

Minutes of a Committee meeting held on Wednesday 13th October 1971 at 8 p.m. in the Public Library.

Present: Mr J.C. Savage, in the Chair; Messrs Booth, Hughes, Lorimer Green, Crumplin, Brandreth, Curl, Mrs Johnstone, Mrs Elliott, Mrs Williams, Miss Haberer and the Secretary.

Apologies were received from Messrs Goacher, Derrett and Dixon, Mrs Jones and Miss Finney.

The Committee received with regret the resignation of Miss Finney whose arthritis prevented her from attending evening meetings.

1. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 8th September 1971 were read. Mr Booth said that regarding minute 11 dealing with the Ox Lane Bridge he had understood it was the main Committee who were to view the site, not the Lea Valley Committee. This having resulted in nobody viewing the Bridge, it was agreed that the main Committee inspect and report at the next meeting. The minutes were now confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

2. Matters arising not otherwise discussed

- (i) No news had been received of the public enquiry re Redbourne Lane widening.
- (ii) The Clerk to the Council had acknowledged our report on parking on the Common and had promised to put it before the appropriate Committee.
- (iii) The Town Centre Committee had met and had included the Society members who had shown interest in this subject.

3. Town Planning

In the absence of Mr Dixon no report from this sub-committee was available. The Committee thought that this was regrettable and that some other member should represent the sub-committee. The Secretary pointed out that the other members were Mr Raw whose business commitments prevented him attending on Wednesday evenings and Mr Wilson who was not eligible to sit on the Committee on the three year rule. Mrs Johnstone

proposed that Mr Wilson be co-opted but the Secretary said that Mr Wilson had refused on the grounds that this would be a deliberate avoidance of the intention of the new rule. Mrs Johnstone then proposed that Mr Wilson should report for the sub-committee only when Mr Dixon could not attend. As Mr Dixon, on this occasion, had only found he was unable to leave his office an hour before the meetings' starting time, it was rather imposing on Mr Wilson to give him such short notice and to expect him to attend for only one item of business.

Mrs Johnstone referred to the planning application for the Gorselands corner. Mr Curl said there would be no early decision on this matter and as the site was in the Conservation area it would have to be decided by the County Council. It was agreed to ask for the views of the Urban Design Group.

4. CPRE Towels

It was agreed to sell these at 45p and as half of the sample dozen were bought by the Committee the Treasurer was authorised to buy a further dozen.

5. Footpath Guides

The Secretary read a letter from the Ramblers' Association which gave very clear particulars on producing a guide and maps for footpaths. It was agreed to refer the letter to Mrs Jones and to ask her to confer with her sub-committee and to advise us whether such a scheme would be possible and desirable for Harpenden and district and what help her Committee would need. No financial commitment was to be made without the prior sanction of the Committee.

6. Institute of Landscape Architects

The Institute was making a special investigation into existing legislation as it affects the environment and asked for assistance. It was agreed to refer this to the Urban Design Group.

7. Town & Country Planning Association

A leaflet giving particulars of the December conference was laid on the table.

8. Elm disease

The Council's Surveyor and Engineer had asked for help in recarding and inspecting the elm trees in this district. The action of the Secretary in referring this to Dr Potter was confirmed.

9. Future Organisation

The Secretary reminded the Committee that partly as a result of the Questionnaire of a year ago, a number of sub-committees and working parties had been set up. There was a danger of these becoming almost autonomous and the situation was not helped by the working of the three year rule whereby often the keenest sub-committee workers were not members of the main committee. He suggested that the main committee should meet less frequently but that before each meeting it should be supplied with written reports of the activities of each sub-committee or working party. Routine business would be dealt with by the executive. Coupled with this the Secretary suggested that a regular newsletter should be produced by a publicity sub-committee based on the reports of the sub-committees but containing other matter as well.

Earlier Miss Haberer had mentioned an excellent lecture by a member of the Chilterns Society and the Secretary suggested that a meetings sub-committee be formed to plan one or two more meetings for the general membership. For the current winter probably only one additional meeting could be held - say in January 1972.

Mrs Elliott expressed concern about the delay in finalising the details of the Autumn meeting and the lack of publicity.

The Secretary agreed and pointed out that in April last he had given notice that he was unable to devote the time required by the expanding activities of the Society, particularly as the composition of the Committee changed so often and the Chairman of the Committee also by rule had a very limited term of office. He reminded the Committee that they had made no arrangements to give him assistance or to appoint a designated successor.

The Committee then appointed a sub-committee to consider the publication of a regular newsletter. Mr Brandreth agreed to convene and Mrs Elliott and Mr Hughes agreed to help.

It was proposed that a sub-committee be formed to consider holding additional meetings for the members. Miss Haberer agreed to lead this committee assisted by Mr Lorimer Green and Mrs Johnstone provided that the committee was only for exploratory purposes as she could not undertake to run the meetings. This was agreed.

10. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer reported a balance in hand of £40 at the beginning of October. 91 members were in arrears with their subscriptions. It was agreed that the membership secretary be asked to prepare a reminder letter and enclose it in the envelopes which would be used for the notice of the Autumn meeting.

11. Autumn meeting

The Secretary reported that Dr Potter had approached the Director of Rothamsted to address the autumn meeting. (Later. Sir Frederick Bowden has accepted.)

It was agreed to have coffee before the meeting and Mrs Elliott agreed to be responsible.

12. Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting be on Wednesday 10th November 1971 and the provisional date for the December meeting was the 8th, both at the Public Library.

This concluded the meeting.

J. C. Savage.

10.11.71.

PRESENT : Mr. J. Savage in the chair
Messrs. Booth, Crumplin, Lorrimer Green, Brown.
Miss Haberer, Mrs. Williams, Mrs. Elliott,
Mrs. Johnstone, Mrs. Jones and
The Secretary

1. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 13th October having been circulated were taken as read. Mr. Booth, referring to item 3, queried whether more positive action had not been recommended to provide reports of the deliberations of the plans sub-committee. To clarify the position the Committee discussed ways of improving the reporting of the sub-committee. The Secretary pointed out that the success of the sub-committee was largely due to the intimate way it was able to consider the planning applications, and any suggestion of increasing its strength, primarily for reporting to the main committee, should not be allowed to impair the efficiency of the work which was being so satisfactorily done. It was agreed that the Secretary inform Mr. Dixon of the committee's desire to know more of the proceedings of the planning sub-committee and to ask him to arrange that when he was unable to be present, he should arrange for a substitute.

The minutes were then confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

2. Matters arising not otherwise discussed

(i) Elm Disease: The Surveyor had acknowledged with thanks our offer of help.

(ii) Open land Sun Lane: The Surveyor had promised to have this land tidied up.

3. Widening of Redbourne Lane

The decision of the Minister for the Environment to confirm the compulsory purchases to widen the road over the Common and Hatching Green had been reported in the local press. Comment was made about the way isolated improvements were later linked up to form new trunk routes. It was decided that Mr. Brown would study the full findings and report to the next meeting.

4. Parking on the Common

A letter from the Council thanking the Society for its report gave particulars of proposals by their own sub-committee. These included clearing scrub near the Brickle Dells.

It was agreed that Mrs. Johnstone should make further enquiries and, after consultation with Mr. Lack of the Urban Design Group, report to the next meeting.

5. Car Parking at All Saint's Church

The Secretary reported that the Public Enquiry against the refusal of the Council to give planning permission was to be held on 30th November, 1971. The Committee were of the opinion that the parking proposed was not likely to be very unsightly and did not intend to take any further action. It drew the attention of the Lea Valley Committee to the Enquiry and left any action to them.

6. Spotlight on Leisure Exhibition 1972

It was decided to participate and Mr. Crumplin agreed to report to the next meeting detailed proposals for our exhibit.

7. Autumn Meeting

The Secretary was authorised to advertise the meeting in the Free Press at an estimated cost of £4.00. Mrs. Williams agreed to sell the CPRE towels and Miss Haberer would sell the books. The Chairman was asked to introduce the speaker and the President would give the Society's thanks. Mrs. Elliott who was looking after coffee would provide for 100 people.

8. Sale of Cottage, 2 Southdown Road

At the invitation of the Chairman Mr. Wilson joined the meeting. He referred to the old cottage which had now been offered for sale at £10,950. Mr. Wilson suggested that this was an opportunity for the Society to acquire a building which was claimed to go back to medieval times and to use it for a meeting place, in whole or in part. Mr. Wilson said he had made enquiries of the Hertfordshire Society and others and he suggested that financial help might be available from the County Council or the Carnegie Trust.

8. Sale of Cottage, 2 Southdown Road (cont.)

The Committee recognized that there were many things to be considered, including maintenance, but decided to ask Mr. Wilson assisted by Mr. Crumplin and the Chairman, to make further enquiries.

9. Other business

There being no further time available, no discussion took place on the letters received from the Lea Valley group and the plans sub-committee. Miss Haberer briefly reported on suggestions for further meetings and it was decided to discuss this at the next meeting. Mrs. Jones agreed to defer her report on publicising footpaths to the next meeting.

The Secretary was asked to put on the agenda an item dealing with the modifications to the Gyrotory System and to ask Mr. Cunneen for his views and those of the Urban Design Group.

10. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting was to be on Wednesday 8th December, 1971 at the Library at 8.00 p.m. Mrs. Jones and Mrs. Elliott expressed their regrets at not being able to be present. The first meeting for 1972 was provisionally fixed for January 12th.

This concluded the meeting.

J. C. Savage

Minutes of a Committee meeting held on Wednesday 8th December 1971 at
8 pm. in the Public Library

PRESENT: Mr. J Savage in the chair
His Honour Judge Dow
Messrs Booth, Brandreth, Crumplin, Dixon, Hughes and Squires
Miss Haberer, Mrs. Johnstone, Mrs Jones and Mrs Williams

Apologies were received from Mrs Elliott, Messrs Brown, Derrett, Green and the Secretary

1. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 11th November which had been circulated were confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

2. Matters arising not otherwise discussed

- (i) Parking on the Common: Mrs Johnstone gave a report on her enquiries about the Council's proposal to clear scrub to the east of the Brickle Dells. She understood that only the scrub would be cleared; the trees and bushes would be left. The Secretary would write to the Clerk to request that the clearance should be kept to a minimum.
- (ii) Plans Sub-Committee: Mr Dixon said he understood that the Committee were concerned that they were not getting enough information from the sub-committee, and he referred to the difficulties he had in providing comments in the time available. This was accepted, and the Committee expressed its appreciation of the work the sub-committee did for the Society. It was pointed out that the Committee found it particularly helpful to have Mr. Dixon or in his absence a member of the sub-committee present when their reports were considered. Mr. Dixon agreed that it should be possible to arrange this so long as he had good notice of future meetings.

Reference was made to the possibility of developments at the Gorselands, and Mr Dixon noted the Committee's request to be kept closely informed. There was no information about the County plan for a school in the Beeson End Land area. [Notice has since been published referring to an area of land to the West of Barlings Road and Collens Road, with access from the Uplands as the site for a proposed new primary school.]

- (iii) 2 Southdown Road: Mr Crumplin said that the sub-committee had submitted a report, copies of which had been circulated, which recommended the Council to purchase the property. The Council were not enthusiastic and had referred the proposal to the County. The Carnegie Trust had stopped giving grants for the purpose intended. If the Society were registered as a charity it might be easier to obtain grants, and if the building was listed this might also help.

The Committee confirmed the action which had been taken and decided to keep the situation under review.

- (iv) Car Parking at All Saint's Church: Mr. Crumplin said that the Upper Lea Valley group had raised no objection to the extension of the car park provided that the landscaping was satisfactory. The Public Inquiry had been held on 30th November, and under the new procedure the presiding Inspector would take the decision.
- (v) Spotlight on Leisure Exhibition 1972: An application for space had been submitted, and Mr. Crumplin was making enquiries about display material. He was in favour of incorporating a map of the town pinpointing those areas in which the Society and the Urban Design Group were active.
- (vi) Autumn Meeting: The Small Public Hall had been full for the talk by Sir Frederick Bawden, and the Committee recorded its thanks to Mrs. Elliott, Mrs Williams, Miss Haberer and other helpers. The Treasurer had been kept busy with the receipt of subscriptions and had welcomed nine new members. There was a surplus of £1.92 from the sale of tea towels and commission of £1.20 from the sale of Rothamsted booklets.

It was said that some members towards the back of the hall had had difficulty in hearing the speaker and the Secretary was asked to write to the Council to suggest the possibility of installing loud-speaking equipment.
- (vii) Elm Disease: Mr. Squires reported that the Urban Design Group had offered to assist the Council provided a satisfactory scheme was organized. The problem was complicated by the variety of elms, and an expert check would be required to confirm each suspected case.
- (viii) Footpaths: Mrs Jones said that the sub-committee had met to consider the question of publicity for footpaths. The St. Albans and District Footpaths Society had in fact published a booklet which contained details of footpaths in Harpenden except for an area in the north-east, and two members of the sub-committee would investigate the position with a view to adding to it. She gave a report on the Crabtree Lane footpath, on which developments would be watched.
- (ix) Widening of Redbourne Lane: In the absence of Mr Brown further comments on the decision to widen and straighten the road were postponed.

3. Correspondence

- (i) NCH Railway Land: A letter had been sent to the County asking for their help in negotiating with the NCH about the proposed use of the railway track as part of the walk-way in the Lea Valley. An

interim reply had been received, details of which were awaited.

- (ii) Cross Farm land proposed development: A letter had been received from the Council stating that the Public Inquiry into the proposed residential development postponed from March would now be held on 2nd February 1972. If representations had been submitted on that occasion no further action was required. Mr Dixon undertook to look into the position and report back.
- (iii) Hertfordshire Association of Architects: A letter from the Association offering its services and free advice to amenity societies was noted.
- (iv) Ladacan: It was agreed to make a token contribution of £5 to Ladacan in support of its opposition to further developments at Luton Airport which would be the subject of a Public Inquiry on 4th January 1972.

4. Proposed Roundabout on Common: Mr. Squires gave a report. It was very difficult to get people to say what the present position was, but it seemed possible that the scheme would be re-submitted in two parts. He could not say whether traffic lights would feature in any revised plan, but London Transport were likely to raise problems about the proposed gyratory system because of the difficulties of turning south out of Station Road at The Harpenden Arms. The Society and Design Group would be able to comment when the plans came before the Council again.

5. Future Programme

Miss Haberer put forward recommendations by the sub-committee on future meetings. They felt there should be four meetings in the year (in addition to the summer outing) one of which would follow the A.G.M. A number of organizations which could be approached for speakers were mentioned, and it was suggested that at least one meeting in the year should be devoted to a talk by a representative of the Design Group. The sub-committee recommended that the possibilities of paying speakers should be investigated even though this might mean raising subscriptions. The use of the small public hall was favoured, but they did not support giving coffee to members.

In view of the lateness of the hour further consideration of the report was postponed. But it was agreed to invite Mr. Sherwood to give a talk on the coming of the railway to Harpenden at the next A.G.M.

6. Future Organisation:

The Committee considered what steps might be taken to arrange for the post of Secretary to be filled following Mr. Bowran's decision to retire

7. FUTURE ORGANISATION

The Chairman reported that he had consulted the Secretary as required by minute 6 of the last meeting. The Secretary had made various proposals intended to increase the efficiency of the Society and it was agreed that the officers should present a joint report to the next committee, so that any agreed proposals could be put to the Society at its General Meeting in March.

8. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Mr. Booth confirmed that the arrangements were all complete and Mrs. Elliott agreed to see that coffee would be available before the meeting.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be on Wednesday 9th February 1972 at 8.00 p.m. in the Public Library and the following meeting was provisionally fixed for March 8th.

This concluded the meeting.