting closed at 8:59 p.m.**