

THE HARPENDEN SOCIETY COMMITTEE MEETING
Monday 28th January 2013 at 7.30 p.m. in The Harpenden House Hotel
MINUTES

Present: Chris Marsden (CM), Barbara Ouston (BOu), Steve Gledhill (SG), Eric Midwinter (EM), Ron Taylor (RTa), Anthony Steele (AS), Richard Thomas (RTh), Arnold Allen (AA), Penny Alcock(PA), Alan Jackson (AJ) Mike Waddilove (MW), Victoria Evans (VE.), Donald Robertson (DR) and Bob Fletcher (RF).

1. Apologies for absence received from: John Davis (JD) and Tim Riley (TR).
2. Minutes of the meeting on 3rd December 2012, previously circulated, were approved as a true record.
3. Matters arising not on the Agenda:
 - a) RTh reported that The Charity Commission denied all knowledge of St Albans Civic Society's new constitution upon which the Harpenden Society's new constitution is based. They have also stated that in their opinion the Society's constitution does not conform to charity law. ***ACTION RTh to progress.***
 - b) RTh commented on the lack of a Strategic Plan meant that developers are more likely to be able to build on the Green Belt. It is unlikely that a new Strategic Plan will be available before the end of 2013.
 - c) MW reported that an examination of planning applications showed that Harpenden was building around 100 houses a year on brown field and infill sites.
4. **Treasurer's Report**
 - a) AA reported that he would like to transfer some of the Society's funds to the Harpenden Building Society. This was approved. A full financial report will be available for the AGM.
5. **Secretary Items**
 - a) The Secretary's report had been circulated to committee members prior to the meeting.
 - b) Speakers for Public Meetings - Alan Jackson reported that the new Hertfordshire Police commissioner had accepted an invitation for the 21st September 2013 public meeting.
 - c) RF requested the committee members, especially the working group leaders, to continually provide input for the website otherwise the content will steadily become out of date and irrelevant.
 - d) CM reported that he had made contact with Prof. Moloney regarding his offer to host a summer meeting at Rothamsted Research. ***ACTION RF to progress this.***
6. **Chairman's Items**
 - a) CM reported that it was becoming clear that one purpose of the Society could be to encourage more meetings between the Town, District and County councillors as this does not seem to be happening very frequently currently.
 - b) CM reported on the meeting that had taken place on 20th December between some members of the Society and Councillor Heritage. CM reported that the comments made by Councillor Heritage on the library re-development were encouraging but currently there is no plan to change the opening hours. The Society had proposed the use of volunteers and she agreed to raise this at a meeting with the library management. ***ACTION CM to include request for volunteer part-time librarians in next email to members.***
 - c) CM had circulated a proposal for the Lower High St to become "shared space" prior to the meeting. This proposal was approved as being the Society's view.

- d) CM had circulated a proposal for the development of Thompson's Close prior to the meeting. This proposal was approved as being a development that the Society's thought would be of benefit to the Town.

7. Membership Secretary's Items

- a) BOu reported that 35 new members had joined and 24 had left in 2012. Also 35 membership fees were unpaid from 2012.
- b) It was agreed for a trial period committee members could try to recruit more members by offering a 3 year membership for £10. The information required from the member would be name, phone number and email address.
- c) It was agreed that the Society should try to implement an on-line application process. A sum of up to £100 was approved for this activity, if required. **ACTION RF to progress this.**
- d) A discussion took place on the level of membership fees. In 1997 the family subscription was raised from £3.50 to £5.00.
- e) AA reported that at the current spend levels we are running at a deficit of around £2K p.a. and will have to reduce spend or increase subscription fees within 3 years.
- f) It was agreed that a discussion on membership subscription fees would be held at the next committee meeting. **ACTION RF to arrange this**

8. 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 mini-annual report to be included in the next Newsletter was progressing well.

9. Publicity Officer's Items

- a) The Publicity Officer's report had been circulated to committee members prior to the meeting.
- b) The new publicity material is now being used on the Society's website.
- c) RT reported that the intention of the new format AGM was to raise the Society's profile in the Town.
- d) RT reported that he discussed the state of the Public Halls with Stuart Foster and discussed the Society's view that consideration should be given to a completely new rebuild. A meeting with Richard Schwe (Head of Community Services, SADC) is being planned to progress this.
- e) CM reported that a member (Mike Peters) had offered to help pro bono with feasibility plans etc. for this development

10. Press Officer's Items

- a) SG reported that an article had been submitted to the next edition of the Forum magazine and that has been accepted for publication albeit after some initial reluctance. SG commented that The Society needs to remind the Town Council that we are a key part of the town and should not be rationed to one appearance a year in Forum as for other societies. We hope we will appear regularly in the Forum magazine but this should not be taken for granted.

11. Working Group Reports

- a) **Public Order:** AJ reported that metal theft was a big problem nationally and within Hertfordshire. Mention was made of underground WWII air raid shelters in Harpenden that members were not aware of.
- b) **Environment:** RTh proposed that the Society should now firmly object to the proposed development of Luton Airport. This was agreed. **ACTION RTh to liaise with JD to draft letter within 10 days.**
- c) **Transport:** HCC are holding a Highways & Transport Stakeholder Forum on 13th February to which the Society is invited. CM will attend the first meeting and DR thereafter.

- d) **Education & Leisure.** The Education & Welfare report had been circulated to committee members prior to the meeting. EM thanked all those who had helped at the 24th January public meeting. CM added his thanks to all concerned and praised the success of the meeting process which engaged the audience so effectively.
- e) **Health & Welfare.** The Health & Welfare report had been circulated to committee members prior to the meeting. The Red House Forum meets on 14 Feb to plan the key public meeting on Feb 21.
- f) **Built Environment.** MW reported that he was still in need of people to help with this working group. AS commented that in the past because of limited resources the Society's approach was to object to what it considered to be inappropriate developments rather than supporting good ones. CM reported that TR's report on Glen Eagle's Manor had been sent to Jarvis and a meeting had been arranged to discuss it. **Action CM to include a request to help with this group in the next member's email**

12. Any Other Business

- a) **Awards:** AS reported that 15 proposals for Awards had been received covering 10 developments.
- b) **Pot Holes:** The issue of pot holes was discussed and it was agreed will be raised at the next information exchange meeting with HTC and Councillors. **ACTION CM to advise members in his email how to report pot holes to the County Council.**

13. Dates of the next meetings:

- a) Committee meeting dates: 25th Mar 2013, 20th May 2013, 22nd July 2013, 23rd Sept 2013, 9th Dec 2013, 27th Jan 2014, 24th March 2014.
- b) Public 'speaker' meetings at Park Hall (apart from 2013 AGM) are scheduled for: 21st Feb 2013, 11th April 2013 (**AGM**), 26th Sept 2013, 24th October 2013, 12th Dec 2013, 30th Jan 2014, 27th Feb 2014, 27th March 2014(AGM)

14. The meeting closed at 9.30 p.m.