

**THE HARPENDEN SOCIETY COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**Monday 8 September 2025 at 10.00 a.m.**  
**HTC Council Chamber**  
**MINUTES**

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**1. Present**

Jeff Phillips (JP), Harry Downie (HD), John Lowe (JL), Ron Taylor (RT), and Bob Fletcher (RF).

**2. In Attendance**

Roger Butterworth (RB).

**3. Apologies for absence**

These were received from Paul Gloess (PGs), Ian Barrison (IB) Alan Bunting (AB) and Martyn Reed (MR).

**4. Past Meeting Minutes**

Minutes of the meeting on 7 July 2025, previously circulated, were approved as a true record.

**5. Matters Arising from Minutes**

JP reported that he was still progressing a meeting with Cllr. Stuart Roberts to talk about transport concerns. Additionally, he reported that the HTC Transport Working Group was meeting on the 1<sup>st</sup> October.

**6. Treasurer's Report**

HD reported that the current forecast expenditure indicated that the Society would be close to break even for this financial year.

**7. Secretary's Items.**

- (a) RF reported that a letter of appointment for the new Examiner (Colin J Stacey) had been signed and sent out.
- (b) Post Meeting Note – It is reported that an email exchange has taken place on or about the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2025 where JP, HD and RF agreed that as Nicholas John Bristow will be taking over as Treasurer from the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2026, the Society will arrange to make him a signatory of the Society's National Westminster bank accounts as soon as possible so that he can familiarise himself with the operation of the accounts.
- (c) RF reported that an email inviting people to attend the next public meeting with our MP, Victoria Collins, would be sent out in the next day or so. As an experiment we will let our members book seats for a week in advance of the general public.

**8. Chairman's Items.**

- (a) JP reported that he met with our MP, Victoria Collins, in early July, where the substance of the conversation was the hoped for implementation of the SADC Local Plan currently with the Planning Inspectorate. Victoria was totally supportive of the points the Society had made in the briefing note around policing the provision of infrastructure as housing developments were in construction, and not waiting for public outcry to force the hands of HCC and other statutory authorities. She was also very clear that Daisy Cooper was also on the same page.
- (b) JP has also received a response from both Steve Jarvis, the leader of HCC, and Paul de Kort to an email I sent along the same lines as the briefing note to Victoria. They were both aspirational as regards the infrastructure development question, but inevitably currently lacking in any practical

detail. JP proposes to ask Paul to present at a public meeting straight after Christmas and invite Steve to join him to discuss this issue.

(c) JP reported that the Stage 2 public examination by the Planning Inspectors kicks off on 14<sup>th</sup> October, and runs for a timetabled four weeks. This stage covers the issues of site definition and selection, impacts on roads and transport, health, education provision and primary infrastructure (water, sewage, electricity etc.). JP will try to attend remotely as many of the pertinent sessions as he can but would appreciate some help from other members of the committee.

(d) JP reported that IB and he met with Bethan Rees, the clinical lead for the Harpenden and District Primary Care Network (PCN) where the main issue raised was the need for a Neighbourhood Health Centre for the district given the increase in the PCN's served population from c.44,000 to well over 50,000 as a result of the Local Plan roll out. This issue could be another lead story in the next Society newsletter, assuming Bethan is happy with the text of the report IB drafted after our meeting with her, and it may well be another subject for a public meeting in the spring.

## 9. **Membership Secretary's Items**

The Society now has 496 memberships, covering 755 names.

There has been one new membership and 5 leavers (moved) since the last report.

## 10. **Newsletter Editor's Items**

Autumn Newsletter. The proposed content is:

Interview with our new Mayor x 1 page ( By Alan B) Eric Midwinter Obituary x 1 page (By Alan B) School Arts Comp with the UN x 1 page (By Ron) Call for AWARDS 2025 x 1 page (By Ron) Report On Public Meeting Oct 16 x 1 page ( By Jeff) Christmas Shopping feature in the High St and Southdown x 3 pages (by Ron) 10 things you need to know about aircraft noise"

## 11. **Publicity**

**Arts Competition with Harpenden's United Nations division.**

The Launch brochure will be issued to head teachers/ heads of Art at: KWS. SJL. St George's, Roundwood Park and The Kings School. in mid Sept. All have expressed a keen interest and will be asked to confirm participation by Sept 30. Suheil Shahryar (Harp UN head) has agreed a £500 budget as we have also to fund prizes and limited print.

## 12. **Social Media**

(a) MR reported that it would be good to have more web content from trustees. Members, and prospective members, will only value the Society if they know about the good work that we do.

(b) Facebook followers are now at 402, up 9 since the last meeting and 112 more than the 290 when MR started.

## 13. **Awards**

The Society award presentations have taken place over the last couple of weeks, and RT reported that JP was delighted to have made a presentation to the Lea Grange Care Home last week, and will be giving The History Society a similar plaque this coming Friday

## 14. **History Society**

(a) RB reported that on 22 July the History Society:

- I. Opened an exhibition on the life of our kinsman George Hogg;

- II. Hosted a reception at Rothamsted Conference Centre in commemoration of George Hogg, with about 50 attendees, including a representative from the Chinese Embassy. Cllr Teresa Heritage, Mayor of St Albans, spoke in the absence of Beth Fisher;
- III. Held a public lecture attended by 170 given by Mark Thomas, Hogg's nephew and biographer; again, Cllr Teresa Heritage, Mayor of St Albans spoke;
- IV. The History Society featured in a 4-page report, mainly comprising photographs, in St Albans Times on the events of 22 July;
- V. The Society has on offer "Blades of Grass", being Mark Thomas' biography of Hogg at £15, signed by the author and also Theodora's Journal, also £15;

(b) In addition, the History Society has:

- I. Welcomed Cllr Kirsti Wenn as honorary vice-president, supporting the Mayor;
- II. Received Harpenden Society's plaque for the museum as a development which has enhanced our environment; and
- III. Hosted the Mayor in a visit to the museum.

## 15. Transport Working Group

- (a) The HTC Sustainable Transport meeting that was postponed from 30 January has been rescheduled for 1 October. JP will be attending but MR may not be able to attend.
- (b) MR reported that an internal strategy proposal for Transport has been drafted, circulated and amended.
- (c) MR reported that he had attended a forum meeting with the Head of Flight Operations at Luton airport to learn and share concerns about noise levels in Harpenden. MR also reported that the Society had publicly congratulated LADACAN on achieving a judicial review of the decision to extend Luton Airport.
- (d) MR reported that he had made contact with representatives of LADACAN and Harpenden Sky.
- (e) MR also reported that together with JP he had written to the leaders of SADC and HCC calling for full oversight of the infrastructure needed, and promised, in the local plan

## 16. Health & Social Welfare Working Group

IB reported that:

### (a) Neighbourhood Health Centres

Harpenden is ideally suited to the development of an NHC. The establishment of Neighbourhood Health Centres is part of the NHS's plan to create a more preventative, joined-up health system. By decentralising care and providing comprehensive support within the community, NHCs aim to ensure that individuals get the right care when they need it, reducing the pressure on hospitals and improving overall community well-being.

### (b) New Integrated Care Board Cluster

Our new ICB will cover Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire, Peterborough, Hertfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes. This is one of the largest proposed ICB's in England, with a population of 3,400,000. There are 8 large Acute NHS Trusts, 2 Cancer Centres, a major cardio thoracic surgical unit, at least five Community NHS Trusts, and six Mental Health Trusts within the ICB. On September 2<sup>nd</sup>, Robin Porter, currently Chair of the Bedfordshire and Milton Keynes ICB, was announced as Chair of the new cluster.

Hertfordshire has always 'leaned' towards London for its' Specialist links, e.g. transplants, heart surgery, complex children's disease. There are strong Trust associations with the Royal Free Hospital, UCH and

Harefield. Being involved in a massive organisation where Trusts will be competing to achieve sufficient funding will be a challenge to say the least.

This merging of large geographical areas also takes no account of the re-organisation of local government.

(c) **Nursing Posts and ICB Mergers**

IB reported that the threat of nurse redundancies and ongoing uncertainty around incoming cuts to integrated care boards (ICBs) is placing significant strain on the workforce and ‘undermining the delivery of vital nursing functions’, the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) has warned. The government has today been asked by the RCN for a ‘renewed conversation’ on its planned cuts for ICBs and to protect the role of a chief nursing officer for every ICB.

Alongside plans to abolish NHS England, the government announced earlier this year that ICBs would be required to reduce running costs by 50%. But since then, the RCN argued that ‘most of the nursing staff affected still have no definitive information about how these changes will impact their roles’. In a new report, it said: ‘For several months, nursing staff working in commissioning bodies have faced growing uncertainty regarding the long-term future of their roles and teams due to delays to wider system reforms. Comment - ICB’s have many nurses in senior roles- it is not clear how their work will be distributed.

**17. Built Environment Working Group**

The low number of applications for residential extensions etc continues. Set out below is a review of the larger existing applications/proposals under consideration: -

**(a) Land to north west of Harpenden – (5/2023/0327) – Carla Homes**

No additional information posted since Feb 2025.

**(b) Land to north of Wheathampstead Road – (5/2022/2748)**

No additional information posted since Nov 2024. Application relates only to access. Awaiting decision by Committee but has officers’ recommendation for approval.

**(c) Land to the NE of Harpenden – Ref: - 5/2024/1602 – Crest Nicholson**

No additional information posted since Nov 2024

**(d) Land to South of Greenacres, Lower Luton Rd – Ref No 5/2025/0362 – Miller Homes**

Scoping application. Council have confirmed that an Environmental Statement is not required.

**(e) Land opposite 27-39 Common Lane Harpenden – Ref No: - 5/2025/0668**

Application submitted for 8 self-build detached homes on strip of land backing onto KW School. Not yet resolved but HTC have recommended refusal due to issues regarding pedestrian safety. A few local objections have been lodged.

**(f) Townsend Lane Harpenden**

Rothamsted have agreed an option with a developer, Hill, to build on the field between Hartwell Gardens and Townsend Nursery, subject to obtaining planning. Site investigation is on-going. Indicative layout shows about 40 houses.

**18. Economic Activity Working Group**

**(a) RT reported that HTC have set up a Business Forum on Sept 15 to engage with local businesses to understand challenges, discuss ideas, and provide effective support. It is their hope that the newly**

formed Harpenden Business Forum will provide opportunities to achieve their ongoing ambitions, partnering with local organisations to ensure that independent businesses thrive.

(b) RT reported that Stage 2 of our research Survey for Retailers has been analysed. The Stage 2 version for our members was unfortunately hijacked with a link to the survey put on Facebook sites. SADC have already indicated that Facebook based surveys are invalid from their perspective. So, the high number of responses (well over 300) are of no practical use. The responses from our members are merged with the public ones and are difficult to segment.

#### 19. AOB

RB had circulated his current report on the progress towards a Unitary Authority prior to the meeting. A summary of the report should be put on the Society's website. **Action RB to produce helped by RT.**

**Dates of the next committee meetings:** 10 Nov 25, 12 Jan 26, 9 March 26, 11 May 26, 6 July 26, 14 Sept 26 9 Nov 26.

**Dates of the next Public Meetings:** 16 October – Victoria Collins MP

The meeting closed at 11.35