

# Annual Report 2025/2026

## Looking back - Looking forward

A brief account for the Annual General Meeting of the Society's activities during the year 2025/2026 with a glance ahead to the coming year.



### The Chairman's review of the year, and the issues we face going forward

This feels like an episode out of Groundhog Day, in that all the major issues I reported on last year are still ongoing.

The adoption of the Local Plan, the expansion of Luton Airport, the concomitant increase in pressure on the roads through the town and the rail network into London remain the top three issues on our list.



#### The Local Plan

On the Local Plan, Paul de Kort and Paul Zukowskyi briefed a lively meeting on the then status of the plan in January. (above) The good news is that as of today, the Inspectors have only raised requests for minor amendments and consistency in the document, and in the view of SADC, it's progressing towards a hopefully positive outcome, in line with the expectation that it will be approved by the Secretary of State early in 2027. The bad news, Herts County Council are not likely to be granted funding by the Government for any major improvements to Harpenden's road gridlock – which can only get worse.

And as many of you are well aware, the L&G Cooters End project was given a reluctant approval to proceed as there was no Local Plan formally in existence. This was subject to agreement being reached on the proportion of affordable homes and financial contributions under Section 106 to projects for the benefit of the community. These include £500,000 to meet projects at the rugby and hockey clubs, a pavilion in Rothamsted Park and for sports pitches maintained by the Town Council. In addition, there is a £230,000 Sustainable Transport Contribution but with no specific mention of cycle paths.

All this S 106 funding is fine, but in traffic terms, the bottleneck of the Nickey Line bridge remains unaddressed, as is the supposed alternative route to the station via Ambrose Lane and Tennyson Road.



This planning decision no doubt encouraged Crest Nicholson to progress their outline application for their 500+ project in north Batford. The Society has strongly objected to their submission in respect of ingress/egress proposals, in particular, they ignore the fact that there are two additional sites involved in the overall development. As a result, there is no coherent plan for the 750-home development which is critical in avoiding gridlock on the Lower Luton Road.

The Society has also asked Crest Nicholson to outline what steps will be taken to address surface water flooding from the site to ensure that it will not adversely affect the River Lea and the Lower Luton Road.

However, one positive sign is in respect of existing and future sewage treatment in that work is just starting at the Piggottshill treatment plant to improve capacity etc. Thames Water has committed to meeting the needs of our enlarged community per the Local Plan, and to dramatically reduce the risks of untreated sewage being discharged into the River Lea – a laudable commitment, but time will tell!

**(Continued on next page)**

## Central Harpenden

Whilst we are pleased that there are now a limited number of spaces available with a longer free period, we continue to lobby for a return to a 60-minute free period.

But there are other problems than remain.

Firstly, the number of pay points needs to be reviewed, as in our opinion, they remain inadequate in terms of numbers, and secondly, the mobile phone coverage in the centre of the town is inadequate and needs upgrading by the network operators.

## Rail services and Luton Airport

Further pressure on our local infrastructure relates to train services, with the expansion to Luton Airport and the Universal Studios theme park at Kempston outside Bedford (below) adding to the pressure on track capacity. This pressure will be further exacerbated through the construction of the rail freight terminal south of St Albans. As a community, we just continue to suffer.....

As for Luton Airport, we continue to support LADACAN in their campaign to mitigate the impact of plane movements around our community.



However, the airport operator has begun holding public consultations on the operational impact of flight plans etc, which we will be attending in future, with the object of lobbying for revisions to flight plans that currently result in periodic overflying of our community.

## Unitary authority issues

Following the Government's decision to consolidate local councils into unitary authorities, there have been a number of submissions made to Government by Hertfordshire councils, with the County Council and SADC proposing a 2

authority model, but other councils have submitted both a 3 and a 4 council version. In our opinion, the 2 council proposal presents the most cost-effective transition from the current structure as well as for the long term, and one which contributes the most in terms of efficiency gains.

## But the portents are not good.

The Minister has decided five cases to date, and with the exception of the 2 council proposal approved for Surrey, the Minister has chosen the financially weakest models for Suffolk and Norfolk (3 councils) and Essex and Hampshire (5 councils).

If a 4 council model is chosen for Hertfordshire, it is estimated that it will cost over £300 million extra over a ten-year period. This means 10 district councils become 4, and the County Council replicated 4 times. This allocation of County Council services over 4 units is likely to cost substantially more than it currently costs for those services across the whole of the county, and would generate confusion for users and residents given the replication of roles.

This exercise was meant to reduce complexity, and through that simplification, reduce cost and increase efficiency.

In our case, this simplification is going to cost Hertfordshire residents at least £30 million per year.....so why bother??

All in all, given all the ongoing issues outlined above, your Society has a very full agenda for the coming year, and I have to thank my colleagues on the management committee, along with our volunteers, for their involvement and help over the last year

As for individual committee members, I'd like to thank two long serving colleagues who have recently retired from "active" service. Harry Downie, who has been our Treasurer for a number of years, and the redoubtable Alan Bunting, our newsletter editor and scribe. We wish them both well for the future, and thank them again for their efforts on behalf of the Society

But as these two stalwarts leave our committee, I'd like to welcome three new members.

Katharine Tate, a professional nutrition therapist and teacher, Peter Syme, an architect and property developer, and Alan Bostock, a former senior officer with the Metropolitan Police.

## Jeff Phillips Chair

## Transport – Looking Back

Our transport work has taken a broader focus this year, driven by the prospect of two major housing developments.

Over the past year, we have concentrated on:

- parking charges
- Luton Airport expansion
- sustainable transport
- traffic congestion
- rail capacity

Our current position on each issue is outlined below.

### Parking

While parking charges have improved space availability, we believe further improvements could be made with minimal downside. In particular:

- extending the free parking period from 30 to 60 minutes for all on-road parking
- reviewing parking meter provision and improving signage
- improving mobile phone coverage in the town and encouraging operators to address reception gaps
- encouraging SADC to join the National Parking Platform (NPP), simplifying payment options

### Luton Airport

As we went to press, LADACAN's judicial review application had concluded unsuccessfully, likely marking the end of the legal process.

The Society is now focused on ensuring that, if expansion proceeds:

- commitments made during consultation are honoured
- the impact on road and rail infrastructure is properly addressed by Hertfordshire County Council and Network Rail
- the UK Airspace Design Service reviews the westbound flight path to reduce traffic over Harpenden

### Road Infrastructure

Members will know of the two proposed developments of more than 1,300 homes, which will place further pressure on already stretched transport infrastructure.

Additional major schemes nearby could have an even greater impact:

- Hemel Garden Community – 11,000 homes
- expansion of Redbourn village – 5,000 homes
- expansion of Luton Airport, effectively doubling capacity
- Universal Studios' proposed theme park south of Bedford, expected to attract 8.5 million visitors annually from 2031

The Society is lobbying Hertfordshire County Council to assess these developments collectively rather than in isolation, considering both construction impacts and long-term consequences.



### Rail Infrastructure

We now think that the current Harpenden station is no longer fit for purpose, with inadequate parking and poor access, particularly to the west car park where pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles conflict.

In addition to pressures from housing growth:

- the Radlett rail freight terminal will consume valuable track capacity (above)
- the proposed Universal Studios theme park will place additional strain on rail services

The Society continues to lobby local and national politicians to recognise the cumulative transport impact of these developments.

### Sustainable Transport

Following publication of the Society's Transport in Harpenden report, we have continued working with the Town Council to support:

- the recently published "Harpenden Green Loop" for walkers and cyclists
- a survey into demand for a cargo-bike delivery service for independent shops
- promotion of Harpenden's bus routes as a convenient and sustainable alternative to cars
- improved and more secure cycle storage



We also review planning proposals to help ensure safe walking and cycling routes for residents. The Society will continue to identify issues and lobby to protect Harpenden's quality of life, and we welcome suggestions for future priorities.

**Martyn Reed**

# Social Media-Looking back

It's been another big year for the residents of Harpenden with a number of changes that will impact the quality of all our lives.

The hot subjects in the last year have been the introduction of parking charges, applications for two large residential developments, the airport expansion, the adoption of the new Local Plan, and the collective response that the society can deliver has never been more needed.

The society promotes its work on two social media channels, Facebook and Nextdoor with the intention of raising awareness and driving traffic back to the Society's website.

Many of our current members may receive their news from direct emails and newsletters, but to be considered a representative group we need a constant flow of new members and social media is considered the most effective and efficient method of communication.

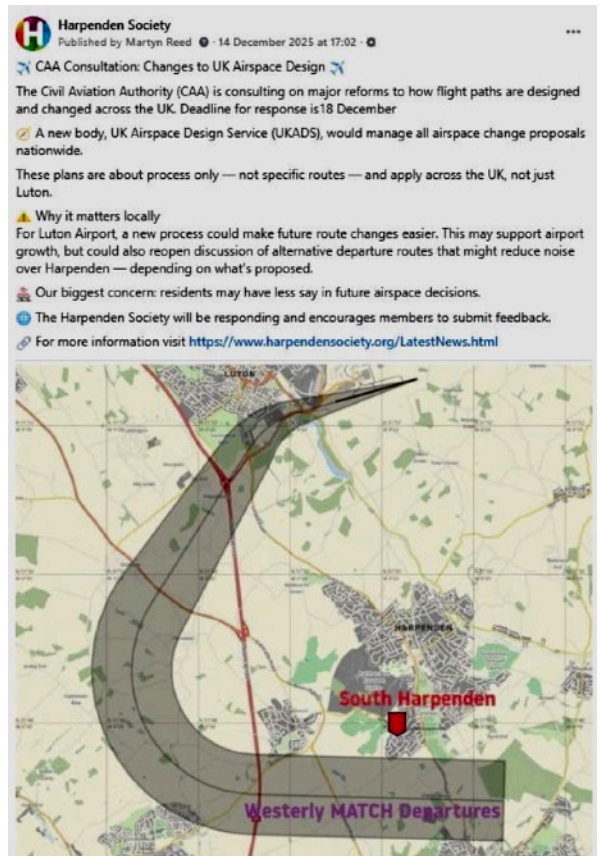
With weekly posts which, hopefully, feature the subjects that you care about, followers have grown significantly over the year from 390 to over 500.

Our most popular post this year is, perhaps surprisingly, not parking related but the consultation on air space design which achieved over 13000 views (1 in 3 Harpenden residents!) and 115 "likes".

# Looking forward

We now intend to start using Instagram to help us connect with a younger demographic.

"Latest news" will first appear on our website and we promote that with just a brief extract on social media which encourages readers to click through to our website. Hopefully when they get to the



website they will see the good work we do and want to join.

If you use social media platforms then please do follow our page and when you see a post please react to it, ideally with a like. The more followers and reactions we get then the more exposure we receive.

With the rate of change that the town is being subject to there has never been a more important time for the residents to come together and support the Society so please encourage your friends and neighbours to join us because together our voice is louder.

**Martyn Reed**

# Newsletter

Our quarterly Newsletters are going from strength to strength with editorials covering a wide range of topics, all with relevance to our members and the wider readership in Harpenden. That's the feedback I receive from the deliveries I undertake across High Street retailers and local businesses.

With the creative concept and production process now under my control I have added some stories with differing content from the traditional sources in the Summer edition. This is an opportunity for readers to contact me with their suggestions for publication in the Autumn and Winter editions.



### How easy do you think it is for a Harpenden student to get their first job?

The Harpenden Society recognises the importance of the aviation industry to the town and the need for a workforce to support it. We are currently looking for a new member to join the team.

On the other hand, this position can be a challenging one. It requires a high level of technical skill and a strong understanding of the industry. We are looking for someone who is passionate about aviation and has a strong desire to learn.

What are the challenges? The challenges of this role are not only the technical aspects but also the need to work in a fast-paced environment. We are looking for someone who is able to handle pressure and has a strong ability to learn.

What are the opportunities? The opportunities of this role are not only the technical aspects but also the need to work in a fast-paced environment. We are looking for someone who is able to handle pressure and has a strong ability to learn.

How easy do you think it is for a Harpenden student to get their first job? The Harpenden Society recognises the importance of the aviation industry to the town and the need for a workforce to support it. We are currently looking for a new member to join the team.

On the other hand, this position can be a challenging one. It requires a high level of technical skill and a strong understanding of the industry. We are looking for someone who is passionate about aviation and has a strong desire to learn.

What are the challenges? The challenges of this role are not only the technical aspects but also the need to work in a fast-paced environment. We are looking for someone who is able to handle pressure and has a strong ability to learn.

What are the opportunities? The opportunities of this role are not only the technical aspects but also the need to work in a fast-paced environment. We are looking for someone who is able to handle pressure and has a strong ability to learn.

**Ron Taylor.**

Email. [publicity@harpendsociety.org](mailto:publicity@harpendsociety.org)

## Built Environment - Looking back

In last year's report we mentioned that St Albans District Council had resolved to grant Legal & General (Carla Homes) Outline Planning Consent for their new development on the north-west side of the town, subject to agreeing terms for a Section 106 Agreement. This has now been agreed so we expect the Council to grant formal consent in the near future. The 106 Agreement provides for 50% of the new dwellings to be Affordable in addition to payment of approx. £525,000 towards a range of local facilities. A further £230,000 is to be paid towards a Sustainable Transport solution to cover cost of introducing a speed limit zone and/or measures to support sustainable travel routes. There is still a considerable amount of detail to be approved before building work can actually start.

In April 2024 the Council granted conditional consent for the Coal Pension Properties to build eight new commercial units including a builder's merchants and trade counter totalling 5,947 sq. m (64,000 sq. ft). Although the site has been cleared of existing building, no further work is currently being undertaken to progress with the re-development. The provision of new employment generating space would be welcome in the town, although we wonder if the owners are re-examining the viability of the scheme.

The new care home Lea Springs in Coldharbour Lane opened in 2025 on the site of the former Chelford Fabric premises, whilst Harpenden Springs Care Home (below) on the former Pan-Auto tyre/exhaust premises opened in March 2026.



We reported last year about the proposal by Solum to build 120 flats on the Station car park and reduce the number of parking spaces for commuters. The scheme attracted much opposition and although Solum declared they intended to make a planning application before the end of 2025, so far this has not materialised

An Outline application to build up to 40 houses on paddocks near Aldwickbury Manor with access off Piggottshill Lane was given initial approval last year subject to finalising a Section 106 Agreement. We wait to see when this proposal will be progressed

## Looking forward

Crest Nicholson have recently submitted an Outline application for their site off the Lower Luton Road extending behind the Batford Estate. They want to build up to 550 new homes plus some community facilities and an infant's school. Their site adjoins 3 other parcels of land which – assuming planning consent is granted – will combine to form a larger scheme of up to 750 dwellings. Although this site has been identified in the Draft Local Plan as being suitable for residential development, the Harpenden Society is concerned about the impact this development is likely to have on the local neighbourhood, particularly in regard to traffic congestion as the Lower Luton Road is already a very busy through route. The Highways Authority have asked the Council to defer making a decision on the application until the applicants submit more information to address this concern.

Regardless of the final arrangements, it is likely that this and the Legal & General site on the NW side of town will eventually get the go-ahead resulting in additional pressures on the local infrastructure, whether it relates to parking, schools, doctors and the general environment.

The Lawes Agricultural Trust (Rothamsted) has agreed an option with a developer to progress development of a parcel of agricultural land off Townsend Lane, next to Hartwell Gardens for about 56 houses. A planning application has not yet been submitted.

Finally, last year we mentioned that we hoped to see 6 High Street (former M & Co and C & A)



(above) brought back into use after being closed for a number of years. We understand the delay was caused by the owners going out of business. However, a planning application has now been made to divide the ground floor into 2 separate commercial units, whilst the upper floors are to be converted into 4 flats. This is still being considered by the Council but hopefully it will not be long before the building is brought back into full use.

**John Lowe**

## Secretary's report

The Society held its AGM on the 21st May 2025 followed by a talk by Stuart Roberts, the third-generation member of his family to manage the 300 acres of Hammonds End Farm on the south side of Harpenden, on the Future of Farming. Stuart stated that many Harpenden townspeople, especially comparative newcomers to the town, might be unaware how much open countryside, specifically farmland, there is close by. Stuart was keen to highlight his role as a traditional farmer, endeavouring since he took over the business from his father in 2012, to uphold a policy of working hand-in-hand with nature, regarding himself not just as a farmer but also an environmentalist.

Following Stuart Roberts, Katharine Tate, (also known as The Food Teacher) under the heading of "Looking after the Grey Matter!", put forward her professional advice, clearly reviewing the role of diet in determining mental health in particular.



On the 21st January 2025 (above) to an audience of over 100, Paul de Kort presented the status of the Local Plan. Paul de Kort pointed out that much has changed of relevance to planning issues, in the local as well as the national domain in recent years, not least across the political landscape. SADC has come under Liberal Democrat rather than Conservative control and, more recently, Labour has come into power at Westminster. Under new Secretary of State for Housing, Angela Rayner, the Labour government has formulated a revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which has set revised new 'top down' housing targets to be met before the next general election. Those targets call for an 88% increase in the number of new homes to be built annually in St Albans District, compared with the target set by the Tory government. However, SADC's updated Local Plan was deemed to be sufficiently close to submission to government inspectors, the previous mandatory target of 885 new dwellings per annum was allowed to stand. Councillors are optimistic that the scrutiny process by inspectors and hence subsequent approval will be more rapid than with previous Local Plan submissions. Cllr de Kort said its adoption by March 2026 was 'a reasonable forecast'.



On the 16th October, 2025, (above) Victoria Collins MP outlined her activities over her first year in the House of Commons. She stated she is one of the 20 most active members in the House, and in just over a year, she and her small team have been involved in over 10,000 personal and political issues with residents and others. She has attended over 600 debates, questions and speeches in the House, and asked four questions of the Prime Minister, and held over 300 advice surgeries, meetings and other local visits. The key subjects she focussed on include social care (especially dementia and mental health), special education needs, the cost of living and holding the Environmental Protection Agency/Water Companies to account for the appalling levels of raw sewage discharge into our river systems and streams. As leader for the LibDems on Science, Innovation and Technology, she is a highly vocal campaigner for online safety, and is promoting ethical AI innovation, not least pushing for a standard for age for data consent, which is supported by Bernardo's and Mumsnet.

**The Society publishes three websites containing topics of interest to members and Harpenden residents in general. The websites are:**

<https://www.harpendensociety.org> the website of the Society covering topics of interest  
<https://www.volunteerforharpenden.org.uk> - a website containing the volunteering opportunities from over 30 local Harpenden organisations.  
<https://connectingharpenden.org.uk> - Connecting Harpenden is a website enabling anyone to find out which groups, clubs and services are available in Harpenden. The contact details of over 400 organisations are listed on the website. Connecting Harpenden was set-up initially by a group of Harpenden Society and Harpenden Trust members with financial support provided by the Harpenden Trust and the locality budget from County Councillor Mrs Theresa Heritage. However, the website is now being run by the Harpenden Society.

**Bob Fletcher**

## Health & Welfare

### NEW HOSPITAL DEVELOPMENTS FOR HARPENDEN RESIDENTS

#### 1. NEW COMMUNITY DIAGNOSTIC CENTRE ON THE UNIVERSITY OF BEDFORDSHIRE SITE. (Below)

Patients in our area are set to benefit from a Community Diagnostic Centre (CDC) located within the University of Bedfordshire, following the approval of £25m funding.

Construction work will start to create a CDC to house modern healthcare facilities for endoscopy, CT scanning and bone density scanning (DEXA). The CDC will enable earlier diagnosis, improve long-term condition management, and strengthen care coordination, ultimately improving patient outcomes and helping to improve access to vital healthcare services.



#### 2. NEW SCANNERS OPENING AT ST ALBANS CITY HOSPITAL IN EARLY JUNE

These will include CT and MRI scanners. These new facilities should improve access and reduce waiting times.

#### 3. MOUNT VERNON HOSPITAL

It has been agreed that all the services provided at Mount Vernon will move to new buildings on the Watford Hospital site, sometime in the 2030's.

### DELAYS AND INFRASTRUCTURE ISSUES

HEMEL HEMPSTEAD NEIGHBOURHOOD HEALTH CENTRE DELAYED (AGAIN) - AND MAJOR PROBLEMS IN THE DELIVERY OF IMPROVEMENTS TO LOCAL HEALTH CARE

Closure of the Hemel Hospital site must now go through a formal planning process.

The £135 million potential cost of the Hospital/Council new building in Hemel town centre is three times the sum allocated for NHC's across England.

All of this slows down improved access to diagnostic and community NHS services in Hemel, which will eventually take the pressure off Watford Hospital.

Nationally, **NHS neighbourhood health plans are in danger of failing due to a lack of formal governance, chronic staff shortages, and minimal GP involvement.**

The push to shift acute hospital care into local neighbourhoods is struggling to gain momentum due to several major hurdles:

**Lack of Structure:** Top trust leaders warn that without formal governance and strong operational delivery, the plans risk becoming "nice ideas" that simply disappear.

**General Practice Exclusion:** The British Medical Association (BMA) and Doctors' Association UK (DAUK) warn that NHS England's top-down approach is fatally flawed because GPs were largely left out of the initial planning stages. One of the key issues is around where responsibility for an individual patient sits.

**Financial Pressures:** Local Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) and GP practices face steep funding cuts and immense operational strain, making it difficult to absorb new roles.

### NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS AND GP SURGERIES-NO GUARANTEES OF NEW BUILDS.

Developers pay infrastructure support money to planning authorities through S106 agreements. New houses do not automatically mean new GP surgeries, as the developer infrastructure payments go via the District Council to the Integrated Care Board, (now Central East), who decide how and where the money is spent.

Generally, expansion of existing surgeries, is more likely than the construction of new surgeries.

### LATEST S106 NEWS FOR HARPENDEN

In the draft S106 agreement between CALA homes, (The North West Harpenden developer), and St Albans District Council, S106 payments are allocated as follows:

The East of England Ambulance Trust will receive £195,964.00, index linked as a contribution towards the cost of relocating ambulance hubs, payable prior to first house occupancy.

### General NHS Contribution

There will be an NHS Contribution of (£1,671.00) per Dwelling as a contribution towards the cost of increasing clinical space and patient access within the Council's area through the expansion and/or reconfiguration of existing facilities, and/or the digitisation of patient records or alternative provision of medical services by the NHS serving the Development.

Around £870,000 total - 50% payable prior to first house occupancy - remainder after 50% occupancy. So no guaranteed funding for expanded NHS Primary Care services in Harpenden. This pattern of developer contributions going into a non-designated pot is likely to continue with other new housing sites.

**Ian Barrison**

## AWARDS 2025

The Harpenden Society is proud to recognise these worthy nominations for our Annual Awards. Please note individuals who have contributed immense efforts to their particular causes are now featured.

Presentations for each Award will take place in the summer. See the Society web site for details

### Prestige Plaque

Redclyffe Place Apartments in Salisbury Avenue, for the 55+ age groups.

### Certificate of Merit

Artichoke Bake & More in Leyton Road

### Letters of Commendation

**Derek French** for his work to secure a Town Centre Bank Hub.

**Sue Hobley** for her volunteer work for Harpenden & District Macmillan Cancer Support.

**Mike Hodge** for his fund raising work as the Harpenden Busker.



## Membership – Looking back

Overall, membership has decreased in the year to 31-Mar-26 with the 46 new joiners being offset by a reduction as a result of a major 'data cleanse' exercise to verify the membership entries. We contacted members we hadn't heard from recently by several different methods including a final posted letter. We had a good response clarifying membership status, but several members were reported to have moved away or sadly died. As at end of April 2026, we have yet to hear from 28 and these will likely impact on next year's report.

The result of the data cleanse is that we have a better view of our active membership. Please remember to tell us if you move address or change email address so we can keep the records up to date, and get the newsletters to you. This is easiest via email to [membership@harpendensociety.org](mailto:membership@harpendensociety.org) -

### Thanks in advance!

Our new members have mostly joined through our website after attending our popular Public

Meetings, or responding to our active social media presence.

Totals now: 702 people across 471 memberships as at end March. This compares to 756 people across 496 memberships last year. Some memberships have two names associated with them, but newer memberships tend to have only one name.

## Looking forward

The programme of public meetings and increased social media exposure through the campaigning work will provide opportunities for recruitment, and some of the activity streams in hand, eg stands at public events, should also generate interest by demonstrating the reach and influence of the society.

**Paul Gloss**



## Publicity - Looking Back

We have continued with traditional media coverage via press release news stories across our activities in the realms of : Local Plan, Built Environment, Health and Welfare, Transport, Awards Presentations, Public Meetings. Our stand at the Seniors Fair is a regular event. AND our Web site is a constant source of information.



## Looking forward

We will retain the key local media: The Herts Advertiser and St Albans Times plus posters around the Town retailers, Library and Council notice boards. Plus more coverage for the 2025 Awards presentations. Social media is becoming a more dominant force as can be seen on page 4.



## The Economy Looking Back

The introduction of the new High Street parking charges in early Spring 2025 has been the dominant force of change with retailers and residents coming to terms with paying. In the initial months the High Street was like a ghost town with hardly a shopper to be seen. Retailers and residents alike were in uproar. During the summer there was a gradual acceptance of the situation and by Autumn there was a more positive vibe with shoppers returning and most retailers adjusting their status.

## Looking forward

National praise in the Express as one of the top retail towns in the UK continues to be the case with very few empty units. And when one is vacated it soon becomes occupied.



The Harpenden Building Society opened a stylish new venue on Church Green and a Bank Hub will be opening in June, almost opposite, establishing 2 key businesses in the centre, The hospitality sector is vibrant with The Perch Cocktail Bar now open in Station road.

Southdown continues to attract shoppers to some well established businesses like Milehams and Southdown Hardware. Their hospitality sector is also very busy. And the Harpenden Springs Care Home opened in March.



The Town Council are supporting local businesses with their excellent editorial coverage in Forum Magazine and their Business Forum is becoming more active with various projects including a Mentoring service.



Finally the Southdown Industrial Estate ( above) has been cleared ahead of planned development.

**Ron Taylor**

# Harpenden Society – 2025

## Treasurer's Report 2025

The Society generated a significant overall surplus for 2025 of £1,821 following a deficit of £814 in 2024.

Following John Bristow's appointment as Treasurer wef 1<sup>st</sup> January 2026, the Society appointed Staceys Accountants as the Society's independent examiner for the 2025 year.

### Income

Overall income, at £6,985, is 4% higher than 2024.

Subscription income improved by 8% over 2025 to £4,632 and having stability in the Society's primary income stream has meant that trustees have not had to raise subscription rates for 2026. Interestingly, a number of members are still renewing their subscription at historic rates and such members have been asked to increase to the current £15.00 rate if they are able to do so.

Gift Aid remains an important income source and all members are encouraged, if possible, to provide a valid declaration

### Expenditure

Overall Expenditure in 2025 was markedly lower, at £5,164, than 2024 (£7,538). The main cause of this reduction was the lower expenditure on Advertising and Promotion.

### Funds

At 31 December 2025, the unrestricted Accumulated Fund balance at £22,752 is more than in line with that required by the Society's Financial Reserves policy and the Society is therefore in a strong financial position.

### Looking forward

The Society's draft budget for 2026 reveals a small deficit which is more than capable of being financed from our existing funds. Income is broadly in line with 2025 levels and expenditure is budgeted to increase as we intend publishing 4 newsletters and acquiring new display banners.

## INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE HARPENDEN SOCIETY

I report on the accounts of the Harpenden Society for the year ended 31st December 2025, which are attached and reported on in Paragraph 6 above.

### 10.1. Respective responsibilities of Trustees and Examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's

trustees consider that neither an audit nor an independent examination is required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) but in the interests of good governance that an independent examination should be conducted as though it were required.

### It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts prepared pursuant to section 145 of the 2011 Act
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act) and Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of the Harpenden Society and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

### 10.2. Basis of Independent Examiner's Report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement

### 10.3. Independent Examiner's Statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- 1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that, in any material respect, the requirements:
  - a) to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
  - b) to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act have not been met; or
- 2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

**Colin Stacey BFP FCA, Rivers Lodge, West Common, Harpenden, Herts, AL5 2JD**



## The Harpenden Society

### Receipts and Payments Account for the 12 months to 31st December 2025

	Accumulated Fund £	Civic Dev Fund	Total £	Year to 31/12/2024 £
<b>INCOME</b>				
Subscriptions and donations	4,632.45		4,632.45	4,290.50
Interest received	1,357.91		1,357.91	1,523.40
Gift aid refund	995.01		995.01	910.28
	<u>6,985.37</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>6,985.37</u>	<u>6,724.18</u>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>				
Newsletters	1,992.98		1,992.98	1,669.10
Other Publications	79.00		79.00	22.50
Public Meetings	521.35		521.35	1,691.06
AGM expenses	327.85		327.85	409.42
School Arts competition	375.00		375.00	77.90
The Harpenden plaque	702.75		702.75	617.04
Harpenden in Bloom	0.00		0.00	160.00
Subscriptions to other societies	100.00		100.00	100.00
Advertising & Promotion	195.00		195.00	2,255.00
Office expenses, postage, telephone etc.	379.30		379.30	120.50
Insurance	477.87		477.87	411.16
PayPal charges	12.60		12.60	4.87
	<u>5,163.70</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>5,163.70</u>	<u>7,538.55</u>
<b>Surplus/-Deficit for the period</b>	<u>1,821.67</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>1,821.67</u>	<u>-814.37</u>
Funds b/f	20,929.92	19,564.55	40,494.47	41,308.84
Surplus/deficit	1,821.67	0.00	1,821.67	-814.37
<b>Funds c/f</b>	<u><u>22,751.59</u></u>	<u><u>19,564.55</u></u>	<u><u>42,316.14</u></u>	<u><u>40,494.47</u></u>

**The Harpenden Society**

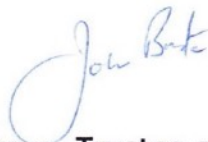
**Balance Sheet as at 31st December 2025**

	Accumulated Fund £	Civic Dev Fund £	Total £	Year to 31/12/2024 £
<b>FUNDS</b>				
Balance at 1st January 2025	20,929.92	19,564.55	40,494.47	41,308.84
Surplus/Deficit for the period	1,821.67	0.00	1,821.67	-814.37
Balance at 31st December 2025	22,751.59	19,564.55	42,316.14	40,494.47
Represented by:				
Cash on deposit at bank and in hand	2,014.56		2,014.56	3,514.23
95 day deposit	20,737.03	19,564.55	40,301.58	36,980.24
TOTAL ASSETS	22,751.59	19,564.55	42,316.14	40,494.47

The above Income and Expenditure Account were approved by the Trustees and authorised for signature on 9th March 2025 and signed, on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026, by:



**J K Phillips - Trustee and Chairman**



**N J Bristow - Trustee and Treasurer**

Please send comments on articles or any other issues raised in this Annual Report to: Ron Taylor. [publicity@harpendsociety.org.uk](mailto:publicity@harpendsociety.org.uk)

Visit the Society's website – [www.harpendsociety.org](http://www.harpendsociety.org)  
Published by  
The Harpenden Society.







