

THE HARPENDEN SOCIETY COMMITTEE MEETING
Monday 16 January 2023 at 10.00 a.m.
Salvation Army Hall
MINUTES

1. **Present**

Jeff Phillips (JP), Paul Gloess (PGs), Karl Wingfield (KW), John Lowe (JL), Alan Bunting (AB), Harry Downie (HD), Penny Ayres (PA), Ian Barrison (IB) and Bob Fletcher (RF).

2. **Apologies for absence**

These were received from Paul Gardiner (PG), Ron Taylor (RT) and Chris Armitage (CA).

3. **Past Meeting Minutes**

Minutes of the meeting on 14 November 2022, previously circulated, were approved as a true record.

4. **Matters Arising from Minutes**

None

5. **Treasurer's Report**

The Treasurer's Report had been circulated by HD prior to the meeting. HD reported that a legacy of £10,000 had been received from the estate of Mrs. Daphne Ann Thomas. **Action: RF to send a thank you note/email to the executors.**

6. **Secretary's Items.**

(a) Topics for new public meetings were discussed. Suggested public meetings included:

- I. Meeting on pedestrianisation, parking and traffic flows in Harpenden, maybe late Spring 2023.
- II. Conservation Area, maybe late 2023
- III. Meeting on the local primary care network and its relationship with the new Integrated Care System. Possibly in the Spring of 2023.
- IV. Luton Airport – focussing on the flight path issues, late 2023, possibly.

(b) RF requested committee members to look at the Society's website and to provide updates for those sections that are relevant to their activities.

7. **Chairman's Items.**

(a) Traffic/pedestrianisation study for central Harpenden. This work has now been commissioned from the University of Hertfordshire (Stephen Joseph). The Society is requesting a scoping document outlining what could be done to improve the centre of Harpenden taking into consideration the apparent desire of a large number of residents for more pedestrianisation but also being aware of the requirements of the retailers.

(b) The issues surrounding the Society's press release about the food vans on the concourse was discussed. It was agreed by all that the wording of the initial press release left the Society open to criticism and that in future more care will need to be taken to check any output from the Society (press releases, newsletters etc.) to ensure that the wording cannot be interpreted in a negative way.

(c) It was agreed that a committee meeting would be arranged in late February to discuss the vision/strategy of the Society. **Action; RF to arrange a date.**

(d) A discussion took place about restarting the Chairman's emails to members. In the past the Society attempted to send a Chairman's email outlining the Society's activities about 6 times a year. JP will consider how this activity can be restarted. **Action: JP**

8. **Membership Secretary's Items**

(a) The Membership Secretary's report had been circulated by PGs prior to the meeting.

- (b) The new membership leaflet has now been distributed to houses in North Harpenden. This has resulted in only 3 new members. It was decided to not go ahead with any more leaflet distribution for the time being.

9. **Newsletter Editor's Items**

- (a) AB reported that he had sufficient content for the Winter issue.

10. **Publicity**

- (a) The publicity report had been circulated by RT prior to the meeting.

11. **Awards**

- (a) PA reported that she had had nominations for the 2022 awards for Corner Hall, the old Nat West building (now Gail's), Station House and the new playgrounds. It was agreed that Ronan Place should not be considered for a 2022 award as it not completely finished, it could be included in the 2023 nominations.

12. **Working Group Reports**

- (a) Community Safety: The Community Safety report had been circulated by PG prior to the meeting.
- (b) Environment: Nothing to report.
- (c) Transport: The Transport Report had been circulated prior to the meeting. KW reported that the eight-week Public Inquiry into Luton Airport's application to grow airport capacity from 18 to 19 million passengers per annum – bringing an increase in local noise, air pollution and traffic congestion – wound up in mid-November. The application, already, and unsurprisingly, approved by the airport owner Luton Borough Council (LBC), had been 'called in' (a standard local authority planning term) by the two relevant Secretaries of State, for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and, separately, Transport. At the completion of the inquiry, held in Luton Town Hall, the three government-appointed independent inspectors set about reviewing all the evidence, ahead of submitting their recommendations to the Secretaries of State. Their report is due to be submitted before the end of February and a decision from Whitehall is expected by late May.
- (d) Education: Nothing to report. Chris Armitage has resigned from his position as leader of the Education Group. The Chairman expressed his thanks to Chris for all the work he has done for the Society.
- (e) Health & Social Welfare: The Health Report has been circulated by IB prior to the meeting. IB reported that surgeries in Harpenden were recruiting additional (non GP) staff in an attempt to improve the level of service.
- (f) Built Environment: The Built Environment full report has been circulated by JL prior to the meeting. JL reported on two applications:
 - I. **Harpenden Public Halls, Southdown Rd.** – 5/2022/2612. At long last the Council have submitted an application for the redevelopment of the site. It has attracted a fair number of Objections including those from owner of Harpenden Hall. The development is considered overly large for the site and the Town Council have also expressed concerns, particularly in relation to the effects on the neighbouring Listed Buildings and the tall 4 storey block fronting Arden Grove. The Society has submitted an Objection. However, as the Council need maximum value to pay for EMC there is doubt that the objections will bear fruit.
 - II. **Care Home, at Former Pan Autos, Grove Road** – 5/2022/2735. The building of a 75-bed care home has attracted Objections particularly from nearby residents due to the overall size and limited parking provision. The Society has also lodged an Objection.
- (g) Economic Activity: The Publicity report had been circulated by RT prior to the meeting.
- (h) Arts, Leisure, Entertainment (ALE): Nothing to report.

(i) Sports: Nothing to report.

13. **AOB**

None.

14. **Dates of the next meetings:** 13 March 23, 8 May 23, 10 July 23, 18 Sept 23, 13 Nov 23

Public Meetings: none currently planned.

The meeting closed at 11.45 am.