

EXPOSED. Local Plan Infrastructure Issues and how the Society will act.

Jeff Phillips, Society chair explains...



As many will be aware SADC's Local Plan, which covers the whole district is currently with Government Planning Inspectors for approval.

Apart from the provision of additional housing, it is meant to have a strategic plan for the whole of Harpenden covering all aspects of road improvements to mitigate congestion, ensuring that there are adequate school places, sufficient healthcare services as well as community facilities and recreation amenities for our community.

This should have a holistic view of what's needed over the 15 year lifetime of the plan, but with a requirement that these needs are met as the plan unfolds, rather than the traditional muddling through until the noise from residents gets so loud that local politicians can't ignore the need.

With the recent approval for 550 homes by L&G at Cooters End, the evidence suggests that none of the statutory bodies – Herts CC, the NHS etc – have woken up to the need for such a holistic approach.



Huge traffic congestion

From the lamentable approach of Herts Highways, who think that there will only be 100 car movements from this development at each of the daily peaks, to Herts Education who do not see the need for a new primary school, and the NHS, who

do not intend to fund additional GP provision in the town, is evidence of the traditional silo thinking, assessing each

proposed development as a single entity. Sadly, this provides the developer with a backdrop for any Section 106 agreement to fund these needs. Such an agreement is a condition of the planning permission it has been granted, and the likely result is a poor financial settlement for Harpenden.

And to add insult to injury, experience suggests that any such settlement is unlikely to be spent in our community anyway.



New Pharmacies essential



New Primary School required

Under the planning permission that has been granted, SADC and the L&G have six months in which to reach such an agreement.

And now we have Crest Nicholson progressing a project to build 520 units (including a 60 bed care home) in the north of Batford, which is highly likely to be approved given the outcome of the L&G application. These two projects make a total of c.1100 new homes from the outset of the Plan – c.75% of the total currently proposed for the Plan period.

Article continues overleaf.

So what we already face is a failure to address the needs of the Plan in a holistic way, and it's also not obvious to us who is in charge of addressing those needs.

So what actions are the Society going to take?

It's one thing for the Society to generate a public awareness campaign through social

media and the press – including lobbying both of our Members of Parliament. It's quite another to get traction in the various bodies involved in delivering those infrastructure needs across our community.

We must lobby SADC, as the Plan's owner, to clearly identify in the Plan the infrastructure improvements that it is mandated to meet, before it's approved, as well as Herts County Council as the statutory authority responsible for roads and education etc.*

We also need a formal Harpenden forum, possibly made up of elected councillors – town, district and county – together with representative groups such as the Society and other interested parties with a remit to meet with senior management of the bodies involved regularly, to hold them to account for the needs identified. **

As an example, the Crest Nicholson plan includes space for a primary school.

It defies logic not to conclude that 1100 housing units from the two developments would generate sufficient numbers of under 5s that will need additional primary school provision

A recent development of 1000+ homes in Bishops Stortford saw over 400 homes built before the construction of a primary school started, with 5 year olds being bussed/taxied all over East Herts until it was completed.



We can't allow this to happen.....

SOCIETY ACTIONS

- *We will be holding a Public Meeting in October where our MP can answer questions about the subject. **AND**
- *We will be inviting SADC and HCC to a Public Meeting in November to explain their actions. **AND**
- *We will be liaising with HTC to set up a formal Harpenden Forum to establish the first meeting

AGM Report: Society in robust financial health

In line with previous years, our AGM on May 21 was a short affair covering all the statutory requirements and disclosures. In summary, the Society is in robust financial health, largely due to generous donations, membership numbers remain relatively stable, and the trustees were voted in to serve another year.

The Society's activities are well documented in our Annual Report, with content from trustees and the Chair's report of the year 2024/2025. The report in full can be seen on our web site.

In summary, the Society has had a very busy year, and the year ahead suggests no let-up..... the SADC Local Plan, now in the public sessions held by the Planning Inspectorate, with its impact on our transport infrastructure, road

congestion and town centre parking facilities, school provision, health facilities etc, and the impact and monitoring of Luton Airport's expansion now sanctioned by the government, despite the planning inspectors' recommendation to reject.



Sustainable farming & a healthy lifestyle... the focus of our Spring Public meeting

Once the AGM formalities were completed, our Spring Public Meeting focussed on farming in our community, with a highly entertaining talk by **Stuart Roberts of Hammonds End Farm**, who shared his passion for sustainable farming on our doorstep.



Stuart Roberts (left) with Society Chair Jeff Phillips

As a third-generation farmer, he champions working hand in hand with nature—balancing livestock, crops, and conservation. He highlighted the vital role of farming in meeting the ever

increasing demand for cost effective food, whilst protecting the countryside.

His message? Support local farms, eat well, and let farmers farm without unnecessary red tape.

Stuart was then followed by a highly informative talk focussed on using diet to boost mental health.

Local food nutritionist Katharine Tate gave a talk under the heading of 'Looking after the Grey Matter!' reviewing the role of diet in determining good mental health.

Katharine cited studies into gradual cognitive impairment – often heading towards dementia – that indicated a strong link to blood sugar level in one's metabolism, where the carbohydrates in white starchy food and the stimulants found in fizzy drinks and caffeine were best avoided, as well as the so-called 'trans fats' common in ultra-processed and 'junk food'.

In addition, when it came to 'dementia risk' there were numerous lifestyle influences, but the positive role of a 'healthy gut' ranked alongside restful sleep, set against such damaging influences as lack of exercise and anxiety!

In summary, Katharine outlined her 'top tips' for a healthy lifestyle, one best designed to combat cognitive impairment and the possible onset of dementia. These were to regulate blood sugar level while nevertheless consuming a range of nutrients including plenty of protein. And away from dietary considerations, she stressed the desirability for older people to 'keep moving' and to maintain mental stimulation, via hobbies, social activity and acquiring new skills.
www.thefoodteacher.co.uk



In particular, he described the critical nature of climate-conscious practices like preserving hedgerows and woodland, which play an important role in carbon absorption, and the importance of being 'public friendly', by keeping footpaths open for the community to use.

As a matter of fact, most of the footpaths through his farm are open to walkers, and organised visits by interested groups have now become a feature - with participants sitting on straw bales on a trailer pulled by a tractor driven by Stuart, providing a running commentary.

He wound up his talk with a plea for government to get out of the way of agriculture, and to avoid administrative meddling in the way farming is structured – the four/five family run



Citizens Advice St Albans & District

How we support the local community

Did you know, Citizens Advice St Albans & District advice service is a local charity, run by trained volunteers? And we've helped over 550 Harpenden residents over the past year.

Our advice is free, confidential and completely impartial. Our aim is to resolve problems, offering legal and practical advice on a wide range of issues, including the cost of living, welfare benefits, housing, debt, family issues/breakdown and employment. Here's what some clients say about us:

"Thank you for all your help and support in filling in my Power of Attorney forms – without it I would have found it impossible. A big thank you for making it all happen"
AND

"I think that you provide a fantastic service for free and I'm very appreciative of the assistance received. The response was quick and the people I spoke to were knowledgeable and approachable. Thank you!"

Some examples of our work include: a *widower & homeowner in Harpenden, who had read a lot in the press about preparation for retirement and was quite overwhelmed. We helped her to understand her pension entitlement; how to go about finding an independent financial adviser to help her consider all the hidden costs of financial decisions, including how to go about downsizing to free up some capital for her children.*

We recently gave advice to a local resident who was poorly treated and dismissed without process. With our help, the client found a new position and we were able to give them a template to obtain clarity of terms & conditions with their new employer, to prevent future problems.

Volunteers are at the heart of our service, helping over 10,000 people in the district resolve their worries. We offer our volunteers comprehensive training and support, enabling them to help people over the phone, online and face-to-face.

No prior experience is needed to volunteer, just a commitment to learning and two days a week of your time. The role is extremely rewarding with many volunteers commenting how they love the supportive, collaborative environment and friendly colleagues.

Interested in volunteering? Our next **Volunteer Information Session is 18th June 1-3pm**, Civic Centre, St Albans. Find out more and hear from current volunteers, no obligation. Register at volunteer_recruitment@castad.org.uk. You'll also find lots of useful information at www.citizensadvicestalbans.org.uk/volunteer

As part of our commitment to supporting the local community, we want to make young people across the St Albans District more knowledgeable and confident about how to make the most of their money and protect themselves from falling victim to fraud.

With the wonderful support of **Harpenden Building Society**, we were able to offer fun, interactive, Money Management Workshops, free of charge, to over 500 Year 5 and 6 pupils. Demand was high, and we currently have a waiting list for the Workshops in schools across the district

We are currently looking for sponsors, to enable us to provide more **Money Management Workshops** across the district. For more details please get in touch, Chief Exec
June.chapman@castad.org.uk



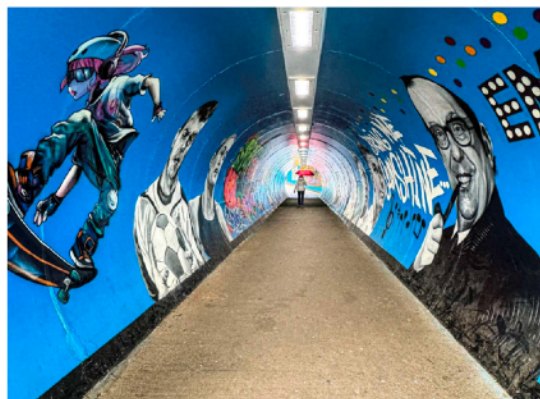
To get our help, call 01727 811118 Monday to Thursday 10am – 4pm or Friday 10am – 1pm. Alternatively, you can call Advice line free on 0800 144 8848. Lines are open Monday to Wednesday 10am – 9pm; Thursday & Friday 10am to 8pm; Saturdays 10am – 4pm.

You'll find us at The Hub, Civic Centre St Albans weekdays 10am – 1pm; and at weekly Outreach Services across the district in Harpenden on Mondays at The Salvation Army 10am – 1pm; The Harpenden Trust on Wednesdays 11:30am – 1:30pm; and Wheathampstead Memorial Hall on Thursdays 9:30am – 11:30am

And the Winners are...



"PHOTO HARPENDEN" COMPETITION 2024/25 CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR WINNERS!



Overall Winner:
Brian Cooke



2nd Place
Katharine Tate



3rd Place
Tim Tate



4th Place
David Whitbread



5th Place
Debbie Dennis

This May, we proudly announced the winners of the 2024–25 Harpenden Society Photography Competition, held in partnership with the Harpenden Photographic Society.

Running from September 2024 to March 2025, the competition invited Harpenden residents to submit photographs that capture why Harpenden is the **"most desirable town to live."** We were thrilled to receive a high volume of entries of a very high standard.

A panel comprising members of the Harpenden Society committee and Steve Collins, Chair of the Harpenden Photographic Society, carefully reviewed the submissions and created a shortlist, and the final winners were then selected via a secret ballot by the Harpenden Society trustees.

Five prizes were awarded, with high street vouchers ranging from £25 to £125. In addition, the overall winner received a complimentary one-year membership to both the Harpenden Society and the Harpenden Photographic Society.

Martyn Reed, competition organiser at the Harpenden Society, commented: "We received a fantastic range of entries, and the judging panel was genuinely impressed by the quality. While choosing the winners was challenging, the anonymous voting process helped identify the images that best showcased what makes Harpenden such a special place to live."

First Place – Station Road Pedestrian Tunnel by Brian Cooke

Second Place – East Hyde Nature Reserve by Katharine Tate

Third Place – Moving Trains by Tim Tate

Fourth Place – Harpenden Common by David Whitbread

Fifth Place – Harvest Time by Debbie Dennis

A huge thank you to all who entered, and warm congratulations to our winners!

Emeritus Editor's View

Alan Bunting

New County Hall regime pledges pothole action

Though I have relinquished the primary role of editor of this newsletter, after a nine-year stint, as a Harpenden resident of 64 years' standing, I understandably maintain a keen interest in local affairs – an interest that remains reasonably impartial, politically speaking.

I am pretty confident that a straw poll of townspeople's local concerns today would indicate, regardless of any political party affiliations, that the state of our roads would figure prominently, potholes often remaining unrepaired for months being probably at the top of the list.



Highways in Harpenden are a Hertfordshire County Council responsibility. It is therefore gratifying to hear from Steve Jarvis, its newly-elected leader, that he is (and I quote) 'excited to get to work focusing on the things we know really matter to our residents. And in the first 100 days of this new administration, we will deliver a ten-point plan of priority actions'.

The first of those actions, says Cllr Jarvis, is 'to fix our roads' and, in so doing, 'to make journeys safer'. Importantly and



specifically he adds that the council 'is trialling a new approach to mend more potholes in a single visit rather than coming back another day'.

Some of us might question why, on such an urgent issue, it should take up to a hundred days – more than three months – just to come up with a highways-prioritised action plan, which is of course not the same thing as highways-prioritised action per se. Perhaps though we have nowadays been instilled with impatience by President Trump's administrative actions which are seemingly implemented in barely more than a hundred minutes!



Recent prolonged dry weather may have put the not totally-unrelated issue of local flooding towards the back of everyone's minds. But it would be a pity if Herts County Council's allocation of highway-earmarked financial and physical resources, in tackling the immense pothole problem in its plan of action, meant neglecting the not-quite-so-obvious matter of blocked gutter drains.

Help is on hand

Harpenden Helping Hand is a local charity working for the Harpenden community and offering practical help to those in need with:

Transport to medical appointments

Assistance with essential shopping

Social companionship



Above. Harpenden Helping Hand at the Harpenden Trust Seniors Fair in April.
Helen Loveland and Chris Marsden (Chair)

How you can help others? As a volunteer driver you could.

Can you spare an occasional hour or two at a time to suit you as a driver?

A mileage allowance is available to cover your expenses.

We will liaise with you to agree a date and time when your services are needed.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

01582 764599

Registered Charity

261426

WWW.HARPENDENHELPINGHAND.ORG.UK

Harpenden Helping Hand

Our team of volunteers is on hand to help Harpenden people in need. With over 50 years of experience we know how valuable this help can be, but we can't do it without ongoing help from new volunteers.

So, can you help us to help others?



As part of the Town Council's strong commitment to promoting environmentally friendly living, health and wellbeing, and the Town's green spaces, the 'Green Loop' is being created as a convenient, attractive walking and cycling route around Harpenden. The Green Loop includes



various paths, open spaces and trails connected to make a 15km route which can either be walked or cycled in its entirety or in sections. A survey on residents views is open until July 16th. **The concept is fully supported by the Harpenden Society.**

Time to spare? Get Learning for Leisure!

Are you keen to get out of the house, keep your mind active and learn something new with like minded people? If so, a Harpenden Learning for Leisure course might just be what you are looking for.



Harpenden Learning for Leisure (HLfL) is a not for profit organisation run by local people for the Harpenden community. We run a series of daytime courses across a broad range of subjects, each course being run by a professional lecturer who is an expert in their field. No prior knowledge is required to attend, and there is no homework or exams at the end. The aim is to learn just for fun in an informal, friendly environment.

Most classes run in the Autumn and Spring terms, with a few extending in to the summer term. They comprise mainly ten, two-hour sessions, although we do run a few five week courses. We offer classes covering art appreciation, history, science, classical music and literature. Also a new beginner's level modern language course – Holiday Italian! Truly something for everyone.

All the courses are held in either one of the Harpenden Trust Halls in Southdown, or the Function Room of the Plough and Harrow pub opposite. They are easily accessible with free parking, at the CoOp, very nearby.

So come and discover the history of the City of London; gain an insight in to Victorian

Society or Medieval England. Explore developments in transport from train travel to space exploration, or discover more about DNA. Listen and learn about some delightful music or art. In the autumn term we will see the changing lifestyle for ladies living and working in an English Country House, and also study the American dream in 20th century literature. Next spring, it's La Dolce Vita with the new Holiday Italian class.

Those who attend an HLfL course find them enjoyable and excellent value for money, with many returning year after year. Why not visit our web site to find out more? We are sure you will find something of interest. So you can start Learning for Leisure!

www.harpendenlearningforleisure.org.uk



Ron's Retail Round Up Summer 2025



The Harpenden High Street is OPEN for business all Summer long.

With Summer Sales a focus there will be savings across a wide range of stores. Harpenden is blessed with a wide range of retailers, both National and Independents PLUS coffee shops, hairdressers, beauty treatments, pubs and restaurants. **SHOP LOCAL this Summer.**



Above top. A new phone shop now open on the High Street. Below. Creative art in Syke's window.



Above left. Manor Pharmacy now open. Above centre. Darlish Ice Cream, now closed due to high rent/rates. Above right. Molasses House art gallery.



Above left. Cotswold Furniture now open. Above centre. The always popular Pop Up Shop. Above right. Keech Charity Shop, one of many in Harpenden, always busy.

Controversial parking charges on the Harpenden High Street were implemented on Feb 17.

Whilst many residents, local businesses and opposition groups have continued to voice their complaints, St Albans Council have responded formally stating that they would review the situation in November and listen to issues raised by formal groups who provide evidence to support their views. The Harpenden Society is conducting a structured research programme to monitor the views of its members and the Independent retail sectors' trading performance over the Feb - Oct period,

Results will be presented to SADC in November.

Luton Airport Expansion Approved – Harpenden Society Responds

After many months of detailed analysis and engagement, the Harpenden Society, led by Society Trustee Karl Wingfield, who worked very closely with LADACAN, closely examined the proposals to expand Luton Airport and reviewed the detailed assumptions.

As a matter of principle, the Society is not opposed to airport expansion in itself. However, we believe that any such development must demonstrate that its benefits clearly outweigh its costs – particularly where our environment and local community are concerned. Following careful review, the Society decided to oppose the proposed 77% increase in passenger numbers – from 18 million to 32 million annually – due to serious concerns about:

- **Environmental impacts, especially increased aircraft noise and carbon emissions**
- **The scale and necessity of the development**
- **Doubts over the long-term financial viability of the scheme**

We argued that Harpenden and the surrounding areas would bear a disproportionate share of the negative consequences, including noise pollution and road congestion.

Throughout the consultation process, the Society actively voiced its concerns. We submitted formal objections, attended public meetings, and worked with local authorities to represent residents' interests.

It is therefore with great disappointment that we were informed in April 2025 that the government has approved the expansion plans. This decision was made despite strong environmental objections from the Planning Inspectorate, which raised concerns about the potential harm to the Chiltern hills, as well as widespread opposition from environmental groups, local councils, parishes, and campaigners, including LADACAN.

Transport Secretary Heidi Alexander approved the project, citing potential economic benefits: Luton Rising (the airport's owner, operated by

Luton Borough Council)

claims the development could generate up to 11,000 jobs and contribute £1.5 billion to the UK economy each year. The Prime Minister welcomed the decision, describing it as “key to national growth and infrastructure development.”

The Harpenden Society is now reviewing its strategic response. This will likely include monitoring the specific conditions and safeguards imposed on the airport operators, ensuring they are upheld, and continuing to raise awareness of local concerns. We remain committed to amplifying the voice of Harpenden residents, who will undoubtedly be impacted by this decision.

We would like to express our sincere thanks to Karl Wingfield for his tireless efforts in leading this campaign on behalf of the Society. Karl has now stepped down as a Trustee, and we wish him all the best in the future.



House with a roof-top lookout

Harpenden is not short of buildings of both architectural and historic note. One such is the eye-catching and imposing 'Manland Beacon' at the junction of Sauncey and Manland Avenues. It was built in or about 1913 to the design of Mr Eustace Salisbury, who also designed the other houses in nearby Manland Avenue at the time, with the probable exception of 'Ferndale' and 'Lyndhurst', now numbers 26 and 28.

For reasons now lost in the mists of time the house was first known as 'Silchester', but by 1917 it was known as "The Beacon". It was probably one of the first houses to be built locally with an integral garage, and one with an inspection pit to boot. (Photo courtesy Harpenden Local History Society)



NO parking problems when you travel on the Hopper.

I started using the Hopper some months ago and was astounded by the service and reliability. By choosing the times and routes to suit my needs I was able to visit the town centre and return home without the hassle of car parking AND have friendly chats with the regular users. Services operate from Mon - Fri. 09.30 - 16.24 - SEE TIMETABLE. It's a Hail and Ride service, so you can board along the specific routes- SEE MAP



Who owns the Hoppers? A charity (Charity No.1172748) called Harpenden Connect was set up by a group of community-minded local people, with the backing of Harpenden Town Council. The Trustees of Harpenden Connect run the business, and the buses are driven by fully trained and qualified drivers. Everyone involved in providing the Hopper service is a volunteer.

The running costs are met by grants, donations, commercial sponsorships, fares collected from passengers and community hire charges, with the backing of Harpenden Town Council.

<https://www.harpendenhopper.co.uk/news>

By Ron Taylor.

Everyone can ride!

Fares are £2 for adults, £1 children, (babies travel free) All fares include a return journey on the same day

They also accept concessionary tickets (including pensioners' bus passes)



Summer events for everyone to enjoy

Classics on the Common

July 23rd

This year's classic car show on Harpenden Common is on Wednesday, 23rd July. Once a year, Harpenden Common comes alive for half a day with 1000 classic cars, motorcycles and scooters. Every decade of the 20th century is represented, with the likes of a 1904 Crestmobile and a 1913 Rolls Royce Silver Cloud sharing space with a 1984 Lincoln Continental and a 1996 Aston Martin DB7.



Teddy Bears' Picnic

6th August, 11am-2pm,
Rothamsted Park

This exciting event for children and their bears is organised to coincide with National Play Day. The day is always lively and fun-filled with a variety of free, engaging entertainment and activities ideal for pre-schoolers and their parents and carers.

Music in Lydekker

23rd August, 12-4pm,
Lydekker Park

Mark your diaries now for a fantastic afternoon of free live music, in beautiful surroundings, this August Bank Holiday! Bring your picnic and deck chairs or make the most of the delicious food and drink on sale. This occasion is perfect for people of all ages.

Harpenden Food and Drinks Festival

13th September, 12-6pm,
Harpenden Town Centre

This popular event showcases the very best of food and drink in Harpenden. 2025's Festival promises to be another fantastic day for all; thousands of people are expected to attend the event which will be situated across the Town Centre and Harpenden Common. Street food, market stalls, outdoor bars, community seating, family entertainment, live music and so much more. The afternoon is a gastronomic celebration with an unrivalled creative, community feel.



Art on the Common

Saturday 30th & Sunday 31st August
Saturday: 10 - 5pm Sunday: 10 - 4pm

This popular event has been promoting local artists for over 30 years and we are proud of the very wide range of art which will be available to peruse and buy. Last year Art on the Common showcased over 60 local artists across a wide spectrum of genres and this year we have even more stalls exhibiting and selling jewellery, ceramics, photography, wood work, mosaics, hand-made greetings cards, decorative glass as well as embroidered art and large paintings for your wall.

Please send comments on articles or any other issues raised in this edition to Editor Emeritus: Alan Bunting
editor@harpendensociety.org.
Sub-editor Harry Downie

Visit the Society's website – www.harpendensociety.org
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