

THE HARPENDEN SOCIETY COMMITTEE MEETING
Monday 9th December 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), Ron Taylor (RTa), Richard Thomas (RTh), Mike Waddilove (MW), Donald Robertson (DR), John Davis (JD), Penny Ayres (PA), Tim Riley (TR). and Bob Fletcher (RF).

1. Apologies for absence were received from Arnold Allen (AA), Alan Jackson (AJ), Steve Gledhill (SG).
2. Minutes of the meeting on 23rd September 2013, previously circulated, were approved as a true record.
3. Matters arising not on the Agenda:
 - a) RTh reported that Action for Children, the owners of Ambrose Woods, are terminating the current lease and are now not planning to sell the site.
 - b) RTh reported that Arnold Allen was resigning from the Treasurer's position at the end of the calendar year. AA was thanked for his services by all the committee with special thanks for coming to the aid of the Society when it was required. **CM will write a letter of thanks to AA.**
 - c) RTh reported that Harry Downie (HD) has agreed to stand for the vacant Treasurer's position at the next AGM. In the meantime it was agreed that the committee would co-opt HD as a committee member.
4. **Treasurer's Report**
 - a) AA was not present but had reported to the Secretary that Gift Aid funds of approx. £700 had been received.
5. **Secretary's Items**
 - a) Speakers for Public Meetings – the January 2014 public meetings will be on the subject of Local Transport. RTh reported that the progress on the Strategic Local Plan had been slower than expected and therefore it would not be appropriate to have this as the subject of the February meeting. It was agreed that the Secretary will cancel the February meeting with Park Hall unless committee members propose an alternative subject by 1st Jan 2014.
6. **Chairman's Items**
 - a) **Press Secretary** – CM reported that the Press Secretary was considering resigning his position. The committee expressed appreciation of the work the Press Secretary was doing and agreed that CM should meet with SG to discuss the situation.
 - b) **Meetings with HTC** – CM reported that the Society had meetings with HTC officers and councillors to discuss areas of mutual interest about once every 2 months. **Action: RF was actioned to circulate the notes of the last meeting to committee members.**
 - c) **Committee Communications Guidance** - The Chairman briefly described the contents the committee communications guidance document that had been circulated before the meeting. The committee agreed that the guidance was sensible and acceptable.
 - d) It was reported that the Christmas lights were very good this year. CM was actioned to write to HTC expressing appreciation for the efforts that had been made to make the lights themselves and the "switching on" ceremony such a success. **Action: CM.**
7. **Membership Secretary's Items**
 - a) BOu stated that she reluctantly was resigning from her position of Membership Secretary due to other commitments this coming year.

- b) CM thanked BOu for all her efforts. HD is reviewing the Treasurer's role and considering which membership secretary activities could be absorbed within that role. However, the Newsletter Distribution role, which the Membership Secretary also carried out, will need to be filled.

8. **Newsletter Editor's Items**

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

9. **Publicity Officer's Items**

- a) The Publicity Officer's report had been circulated to committee members prior to the meeting.
- b) RTa reported that the two winners of the membership campaign had now been chosen and had been informed.
- c) Work is also progressing on the 2013/4 School's Art Competition. 8 out of 13 schools have registered so far.

10. **Working Group Reports**

- a) **Public Order:** AJ was not present but his Public Order report had been circulated to committee members prior to the meeting..
- b) **Environment:** JD reported that Luton Borough Council had now delayed the airport planning meeting until the 20th December. JD will be attending.
- c) **Transport:** DR reported that Junction 10a of the M1 was now being worked on. The 30th January 2014 public meeting will be combined with the Transport Forum.
- d) **Education & Leisure.** The E&L report had been circulated to committee members prior to the meeting. EM stated that he believed that the Society should now focus its attention on the type of school that was needed and move away from the discussions about the appropriateness of the currently chosen site. It was agreed that the Society stance is that it supports HCC's decision to build a new school in Harpenden at HCC's chosen site within the stated timescale but has no preference to which site HCC designates as their best (or least worst!) option.

EM reported that the library trial with volunteers was now going ahead. A half day training course will be held at the library for 4-6 volunteers on 15th January 2014. The volunteers will start on the 22nd Jan. CM will hold an inaugural meeting for all the volunteers on 17th December.

- e) **Health & Welfare.** The Health & Welfare report had been circulated to committee members prior to the meeting. EM reported on the 9th December morning meeting of the Red House Forum. Post meeting note - a note of this meeting was circulated to all committee members and posted on the Society's website and Facebook page.
- f) **Built Environment.** . RTh circulated a report on the progress of the Strategic Local Plan (SLP) prior to the meeting. RTh took an action to provide additional information to the committee on the background to the SLP with a view to developing a strategy on how to respond to the potential threats to Harpenden posed by it. **Action: RTh.**
- g) **Economic Activity.** RTa reported that the Harpenden Christmas Shopping Facebook page had been successfully implemented and was receiving encouraging support from many of the retailers.

11. **Any Other Business**

- a) RTh reported that HD had responded to two of the points raised by the Charity Commission about The Society's 2012 updated constitution and a revised document had been sent to the Charity Commission for their approval.
- b) PA asked for another member to join the Awards Committee. Mike Waddilove put himself forward and was thanked by PA.

12. Dates of the next meetings:

- a) Committee meeting dates: 27th Jan 2014, 24th March 2014.
- b) Public 'speaker' meetings at Park Hall (apart from AGM) are scheduled for: 30th Jan 2014, 27th Feb 2014 (possibly) , 26th March 2014(AGM)

13. The meeting closed at 9.55 p.m.

14. Post Meeting Note

- a) CM, RTh and RF agreed that Harry Downie should be added to the Society's bank mandate for the purposes of electronic banking, signing cheques and any other dealings with the Nat West bank relating to the Society's bank account.