

**THE HARPENDEN SOCIETY COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**Monday 23rd September 2013 at 7.30 p.m. at The Harpenden House Hotel**  
**MINUTES**

---

**Present:** Chris Marsden (CM), Barbara Ouston (BOu), Anthony Steele (AS), Eric Midwinter (EM), Victoria Evans (VE), Ann James (AJa), Alan Jackson (AJ), Ron Taylor (RTa), Richard Thomas (RTh), Mike Waddilove (MW), Donald Robertson (DR), John Davis (JD), Penny Alcock(PA), and Bob Fletcher (RF).

1. Apologies for absence were received from Arnold Allen (AA), Steve Gledhill (SG), Tim Riley (TR).
2. Minutes of the meeting on 22nd July 2013, previously circulated, were approved as a true record.
3. Matters arising not on the Agenda:
  - a) RTh reported that a donor had been found to purchase Ambrose Woods as a gift to the Town. The intention would be that HTC would then maintain it. However, the issues around the landlord terminating the current lease are still being investigated.
  - b) RTh reported that David Jones had spoken to Arnold Allen and was now prepared to accept the vacant position of Society auditor. The committee agreed to co-opt him (proposed by RTh, seconded by CM) pro tem until he stands for formal election at the next AGM.
4. **Treasurer's Report**
  - a) AA was not present but had provided a full set of detailed accounts (including items up to 19<sup>th</sup> September 2013).
5. **Secretary's Items**
  - a) Speakers for Public Meetings – subjects for the January and February 2014 public meetings are required. It was felt that the Strategic Local Plan issues would occupy one of these slots. DR was asked to consider if “transport” could take the other slot. Another candidate could be the issues and opportunities resulting from the new secondary school.
6. **Chairman's Items**
  - a) **Green Belt** – SADC have experienced delays in the production of the new Strategic Local Plan (SLP). It now appears that public consultation on this will not take place until early 2014. Therefore the Society's “pledge” letter has not been distributed. This will be done when there is firmer information regarding the outcome of the SLP.  
  
CM will contact Mike Peters to discuss the Society's possible response to unattractive planning applications in the absence of a SLP. **Action CM.**  
  
RTh reported that the joint working party with HTC had met last week but he feels that there is not a strong appetite this time to fight any unsustainable proposals that may be included within the new SLP.
    - b) **Library** - The Chairman reported that a pilot was being proposed to use volunteers to staff the front part of the library on Wednesday afternoon. For this to occur we would need 16 volunteers. Currently we have around 6, some of whom can't meet the full requirements. CM agreed to contact Taryn Pearson, Head of the Library service, to obtain a job description which we then include in a new email request. A co-ordinator would also be required. **Action CM.**
    - c) **Red House** - It now seems very likely that this campaign will be successful. Mark Carman's report has now been published and includes a recommendation for a Health & Well Being campus on the

Red House site. Mencap are also interested in building a facility on the site. This is the subject of the Society's public meeting on October 24<sup>th</sup>.

- d) **Park Community Centre** - Councillor David Williams is making slow but positive progress on this. Discussions are now taking place about the potential development of the whole site including a 4G all-weather pitch. Councillor Julian Daly is rather negative about the possibility of required funds (£2m) being raised plus he states there may be green belt issues. CM is still intending to call a meeting of all interested groups to explore their mutual interest in the development. CM stated that we require the support of the younger elements in the Town to push this development forward.

#### 7. **Membership Secretary's Items**

- a) BOu reported that membership was declining slightly.
- b) RF proposed that a new class of membership be created which could be called "associate membership". This would be free of charge (although donations would be requested) and would entail applicants just entering their email address and phone numbers on-line. Associate members would receive the Society's emails and could read the newsletter on-line but would not receive in newsletter in hard copy. It was agreed that this should be trialled to see if a significant number of new members could be recruited and to ascertain how many full members transferred to associate members. **Action RF with support from RTa.**

#### 8. **New Secondary School**

- a) AJa reported that 150 Batford residents had recently met to discuss their objections to the location of the new secondary school. These were - coalescence (the proposed location starts to merge Batford with Wheathamsted), the school is for outsiders as Batford children attend Sir John Lawes school, and suspicions about why a site of 15 hectare site was required.
- b) EM reported that the Harpenden Parents Group together with the Society had been campaigning for a new secondary school for the last two years. The forecast shows a significant shortfall of secondary school places in Harpenden peaking in 2019.
- c) EM also reported that 5 sites had been considered for the new school, 4 in St Albans and one in Harpenden.
- d) Several members stated that they thought the proposed site was not ideal and there may be better sites in Harpenden but it was agreed that at this stage only the 5 sites are candidates and if objections are raised to the Harpenden site there is a danger that the location could be moved to one of the St Albans sites.
- e) Although the concerns of AJa were recognised the committee agreed that the Society should actively support Herts CC's plans for the new secondary school.

#### 9. **New Farm Position**

- a) This was briefly discussed and it was confirmed that the Society's position on the Colt's use of New Farm for a new football complex was as agreed by the committee and was correct, bearing in mind the wide divergence of opinion about this subject.

#### 10. **Newsletter Editor's Items**

- a) The Newsletter Editor's report had been circulated to committee members prior to the meeting.

#### 11. **Publicity Officer's Items**

- a) The Publicity Officer's report had been circulated to committee members prior to the meeting.
- a) RTa reported that the membership drive project is now in place but current results are not very encouraging.
- b) Work is also progressing on the 2013/4 School's Art Competition

## 12. Working Group Reports

- a) **Public Order:** The Public Order report had been circulated to committee members prior to the meeting. AJ reported that contrary to some previous reports Harpenden, especially north Harpenden, is a crime hot spot.
- b) **Environment:** The Environment report had been circulated to committee members prior to the meeting. JD distributed a report from CPRE about site in Hertfordshire experiencing development threats.
- c) **Transport:** The Transport report had been circulated to committee members prior to the meeting..
- d) **Education & Leisure.** The E&L report had been circulated to committee members prior to the meeting.
- e) **Health & Welfare.** The Health & Welfare report had been circulated to committee members prior to the meeting.
- f) **Built Environment.** . The Built Environment report had been circulated to committee members prior to the meeting.
- g) **Economic Activity.** Nothing to report this time.

## 13. Succession Planning

- a) CM reminded the committee that although there is no imminent need the Society does need to start to plan for the next Chairman in sufficient time for a smooth takeover of responsibilities to take place.

## 14. Any Other Business

- a) AJ reported that the issues regarding the Nickey Line access points have now been resolved.

## 15. Dates of the next meetings:

- a) Committee meeting dates: 9<sup>th</sup> Dec 2013, 27<sup>th</sup> Jan 2014, 24<sup>th</sup> March 2014.
- b) Public 'speaker' meetings at Park Hall (apart from AGM) are scheduled for: 26<sup>th</sup> Sept 2013, 24<sup>th</sup> October 2013, 12<sup>th</sup> Dec 2013, 30<sup>th</sup> Jan 2014, 27<sup>th</sup> Feb 2014, 26<sup>th</sup> March 2014(AGM)

16. The meeting closed at 9.50 p.m.