

THE HARPENDEN SOCIETY COMMITTEE MEETING
Monday 30th July 2012 at 7.30 p.m. in The Harpenden House Hotel
MINUTES

Present: Keith Jennings (KJ), Chris Marsden (CM), Tim Riley (TR), Eric Midwinter (EM), Ron Taylor (RTa), Penny Alcock(PA), Anthony Steele (AS), Chris Grey (CG), Richard Thomas (RTh), John Davis (JD), Alan Jackson (AJ), Mike Waddilove (MW), Donald Robertson (DR), Bob Fletcher (RF).

1. CM welcomed Donald Robertson to the meeting.
2. Apologies for absence received from: Arnold Allen(AA), Steve Gledhill (SG), Barbara Ouston (BO) and Victoria Evans (VE.)
3. Minutes of the meeting on 28th May 2012, previously circulated, were approved as a true record.
4. Matters arising not on the Agenda:
 - a) CM reported that the Jubilee structures were now nearly ready for installation. John Bagshaw (Town Clerk) is consulting with the Advertiser and the Review to agree whether three separate ceremonies on different days or maybe three ceremonies spaced out throughout one day would be the best approach to obtaining maximum publicity. The Society will be involved in the installation ceremonies. Installation will now not take place until September so as to avoid the holiday period.
 - b) CM reported that the Thomson's Close arch is now waiting for planning permission from Herts CC Highways Dept. CM agreed to progress this with Bernard Lloyd to try to expedite progress.
5. **Treasurer's Report:** AA's Treasurer's Report was circulated before the meeting. There were no questions and the report was accepted.
6. **Secretary Items**
 - a) The Secretary's report had been circulated to committee members prior to the meeting.
 - a) New Web Site. RF reported that the new web site was now operational. In order to keep the website up to date with the activities of the Society RF requested that committee members send him information relating to their working groups at regular intervals. Also the Society is now using a (free) emailing service that enables emails to be sent to Society members without the emails being blocked by spam filters. All emails to be sent out to the Society's members should now be routed via RF.
 - b) The topics for the 4th October (Prof. Moloney from Rothamsted), 25th October (Tim Riley on the Harpenden Community Plan) and the 6th December meetings (Ambulance Services) have now been selected.
 - c) RTh, RF & TR agreed to work with EM and RTa to agree the March 2013 AGM content and format. RTa and EM to arrange a meeting.
 - d) JD informed the meeting that the Society used to advertise its public meetings on posters throughout the town. RTa to consider re-establishing this approach.
7. **Chairman's Items**
 - a) CM reported that John Bagshaw had informed him that the DfE had bought the whole of the Oakland site for use by the Free School. No further information is currently available.

- b) CM reported that Heather Cheesbrough (Head of Planning & Building Control, SADC) is moving on. John Bagshaw will arrange for the Society to meet with the new Head of Planning when the appointment is made.
- c) CM reported that John Bagshaw suggested that the Society should contact Beric Read (Portfolio Holder, Community Engagement & Localism, SADC) to discuss the Society's view that public parking in Harpenden should be free for the first two hours. This may become more important with the re-location of the library to the Argos site which John Bagshaw reported was still expected to take place.
- d) CM reported that John Bagshaw is moving away from the Neighbourhood Plan towards thinking that Supplementary Planning Documents may be a better way to get developments started.
- e) TR presented the work that has been done on the Harpenden Community Plan with special emphasis on the Café in the Park. The current proposal is to have two buildings in close proximity, one for the café and one for community use. It was stressed that the café must be economically sustainable. CM reported that John Bagshaw has agreed to arrange a meeting for TR to present the current state of the Community Plan to interested councillors and to get their feedback before the Plan is presented to the Society members on the 25th October. The committee gave approval for the continuation of the work programme proposed on the Harpenden Community Plan, including the work required to progress the proposal for the Café in the Park.
- f) CM reported that he had received information about a consultation exercise HCC were carrying out about filming on the highway. No objections were made. CM will reply that the Society is broadly in favour of this.

8. Membership Secretary's Items

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

9. Proposed new constitution

- a) RTh's proposed new constitution had been circulated to committee members prior to the meeting.
- b) The chairman reminded the committee that RTh, the Vice Chairman, had been asked to draft a new constitution. The committee acknowledged that the draft for consideration at this meeting had been circulated to the whole committee in good time so that all members had had the opportunity to review it. The new constitution was needed because it had been discovered that according to the Charity Commission the Society should be operating on its 1975 constitution, all subsequent constitutions being invalid as a consequence. It was not known how this had happened. In preparing the new draft, RTh said he had taken the opportunity to review the constitutions of other relevant societies and the publications of the Charity Commission. Accordingly he submitted the new draft, described the changes to the objects and procedures, and explained why they were desirable.
- c) The adoption of the new constitution was proposed by EM and seconded by AS. The new constitution was unanimously approved for adoption and will now be distributed to members by email and put onto the website. Members will also be informed in the Autumn newsletter that paper copies can be obtained from the Society's secretary on request. It was agreed that in adopting the new constitution, with its new objects, the Society is acting within both its power of amendment and the power provided by s. 74C Charities Act 1993.
- d) The new constitution will be proposed for acceptance by members at the 4th October EGM. The committee acknowledged that once the members have accepted it at the EGM, it will be duly submitted to the Charity Commission.

10. **Proposal of new President**

- a) RTh circulated the biography of the Society's proposed new President, Alison Steer (ASt). ASt will be present at the 4th October EGM where her election will be formally proposed.

11. **Newsletter Editor's Items**

- a) EM reported that the Autumn issue of the newsletter will include an item informing members about the EGM to approve the new constitution. The newsletter will be distributed to members at least 21 days before the EGM in accordance with the constitution.

12. **Publicity Officer's Items**

- a) RTa had circulated copies of the Society's new brand identity immediately before the meeting. Committee members were requested to provide comments by email to RTa.

13. **Press Officer's Items**

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

14. **Working Group Reports**

- a) **Built Environment:** MW reported that SADC were not defending the conservation area when assessing planning proposals. This may be because if there is an appeal the appellant usually wins. It was suggested that the Society should try to influence policy via the Local Development Framework.

15. **Any Other Business:**

- a) Nothing to report.

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

- a) Committee meeting dates: 25th Sept, 3rd Dec, 28th Jan 2013, 25th Mar 2013, AGM 28th Mar 2013.
- b) Public 'speaker' meetings at Park Hall are scheduled for: 4th Oct, 25th Oct, 6th Dec, 24th Jan, 21th Feb.
- c) **NB CHANGES**

17. The meeting closed at 9.55 p.m.