

**THE HARPENDEN SOCIETY COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**Monday 3rd December 2012 at 7.30 p.m. in The Harpenden House Hotel**  
**MINUTES**

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**Present:** Chris Marsden (CM), Barbara Ouston (BOu), Steve Gledhill (SG), Eric Midwinter (EM), Ron Taylor (RTa), Anthony Steele (AS), John Davis (JD), Richard Thomas (RTh), Keith Jennings (KJ), Victoria Evans (VE.), Donald Robertson (DR), Tim Riley (TR) and Bob Fletcher (RF).

1. Apologies for absence received from: Arnold Allen (AA), Penny Alcock (PA), Alan Jackson (AJ) and Mike Waddilove (MW).
2. Minutes of the meeting on 25th September 2012, previously circulated, were approved as a true record.
3. Matters arising not on the Agenda:
  - a) RF reported that the Harpenden House Hotel (HHH) had agreed to invoice for the room hire rather than the provision of tea & coffee.
  - b) RF reported that HTC Town Clerk, John Bagshaw, had agreed to get his team to re-install the Society's plaque at Batford that had been destroyed by vandals. The replacement plaque was provided to HTC by RF on the 7<sup>th</sup> Nov 2012
4. **Treasurer's Report**
  - a) RF reported that there had been a small error in the Treasurer's report provided to the 25<sup>th</sup> Sept committee meeting. This had now been corrected by AA. The error was in the presentation not in the actual finances.
5. **Secretary Items**
  - a) The Secretary's report had been circulated to committee members prior to the meeting.
  - b) It was agreed that Alan Jackson should contact the new Hertfordshire Police commissioner to try to arrange for him to speak at the Society's public meeting in Sept 2013 (date to be arranged). **ACTION AJ to progress this.**
  - c) RF requested the committee members, especially the working group leads, to continually provide input for the website otherwise the content will steadily become out of date and irrelevant.
  - d) It was agreed that the Society shall have a stand at the 15<sup>th</sup> June Common Discovery Day. It was agreed that the Society should explore the cost of acquiring its own gazebo although an alternative could be to rent the service from the scouts. **ACTION RF to progress this.**
  - e) It was agreed that the Society would be very pleased to accept Prof. Moloney's offer of hosting a summer meeting at Rothamsted Research. **ACTION CM to progress this.**
6. **Chairman's Items**
  - a) CM reported that he and TR had recently met with Cllr Heritage and Cllr Chichester-Miles. Concern was raised as to the proposed location of the Park Café. It was proposed that moving the children's play area and combining the Park Cafe with Harpenden Town football club's new stand and club house re-development may be more acceptable. CM also reported that strong support was given for the re-development of the Public Halls and there was an acceptance that enabling development will be required.
  - b) CM reported that in addition to the Society's regular meetings with HTC officers the Society should also arrange regular meetings with HTC and SADC councillors. **ACTION CM to progress this.**
  - c) CM reported that the New Farm Protection Group had responded to the Society's offer to chair a meeting of all interested parties but had stated that at this time they would like to meet with the

Society to share their concerns regarding the proposals but felt a wider meeting of all the parties would not be appropriate. The committee felt the Society should chair only a joint meeting. **ACTION CM to inform the New Farm Protection Group of the Society's proposed course of action.**

- d) CM reported that the Strategic Local Plan had been rejected by SADC at the 28<sup>th</sup> Nov council meeting. Unless a new plan can be proposed and approved in the near future the District will not have a Strategic Plan in place after March 2013. This would allow developers to mount challenges to planning decisions most of which would probably be successful

#### 7. Membership Secretary's Items

- a) The Membership Secretary's report had been circulated to committee members prior to the meeting.
- b) BOu reported that 29 new members had joined in 2012. However, it was felt that membership numbers could be significantly increased and that the Society should launch a membership drive in 2013, although JD noted that important as it was to keep membership above the thousand mark, it was still higher pro-rata than many similar Herts societies. **ACTION RTa/CM to consider how this should be organised.**
- a) BOu reported that Harry Downie had accepted the position of "banker" and would look after the membership list and the organisation of subscriptions.

#### 8. Newsletter Editor's Items

- a) It was agreed that a mini-annual report would be included in the next Newsletter to remove the need for committee members to take up time at the AGM delivering their reports. This would aid the new style AGM which will be based around the working groups with each having its own area to present its achievements and for members to ask questions.

#### 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 was approved by the committee.
- c) Sponsorship for the March 2013 AGM is still under consideration. It was felt that the cost to the Society for the AGM should be limited to £250, either by including sponsorship, charging members or reducing expenditure. **ACTION RTa to investigate the costs for the AGM.**

#### 10. Press Officer's Items

- a) SG gave a slide presentation illustrating how PR works and gave examples of recent publicity pieces in the weekly papers, on local websites and in Harpenden Town Forum. He requested all members to send him news items, especially information on forthcoming meetings..

#### 11. Constitution

- a) RTh reported that the new constitution had been sent to the Charity Commission but as yet no response had been received. **ACTION RTh to continue to progress this.**

#### 12. Central Harpenden Community Plan

- a) **Park Café.** TR reported that at the meeting with Cllr Heritage and Cllr Chichester-Miles it was stated that the proposed location of the Park Café was in the green belt and it was most unlikely that this location would be approved. It was proposed that moving the children's play area and combining the Park Cafe with Harpenden Town football club's new stand and club house re-development may be more acceptable. **Action: TR/VE/CM to progress this proposal in meetings with Town Mayor, Town Clerk, et al.**
- b) **New Library.** TR reported that the concourse outside the new library is owned by HTC and HCC had not considered any improvement to this as part of their plan to convert the Argos store. It was

considered that the Society's proposal to making the road immediately outside the library into a shared space and improving the concourse will be difficult to get approved until a new Strategic Plan is adopted but it has strong merits and should be progressed. **Action: CM/TR/EM to progress this in meetings with Terry Heritage.**

- c) **Public Halls.** TR reported that strong support was given for the re-development of the Public Halls and there was an acceptance that enabling development will be required. Action as b above

### 13. Glen Eagle Manor

- a) Various members of the committee attended the consultation meeting on Nov 27<sup>th</sup>. The general feeling was that for this site a more appropriate development for Harpenden would be a mix of apartments and affordable housing (for teachers etc.) rather than large apartments and a care home. **TR to produce a report containing the Society's opinion on the proposed development. RTh to pass on the committee's views at his meeting with Jarvis on 6 December. RTh/TR/CM then to progress this with Jarvis, HTC, SADC etc.**

### 14. Working Group Reports

- a) **Environment:** JD reported that he is communicating with John Bagshaw about the state of the common after various commercial activities have taken place. Point was raised about whether it is sensible to have commercial activities on the common after September when it is often very wet and a lot of damage can be caused. In addition JD requested that an email be sent requesting members to respond to SADC's "Sprucing up the District" consultation. **ACTION RF to send email to members.**
- b) **Education & Leisure.** The schools competition is planned to commence in the new year. Hopefully prizes will be awarded at the AGM
- c) **Health.** The third meeting of the Red House team, with Peter Lilley in attendance, is scheduled for Friday 7<sup>th</sup> December.
- d) **Transport.** A report has been produced about the issues regarding parking for the new Free School on the Oaklands site. **ACTION CM to contact the Free School headmistress to discuss issues including parking.**
- e) **Built Environment.** There is a need to monitor the proposed development of Rothamsted Research as land at Rothamsted has previously been taken by the Ministry of Agriculture, before the green belt was in force, reportedly with the promise that if it were no longer needed it would be returned for farming. The land was later used for housing.
- f) **Economic Activity.** A campaign to persuade shops to open on Sundays has been organised in conjunction with the Retail Partnership. A list of shops will be provided for the Society's web site. **ACTION RTa to provide list**

### 15. Vote of Thanks

- a) A vote of thanks was proposed to John Hunt and Chris Grey, both of whom had resigned from the Society in the recent past and had provided distinguished service to the Society over many years. **Action CM to formally write to John Hunt and Chris Grey expressing the Society thanks for their dedicated service.**

### 16. Any Other Business

- a) JD to provide input for the web site on the phone numbers that can be used to report litter problems. **Action JD**
- b) CM to talk again to Sainsbury's about their unsightly 'window'. **Action CM.**

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

- a) Committee meeting dates: 28th Jan 2013, 25th Mar 2013, 20<sup>th</sup> May 2013, 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2013, 23<sup>rd</sup> Sept 2013, 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 2013 AGM) are scheduled for: 24th Jan 2013, 21st Feb 2013, 11<sup>th</sup> April 2013 (**AGM**), 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, 27<sup>th</sup> March 2014(AGM)

18. The meeting closed at 10.00 p.m.