

THE HARPENDEN SOCIETY COMMITTEE MEETING
Monday 6 July 2020 at 7.00 p.m. by Zoom video conference
MINUTES

1. Present (by video)

Phil Waters (PhW), Alan Falconer (AF), Harry Downie (HD), Alan Jackson (AJ), Ron Taylor (RT), Hester Gabbutt (HG), Penny Ayres (PA), John Davis (JD), John Lowe (JL), Alan Bunting (AB), Paul Gardiner (PG), Chris Armitage (CA) and Bob Fletcher (RF).

2. Apologies for absence

These were received from John Harris (JH) and Tim Riley (TR).

3. Past Meeting Minutes

Minutes of the meeting on 20 January 2020, previously circulated, were approved as a true record.

4. Treasurer's Report

(a) HD presented the 2020 accounts (previously circulated). HD reported that the Society's finances are sound but annual income is falling slightly due to the falling membership.

5. Secretary's Items.

(a) RF reported that this committee meeting was being held by Zoom video conferencing due to the social distancing rules brought in because of the Covid19 pandemic.

(b) RF reported that the 16th March committee meeting had been cancelled also because of the Covid19 pandemic.

(c) RF reported that the AGM and public meeting scheduled for the 23 April had also been cancelled.

(d) It was agreed that the Society's AGM would be postponed until it was safe to hold a public meeting even though this would mean that the AGM would be held outside the timescale required in the Constitution. Members would be informed of this decision by email and in print for those members without an email address or for whom the Society does not hold an email address. The Society's financial accounts for 2019 would also be distributed to members in a similar manner.

(e) It was agreed that the 2019 accounts will be submitted to the Charity Commission.

(f) John Lowe and Alan Falconer, who are not standing for re-election to the committee, agreed to stay on the committee until the AGM is held.

6. Chairman's Items.

(a) PhW reported that the Katherine Warrington school had now been handed over to the Trust.

7. Membership Secretary's Items

(a) HG reported that the membership number is now 885.

(b) HG reported that the membership leafleting which was produced before lockdown has yielded few results. It was agreed that each Committee members would be supplied with a handful of membership leaflets to distribute to neighbours, local friends, contacts and homes near theirs with new residents as a contribution to encouraging membership.

8. Newsletter Editor's Items

(a) A short Summer edition has been produced. This has been sent out by email and a printed version is being prepared to be distributed to those members for whom we do not have an email address.

(b) It was agreed that the Society will also produce an Autumn newsletter. One article could report on the completion of Katherine Warrington School. AB will try to visit to take photographs. CA to help to arrange the visit. **Action AB & CA**

9. Publicity Officer's Items

(a) Report circulated to committee members.

- (b) RT has proposed that the Society hold a writing competition for local school children. CA will test out the idea with the head of Sir John Lawes. **Action CA**

10. Awards

- (a) PA reported that the 2019 awards were:
- I. Plaque - Welcombe House redevelopment and associated site
 - II. Certificate of Merit to Harpenden Cricket Club
 - III. Letter of Commendation - Salvation Army Hall
 - IV. Letter of Commendation - Hatching Green (new thatching on cottages)
 - V. Letter of Commendation - Skye Optometrists
- (b) These Awards have not been presented currently due to the lockdown situation. RT will now proceed to produce the framed Certificate and Letters of Commendation. It was agreed that the Certificate could now possibly be presented as cricket is resuming in the near future.
- (c) It was agreed that the Awards for 2020 will try to include people (not just buildings) who have contributed to improving the quality of life in Harpenden.

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.
- (c) **Transport:** The Transport report had been circulated to committee members prior to the meeting. AF reported that there had been complaints about the parking restrictions in the Lower High Street which have been introduced to improve social distancing. Committee members expressed conflicting views about whether this was a “good thing” or not. Retailers have complained about similar restrictions in the past as they claim that it reduces footfall and residents who have restricted mobility like to park near the shops but having pedestrians and motor vehicles in such close proximity was thought to be dangerous and unpleasant.
- (d) **Education:** Katherine Warington School has now been handed over to the Trust.
- (e) **Health & Social Welfare:** Work on the Red House seems to have stopped probably because of the lockdown situation and because it has been used as a Covid19 test centre. The Friends of the Red House organisation is now in the final stages of closing down. The Secretary was requested to email HTC and the Harpenden Trust acknowledging their ‘Harpenden Cares initiative for local needy residents over the Covid lockdown period.
- (f) **Built Environment:** JL reported that a new application had been submitted for the re-development of Redclyffe in Salisbury Avenue. This application seems to be as controversial as the previous applications. The incinerator application for East Hyde has now expired so will not proceed although other applications may be made for the use of the site.
- (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 second user group meeting for the new centre had been held on the 12th March and there is no other meeting currently planned. Barry Cronin , the officer in charge of the project, has now retired. For the Public Halls replacement JD reported that local builders are apparently lobbying for the design to include a smaller number of larger apartments rather than a larger number of smaller apartments as this improves the financial viability of the project. This may not be what the town needs though. JD to enquire about the current situation regarding the Public Halls re-development. **Action JD**
- (i) **Sports:** No report as there is now a vacancy for this position.

12. **AOB**

- (a) AF raised concerns about the apparent lack of sales of apartments in Welcome House and 23A Leyton Road. Concerns were also raised about the apparent long-term need for external scaffolding at 23a Leyton Rd.
- (b) A discussion was had about the worrying “lost year” in Education.

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

Committee Meeting dates: 21 Sept, 16 Nov, 18 Jan 2021, 15 March 2021

Public Meetings: non currently scheduled

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