

THE HARPENDEN SOCIETY COMMITTEE MEETING
Monday 17 January 2022 at 10.00 a.m.
Salvation Army Hall
MINUTES

1. **Present**

Phil Waters (PhW), Harry Downie (HD), Alan Bunting (AB), Paul Gardiner (PG), Ian Barrison (IB), Chris Armitage (CA), Karl Wingfield (KW), Jeff Phillips (JP), Neil McArthur (NM), Caroline Roberts (CR), Penny Ayres (PA), John Lowe (JL) and Bob Fletcher (RF).

2. **Apologies for absence**

These were received from Ron Taylor (RT), Alan Jackson (AJ), Hester Gabbutt (HG) and Anne James (AJa).

3. **Past Meeting Minutes**

Minutes of the meeting on 15 November 2021, previously circulated, were approved as a true record.

4. **Matters Arising from Minutes**

(a) None.

5. **Treasurer's Report**

(a) The Treasurer's report had been circulated to the committee before the meeting. HD reported that the Society will have a £2k surplus of income over expenditure for 2021.

(b) It was also reported that the Society had been informed that it had been left a legacy of £10K from the estate of Mrs Sheila Burley. Once this is received from Taylor Walton solicitors a meeting will be convened to explore constructive ways in which this legacy can be spent. Attendees will be RF, RT, IB, JP and HD.

6. **Secretary's Items.**

(a) The meeting approved the co-opting of Caroline Roberts and Neil McArthur onto the committee. Caroline Roberts will discuss the role of membership secretary with HG with a view to taking on this role. Neil McArthur will become a member of the committee currently "without portfolio".

(b) The meeting on Air Pollution and Children featuring Dr Abigail Whitehouse is now arranged for the evening of April 21st. The publicity for this event should now be started. IB mentioned that some health professionals may be interested and they will need around 6 weeks notice so that they can make arrangements to attend. **Action RT to start to produce the publicity material.**

(c) The date of the AGM is still not decided. It would be desirable for the AGM to immediately precede a public meeting but if this is not possible a Zoom based AGM could be held. **Action RF to progress date and format of the AGM.**

(d) It was agreed that a meeting will be held to discuss the 4 or 5 areas where the Society should focus its activities. Attendees will be JP, NM, KW and RF. **Post meeting note – this meeting has now been arranged for the 7th February.**

7. **Chairman's Items.**

(a) PhW reported that it had been agreed that the Society would work together with the Harpenden Trust in several ways but initially in an attempt re-establish the library volunteer scheme which enabled the library to remain open on Wednesday afternoons.

(b) PhW reported that Conservation Area working party had been formed with two residents (Nicola Ramsden and Chris Earnshaw) being members. The Town Council has agreed with this initiative and is supporting it. HG will be the Society's representative.

8. **Membership Secretary's Items**

(a) The Membership Secretary has reported that the Society now has 854 members.

- (b) HG is resigning as the Membership Secretary. CR will discuss this role with HG with a view to taking over.

9. **Newsletter Editor's Items**

- (a) The Winter newsletter is in progress.
- (b) It was agreed that JP will "sign off" each edition of the newsletter. **Action AB and JP.**

10. **Awards.**

- (a) PA reported that four nominations had been received for the 2021 awards. They are: the Eric Morecambe Centre, the renovated Russell Building at Rothamsted, the new play area in Rothamsted Park and the new boardwalk in Batford Springs.

11. **Working Group Reports**

- (a) **Community Safety:** The Community Safety report had been circulated by PG.
- (b) **Environment:** Nothing to report.
- (c) **Transport:**
 - I. The Transport Report had been circulated prior to the meeting.
 - II. KW reported that he had received several email responses to the proposal to move the pedestrian crossing at the foot of Station Rd and to remove the two parking places outside Simmons also in Station Rd. There was general support to remove the parking places as it was considered that cars parked there cause traffic congestion in Station Rd. However, there was very mixed results to the proposal about moving the pedestrian crossing. Therefore, it was proposed that the Society does not progress the proposal to move the pedestrian crossing but does go forward with the proposal to approach councillors to try to remove the two parking places.
 - III. The town's retailers have come out strongly against any proposal to increase the pedestrianisation of the Lower High St. It was agreed that this was an understandable reaction but possibly caused by the fact that there was no overall plan about how this could be achieved without losing parking places. **Action: PhW will explore whether the Society can engage the services of a person who could produce a comprehensive parking plan for that area of the town centre**
- (d) **Education:** CA reported that the Society's writing competition had been received by the secondary schools but unfortunately it seems as if there will not be a large number of responses. This reaction may be the result of the disruption of the school timetables caused by Covid.
- (e) **Health & Social Welfare:** The Health Report has been circulated prior to the meeting. IB reported that the West Herts Hospital Trust had obtained Teaching Hospital status which was a major accomplishment. It was also reported that the introduction of the St Albans Urgent Care Centre had been delayed, possibly until April, and that there seems to be little progress on moving new services to the Harpenden Memorial Hospital (The Red House).
- (f) **Built Environment:** The Built Environment report has been circulated by JL. JL reported that the Society had commented on the proposal to turn Kinston House into a restaurant stating concerns about the loss of retail space in the town. It was also reported that the proposal to build a care home on Coldharbour Lane had been approved even though the application seems to be in contravention of the Neighbourhood Plan. A discussion took place about why the planning application process seems to ignore the Neighbourhood Plan on some occasions and to use the Neighbourhood Plan as the reason the turn down applications on other occasions. It was stated that the Neighbourhood Plan is only advisory and has no status in planning law.
- (g) **Economic Activity:** The Publicity report has been circulated by RT.

- (h) **Arts, Leisure, Entertainment (ALE):** The ALE Report has been circulated prior to the meeting.
- (i) **Sports:** KW reported that the Harpenden Rigby Club were closing their squash courts so that they can build more changing room accommodation. **Action: KW to send a short report to PhW about this so that he can take this matter up with the County Sports Partnership.**

12. **AOB**

- (a) Nothing to report.

Dates of the next meetings:

Committee Meeting dates: 14 March, 9 May, 11 July, 19 Sept, 14 Nov

Public Meetings: AGM (tba), April 21st 2022 (Dr Whitehouse)

The meeting closed at 12.06 pm.