

**THE HARPENDEN SOCIETY COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**Tuesday 25th September 2012 at 7.30 p.m. in The Harpenden House Hotel**  
**MINUTES**

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**Present:** Barbara Ouston (BO), Chris Marsden (CM), Eric Midwinter (EM), Ron Taylor (RTa), Penny Alcock(PA), Anthony Steele (AS), Chris Grey (CG), Richard Thomas (RTh), Alan Jackson (AJ), Mike Waddilove (MW), Victoria Evans (VE.), Donald Robertson (DR), Bob Fletcher (RF) and Alison Steer(ASt).

1. CM welcomed President Elect Alison Steer to the meeting.
2. Apologies for absence received from: Arnold Allen (AA), Steve Gledhill (SG), Tim Riley (TR), and John Davis (JD).
3. Minutes of the meeting on 30th July 2012, previously circulated, were approved as a true record.
4. Matters arising not on the Agenda:
  - a) CM sought the approval of the meeting to continue to use the Harpenden House Hotel (HHH) as a meeting venue at a cost of approximately £35 per occasion compared to the amount of £18.50 that was paid for the hire of St John's Hall. It was pointed out that the HHH provided a fully equipped room with audio visual equipment and with the tables erected, unlike St John's. Also water and tea/coffee was provided. The committee agreed that the extra expenditure was justified in order to facilitate a more comfortable meeting environment. However it was agreed that it would be better if the HHH invoiced for the room hire rather than the provision of tea/coffee as is currently the case.  
**ACTION: RF to request HHH invoice for the room hire.**
5. **Treasurer's Report:** AA's Treasurer's Report was circulated before the meeting. DR pointed out that there seemed to be a mistake in the Excess of Income over Expenditure figure. **ACTION: RF to take this up with AA.**
6. **Secretary Items**
  - a) The Secretary's report had been circulated to committee members prior to the meeting.
  - a) New Web Site. It was agreed that this would use the domain www.harpendensociety.org.
  - b) RTh reported that he had received tentative acceptance from the Ambulance service for the 6<sup>th</sup> December meeting. **ACTION: RTh to confirm the Ambulance Service can provide a speaker for the 6<sup>th</sup> Dec public meeting.**
  - c) It was agreed that EM will investigate having the Red House as a topic for the 24<sup>th</sup> Feb and possibly the 21<sup>st</sup> Feb public meetings. **ACTION EM to confirm this.**
  - d) It was agreed to spend £200 to replace the Batford plaque. **ACTION: RF to order a replacement plaque.**
  - e) It was agreed that the Society should send out a monthly email to its members informing them of the activities the Society has been engaged in during the previous month. **ACTION: RF to co-ordinate this and CM to write it.**
7. **Chairman's Items**
  - a) State of Working Groups: Several working groups are now operating successfully (Public Order, Educaion, Health). However, Built Environment is very short of people resulting in it currently not being able to examine all proposed plans within Harpenden. Additional volunteers will be requested in the next members email. **ACTION: RF to co-ordinate this.**

Environmental Issues is also currently short of people. **ACTION: RTh to talk to JD about the organisation of the group.**

- b) CM reported that he was in contact with several business people in Harpenden with a view to forming a 'Thriving High Street' advisory group.
- c) Email discussions. The increase use of email discussions between committee members was welcomed. CM suggested that committee members should consider whether "reply all" was always necessary when responding to emails. Often individual replies are more appropriate for specific requests while 'reply all' is useful for open discussions. **Action all.**

#### 8. Membership Secretary's Items

- a) The Membership Secretary reported that the recent email to members requesting volunteers to help with the membership records and banking had resulted in several responses which she believes will help to relieve the problem.
- b) The Membership Secretary reported that the last year had seen a very high rate of resignations from the Society but overall with new members joining the membership was approximately flat.

#### 9. Newsletter Editor's Items

- a) The Newsletter Editor's report had been circulated to committee members prior to the meeting
- b) EM reported that the closing date for the next newsletter was the 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2012.

#### 10. Publicity Officer's Items

- a) The Publicity Officer's report had been circulated to committee members prior to the meeting.
- b) After a discussion about the new proposed format for the March 2013 AGM approval was given to proceed to the next stage of planning for this event but there were severe reservations about the cost. RTa was asked to investigate means by which the cost could be lowered including sponsorship (excluding sponsorship which may compromise the integrity of the Society). **ACTION: RTa to investigate cost savings for the AGM.**
- c) It was agreed that the Society's name should stay as The Harpenden Society. It was thought that the tag line "your local voice" would help to explain the purposes of the society.
- d) The new graphics were approved and RTa was asked to proceed to the next stage with this project but to keep the cost as low as possible. **Action Rta.**

#### 11. Press Officer's Items

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

#### 12. Luton Airport Expansion

- a) There was vigorous discussion about the strategy that the Society should adopt in responding to the Luton airport expansion planning application when it is eventually published in Nov/Dec. There was a discussion on the relative importance of the increased aircraft noise, increased road traffic congestion and increased numbers of train passengers and luggage that will undoubtedly come with any expansion in the airport. With the exception of the action in (b) below, it was felt that further action by the Society should await the next stage of planning consultation and be closely aligned with other key actors, especially the Town Council.
- b) Regarding the increased road traffic congestion, which many committee members considered to be the main issue which will affect Harpenden, RTh was requested to take the recent email from John Davis on this topic and produce an article for the next Newsletter explaining what the impact could

be. RTa was requested to provide photographs for this article. **ACTION: RTh to produce article for the Newsletter.**

### 13. Community Plan

- a) CM reported that a meeting had been held with CM, RTh, TR and representatives of the Town Council to present the Community Plan.
- b) It was agreed that although the Community Plan should present an overview of the long term objectives for the town centre it was necessary to focus on some short term deliverables, one of which is currently the Café in the Park. However it needs to be demonstrated that such a café is needed and can be commercially viable. VE was requested to test the need for the café via a survey of the Pulse Group membership and others and to start to consider how a fundraising campaign could be managed. **ACTION: VE to organise a survey to test the need for a Park Café.**

### 14. Working Group Reports

- a) **Built Environment:** It was agreed that the Society's work on the Free School should be led by the Transport WG not the Built Environment WG.
- b) **Batford:** Chris Grey reported that HTC are not progressing the Lea Valley Industrial Estate until the new Local Plan has been adopted.

### 15. Any Other Business:

- a) CM reported that a meeting had been held on the 25<sup>th</sup> Sept with CM, RF and representatives of the Harpenden History Society. The History Society was requesting the Society's support for having a museum included in the new Argos site development. Currently feedback from Councillor Teresa Heritage indicates that there is not sufficient space to house the History Society on this site. The committee agreed that the Chairman should write to Councillor Heritage outlining its support for the History Society and requesting a more flexible solution be considered, possibly including the adjoining Methodist Hall. **Action CM.**

### 16. Dates of the next meetings:

- a) Committee meeting dates: 3rd Dec, 28th Jan 2013, 25th Mar 2013, AGM (date to be changed as 28th March is too near Easter, date in mid-April to be arranged).
- b) Public 'speaker' meetings at Park Hall are scheduled for: 4<sup>th</sup> Oct, 25th Oct, 6th Dec, 24th Jan, 21st Feb.

17. The meeting closed at 10.00 p.m.