

THE HARPENDEN SOCIETY COMMITTEE MEETING
Monday 13 February 2012 at 7.30 p.m. in St John's Church Hall
MINUTES

Present: John Davis (JD), Victoria Evans (VE), Ian Fulton (IF), Rosemary Horne (RH), Keith Jennings (KJ), Chris Marsden (CM), Eric Midwinter (EM), Keith Nash (KN), Barbara Ouston (BO), Anthony Steele (AS), Ron Taylor (RTa), Richard Thomas (Rth). Observer: Bob Fletcher

1.Apologies for absence: Arnold Allen, Penny Ayres, Steve Gledhill (SG), Chris Grey (CG), Alan Jackson (AJ), Tim Riley

2.Minutes of the meeting on 9 January 2012, previously circulated, were signed as a true record after the correction of £1,800 raised by the New Year's Duck Race (Item 12.ii).

3. Matters arising not on the Agenda: there were none notified.

4.Treasurer's Report: Arnold Allen absent but had reported that the figures for 2011 had gone for audit..

5.Membership Secretary's Report:

a) BO reported that the membership was up: 2011 76 new members (2010 21 new members).

b) She requested that the membership work should be divided into three sections: banking, membership, distribution of the Newsletter. Volunteers needed.

c) She suggested that there should be Harpenden Society stands to hold copies of the Newsletter in various places in Harpenden: Sainsbury's, the Co-ops in Southdown and Batford. This was considered a good idea and RTa will look into getting stands.

It was recognised that BO had done a tremendous amount of work on membership matters and she was warmly thanked.

6. Newsletter:

a) There were several comments on the excellence of the Spring issue.

b) RH not happy at the number of errors (omitted 'r's) in the published text that had crept in after proof reading and asked that the printer be made aware of these. RTa agreed to have a word with the printer.

c) The Spring edition had gone out with the AGM agenda and nomination forms, Awards forms and the Theodora book flyer.

d) Summer edition: copy date 2 April, distribution if possible the first week in May.

7. Awards Committee: nomination forms included in the Spring issue to be returned to RH by the end of February. Request for nominations from the Committee. Mr Alan Bunting had been approached by JD to join the Awards Committee – he was thanked and told that as AS has volunteered to join the Group he was not needed for the moment.

8. AGM formalities:

a) Bob Fletcher was observing this meeting, with a view to becoming Secretary. He gave a short introduction of himself and expressed willingness to take over the post of Secretary to the Society. He was warmly thanked.

b) Forms were completed for those wishing to stand for election and re-election at the AGM. CM and RTh will ensure that absentees also sign their forms.

KN and RH were not standing for re-election; AS would be standing down as leader of the Plans & Built Environment Group but stay on the Committee for another year. IF would like to retire as

President but agreed to stay until the EGM had ratified the new constitution.

- c) The AGM procedure was decided: i) IF will start the meeting and propose CM as Chairman.
- ii) CM will take over the rest of the meeting: give an annual report, introduce the Treasurer to make his report, organise Committee elections and introduce working group convenors, who will also give short presentations on events of the year and future plans.
- iii) The Awards for 2011 will be announced
- iv) Progress and proposals for the new constitution will be introduced by RTh at an EGM, probably the first public meeting in the Autumn.

9. Chairman's Report:

- a) Meeting with Michael Weaver, the Town Mayor. i) Following the Mary Portas Report, a Town Team will probably be created which the Society had been invited to join. ii) It was proposed that a wrought iron archway be erected over the entrance to Thompson's Close to enhance the centre of Harpenden as the next stage in developing the Close as an integral part of the High Street. The Mayor has said that this would be one good way of commemorating the Diamond Jubilee and that money is available. The committee endorsed the plan.
- b) Meeting with Teresa Heritage, County Councillor. i) She is interested in improving the Public Halls, and has the support of Mike Peters (Jarvis builders).ii) She would like ideas for inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan. Ideas could be collected at the AGM and Committee meetings. The Chairman appealed for people to send him their 'wish list' for improving Harpenden. Already on the Society's wish list are: The Harpenden Memorial Hospital (the Red House), Thompson's Close, the Public Halls, the area at the top of Vaughan Road behind the Library.
- c) Meeting with Town Clerk. i) Luton Airport expansion public consultation: there would be an Open Day for Harpenden consultation on 25 February in the Public Hall. The Town Clerk is not satisfied with this and is seeking a full public meeting.
 - ii) Diamond Jubilee: Saturday 2 June 11.30 – 5.00 Town Event. We would like a stand. Monday 4 June Seniors Event in the Public Halls. CG is on the Committee. VE asked what publicity there was of the date. Following on from item a) there had been discussion about placing 3 wrought iron sculptures with plaques bearing the names of all sponsors: one in the centre of the town, one in Batford and one in Southdown. RTh suggested that the Society should pay for all three up to a maximum total of £1,500 and this was approved. Joint sponsorship could be considered as long as a plaque denoting the Society's support was included.
 - iii) Directory of Harpenden voluntary services: There are several organisations in Harpenden which have helper lists, e.g. Seniors Forum. RTh will see if Harpenden First have such a list. VE said that there was a network run by the National Childbirth Trust. EM said that the HSW Working Group was compiling a list of helpers. There is also the CAB. RTh suggested that there could be a request in the Society's Newsletter for people to send in names of organisations. There was obviously a need to collate all these groups. RTa agreed to investigate this further.
 - iv) The Harpenden & District History Society: 2 concerns – finance and an ageing organisation. RTh will arrange a meeting between CM and the History Society Treasurer. Could this be a project for the Education and Leisure Working Group?
- d) Harpenden Business Breakfast 21 February: There had been an impressive response to CM's survey showing that many businesses were actively involved with Harpenden affairs and were making meaningful contributions.
- e) CM to be asked to speak at a Rotary meeting.
- f) Donald Robertson had responded to CM's e-mail to members volunteering to help the Society. He is considering becoming the Convenor of the Transport Working Group and will liaise with CM over this.
- g) Meeting with Rania Aidley: willing to help with publicity and had made some helpful suggestions regarding the design of a compliments slip and headers for our publications. RTa, EM & CM will be taking these ideas forward with Rania

10. Working Group Reports:

- a) Public Order:** AJ absent but had circulated a report in which he said that public order was a local concern and he had met Sgt. Twitchett (the Neighbourhood Sergeant for Harpenden) who would welcome the Society's assistance in getting information to the public. The Group's aims are to involve more people, especially the Youth Town Council, and to build links with local public order organisations.
- b) Environment (JD):** Luton Airport proposed enlargement and the 6 week public consultation, to be in the Public Hall on 25 February. Need to make the public aware of the expansion plans and get them to make their opinions known. To this end there had been considerable publicity by LADACAN which will oppose outright any expansion plans. There was discussion about what the Society's response should be: outright opposition (JD and AS) or a qualified objection (RTh and RTa)? They will meet with CM to decide on the Society's answer for the next meeting.
- c) Transport:** i) no leader confirmed. (see Chairman's Report Item 9, f).
ii) The Town Mayor does not want the (Lower) High Street pedestrianised but would like it to be more pedestrian friendly.
iii) It is likely that the gate giving access to the (Lower) High Street is to be closed.
- d) Health & Welfare (EM):** Harpenden Memorial Hospital (the Red House) to be the main project of the Society. EM proposed that a feasibility study be prepared to move the campaign forward. A budget of £750 was agreed.
- e) Education & Leisure (EM and RTh):** Organising the talk on 23 February this year. A budget of £500 was agreed to cover potential expenses.
- f) Built environment (AS):** AS to retire; an e-mail was to be sent asking for a volunteer. There would be input and monitoring of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- g) Economic Activity:** (CG). CG absent but had had a meeting with CM. In addition to joining the proposed Town Team to promote the various ideas for the High Street already mentioned, CG suggested (i) we pull together a list of things people would like to buy in Harpenden that are not currently available, so that shops could be encouraged to supply them, and (ii) that the development of the underused industrial site north of the Batford junction as a retail and parking area should be added to the 'wish list'.

11. Town Council Report:

The promise not to increase the Town Council Precept because of the transfer of several assets from St Albans District Council to the Town Council had not been honoured.

12. Any Other Business:

- a)** The renewal of the £40 subscription to the Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust was approved.
- b)** RTh requested a donation of £20 to the London Green Belt Association and this was approved.
- c)** RTa said that he would work with SG to produce press releases to the local newspapers after the Society's talks.
- d)** RH queried the budget amounts and subscriptions being granted in the absence of the Treasurer but was assured by CM that there were adequate funds to cover the proposed expenditures.
- e)** It was agreed that weekly bin collections were unnecessary.

13. Dates of the next meetings: It was agreed that Committee meetings should continue to be on Monday evenings, but take place every two months, so there would be 6 a year + the AGM and the Summer outing. The meetings for 2012 – 2013 are: March 26, 29 (AGM), May 28, July 30, October 1, December 3, January 28, March 25, March 28 (AGM).

14. The meeting closed at 9.40 p.m.

