

THE HARPENDEN SOCIETY COMMITTEE MEETING
Monday 18 January 2021 at 7.00 p.m. by Zoom video conference
MINUTES

1. **Present (by video)**

Phil Waters (PhW), Penny Ayres (PA), Alan Jackson (AJ), Ron Taylor (RT), Hester Gabbutt (HG), Chris Armitage (CA), Alan Bunting (AB,), Paul Gardiner (PG), Karl Wingfield (KW) and Bob Fletcher (RF).

2. **Apologies for absence**

These were received from Harry Downie (HD).

3. **Past Meeting Minutes**

Minutes of the meeting on 16 November 2020, previously circulated, were approved as a true record.

4. **Matters Arising from Minutes**

(a) None.

5. **Treasurer's Report**

(a) The unaudited accounts for 2020 had been previously circulated. It was noted that although the Society's finances were sound the annual subscription income is declining due to the declining membership. It was noted that members who pay their subscription by cheque were being reminded that payment is now due in the Winter newsletter that is near to being distributed. A discussion took place about how to persuade members to pay by Standing Order rather than by cheque as progressing the late cheque payers is a time consuming task. It was suggested that cheque payment (for new members) should be made considerably more expensive than payment by Standing Order.

Action: RF to discuss this with HD.

6. **Secretary's Items.**

(a) RF reported that consent had been granted by the Planning Inspectorate for the works on the common (the work to the car park and the work to the paths surrounding the pools) in accordance with the application from HTC received 20 December 2019. The Society had provided comments on this plan.

(b) RF reported that a notification of the consultation on the draft Hertfordshire Waste Local Plan had been received. Responses are due by the 19 March 2021.

(c) A discussion took place on possible public meetings. A meeting on the Luton Airport expansion plans was thought to be more appropriate when the large expansion plans were clearer (32M passengers) rather than the current additional 1M mini expansion plan that is currently being proposed.

(d) The Arts Centre/Theatre was thought to be opening in late Spring/Summer 2021. A 2-3 week opening period that could be used by local associations to test the venue has been proposed in the past but it is not known now whether this will occur. Possibly, due to the more severe financial situation, the Centre may have to go straight into hosting commercial events.

(e) The St. Albans Sustainability Festival is taking place in late May. **Action: KW to investigate this and to report back if the Society can take part.**

(f) A public meeting about common maintenance was discussed. **Action: AB to provide name of HTC person who is responsible for this.**

7. **Chairman's Items.**

(a) PhW and RF will be attending a Zoom presentation on the 20th January organised by The Hertford Society to discuss the implications of the government White Paper "Planning for the Future". If this Zoom meeting is successful consideration will be given to asking the speaker(s) to give a similar presentation to Harpenden Society members.

- (b) PhW proposed a sub group consisting of PhW, HG, RT and Alison Steer to discuss how the Society can recruit the new committee members needed to fill the current committee vacancies. **Action: PhW**
 - (c) PhW reported that the work on the Society becoming a central forum for other more specialised societies in the town had not proceeded as fast as was hoped due to the Covid situation. It was agreed that a letter outlining the Society's proposal would be sent to just five organisations initially to test the response and fine tune it.
 - (d) It was agreed that the Society should try to work with the town's Youth organisations. It was stated that the town used to have a Youth Council but it was not known if this currently existed.
 - (e) It was stated that a survey was currently underway by HTC about youth activities in the town. **Action: CA to find out if the Society can get access to the results of the survey.**
8. **Membership Secretary's Items**
- (a) The Membership Secretary's report has been circulated to committee members.
 - (b) A new recruitment leaflet is being planned. HG stated that the recruitment leaflet should contain a list of the Society's achievements.
9. **Newsletter Editor's Items**
- (a) The Winter newsletter will be distribute in the next few days. Distribution will be by email apart from the members for whom we do not have an email address who will receive paper copies.
10. **Publicity Officer's Items**
- (a) Report circulated to committee members.
 - (b) RT reported that the writing competition for local schoolchildren had now postponed due to the lack of responses due to the Covid situation. A £15 book token would be given to all current participants and the competition will be relaunched, probably in the Autumn.
11. **Awards.**
- (a) PA reported that the plaque for the 2019 awards had still not been presented, as had the award to the Salvation Army. These awards will be presented when it becomes possible.
 - (b) Current nominations for the 2020 awards include the KW school and Hollybush Mews.
12. **Working Group Reports**
- (a) **Community Safety:** The Community Safety report has been circulated by PG.
 - (b) **Environment:** The Environment Report had been circulated to committee members prior to the meeting. KW reported that the planning application to expand Luton Airport to 19M passengers went on the Luton Council website a few days ago and then was taken down. It is expected to be back on the site on Friday of this week. It seems as if non of the previously submitted objections have been taken into account so they will have to be repeated.
 - (c) **Transport:** Nothing to report.
 - (d) **Education:** CA reported that the schools were open for key workers and vulnerable children. The Secondary School Trust is currently meeting by Zoom.
 - (e) **Health & Social Welfare:** **Action: RT to try to find out what is happening with the re-development plans for the Red House.**
 - (f) **Built Environment:** Nothing to report
 - (g) **Economic Activity:** The Economic Activity report had been circulated to committee members prior to the meeting.
 - (h) **Arts, Leisure, Entertainment (ALE):** AJ reported that although SADC broadly accepted the views about the re-development of the Public Halls site that came out of the charrette process the planners now seem to be changing the plans. It is now being proposed that there will be no commercial usage

on the ground floor and the proposed building frontage of this important site is uninspiring. Also, no underground car park is now being proposed which means that the site will add to the town centre parking problems. However, the planning application has not yet been submitted.

(i) **Sports:** Nothing to report.

13. **AOB**

(a) None.

14. **Dates of the next meetings:**

Committee Meeting dates: 15 March 2021

Public Meetings: non currently scheduled

15. **The meeting closed at 9:20 p.m.**