

THE HARPENDEN SOCIETY

Minutes of the special committee meeting held on Thursday, 10th January 1974
at 8.00 p.m. in the Public Library

Present: In the chair - Mr. Brown
 Dr. Bowden, Mr. Dixon, Mr. Nixon, Mr. Usher
 Mr. Wilson,
 Mrs. Brown, Mrs. Goss

Apologies for absence were received from Mr. Booth,
 Mr. Borthwick, Mr. Frandreth, Mr. Savage,
 Mrs. Elliott, Mrs. Johnstone, Miss Pratt

Following the preliminary meeting held on 11th December to discuss the Society's view of the document 'How Do You See Herts?', the consultative document on the Structure Plan issued by the County Planning Department in September last, a draft had been prepared for discussion at this meeting.

A number of changes were made, and the following is the text of the paper which was submitted to the County Planning Officer. It will also be included in full in the next issue of the Society's Newsletter.

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Comments by The Harpenden Society

The Harpenden Society believes that Hertfordshire should retain its present character - a mixture of towns and rural landscape, not urban sprawl and urbanised open space. This can only be achieved by the control of population in all its aspects, which is central to the majority of issues presented by the Structure Plan. Allowance has to be made for the natural increase in the resident population, but further growth in industry, including office accommodation, should be severely curtailed and industries wishing to expand should be encouraged to move to development areas, thereby reducing the numbers of people moving into the county.

Hertfordshire has already accommodated a large proportion of the London overspill, and if urbanisation is to be controlled, new policies must be adopted. London must make greater provision for its own housing by giving this absolute priority and severely restricting or even prohibiting further building for offices and industry. Industries within London wishing to expand should be relocated in the development areas, instead of spreading outwards into the counties around London.

Expansion of the urban areas within the county should be severely limited and the natural increase in population accommodated within the present boundaries wherever possible. This can only be achieved by the provision of low cost, high density housing which will be within the reach of the lower paid, essential members of the community; similarly, provision should also be made for the single, elderly, handicapped and disadvantaged. Spread of urban characteristics into the countryside devalues its attractiveness; this gradual 'urbanisation' should be prevented by the extension of the green belt to surround all urban areas. A buffer area could be planned around the larger towns incorporating recreational green areas, such as playing fields and golf courses, in order to prevent the whittling away of agricultural land. Within the towns themselves the importance of greenery and 'breathing spaces' cannot be over-emphasized and adequate provision, properly financed, is required to provide and maintain such areas (such as the Upper Lea valley and Harpenden Common) within and on the edge of the present towns.

New building developments or redevelopments should only be permitted if properly landscaped with adequate provision of open space, to include forest trees and shrubs. In order to ensure such provision and the maintenance of these open areas we would urge that developers be required to deposit money with the County Council who could perform the work themselves or return the deposit on satisfactory completion of the landscaping by the developer.

The Society does not believe that entry into the E.E.C. necessitates the further development of Hertfordshire and the South East, nor does it see the need for a major new east/west trunk road within the county. A detailed survey of heavy transport routing is required, but the Society believes that heavy transport can, and should, be restricted to the present major road network. Public transport should be improved and expanded, especially

east/west inter-town links, as a forerunner of better management of the urban area and the motor car. Local secondary shopping areas should be developed where economically viable, as well as adequate public transport being provided to the central shopping precinct. Shopping areas should be made more attractive to the shopper by improving the environs, for example pedestrian-only areas, while maintaining the current variety of shops both large and small. Movement of traffic within the central area should be reduced to a minimum and use of the private car discouraged by the restriction of on-street parking, provision of limited-stay car parking and the provision of good public transport. The Society cannot see the need for the development of large shopping complexes outside the present town structures, which would only lead to the encouragement of private vehicle movement and the decline of the central shopping areas.

Enjoyment of the countryside should be encouraged, but must be balanced against the need to conserve the natural habitats of wild life. Care must also be taken to ensure that damage does not result from overuse - for example, the erosion caused by cars parking on verges and common land. The Society welcomes the County's policy of setting up country parks with the aid of public funds, whether these provide facilities for sailing and fishing as at Aldenham or nature trails as in Cuffley Woods, and would like to see this policy extended. In addition, picnic areas with car parking and modern facilities should be provided for the car-bound traveller, but if cars were banned completely from certain areas, perhaps at weekends, this might encourage walking and a fuller enjoyment of the countryside. The maintenance of the balance between countryside, country park with special facilities and urbanised country will require careful planning and management, which in turn can only be achieved if adequate monetary provision is made.

On one final point the Society is clear; the County Council requires wide powers in order to control the management of the environment and the development of the county, or must have detailed commitments from Government that changes will not occur without prior consultation. Without these powers the Structure Plan for the county is meaningless. Allowance has to be made for changes in the political climate and attitudes to the environment, but if these in turn require major changes in the Structure Plan, then adequate time should be allowed for public discussion.

THE HARPENDEN SOCIETY

Minutes of the committee meeting held on Thursday, 17th January
at 8.00 p.m. in the Public Library

Present: In the chair - Mr. Brown
The President
Messrs. Booth, Brandreth, Derrett, Dixon, Nixon,
Savage, Squires, Usher Wilson, Drs. Bowden and Potter
Mrs. Brown, Mrs. Elliott, Mrs. Goss, Mrs. Russell
(part-time) Mrs. Jones

Apologies for absence were received from Mr. Borthwick, Mrs. Johnstone,
and Miss Pratt

1. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on November 22nd were approved with the following correction;

Item 6(e) Mr. Hislop was in fact only invited to the lecture meeting on December 5th; the Dinner Sub-Committee were following up two other possibilities for after-dinner speaker.

2. GORSELANDS - Tree Preservation Order

The Chairman read the letter which had been sent to Mr. Fulton about the delay in preparing a tree preservation order on this site, and the reply which he had received. The Secretary had now received confirmation that the order had been made with effect from December 22nd, and the order itself and the plan had been passed to Mr. Derrett.

A letter had now been received from Mr. Best saying that the developers had appealed to the Department of the Environment against the placing of the order. The council now had two courses open to it - to negotiate with the objectors or to refer the matter to the Department - and Mr. Best had asked us to submit our observations. The Tree Group were asked to re-examine the original submission to see if any further comments could be made, then the Secretary would write to Mr. Best saying that the Society believed the preservation order should stand and asking that the planning authority when considering the eventual planning application should also ensure that the provision of services on the site did not damage the protected trees.

3. FOOTBALL PAVILION

Following the letter from Mr. Pettingale saying that the Parks & Open Spaces Committee had decided to revert to the original proposal for siting the pavilion and car park, the Chairman had written to the Chairman of the Council. In his reply Mr. Fulton said that the reasons for this

decision were the undesirability of players having to cross the road, the nuisance to houses on East Common, objections from the county football league and the golf club had also objected to the alternative sites.

The discussion which followed questioned the legality of building on common land and in a conservation area, and the turning over of yet another part of the common to organised sport in spite of the long-standing tradition of football being played there. It was agreed that the Chairman, after seeking advice from the Commons, Open Spaces and Footpaths Society, should write to the Department of the Environment asking them to recall the planning application for review.

Mrs. Russell would also contact Mr. Haynes and let him know that the Society would be raising the matter with the Department,

4. CONFERENCE ORGANISED BY THE COMMONS, OPEN SPACES AND FOOTPATHS SOCIETY

Mrs. Jones reported on the one-day conference she had attended on behalf of the Society on November 28th; among the delegates had been representatives of local authorities, councils, amenity societies, the Ramblers' Association and footpath groups as well as individuals.

The speakers had drawn attention to the changes which would result from the forthcoming local government reorganisation. The number of authorities would be reduced from 1200 to 300 and hopefully would have available more resources - financial, expertise and manpower - which could be used for the improvement and maintenance of footpaths. The county councils would continue to be the highway authority, but the new district councils could apply to assume responsibility for footpaths in their area. Most authorities preferred to use persuasion in dealing with landowners rather than resort to legal procedures, but their efforts in pursuing matters such as ploughed-up paths, damaged styles and route alterations because of development were naturally responsive to public pressure, and interest in footpaths had increased rapidly over the last two decades. The valuable role performed by volunteer groups (after consultation with the landowner) in maintaining footpaths, signposting, way marking and repair of styles and gates was also emphasized. The increasing provision of long-distance footpaths, such as the Pilgrim's Way, was welcomed, but haphazard footpaths in the country and through developed areas were equally desirable.

The Chairman thanked Mrs. Jones for attending the conference, and felt sure that the information she had gained would be useful to the Footpaths Group.

Mr. Wilson said that the Lea Valley Group had prepared a map of the short slip paths actually used by people and had asked the county council to include these on the definitive map; he had not yet heard the outcome of this. This was something the Footpath Group might explore in other parts of the town.

5. CONSTITUTION SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT

The committee then considered the revisions proposed by the Constitution

Sub-Committee. Minor alterations were suggested in the wording of the Objects of the Society, but more radical alterations to the Constitution itself were proposed. As committee members felt they had had insufficient time to consider the revised draft, it was agreed that any comments should be given to the Chairman in writing before the end of the month. These would be circulated with the minutes and a vote taken on the changes at the February meeting. Unless the changes were agreed by then it would be impossible to put them before the Annual General Meeting on 12th March.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Again previous items had taken longer than expected and there was little or no discussion of the following items which were logged in,

District Council

- (a) Mr. Dixon reported that St. Albans had been interested in the close co-operation the Harpenden Society and the Urban Design Group had had with the local council on planning matters, but there was uncertainty over the relations with the new District Council. He was asked to follow up his informal contact with a letter to Miss Entwhistle, Clerk to the District Council.
- (b) Mr. Dixon also referred to an application made to the local council for St. John's Court, the newly completed block of flats in Milton Road to be used as a home for the rehabilitation of female alcoholics, and had written to the council asking for information on this change of use. The council had decided that they had no jurisdiction in the matter but in fact there would be no alterations made to the accommodation.
- (c) Mr. Usher had received from Mr. Tony Patterson a report on the public transport facilities in Harpenden. This would be circulated and discussed at the next meeting.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next committee meeting will be held on Thursday, 21st February at 8.00 p.m. in the Public Library.
The date of the March meeting will be postponed from 21st March until the 28th because the Local History Society will be holding its first A.G.M. on 20th March.

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J. A. Brown.

THE HARPENDEN SOCIETY

Minutes of the committee meeting held on Thursday 21st February
at 8.00 p.m. in the Public Library

Present: In the chair - Mr. Brown
Messrs. Booth, Borthwick, Crumplin, Derrett, Savage,
Squires, Usher, Wilson, Drs. Bowden and Potter
Mrs. Brown, Mrs. Goss, Mrs. Johnstone, Mrs. Russell
Miss Pratt (part-time)

Apologies for absence were received from Mr. Brandreth, Mrs. Elliott,
and Mr. Nixon

1. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on January 17th were taken as read
and approved.

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(a) 'How Do You See Herts?'

The Chairman had received an acknowledgment of our comments from
Mr. Overton saying that he would be in touch again later about the
outcome of their efforts to involve the public in the preparation of
the County Structure Plan.

(b) Public transport study

The committee had received copies of a report prepared by Mr. A.C. Pattison
(a member of the Upper Lea Valley Group) on public transport services in
Harpenden. This was an excellent report and the committee endorsed its
recommendations (with the suggestion that 'modernisation' of Harpenden
station should be altered to 'improvements'). It was agreed that copies
should be sent to the District Council (with a copy to the Parish Council),
the Railway Board and the Bus Company.

Mr. Wilson undertook to convey the Society's thanks to Mr. Pattison, and
to ask him to prepare an abbreviated version giving information on the
various services available which could be made generally available as a
printed handbill. A contribution towards the cost of producing this
would be sought from the official bodies who received copies of the report
and recommendations.

In addition, Mr. Haynes of the Herts Advertiser had expressed interest
in the report which would be released to him now it had received the
Society's backing.

(c) Football pavilion

The Chairman reported that he had sought advice from the Secretary of the
Commons, Open Spaces and Foothpaths Preservation Society on the question
of building on common land and its use for organised sport, but the
position was not as simple as we had hoped. He had also written to the
Department of the Environment and received an assurance from them that
in accordance with their normal practice our objection would be referred

to the applicant when the application was received. In addition, the committee had no doubt seen the comments in the local press. An approach had been received from Mr. Todd of the Rovers Football Club, and the Chairman and Secretary had had an informal meeting with him. It appeared that the club had also asked the council for joint consultations and it was now up to the club to apply for planning permission. The first of the three weekly advertisements concerning this appeared on February 22nd; in fact it incorrectly placed the pavilion on the south side of Cravells Road. (This was subsequently altered in the issue of March 1st.)

The committee considered the developments and decided to continue with its action in objecting to the proposed building and car park on the grounds that the Society objected (i) to the use of common land for the erection of buildings and car parks, and (ii) its use for organised sport, especially as in this case the pavilion was required so that the Rovers Football Club could participate in county league football. The Chairman was asked to write formally to the Secretary of State for the Environment objecting to the pavilion and car park.

The committee also agreed to circularise the houses adjacent to that part of the common as soon as possible, asking them to support the Society and to write individually to the Department of the Environment. The Chairman, Mr. Usher and Mrs. Goss undertook to arrange this outside the meeting.

3. ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE A.G.M.

The A.G.M. will be held on Tuesday, March 12th at 8.15; coffee being served from 7.45, and Mrs. Johnstone would confirm this with Mrs. Elliott. The printing of the posters had been delayed because of the three-day week but the Chairman hoped to have them shortly. After the business meeting the Common Group would be giving a brief illustrated talk on 'Harpenden Common - Use and Abuse' to be followed by discussion.

At the A.G.M. Messrs. Crumplin, Dixon and Savage would be retiring, and the Chairman took this opportunity to wish John Crumplin and his family every success when they leave for Australia in April and to thank him for the considerable time and effort he had put into many of the Society's activities. The three members co-opted at the last A.G.M. - Mrs. Brown, Mrs. Elliott, Mrs. Goss - would be eligible for re-election. Mr. Booth, our acting Secretary, was willing to stand for re-election but because of increasing pressure of work he had asked the Society to find a successor during 1974. Mr. Borthwick had indicated his willingness to stand for election as Treasurer. (Post-meeting: Mr. Green had submitted his resignation because of other commitments on his time.)

The Chairman hoped that nominations for committee members would be given to the Secretary, and drew the committee's attention to the fact that nine members of the present committee would be retiring next year so a strong team was required now. The committee agreed that the President and Vice-Presidents should be proposed for re-election at the A.G.M.

The Chairman would give a verbal report on the activities of the committee during the past year. The Treasurer sought the committee's view on two points which would arise in his presentation of the accounts. The

first concerned the cost of duplicating the Lea Valley Report, and the second the costs of the inaugural meeting of the Local History Society. The committee agreed that the Society should underwrite both of these items.

4. REVISION OF THE CONSTITUTION

As there was insufficient time to put any amendments to the A.G.M., this item was deferred until the next meeting of the committee.

5. SPOTLIGHT ON LEISURE EXHIBITION - 14th-16th March

The Society had a prime spot in the foyer and had been invited to send a representative to the official opening. The Chairman would discuss urgently with Mr. Savage and Mr. Usher the format of our exhibit (there was a possibility that the St. Albans City Museum might be able to supply some material). A rota would also be drawn up so that as far as possible the stand would be manned by a member of the Society. Last year most of the new members had resulted from this kind of contact.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(a) May 6th meeting

The assistant to the County Planning Officer had agreed to come and speak at this final meeting of the present series. Mrs. Elliott was now seeking suggested topics and/or good speakers for the next series.

(b) Parish Council Meeting - 7th March

Following an approach by Mr. Wilson, Mr. Best had kindly agreed that any questions from the Society for inclusion at this meeting could be submitted not later than Monday.

It was agreed that the Parish Council should be asked when there would be public discussion of the County Planning Department's report on the Harpenden Town Centre Study. (The report had been discussed at a joint meeting of the U.D.C. Highways and Housing and Town Planning Committees on 7th December, which endorsed the general aims and policies contained in the report as the basis for a town centre scheme, and the preparation of detailed designs for the possible future implementation of scheme 1.)

Mrs. Goss reported she had telephoned a Mr. Griffiths who had said that the analysis of the questionnaire had taken some time but they hoped to organise a public exhibition in the Further Education Centre before April 1st at which time the District Council would become involved in the consultations.

The second question the Society would like to raise was that in view of the responsibilities taken by the Parish Council for the Common and open spaces within Harpenden what financial resources were the Council planning to make available for this.

(c) Crabtree Lane/Piggottshill Lane development

At the meeting of the Plans Committee on 21st December the Council had refused the outline planning application from Senatral Property Trading Co. Ltd. for permission for the residential development of 10.65 hectares of land on the following grounds;

(a) The land is allocated in the Harpenden Town Map (as amended following the first review of the County Development Plan) for education purposes and, whilst the local education authority do not at present concur, the Council apprehend that there may be a need for the site to be used for that purpose, and that residential development thereon should not be permitted until the need for a school site can be disproved.

(b) The proposal is premature pending the preparation of a structure plan for the county and a local plan or plans for the District, when the extent (if any) to which Harpenden can be permitted to expand can be determined by reference to (i) shopping facilities, car parking, school provision, traffic, sewage disposal and other factors of infrastructure and (ii) the extent to which the St. Albans District in general and Harpenden in particular, have been permitted to expand in accordance with the Development Plan and in accordance with other planning permissions granted by the local planning authority or by the Secretary of State on appeal (including a number of major proposals awaiting the Secretary of State's decision).

(c) The land affords a useful lung of undeveloped land, with green belt characteristics; the residential development of adjoining land was permitted as a result of the first review of Harpenden Town Map, when the site now in question was allocated as a school site (which, with normal playing field provision, would be a less intrusive incursion into the green belt than residential development) and the Council would have opposed the residential development of the adjoining land on green belt grounds if it had been foreseen that the allocation of the present site for education purposes was to be abandoned.

The reasons for the refusal were of considerable interest.

(d) Replacement of tree in Station Road

Mr. Usher reported he had been in touch with Mr. Pettingale concerning the replacement of the tree outside the Oxfam shop which had had to be removed after being damaged in the recent gales. Mr. Derrett undertook to seek suggestions for a suitable species from Mr. Scowen and this should be passed on to Mr. Pettingale before the end of March.

(e) Extension to Rothamsted Experimental Station

Their appeal against the planning refusal for the extension to the chemistry department has been turned down. The Society had objected to the proposed extension because of its height.

(f) Newsletter

Mr. Brandreth was understood to have the copy in hand, but he was not sure when the next issue would be ready for distribution.

(f) Annual Dinner - Wednesday, 3rd April

Mr. Savage reported arrangements were well in hand, although costs had increased sharply. The committee agreed that the tickets should be £2.25 each this year, which meant each ticket would receive a 25 p. subsidy from the Society's funds. The deficit on the last dinner had arisen from the number of guests invited - no free tickets would be given to the press this year. The speaker after dinner would be Mr. Hislop, the countryside officer for Hertfordshire, and an entertainment would be provided by the Harpenden Drama League. The Chairman would make an announcement about the dinner at the A.G.M.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The first meeting of the new committee would be held on Thursday, 28th March at 8.00 p.m. in the Public Library. The date of the following meeting was provisionally fixed for 18th April, assuming meetings would continue to be held on the third Thursday of the month.

[The date of the next meeting was subsequently changed to 1st April]

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J. Brown

THE HARPENDEN SOCIETY

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Tuesday, 12th March 1974
in the Small Public Hall, Harpenden at 8.15 p.m.

The President, His Honour Judge Dow, took the chair with some seventy members present. Apologies for absence had been received from the Secretary, Mr. Booth, and from Mr. & Mrs. Addison, Miss Brooks, Mr. Pattison and Mr. Savage.

1. Minutes

The minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on 19th March 1973 were read, confirmed and signed by the President.

2. Chairman's Report

In his report on the activities of the General Committee, the Chairman referred to the most important items which had been dealt with by the Committee and its various sub-groups during the year. These ranged from the regular scrutiny of planning applications, obtaining a tree preservation order on the site cleared for redevelopment at Gorselands in Walkers Road, the Society's representation at various public enquiries to the preparation of comments on the document "How Do You See Herts?" in connection with the County Structure Plan. Mr. Brown appealed for increased support from members so the Committee could extend the scope of these activities. Thanks were due to Mr. Brandreth who had edited four issues of the Newsletter, thereby keeping members informed of the Committee's actions.

The Chairman concluded by referring to the two matters arising from the last Annual General Meeting. Whilst appreciating the need for a representative body within Harpenden, the Committee believed that the aims of a ratepayers' association might not be in the interests of the Harpenden Society in preserving the environment and the character of the town, and did not recommend this course of action - especially as Harpenden would have its Parish Council from April 1st. The Committee had also examined the Constitution with specific reference to increasing continuity; however, these recommendations were not ready to present to this meeting, but would be put to a general meeting as soon as possible.

3. Treasurer's Report

Copies of the Analysis of Income and Expenditure for 1973 were available at the meeting. In moving the adoption of the Accounts, Mr. Borthwick noted that the balance of £160.90 included a sum of £35 which had been donated specifically for the planting of trees by the Upper Lea Valley Group, and £43 being held on behalf of the Local History Society. This meant that the Society's own balance amounted to £82.80 at the year end, which compared favourably with the £80 balance for the previous year. He also pointed out that the income from subscriptions was some £30 higher than might be expected, as it included payment of past and future subscriptions.

Turning to the Society's expenditure, the major items were expenses arising from the hire of the hall for lecture meetings, a small deficit on the first Society dinner and the costs of the inaugural meeting of the Local History Society. However, the largest item, nearly £50, referred to the Treasurer's and Secretaries' expenses, of which £33 was for postage, primarily for the Newsletter. The Treasurer felt sure that this was an area in which savings could be made. The motion was seconded by Mr. Dixon and agreed by the meeting.

4. Election of Officers

The Chairman proposed the re-election of the President, His Honour Judge Dow, who took a very real interest in the affairs of the Society. The meeting expressed its appreciation to the President who was asked to continue in office.

The President then moved the re-election of the Vice-Presidents, former members who had made a considerable contribution to the Society in the past, and Capt. Bond, Miss Finnie and Mr. George were re-elected unanimously.

The President thanked Mr. Booth, who had assumed the duties of Secretary during the year, and Mr. Borthwick, who had been acting Treasurer. Both were eligible for re-election, but Mr. Booth did not wish to stand because of increasing commitments on his time. Mrs. Johnstone had nominated Mrs. Elliott, and the meeting agreed to the election of Mrs. Elliott as Secretary and of Mr. Borthwick as Treasurer for the coming year.

Mr. C.P. Smith was re-appointed Hon. Auditor.

5. Election of the General Committee

Three members, Messrs. Crumplin, Dixon and Savage, were retiring and Mr. Green had resigned. Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Goss who had been co-opted to the committee were eligible for re-election. There were ten vacancies to be filled and eight nominations, properly seconded, had been received. The following were then elected to serve on the General Committee for three years:

Lady M.E. Bawden	Mrs. L. Goss
Mrs. E.P. Brown	Mrs. M. Jones
Mrs. M.A. Cunneen	Mr. B.C. Nixon
Mr. C.W. Curl	Mr. A.C. Pattison

The Chairman proposed a vote of thanks to the retiring members, to Mr. Savage who had served as chairman for two years, to Mr. Crumplin who had been involved in many of the Society's activities and who was shortly leaving for Australia, to Mr. Dixon who had made a considerable contribution to the work of the Plans Sub-Committee, and to Mr. Green. He also wished to thank Mr. Booth, who had been connected with the Society for many years and had presented the Treasurer's Report at the last A.G.M. before becoming acting Secretary. Mr. Booth had helped the Society through a very difficult period and we were extremely sorry he no longer found it possible to continue his active involvement.

6. Annual dinner

The Chairman gave details of the dinner to be held on Wednesday, 3rd April at which Mr. Hislop, the recently appointed countryside officer for Hertfordshire, would be the after-dinner speaker. The first dinner had been a considerable success and he hoped that this year's would be equally well-supported.

7. Any other business

Mr. Dixon asked that the Society record its thanks to Mr. Brandreth for making the library available for its committee meetings, and the meeting confirmed this.

8. There being no further business the meeting was concluded,

R. Graham Daw
11/3/75

Following the business meeting, the Common Group gave an account of their activities. Miss Pratt, convenor of the Group, said that they were preparing a report on the use and maintenance of the Common which they intended to send to the Parish Council who will become responsible for the Common and other open spaces within Harpenden. We were extremely fortunate in having this Common in close proximity to the town, in fact reaching into its centre like a tongue of green, and it should be utilised to the best advantage. Now that there was no longer grazing on the Common there was a danger it would revert to woodland, as had happened on West Common, and the Group was receiving expert advice from the Herts & Middlesex Trust for Nature Conservation and the Nature Conservancy Board in drawing up their recommendations for management of the Common.

Miss Pratt then introduced the members of the Group - Mrs. Johnstone, who had lived opposite the Common for more than twenty years, Mr. Nixon, their ecologist who was on the Council of the Herts & Middlesex Trust and warden of Marshalls Heath, Miss Thurston, a local botanist interested in ornithology who remembered the Common before it was ploughed up during the war, and Mr. Usher, chairman of the Upper Lea Valley Group who had helped particularly with the survey of the trees on the Gorselands site and the discussions concerning the position of the football pavilion and carpark.

Mrs. Johnstone showed a series of slides of different parts of the Common at different seasons. She mentioned the clearing the bristle dells with the loss of wild roses and other plants, the decreasing number of larks building their nests on the Common, the disappearance of much of the gorse, and how the parking of cars in certain areas was being controlled by the construction of ditches and banks.

Mr. Nixon described how the characteristic flora of the Hertfordshire commons and heaths had derived from the forests covering the land through pre-Roman and medieval times by the action of man in clearing the ground and later using it for grazing. With the decline in grazing after the Second World War the scrub was only kept down by the rabbit population which was decimated by myxomatosis in the 1950's. Now the scrub - hawthorn, wild roses, gorse, brambles - is ten to twenty years old and has shaded out the grass and more interesting wild plants. It is also acting as a nursery for young trees, particularly oaks, which will soon grow through the scrub and shade it out in turn; the eventual outcome of this process is a return to dense woodland. Mr. Nixon went on to illustrate the results of mowing at different times, heights and frequency, and how scrub (a transient phase) would be maintained by clearing to ground level in a mosaic pattern. He emphasised that it was possible to manage an area such as the Common effectively and fairly cheaply, both in terms of money and labour, once it had been decided what sort of cover - short grass, long grass, scrub, woodland - was required in a particular area.

The third speaker, Miss Thurston, deprecated suggestions of planting flowering trees on the Common; these were attractive, especially in spring, but were more suited to parks and gardens. She believed that natural vegetation should be encouraged and mentioned the profusion of harebells, wild roses, bedstraws and crab apples formerly found on the Common.

A lively discussion followed, covering such diverse topics as rubbish deposited on the Common, damage done to bridle paths by the increasing numbers of horses and damage to other parts by cars driving onto the Common and by indiscriminate parking, and the oak forest which would inevitably grow up in front of St. John's church unless measures were taken to prevent it. It became clear that there should be wider public discussion of the choices open to us, both in the use of the Common for leisure activities and in the type of cover (from grass to scrub and woodland) desirable in the different parts of the Common, before practical plans for the management of the area could be drawn up. The members present agreed it had been a most informative evening, and it was suggested the Parish councillors might also find a meeting with the Group useful and make them aware of the opportunities and problems.

In thanking the Group for the work they had put into this project, the President said that the future of the Common was a matter of interest and concern to all of us and he felt that it had been a most valuable meeting.

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THE HARPENDEN SOCIETY

Minutes of the committee meeting held on Monday, 1st April
at 8.00 p.m. in the Public Library

Present: In the chair - Mr. Brown
Judge Dow, Messrs. Borthwick, Brandreth, Curl,
B. Nixon, Pattison, Squires, Usher and Wilson
Lady Bawden, Mrs. Brown, Mrs. Cunneen, Mrs. Jones
and Mrs. Russell
(later) Mr. Derrett and Mrs. Elliott

Apologies for absence were received from Dr. Bowden, Mrs. Goss,
Mrs. Johnstone and Miss Pratt

1. The President took the chair and proposed that Mr. Brown again be asked to act as chairman. This was seconded by Mr. Usher and agreed by the committee. Mr. Brown then welcomed the new members and hoped that the committee would be able to extend its activities in the coming year.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 21st February were approved with the addition to Item 6(f) that Mr. Hislop was the countryside officer for the Hertfordshire Council of Social Services.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

- (a) Newsletter

Newsletter No. 5, dealing chiefly with details of the dinner, had been issued last month.

- (b) Report on Parish Council meeting

Several committee members went to the meeting on March 7th, but the attendance had been disappointing. Two questions were asked on behalf of the Society. One dealt with the finance available for maintenance of the Common and other open spaces - this would be provided by the District Council, but the Parish Council would be able to raise a levy on the local rate in the unlikely event that funds were required for a specific item not backed by St. Albans.

The second question related to public discussion of the town centre study. Mr. Pettingale had kindly lent us a copy of the final plan for two mini-roundabouts which had been put on show at the AGM and our stand at the 'Spotlight on Leisure' exhibition. It was agreed that the Chairman should write to Mr. Overton and Mr. Fulton expressing the Society's view that an open meeting should be arranged at which the public could be made aware of the final proposal, especially in view of the considerable response generated by the previous meeting.

4. MEMBERSHIP OF SUB-GROUPS

(a) Plans Sub-Committee

There was considerable discussion about continuing our arrangement for commenting on planning applications; Mr. Pettingale, the new Parish Clerk, appears most willing it should do so. However, making our comments to the Parish Council which would in turn be commenting to the Northern Area Planning Sub-Committee of the District Council would greatly reduce their effectiveness, and a direct approach to the District Council might be more worthwhile. It appeared that the District Council Plans Committee would have considerable delegated powers and would be meeting every six weeks to consider recommendations from its three sub-committees dealing with different areas of the district. Mr. Dixon and Mr. Squires would continue to make comments on behalf of the Society and the Urban Design Group in conjunction with Mrs. Russell and Mr. B. Nixon.

The committee agreed that a broader look should be taken at different aspects of the development of Harpenden, as well as concentrating our efforts on certain important topics (e.g. football pavilion, Crabtree Lane/Piggotshill development). A Town Centre Group would examine in detail the many other proposals contained in the town centre study and try to form a view on their implications. Mr. B. Nixon, Mr. Usher and Mr. Pattison were willing to do this, hopefully in conjunction with Mr. Cunneen who had headed the Urban Design Study Group.

In view of the considerable study Mr. Pattison had already made of transport facilities within Harpenden, it was suggested that he might set up another group to continue and expand this activity.

Mr. Wilson suggested that the District Council should have prepared detailed brief for developers setting out standards, specifications for materials, etc. Such a set of guidelines had proved very useful in some areas (commonly town centres of older cities with conservation areas) in producing controlled and coherent development. The committee felt this was an excellent idea and asked the Chairman, with the assistance of Mr. Wilson, to write to the District Council advocating that St. Albans adopt a similar scheme.

Mr. Brown felt that it was time the Society gave consideration to forming our views on the future development of Harpenden, especially as preparation of detailed plans for each locality would follow the adoption of the County Structure Plan, and the Society should be prepared with an opinion on longer-term issues. Mr. Wilson and Lady Bawden offered to join in preliminary discussions on this.

(b) Common Group

A draft of their outline proposal for management of the Common would be discussed in committee as soon as possible; many of the Group's ideas had been aired at the meeting after the AGM. The most important thing was to make the new parish councillors aware of what could be achieved, the opportunities as well as the problems, before any detailed plans for different parts of the Common could be prepared. If the Parish Council accepts the principle of management of the Common, a permanent joint committee of parish councillors and members of the Common Group (including their experts) would be one way of continuing the assistance the Society could give. Miss Pratt, Mrs. Johnstone and Mr. Nixon would continue to be the committee members involved in this project.

(c) Footpaths Group

Mrs. Jones would continue to organise this group, which collaborated closely with the Upper Lea Valley Group.

(d) Tree Group

The Group were now getting their plans under way; Mr. Derrett was convenor of the Group, aided by Mrs. Goss, Mr. Booth and their expert Mr. Scowen.

(e) Upper Lea Valley Group

Three committee members - Messrs. Wilson, Usher and Pattison - were members of the Group. Mr. Wilson pointed out that their AGM was being held on 23rd April, and anyone was welcome.

(f) Newsletter

Mr. Brandreth would continue as editor with assistance from Mrs. Russell. However, it was up to all of us, especially convenors of the groups, to prepare pieces for the Newsletter and it was agreed that if we aimed for four issues a year, the deadline for submitting copy to the Editor should be the end of every third month (with Mr. Brandreth issuing a reminder at the committee meeting just before it).

As the Treasurer had pointed out in his report to the AGM, the cost of posting each issue amounted to nearly £8.00. It was, therefore, important that a system of distribution by hand by committee members be instituted as soon as possible; a saving in money and effort could also be made if envelopes were not used, committee members merely being given a list of addresses to which folded copies of the Newsletter should be delivered.

(g) Other activities

It was hoped that someone would be willing to take on responsibility for arranging the lecture series starting in September, for the Society's summer outing, and for the arrangements for the 1975 annual dinner. Mrs. Russell would carry on as Press Secretary, and Mrs. Brown would continue to deal with membership records and subscriptions, and minutes.

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(a) Annual Dinner - May 3rd

Mr. Derrett reported that the full complement of 120 tickets had been sold, and all the other arrangements were in hand. The committee appreciated the considerable effort the sub-committee had put into the organisation of what would undoubtedly be a most enjoyable occasion.

(b) Football pavilion

The Chairman reported that our letter had gone to the Department of the Environment and that Mr. Usher and Mrs. Goss had organised the distribution of a circular to houses in the immediate vicinity asking them to make their own comments to the Secretary of State. Copies of six letters had been received and several people had telephoned the Department because of the mistake in the closing date which was now May 5th; only one of the letters

dissociated itself from the Society's point of view. This has proved a most useful exercise, and arrangements would be made to send a slightly revised version of the circular to all the Society's members by the middle of April so more comments could be made to the Department.

(c) Local History Society

Mr. Harrod, chairman of the Local History Society, had telephoned Mr. Brown to express their very sincere thanks for the contribution the Harpende Society had made to their inauguration; he hoped the two societies would keep in close contact.

(d) Sadlers Wells ballet

The Secretary had received details of a new service for transporting patrons to the theatre by bus in the autumn season. Details would be passed to Mr. Brandreth for display in the library and perhaps a notice included in the Newsletter.

(e) Tree planting on the Common

Two holes had been dug for planting semi-mature trees to replace the two limes which will be felled when the mini-roundabout is built at the A6/Station Road junction. The public lavatories are also to be removed and perhaps the Tree Group might consider asking that another tree be planted in that spot.

(f) Supermarket in Bowers Parade

The Secretary had received a telephone call from a member about the proposal for a supermarket at the end of Bowers Parade. Although the necessity for a third supermarket might be questioned, this was not a planning matter. We understand that the plans have been considered, but no decision taken as the plan is to be publicly advertised because it is within the conservation area. Mrs. Russell was asked to refer the matter to the Plans Sub-Committee. Mr. Wilson pointed out that when the longer term aim of restoring Bowers House to view was achieved, it should be remembered that any building on that site would be its righthand neighbour.

(g) Movement of heavy lorries in Southdown

Mr. Brown reported that he had learned through Mr. Pettingale that a weight restriction was to be placed on Brewhouse Hill in Wheathampstead, and a notice of this would be put up in Southdown Road to prevent heavy lorries using that route through Harpenden on their way from the M.1. to the A1.

(h) Crabtree Lane/Piggottshill Lane development

The developers have appealed against the Urban District Council's recommendation and a public enquiry is expected.

(i) Bus/rail guide

Mr. Pattison had sent a copy of his report to Mr. Overton and received a warm reply saying that the possibility of combined timetables was under consideration. He had also prepared a summary of the services available; a quantity of these would be duplicated and made available to the library, the Harpenden Trust and other bodies.

(j) List of committee members

An updated list of committee members is appended to these minutes.

6. FUTURE MEETINGS

The next meeting of the committee will be held on Thursday, 25th April at 8.00 p.m. in the public library, as 18th April was not convenient for several people,

The committee decided that in future meetings would be held on the third Tuesday of the month instead of the Thursday, i.e. on Tuesday, 21st May and 18th June,

* * * * *

J. Brown

THE HARPENDEN SOCIETY

<u>President</u>		<u>Tel.</u>
His Honour Judge R.G. Dow	2, Kirkwick Avenue	2006
<u>Vice-Presidents</u>		
Capt. K.H. Bond	21, Kirkdale Avenue	
Miss H. Finnie	43, Milton Road	
Mr. L.S. George	9, Marple Road	
<u>Hon. Secretary</u>		
Mrs. J. Elliott	Cherry Hayes, Mackerye End	4196
<u>Hon. Treasurer</u>		
Mr. J.M.B. Borthwick	6, Wheathampstead Road	63712
<u>Committee members (date of election)</u>		
Chairman - Mr. D.A. Brown (1972)	4, Wheathampstead Road	5575
Lady M.E. Bawden (1974)	1, Crabtree Lane	2264
Dr. J. Bowden (1973)	23, Carisbrooke Road	5647
Mr. E. Brandreth (1972)	10, The Close, Kinsbourne Green	3682
Mrs. E.P. Brown (1974)	4, Wheathampstead Road	5575
Mrs. M.A. Cunneen (1974)	99, Crabtree Lane	2846
Mr. C.W. Curl (1974)	34, Haddon Court, Milton Road	3449
Mr. A. Derrett (1972)	42, Lyndhurst Drive	61935
Mrs. L. Goss (1974)	1, Broadfields	5983
Mrs. M. Johnstone (1973)	66, West Common	3504
Mrs. M. Jones (1974)	3, Wheatfield Avenue	5036
Mr. B.C. Nixon (1974)	12, Dalkeith Road	3485
Mr. H.L. Nixon (1972)	101, Crabtree Lane	3640
Mr. A.C. Pattison (1974)	27, Batford Road	60630
Dr. C. Potter (1972)	Brambledene, East Common	3432
Miss M.A. Pratt (1972)	33, Queens Road	2012
Mrs. A. Russell (1973)	10, Roundwood Gardens	60496
Mr. P. Usher (1972)	55, Crossway	63333
Mr. E.P. Wilson (1972)	5, Salisbury Road, Batford	4474
Urban Design Group representative		
Mr. A.O. Squires	52, Crabtree Lane	3685
<u>Resigned 1974</u>		
Mr. Booth, Mr. Crumplin, Mr. Dixon, Mr. Green, Mr. Savage		

Until March 1975

THE HARPENDEN SOCIETY

Minutes of a committee meeting held on Thursday, 25th April
at 8.00 p.m. in the Public Library

Present: In the chair - Mr. Brown
Messrs. Borthwick, Derrett, B. Nixon, Pattison, Usher,
Wilson, Dr. Bowden
Mrs. Brown, Mrs. Elliott, Mrs. Goss, Mrs. Johnstone,
Mrs. Jones, Mrs. Russell

1. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 1st April were approved.

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(a) Public participation in planning

Mr. Dixon, who had agreed to continue as Chairman of the Plans Sub-Committee, had written to Miss Entwistle following up the interest she expressed in the role the Society had played on planning matters with the Urban District Council. In addition, the Chairman had received a letter from the District Council inviting the Society to send representatives to a meeting with members of the District Council's Planning & Development Committee to discuss planning procedures. Mr. Brown, Mrs. Russell, Mr. Dixon, Mr. Squires (for the Urban Design Group) and Mr. Usher (for the Upper Lea Valley Group) hoped to attend this meeting on May 3rd.

(b) Bowers Parade development

The Secretary had received a copy of a letter from Mr. Putterill of 'Bowers End', Thompsons Close objecting the proposed development because the service road would make his house uninhabitable. The committee discussed at some length the grounds for our objections. Although many people were against a third supermarket in Harpenden, the planning authorities could not refuse the application on this ground alone. Our arguments would have to concentrate on the poor access for cars and delivery vehicles, the design of the building in relation to the character of the town, especially as it was within a conservation area, and that it was not in keeping with the Town Centre Study. It was agreed that we should arouse public interest in the matter, through the press and the Newsletter and also by collecting signatures in the High Street. As the development was within the conservation area, it had to be advertised and attention would be given to preparing our objections. (Post-meeting: The plans are on show at Harpenden Hall and the closing date for objections is May 27th).

The Chairman would also approach the Urban Design Group through Mr. Squires and ask for their assistance not only on the design etc. of the proposed building but also on the threatened redevelopment of the whole of that side of the High Street and 'improvement' of properties on the other side by the property companies which now owned them.

(c) Common Group

Mr. Pettingale had indicated that the Parish Council were anxious to have even a preliminary report to consider. It was important that this should be arranged as soon as possible and could perhaps be followed up by an illustrated talk on methods of management similar to that given by Mr. Nixon after the A.G.M. Such a presentation would be a good opportunity to urge the setting up of a joint sub-committee. The report would be discussed at the next meeting, and copies ought to be circulated beforehand.

(d) Annual Dinner - April 3rd

The dinner had again been a highly successful occasion and well supported (122 members and guests were present), and the Chairman wished to thank very sincerely the organisers for all the hard work they had put in to make it such a pleasant evening. What was even more remarkable was the sub-committee had managed to break even without requiring a subsidy on the tickets. Mr. Derrett was asked to write to the caterers expressing our satisfaction. The committee agreed wholeheartedly that another dinner should be held next year, and Mr. Derrett, Miss Pratt and Mr. Savage were re-appointed as the sub-committee to start making preliminary arrangements.

(e) Bus-Rail Guide

Mr. Pattison had produced a revised draft of the handbill outlining the services available, and arrangements would be made to have this printed for free distribution within the town and through local organisations.

3. CONSTITUTION

The committee continued detailed consideration of the alterations suggested by the Constitution Sub-Committee. The Chairman reminded the committee that at the A.G.M. in March 1972 the members of the Society had not agreed that the restriction on re-electing committee members should be rescinded but asked the general committee to consider what constitutional amendments, if any, might be required to improve continuity - the consensus had been that the present constitution had served the Society well for over thirty years. (The then Secretary had found it difficult to ensure that the work of the committee continued satisfactorily when perhaps half of its members and the chairman might retire in any one year.)

The two most important points which had arisen during the committee's previous discussion were the position of the president and vice-presidents and the application of the three-year rule, especially as it applied to the chairman. The agreed changes to the wording would be included in the final draft; the remaining sections of the Constitution would be discussed at a subsequent meeting.

4. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(a) C.P.R.E.

The Secretary had received details of a National Conference to be held at the University of Sheffield on 27-29th September on 'Leisure: Boom or Bust'.

She had also received five leaflets on 'Tree Sense', 'Planning Sense' etc, which could be obtained on a sale or return basis. The committee agreed we should obtain a set to see if they were of interest.

(b) Harpenden maps

Mr. Wilson understood from Mr. Pettingale that a complete set of large scale maps might be available. The committee were most grateful for this offer and Mr. Wilson undertook to obtain them.

(c) Hertfordshire Federation of Amenity Societies

A general meeting was being held in Datchworth on April 30th. The committee confirmed that our £1.00 affiliation fee should be paid.

(d) Hertfordshire Council of Social Service

A conference was being organised on May 8th on the reclamation of waste materials. Mr. Usher hoped to attend; anyone else interested should contact him.

(e) Development in Crabtree Lane

The flats to be erected on the site adjacent to the railway (requiring the demolition of several bungalows in Crabtree Lane) will be very prominent when viewed from the Common and the A.6. The Plans Sub-Committee has been asked to see if it is not too late to require some landscaping of the development.

(f) Lecture programme

The Secretary said that nothing had yet been done about next year's lecture programme, but she hoped that one member of the committee would assume responsibility for arranging each of these meetings.

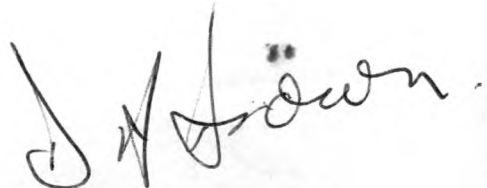
(g) Luton airport development

It appeared that the plans for developing the airport were going ahead. The Secretary was asked to contact LADACAN to see what support the Society could give them, and a formal letter of objection should be sent to the Secretary of State.

5. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held on Tuesday, 21st May at 8.00 p.m. in the Public Library, and the subsequent meetings were provisionally fixed for Tuesday, 18th June and 16th July.

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THE HARPENDEN SOCIETY

Report on the meeting held on Monday, 6th May 1974

Nearly sixty members were present at this final meeting of the current lecture series when the Society welcomed Mr. Cuddihy from the County Planning Department. In introducing him the Chairman, Mr. Brown, said that this was a particularly opportune time for a discussion evening on the subject of the Town Centre Study for Harpenden, as this would of course form part of the Structure Plan for the county at present being prepared by the County Planning Officer and his staff. This document would set out the broad strategy for the future of the county, how and where it should be changed, developed and conserved, and it would be followed by local plans for different areas on the detailed tactics. However, the most encouraging aspect was the increasing amount of public participation in the process of drawing up these plans.

Mr. Cuddihy soon showed that he was even more familiar with Harpenden than some of its residents, as he had been the officer responsible for preparing the Town Centre Study published last year and for staging the public exhibition and subsequent public meeting. The latter had tended to concentrate in particular on the proposals for relieving the traffic problem at the junction of Station Road and the A.6, but the Study covered many other important aspects.

He went on to describe the different 'fashions' in town planning starting in about 1947 and which during the next decade concentrated on planning legislation, preparation of development and zoning of land use. In the late 1950s and 60s the theme was re-development - creation of Brasilia in this country - while later in the 60s attention turned to transportation and planning for the motor car. By the end of the decade and in the early 1970s conservation had become the watchword and the Civic Amenities Act and the Countryside Act came onto the statute book and the latest trend seems to be a return to public transport and planning against the motor car. Mr. Cuddihy asserted that we were fortunate that there had been no opportunity to carry out a town centre study of Harpenden in the 60s, which would have resulted in a redevelopment plan; instead our study had been prepared in the conservation era.

This Study had also been prepared at a time when public participation was required by law, and in fact he was now analysing the responses received to the proposals put forward in the Study. For example, the alternative traffic schemes - 31% were in favour of mini-roundabouts, 12% the gyratory scheme, 23% the one-way proposal and 22% did not like any of these. Again, 60% were in favour of the parking policy, 24% against; 37% agreed with the suggested environmental improvements and 10% were against. These views would be incorporated into the Town Centre Map which will be the guide for development control for the town until at least the early 80s. Copies would shortly be on sale and the process of consultation would continue through the implementation of the detailed proposals.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Cuddihy for giving us such a good idea of what the planners were up to, and felt sure he had done much to dispel the image of the faceless 'them' at County Hall.

A wide-ranging discussion followed which covered the conservation area and what restrictions were placed on developments within it, what control the planning authority had over the type and general character of development, the importance of trees and open spaces, the population increase planned for Harpenden and what shopping and educational facilities would be required, as well as the need for a coherent transportation policy restricting heavy traffic and providing good public transport. It became apparent that in some areas the town planners had much less influence than we tended to give them credit for. The suggestion had been made that the County Planning Department should follow the practice of certain other authorities and produce guidelines for developers detailing not only the scale and type of buildings which would be acceptable but also the specification of materials and finishes felt to be appropriate. The Society felt such guidelines would be extremely helpful to the new District Councils within the county, as these were now the responsible planning authorities in nearly all cases, and hoped the county would pursue this idea.

It was a most interesting and successful meeting, and members seemed to appreciate having the opportunity for discussing both general topics and specific developments, and next year's lectures would be arranged so that this can continue.

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THE HARPENDEN SOCIETY

Minutes of a committee meeting held on Tuesday, 21st May
at 8.00 p.m. in the Public Library

Present: In the chair - Mr. Brown
Messrs. B. Nixon, H. Nixon, Pattison, Usher
(part-time) Mr. Borthwick, Mr. Derrett
Lady Bawden, Mrs. Brown, Mrs. Elliott, Mrs. Goss
Mrs. Johnstone, Mrs. Russell

Apologise for absence were received from Mr. Brandreth, Dr. Bowden, Mr. Curl,
Dr. Potter, Mr. Wilson, Mrs. Cunneen, Mrs. Jones.

1. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 25th April were approved.

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(a) Meeting with the District Council on planning

Representatives of the Society attended a meeting organised by the District Council Plans Committee to talk about how planning applications would be handled and how there could be public participation, as the District Council had assumed responsibility for planning matters in nearly all cases. The Chairman of the Planning & Development Committee was Coun. R. Palmer, and out of the twelve members of this committee only one, Coun. K. Jenkins, was from Harpenden. However, Harpenden matters would be dealt with by the North Sub-Area, one of three divisions each with its own sub-committee. This area covered the Harpenden Urban, Harpenden Rural, Redbourne and Wheathampstead districts and the sub-committee members were Coun. Biggs, Curl, Dow, Dymoke, Perry, Sparrow, Wallis and Wood.

Weekly lists of planning applications would be sent to the local parish councils and we would also receive a copy (in future Mrs. Russell would receive these and maintain a file). The Harpenden Parish Council had asked to see the plans as well, and arrangements were also to be made for the plans to be on view in the locality for 14 days. Mr. Usher undertook to seek clarification about this, and also the dates on which the various committees would meet.

(b) Management of the Common

Mr. Nixon reported that he and Mr. Shirley of the Herts & Middlesex Trust were meeting with Mr. Pettingale on June 12th at 11.00 a.m.; any member of the committee was welcome to join them. He hoped to emphasize to Mr. Pettingale and the Parish Council that a continuous process of advice and consultation was required for satisfactory management of the Common rather than a once-and-for-all recommendation/report/plan.

3. PLANNING TOPICS

(a) Cross Farm development

The appeal had been upheld by the Inspector and 400 houses would now be built on the area to the north-east of Cross Lane; the appeal had been allowed on the grounds that it was more in the nature of in-filling, as the area was bounded by properties on three sides. The committee did not feel that our objections were sufficiently important to write to the Secretary of State about the decision.

Mr. Pattison pointed out that the new estate would be poorly served by buses, and was a fairly long walk from the Southdown shops. The Society ought to urge the bus company to alter the 321 routing to improve this.

(b) Bamville Wood development

Notice had been received of a public enquiry to be held on Thursday, 20th June at 10.30 a.m. in Harpenden Hall to consider the District Council's refusal to allow residential development of 3 & 4 bedroomed detached houses on the land to the south-east of Cross Lane and bounded by the railway line, Mud Lane and properties in Bamville Wood. The application had been refused on the grounds that: 'The site is in an area without notation on the County Development Plan where it is intended to permit only such development as would be appropriate within the neighbouring Metropolitan Green Belt. Within the approved Green Belt it is the policy of the Local Planning Authority not to permit development except for agricultural or other essential purposes. No such need has been put forward in this case.'

It was agreed that our written comments should be sent to the Inspector before the enquiry, and hopefully Mr. Dixon would be able to attend on June 20th. Our objections would be on the following grounds:

- (i) Further erosion of the green belt by development; unless the south-east boundary of Harpenden is held at Cross Lane, development up to Mud Lane will inevitably be followed by development up to Ayers End Lane; any extension of the town towards St. Albans is undesirable.
- (ii) Residential development would result in increased traffic in the area and especially at the junction of Cross Lane and the A.6 which the County Council were proposing to close. In addition, the Common is part of the conservation area and used for both general recreation and golf; increased traffic across it would produce both more noise and hazard from vehicles, especially to children.
- (iii) The decision taken on appeal to allow 400 additional houses to be built in the Cross Lane area will go a long way to bringing the population nearer to the planned target figure (35,000 by 1981) beyond which the town centre will begin to lose its character.

The Plans Committee would be looking at the application, and the Tree Group would also investigate its implications. Information would also be sought on two points: the density of the proposed development, and whether an adjacent area had been purchased at some time for educational purposes.

As a matter of urgency, a circular would be prepared detailing our objections and asking for comments to be sent to the Inspector before June 20th; this would be distributed to members and those living in that part of Harpenden as well as to the 'Three Horseshoes' pub and the Golf Club. Mrs. Russell reported that copies could be delivered with 'The Review' at a cost of £3.50 per 1000 households.

(c) Bowers Parade development

The Town & Country Planning Act 1971 requires that within a conservation area the planning authority shall publish in a local newspaper circulating in the locality in which the land is situated and for not less than 7 days display on or near the land a notice indicating the nature of the development in question and where the plans might be inspected for a period of 21 days beginning with the date of publication in the press. The application shall not be determined by the local planning authority before this 21 day period has elapsed and a 21 day period beginning with the date on which the notice was first displayed on the land. In this case the advertisement had appeared in the 'Echo' instead of the 'Herts Advertiser' as was usual, and the closing date for objections was May 24th.

However, both the Plans Group through Mr. Dixon and the Town Centre Working Party through Mr. Squires had considered this application and the Chairman read their detailed comments. The main grounds for our objection were that it did not conform with the recommendations and conclusions of the Town Centre Study 1973; that as part of the site was within the conservation area, the proposed design was not in keeping with the requirement that 'special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing its character or appearance in the exercise with respect to any buildings or other land in the area'; that it would create a considerable traffic hazard and obstruction of the trunk road, and that we did not believe there was a need for another large supermarket.

Mrs. Goss also pointed out that Phase II (for which no detailed plans were available) would encroach upon Threshers' off-licence nextdoor, which was a listed building under section 8.

These points would all be included in our letter of objection to the District Council. If the application was not refused, there would have to be a public enquiry and when the date of this was known, we would then take steps to collect signatures and stimulate public interest by circularising residents. Thanks to Mrs. Russell's close contacts with the press we were certainly receiving many more mentions and no doubt our views would get an airing in the press before any public enquiry; the 'Herts Advertiser' reporter was in fact anxious to know the outcome of our discussions this evening.

(d) Mr. Cuddihy's lecture - May 6th

The final meeting of the lecture series had been highly successful. Mr. Cuddihy had been the officer from the County Planning Department responsible for preparing the Town Centre Study 1973, and a lively discussion had followed his talk.

4. NEWSLETTER

Mr. Brandreth was in the process of finalising the next issue and arranging for duplication; distribution would again be through committee members. If possible, a note about the Cross Farm appeal being upheld and the date of the Bamville Wood public enquiry would be included. Mr. Pattison also wished to ask for help from those interested in transport matters, and the Chairman suggested a similar appeal for those willing to assume responsibility for planning and development matters in their own particular 'patch'.

5. CORRESPONDENCE

- (a) Replies had been received from both the bus company and British Rail. Neither were prepared to offer financial support, but had welcomed the report and the Society's interest.
- (b) The Secretary had received a letter from the Hertfordshire Association for the Disabled asking us either to hold a function or to send a donation. The committee felt that while individuals might wish to support such an organisation, it was not properly within our area of interest.
- (c) A letter had been received from the Commons, Open Spaces & Footpaths Society asking for our views on the proposal to build a changing pavilion and car park on the Common. (The D.O.E. sends copies of all applications relating to common land to the Society for their comments.) The Secretary would send the Society a copy of our previous correspondence with the Department on the football pavilion.
- (d) The Secretary had received two questionnaires to complete - one a survey by a lecturer from the University of Essex on the activities of amenity societies registered with the Civic Trust, and the other from the Civic Trust itself. The Secretary was asked to deal with these, in consultation with the various groups as necessary.

6. FORWARD DATES

June 26th - LADACAN have arranged a public meeting which we have been asked to support; a notice will be included in the Newsletter.

Lecture meetings - The small public hall has been booked as follows:

Monday, 16th September

Wednesday, 4th December

Tuesday, 11th March 1975 (AGM)

Monday, 5th May

Annual dinner - The public hall has been booked on

Wednesday, 2nd April 1975

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

(a) Aerial photographs

Mike Graham, Mr. Haynes' successor on the 'Herts Advertiser', had sent us a specimen of the aerial survey carried out of the whole county. This showed the trees very well and might be helpful to the Tree Group in particular; the cost of obtaining the full set of photographs of Harpenden would be investigated.

(b) Swimming pool

It was suggested that the Society should take some action over this temporary loss of one of our amenities, and although the District Council staff were no doubt doing everything to expedite its re-opening, the committee agreed that a letter should be sent to Miss Entwistle asking that the public be given a full explanation of what was happening - which would probably result in greater public sympathy for their efforts.

(c) Summer outing

Lady Bawden suggested that a visit might be arranged to Hemel Hempstead if someone could show us round both the old part of the town and the new. Another suggestion was a walk over the Common with someone pointing out the possibilities for management and the impact of development around its edges. However, no-one appeared willing to take on responsibility for arranging an outing this year, and it was suggested that at the A.G.M. members should be asked if they would like an outing arranged next summer.

8. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the committee will be held on Tuesday, 18th June at 8.00 p.m. in the public library.
The following meeting would be held on 16th July, or possibly the 23rd if no meeting was to be held in August.

J. A. Brown.

* * * * *

As amended at meeting on 18th June.

THE HARPENDEN SOCIETY

Minutes of a committee meeting held on Tuesday, 18th June
at 8.00 p.m. in the Public Library

Present; In the chair - Mr. Brown
Messrs. Borthwick, Brandreth, Derrett, B. Nixon, H. Nixon,
Squires, Usher, Wilson, Drs. Bowden and Potter
(part-time Mr. Curl)
Lady Bawden, Mrs. Brown, Mrs. Cunneen, Mrs. Elliott,
Mrs. Goss, Mrs. Jones, Mrs. Russell

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs. Johnstone

1. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 21st May were approved.

The figure of 35,000 in item 3.b.(iii) was checked. It was taken from the Harpenden Town Centre Study, 1973, para. 3.2.1, and apparently refers to a larger catchment area for shopping purposes. In Hertfordshire 1981 the planned population figure for Harpenden itself is 29,920 by that date.

2. MATTERS ARISING

(a) Lecture meeting in September

The date of the first meeting, 16th September, in fact clashes with the Local History Society's lecture on the boundaries of Harpenden to be held at St. George's School. Mr. Wilson and Mrs. Elliott were asked to approach the Society to see if they were agreeable to holding a joint meeting; alternatively the date might be altered.

(b) Procedure for reviewing planning applications

Mr. Usher described the system as he understood it. The three area sub-committees of the District Council's Plans & Development Committee will have delegated powers and would meet every 3-4 weeks on Wednesdays. The Committee itself will meet every 6-7 weeks but only major planning matters will come before it. The Parish Council's own plans sub-committee will meet every 3-4 weeks, before each meeting of the District Sub-Committee, and the plans would be available in Harpenden from the time when the list of applications is issued until the beginning of the week preceding the week in which the District Sub-Committee meets. Mr. Usher would pass on the dates of these various meetings to Mrs. Russell.

One major difference was that the District Council had decided that owners of adjacent properties should be informed routinely of planning applications, and this would introduce a delay. This, and the time required for the District planning staff to carry out their necessary consultations, could well mean that once an application had been listed as received we would have no idea when it would be ready for consideration by the District Sub-Committee. Obviously it would be most helpful to see the agenda, which would not only list the applications to be considered at a particular meeting but would also include the recommendations from the officers and

other interested parties. Mrs. Russell had been told that the meeting of the District Sub-Committee on June 26th would not consider applications received after the end of the previous month, but the system was obviously still evolving and nothing was yet certain.

The Society's Plans Sub-Committee and the Urban Design Group would continue to meet with Mr. Pettingale to comment on the plans to be considered by the Parish Council, and hopefully a similar arrangement could be made with staff from the District planning office.

(c) Bowers Parade development

The Chairman read the letter which the Society had submitted to the District Council. A Bulletin had also been prepared for circulation to all our members urging them to make their own comments on the supermarket proposal before June 26th; the spare copies would be available in the library.

As a side issue, Mike Graham of the Herts Advertiser had sent the Chairman a copy of a letter from Mr. Jarvis (subsequently published) protesting against the Society's 'indiscriminate attacks on the builder/developer' and citing the supermarket proposal as an example. He claimed their original application for residential development was rejected because it did not conform with the Town Centre Plan and a supermarket was suggested as an alternative. The Chairman would be in touch with Mr. Jarvis to discuss in general terms matters of mutual interest.

Whilst the Society naturally wished to make constructive suggestions rather than appearing only to protest, in fact it could only usefully comment on amenity considerations (design, siting, etc.) - economic considerations were outside its province. Therefore, to suggest, for example, that there should be a small arcade of individual shops instead of a supermarket was unrealistic because smaller units were uneconomic.

(d) Bamville Wood development

The developers had withdrawn their appeal, presumably after having considered the reasons for the Cross Lane development being allowed, i.e. no development south of Cross Lane and no access on to the A.6.

(e) Newsletter

Mr. Brandreth and his staff had now completed the latest issue and Mr. Borthwick had revised the distribution lists. Committee members were asked to deliver the Newsletter and Bulletin before the weekend if possible.

3. PLANNING MATTERS

(a) Gorselands

The latest plans are for fourteen flats with double garages underneath, 2 and 3 stories high, in two blocks (allowing vehicular access between) lying nearly the whole length of the boundary facing Queen's Road, fairly close to the front to give the owners the best possible views. The siting appears to have completely ignored the trees and no advantage had been taken of the falling ground. Although only three members of the committee had actually looked at the plans, the general feeling was that

the proposed buildings did not come up to the design expectations within the conservation area, and there was considerable discussion of the possibilities - how the buildings might be set back into the triangular site without overshadowing the bungalows in Walkers Road, how the roof line could be broken up and the buildings separated into smaller units set at different angles. Eventually it was agreed that Mr. Usher should draft an outline planning brief incorporating these points, which would be sent to Mr. Pettingale and members of the Parish Council Sub-Committee in the hope that it would illustrate what might be done on this important site, so prominent a feature of the Common.

The Tree Group would inform the City arborist that trees protected by a TPO were threatened by the proposed development, and he would no doubt make his views known directly to the District planning staff.

(b) Development at the National Children's Home

We understood that the District Sub-Committee would also be considering at its 26th June meeting an application for outline permission to develop 3.7 acres of 'white' land owned by the N.C.H. The Parish Council opposed this application; access was poor and although the area was bounded by properties on two sides, it was part of a larger area on which pressure from development would grow if this was allowed. Residents in Riverford Close had also petitioned against it. The committee agreed that the Society should support the Parish Council in its opposition, and a letter would be sent to the District Council.

(c) 84-92 Luton Road

Four houses on the north side of the railway bridge over the A16 had been demolished and it was proposed to erect flats (3-storey) with access from Hillside Road. The design was somewhat pedestrian but would not be too obvious if the importance of the planting on the front boundary was emphasized. The Tree Group would investigate the possibility of obtaining a TPO on the fine copper beech and prunuses.

(d) Development at Rothamsted Experimental Station

The Director, Dr. Fowden, had invited representatives of the Society and the Urban Design Group to examine the plans for the three new blocks they intend to build at Rothamsted. As a result of this useful meeting, the Chairman would be receiving a full set of the plans for the committee to discuss at the July meeting.

4. COMMON

Mr. Nixon had contacted Mr. Pettingale on behalf of the Harpenden Society. Discussions were started on the best way of managing the Common and it was agreed that these should continue. The Society's long-term aim should be the formation of a joint steering committee run by the Parish Council on which representatives of the Harpenden Society and other interested bodies should serve.

5. UPPER LEA VALLEY WALKWAY

The Group have prepared a set of Notes for discussion on the idea of extending the through-walk from the headwaters of the Lea at Leagrave, Bedfordshire down to Ware linking a chain of countryside and conservation areas. It was suggested that the project be inaugurated to mark European Architectural Heritage Year in 1975. Copies of the proposal have been sent to the County Planning Officer and the chairmen of the relevant county Council committees, and to Luton Corporation. In addition, Mr. Hislop had passed copies to the parish councils and amenity societies through whose areas the Lea flows,

In his reply Mr. Overton said it was a stimulating idea and he had asked his staff to give him their views on it as a matter of urgency. In fact a meeting has been arranged next week for a small group to meet Mr. Overton and his countryside officers for an informal discussion on the project.

The Chairman congratulated the Group on a very imaginative proposal, which had been well thought-out and presented; copies of the Notes were available for committee members. The Group had put a great deal of careful work into preparing this document, which not only emphasized the advantages of the scheme but also the difficulties which would be encountered, especially as it would, hopefully, be a joint venture with a number of voluntary groups working at different points along the Lea valley supported and co-ordinated by the County Council.

6. SECRETARY'S CORRESPONDENCE

- (a) The receipt of the report of the general meeting of the Hertfordshire Federation of Amenity Societies was noted.
- (b) A letter had been received from the St. Albans District Arts Association inviting the Society to become an affiliated member at an annual fee of £2.00; this would allow our activities to be included in the monthly diary of events published in the Herts Advertiser. The committee felt that in view of our own increased publicity, there was no need to join the Association.
- (c) The committee noted that Hatching Green had been entered in the Best Kept Village competition.

7. TREE GROUP

Mrs. Goss reported on a meeting they had had with Mr. Arnold, the City arborist. With regard to a tree survey Mr. Arnold was of the opinion that the comprehensive survey being undertaken in St. Albans was more suitable for longer term natural history purposes than for protecting the amenity value of the trees within Harpenden. He outlined his department's policy on TPOs, how and when they were prepared, and, more importantly, the success they had had in prosecuting for violations of TPOs (a substantial fine and possibly a requirement to replace it with a tree of equivalent value or stature - also expensive). He would like the Society's role to be more as watchdogs alerting his department when trees were threatened, and also of notifying them of trees of particular historical interest or great rarity (and here Mr. Scowen's expertise would be invaluable).

The latest Newsletter contained an appeal to members to help the Group in this task. In addition, there was a warning about the importance of the immediate detection and felling of elms affected by Dutch Elm disease - which spread rapidly during a warm summer.

Lack of time prevented discussion, but the committee agreed to the following points:

- the Tree Group should receive copies of the weekly list of planning applications so that they could investigate the implications for trees threatened by developments;
- the Group would find out the cost of obtaining a full set of aerial photographs of Harpenden;
- a copy of the British Standard for lopping of trees should be purchased;
- in order to avoid the considerable cost of obtaining copies of all Tree Preservation Orders (from 50p each), the Group should maintain a list of Orders with the important details.

8. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the committee will be held on Tuesday, 16th July at 8.00 p.m. in the Public Library. The committee agreed that because of the considerable workload at the moment a meeting should be held in August and the date was fixed for Tuesday, 13th August, with the following meeting scheduled for 17th September. (However, it might become necessary to alter the meetings from the third Tuesday of the month if this proved to be totally out of phase with the meetings of the Parish Council Plans Committee and the District Planning Sub-Committee.)

* * * * *

John M B Barthwick

EPB/ 4.7.74,

THE HARPENDEN SOCIETY

Minutes of a committee meeting held on Tuesday, 16th July
at 8.00 p.m. in the Public Library

Present: In the chair - Mr. Borthwick
Messrs. Brandreth, Derrett, B. Nixon, H. Nixon, Pattison,
Squires, Usher, Dr. Potter
Mrs. Brown, Mrs. Elliott, Mrs. Johnstone, Miss Pratt,
Mrs. Russell

Apologies for absence were received from Mr. Brown, Dr. Bowden, Mrs. Cunneen,
Mrs. Goss, Mrs. Jones, Mr. Wilson

1. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 18th June were approved.

2. MATTERS ARISING

(a) Gorselands

Mr. Usher had prepared a draft design brief which had been discussed with several members of the committee before copies were given to Mr. Pettingale for members of the Parish Council planning sub-committee. It had been well received and further copies have been supplied for all the parish councillors.

We now had a copy of the tree preservation order, which had been confirmed by the Secretary of State for the Environment on 18th June without modification.

(b) Lea Valley Walkway

Mr. Usher reported on their recent meeting at County Hall. Mr. Overton had welcomed the Group's suggestion, but he and his colleagues felt that the most suitable way of progressing the idea of a walkway along the Upper Lea valley was for local groups to become involved along the route rather than have the idea imposed from above by the County Council. Mr. Hislop, of the Council for Voluntary Services, would act as co-ordinator of local action groups; this project was definitely within his existing terms of reference and his enthusiasm would certainly be helpful.

3. NEWSLETTER

Mr. Brandreth would like to receive contributions for the next issue planned for the end of August. Details of the lecture programme would be included.

The Local History Society were agreeable to have a joint meeting on 16th September in the Small Public Hall when Mr. Ian Freeman would be talking on "The Old Boundaries of Harpenden and Wheathampstead". The Secretary would speak to Mrs. Saffery about the format of the posters. No arrangements had yet been made for the 4th December meeting and the possibility of a film from the D.O.E. on improvement areas or from the Civic Trust was raised.

After the A.G.M. on 11th March Mr. Arnold, the City aborist, had agreed to take part in a Q&A session on trees.
The final meeting on 5th May would be devoted to another report on management of the Common.

4. DEVELOPMENT AT ROTHAMSTED

The committee welcomed Mr. Morrice, one of the members of the Urban Design Group who had attended the briefing on the proposed developments at Rothamsted kindly arranged by Dr. Fawden. He gave us his view as an architect of the two extensions to existing buildings and a new 3-storey block on the rising ground above the present car park. Although this last building would be visible from East Common, it would be viewed against a backdrop of trees, and would not be too intrusive. His main comment related to streightening out the access road, which would allow more of present buildings to be seen from the entrance. Their long-term expansion plans (ver the next 10-15 years) had also been outlined. These would be confined to a three-storey block on the site of the present car park, and screening of this area would be completed before construction began. The Chairman had already written to Dr. Fawden thanking him for giving the Society an opportunity to see the plans and to comment on them. The committee had no objections to the plans, and a joint letter from the Society and the Urban Design Group would be sent to Dr. Fawden.

5. DEVELOPMENT AT 64-72 HIGH STREET

Mr. Morrice stayed to give the committee the benefit of his views on the proposed development of this important block of properties running from Rowe's bakery up to the garage. He discussed the detailed plans for each of the present buildings, which would provide eleven ground-floor shops (most of which had already been let according to the press) and several small suites of offices; a service road and small car park would be provided behind the block. An old yew tree would be lost, but it was a poor specimen and the view along the footpath would be opened up; further tree planting on the site appeared to have been planned.

Those committee members who had actually viewed the plans had found them surprisingly sympathetic, involving minimal alterations to the appearance of the present buildings, and following Mr. Morrice's helpful and detailed discussion, the committee felt the proposed development would be a very satisfactory improvement to this block of properties.

The Plans Sub-Committee would make comments on the plans in the normal way, but the committee asked Mrs. Russell to let her press contacts know that the Society was in favour of these proposals - this was especially important as we were gaining a reputation for being 'anti' everything. A letter from the Society to both the Herts Advertiser and the Review might also be helpful.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- (a) The Secretary had received a letter from Dr. Salaman saying he had written to the District Council about the proposed supermarket, and hoping the view of Bowers Parade might once again be opened up.

- (b) The licensee of the Cross Keys had approached the Society because of his concern about children climbing into the hollow elm tree opposite Connells. The Tree Group were asked to refer the matter to the aborigines.
- (c) Stationery - Mr. Usher agreed to look into the cost of providing stationery with the Society's name and possibly the Harpenden crest (which appears on the membership cards); this could then be used by any officer of the Society.
- (d) Herts Federation of Amenity Societies - Following their A.G.M. the Federation had asked if the Society wished to have a member co-opted onto their committee, and also if members would be prepared to participate in their working groups. A notice about this would be included in the Newsletter.
- (e) New conservation areas - Mr. Bruce Nixon had spoken to a member of the Victorian Society who had suggested that the N.C.H. village and Childwick might be protected by a conservation area advisory committee which would have representation by interested local bodies such as ourselves. The Secretary was asked to find out more about such advisory committees, their formation and modus operandi, from the Civic Trust. The Tree Group would investigate the possibility of protecting the large trees surrounding the Oval at the N.C.H.
- (f) Mr. Derrett reported that a young oak tree had been felled in Crabtree Lane. Planning permission had been granted some time ago and the deed was done before anyone was aware of it. Obviously much more support was required from our members and the general public to prevent such occurrences.
- (g) Harpenden Rise laboratory - The latest planning list contained an application for a new testing laboratory for the Consumers' Association; the Plans Sub-Committee would be investigating this further.
- (h) 84-92 Luton Road - Mr. Derrett had looked at the trees on this site. The copper beech was in fact outside the front boundary, but nevertheless Mr. Arnold's attention had been drawn to the development.
- (i) Aerial maps - These maps cost 75p each and the committee agreed that the Tree Group should purchase initially the ten maps covering the central built-up area of Harpenden.
- (j) LADACAN - The Secretary reported that members of the Society had been among the 200 people who attended the open meeting and our Chairman had been on the platform. The Society gave its full-hearted support to LADACAN, especially in view of the increasing pressures for expansion of Luton airport following cancellation of the Maplin project.

7. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the committee will be held on Tuesday, 13th August at 8.00 p.m. in the Public Library, and the following meeting was provisionally arranged for Tuesday, 17th September.

* * * * *

John MB Barthwick

THE HARPENDEN SOCIETY

Minutes of a committee meeting held on Tuesday, 13th August
at 8.00 p.m. in the Public Library

Present: In the chair - Mr. Borthwick
Messrs. Brandreth, Curl, Derrett, B. Nixon,
H. Nixon, Usher and Wilson
Mrs. Brown, Mrs. Cunneen, Mrs. Elliott,
Mrs. Goss, Mrs. Jones, Miss Pratt, Mrs. Russell

Apologies for absence were received from Mr. Brown,
Dr. Bowden and Mrs. Johnstone

1. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The following alterations were made to the minutes of the meeting held on 16th July before these were approved:

- Item 5 - The plans in fact showed the yew tree as being retained, thereby screening the end wall of the garage, but it was highly likely the tree would die as a result of damage during development.
- Item 6,a - Should read Bowers House (not Parade)
- 6,e - Two different points had arisen here; the first relating to protecting Childwickbury and the NCH villages by making them conservation areas, and the second the possibility of a conservation area advisory committee.
(An interesting footnote - 584 new conservation areas were designated in 1973, the highest annual total since designations began late in 1967. In all there are now more than 2,800 conservation areas.)
- 6,f - Messrs. H. Nixon and Derrett had mentioned the felled oak.

2. SUPERMARKET IN BOWERS PARADE

A revised application had appeared in the planning list this week and the plans were on view. The two large windows on the first floor had been replaced by four squarish ones, and the top floor now had glass-fronted balconies with the flats set back. These modifications were an improvement but nothing had been done to break up the frontage and the large plate-glass windows on the ground floor remained an unattractive feature (and for a supermarket especially an undesirable one). The car parking had been reduced to 35 cars (single storey), otherwise the proposal was largely the same.

Mr. Curl told the committee that the District Council's officers' views - the recommendation seemed to be that the revised plans met most of the objections raised - but he doubted the District Plans Sub-Committee would reach a decision on the proposal at their next meeting.

The committee considered our original objections to the proposed supermarket development were still valid, especially with respect to access and traffic problems and the appearance which was out of keeping with the character of the town centre. Mrs. Cunneen offered to inspect the plans and to give

details to the Chairman so that a letter along the lines of our previous one could be submitted to the District Council by 29th August (the closing date stated in the advertisement). The views of the Urban Design Group would also be sought through Mr. Squires.

3. NEWSLETTER

Mr. Brandreth had not yet received any contributions for the next issue, August 20th was the deadline. It was hoped to have the Newsletter ready for committee members to distribute during the week of 9th September. (Post-meeting: A copy of the Bus-Rail Guide and a circular from the Lea Valley Group would also be included in this mailing.)

4. REPORT ON PARISH COUNCIL MEETING, 29th July

The Secretary had received notice of the meeting and had attended as any member of the public may do so. Several points of interest had arisen.

- A ban on heavy good vehicles had been placed on Brewhouse Hill in Wheathampstead, although no notices had been erected. Members had noticed a decrease in such traffic in Piggottshill, Southdown and Walkers Rd.
- The Parish Council had agreed to liaise with the Harpenden Society and the Herts & Middx. Trust on management of the Common - which we of course welcomed.
- The condition of the 'town noticeboard' by the bus stop at the George had been raised. After some discussion the committee eventually agreed that the Secretary should write to the Chairman of the District Publicity Committee asking that something be done about this noticeboard (which would probably be moved next year when the new mini-roundabouts were built). At one time the Urban Design Group had produced detailed recommendations for its re-siting, but at least the Council could arrange for the noticeboard to contain up-to-date information, helpful to visitors and residents alike.

5. REVISION OF CONSTITUTION

Mrs. Goss asked if we should not consider adopting a model constitution from the Civic Trust, which would allow the Society to have charitable status and thereby gain tax advantages from covenanted contributions. (This might be especially valuable if we should require funds for possible legal representation in the future.)

The Constitution Sub-Committee had had copies of this model constitution and Civic Society circular during their original discussions, but no member of that sub-committee was present. It was agreed that the Constitution Sub-Committee be reconvened and expanded, and a meeting of Messrs. Brown, Borthwick, B. Nixon, Dr. Bowden, Mrs. Elliott, Mrs. Goss and Mrs. Russell arranged as soon as possible to re-examine the proposal. Copies of the circular and model constitution would be sent to all committee members with the minutes.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- (a) Mr. Wilson had reported that the town map outside the station provided by the Society some years ago had disappeared. The Secretary had learned

from the station staff that the map had worn out, and Mr. Wilson was preparing a new and up-to-date one.

- (b) Bowers House - Next year was European Architectural Heritage Year and grants were being made towards restoration projects of different kinds. Mr. Wilson advocated strongly that the Society should take an imaginative look at the possibility of opening up the view of Bowers House, perhaps with a public open space in front, and thereby create a favourable climate of public opinion if action should be taken one day. It was agreed that a working party consisting of Mr. Wilson, Mrs. Cunneen, Mrs. Goss and Mr. B. Nixon should consider the proposal and make a preliminary estimate of the monies involved.
- (c) Lecture meetings - Arrangements were in hand for the joint meeting with the Local History Society on Monday, 16th September. Coffee would be served beforehand and posters distributed after further discussion with Mrs. Saffery.
The topic for the December meeting had not been fixed. The Secretary was expecting to receive details of films available on hire from the Civic Trust, and would also contact Mr. Sherwood, the Harpenden representative of the National Trust, for other suggestions.
Unfortunately no-one on the committee was prepared to undertake the organisation of the lecture meetings, a task which ought not to fall on the Secretary. An appeal for an organiser would be included in the next Newsletter.
- (d) Tree Group - The committee agreed that four more aerial survey maps should be bought, thus covering the whole area of Harpenden. The Group had learned from Mr. Arnold that he been required to undertake a survey of the Gorselands site - this seemed extraordinary as we now have a copy of the TPO accompanied by a detailed map. He was also going to survey the trees along the ridge on the open land between Crabtree Lane and Piggothshill.
Dutch Elm disease had affected many trees in Harpenden and would have a permanent effect on the tree cover; fortunately those trees injected last year and earlier this year appear to be safe.
- (e) Availability of plans - Mr. B. Nixon emphasised the impossibility of any commuter being able to inspect plans at Harpenden Hall, a point previously made by other Society members. Having them in the library would offer no solution, as a responsible person would be required to supervise them. The Secretary was asked to write to the District Council asking if consideration could be given to some arrangement for having plans available to the public out of office hours so that residents working away from Harpenden would have an opportunity to see them. It was also suggested that an approach be made to Mr. Pettingale to see if we might borrow the plans for an evening for our committee meetings.

7. NEXT MEETING

The next committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, 24th September (not the 17th as previously stated) at 8.00 p.m. in the library. The following meeting was provisionally fixed for 22nd October.

J. A. Brown

THE HARPENDEN SOCIETY

Minutes of a committee meeting held on Tuesday, 24th September
at 8.00 p.m. in the Public Library

Present: In the chair - Mr. Brown
Dr. Bowden, Messrs. Brandreth, Derrett, B. Nixon,
H. Nixon, Pattison, Squires, Usher and Wilson
Lady Bawden, Mrs. Brown, Mrs. Cunneen, Mrs. Elliott,
Mrs. Goss, Mrs. Jones, Miss Pratt, Mrs. Russell

Apologies for absence were received from Mr. Borthwick,
Mrs. Johnstone and Dr. Potter

1. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 13th August were taken as read and approved.

2. MATTERS ARISING

(a) Report on lecture meeting

Some eighty people had attended the meeting on 16th September at which Dr. Freeman described how the boundaries of the parish of Wheathampstead and Harpenden had been elucidated from old documents. The Chairman would write to Mr. Harrod, Chairman of the Local History Society, thanking him for what had proved a very successful joint meeting.

(b) Bowers House working party

The group had held its first meeting and was now seeking further information on some of the suggestions made. Any project would not be eligible for a European Architectural Heritage Year award.

3. TREE GROUP

The Group had learned that the trees on the land between Crabtree Lane and Piggottshill had been surveyed and were formally on the programme for preservation. The possibility of extending this protection to other important trees along the ridge was raised, but Mrs. Goss doubted if Mr. Arnold would consider this because of the priorities within his severely stretched department.

Lady Bawden raised the question of trees on land behind the corner of Crabtree Lane and Southdown Road on which it was proposed to build three houses. Mrs. Goss agreed to pass on details to Mr. Arnold. However, access alongside No.5, Crabtree Lane was very restricted and it seemed likely the application would be refused on this ground.

4. SUPERMARKET - BOWERS PARADE

A letter objecting to the revised plans had been sent to the District Council. However, these had been passed subject to two conditions: that the design for the front elevation should be submitted for approval when the final use was decided and that modifications should be made to the parking arrangements and control of vehicles.

The committee discussed at length what action should now be taken. To date 42 replies from some 75 members had been received in response to the questionnaire in the Newsletter; all objected to a third supermarket. Further information would be sought urgently on the details of the conditions, and at the same time the question of a possible public enquiry and whether speculative building is permitted within a conservation area would be investigated. It would also be useful if a more detailed brief on the potential traffic hazards were prepared, and a letter sent to all the prospective parliamentary candidates asking their views on the conservation area and this particular development within it, and, more importantly, that it went against the principles contained in the Town Centre Study, 1973. The matter was left in the hands of the Chairman and the Plans Sub-Committee.

5. MANAGEMENT OF THE COMMON

The Society and the Herts & Middlesex Trust had been invited to the meeting of the Parish Council on November 4th; Mr. Nixon and Mr. Shirley would be going. They hoped to get over to the councillors the fact that proper management was essential even to retain the common in its present form, and that it was a continuous process, not a once-and-for-all effort. The Trust could provide the necessary ecological expertise, but the Society had a role to play in the public discussion of amenity matters; the lively discussion which followed the March meeting was evidence of both real public interest and the wide diversity of opinions as to how the common should be used. Unfortunately neither the Society nor the Trust had anyone with the specialist skills of the landscape architect, but the County Landscape Architect, Mr. Clark, might be willing to become involved if approached by the Parish Council. After considerable discussion about the changing face of the common, the committee asked Mr. Nixon to act on the Society's behalf during these initial discussions with the Parish Council.

6. OTHER PLANNING APPLICATIONS

- (a) Flats in Crabtree Lane - An application had been made for 66 flats (3-storey blocks) with lock-up garages to be built on the old railway land. The Tree Group were asked to examine this proposal with particular reference to the amount of screening required, as the site was extremely visible from the A.6 and the common.
- (b) Health Centre - Outline plans for the new health centre to be built in the grounds of the Red House had been discussed by the Parish Council. It was not a rectangular block but something of a pagoda shape, and again the Tree Group would investigate what effect it would have on the trees on the site.
- (c) Beeson End - Eleven detached houses in Barlings Road were the subject of another application. Further information on the exact location of this development would be sought.
- (d) Douglas Road - Application had been made to erect a 4-storey block of flats following demolition of No.26. The Plans Sub-Committee would look into this to see how conspicuous the new building would be.

- (e) Station Road - An appeal has been lodged against the former U.D.C.'s refusal to allow a detached house and two garages to be built in the grounds of No.101. This is a very limited site with poor vehicular access, and the Plans Sub-Committee would be supporting the Council's decision.
- (f) N.C.H. access road - It was proposed to build a new access road to the printing works running parallel to the railway land and coming out into Ambrose Lane at the corner by the railway bridge. Two trees were shown as being removed, and the Tree Group would look into the matter.

7. SECRETARY'S CORRESPONDENCE

- (a) An invitation had been received from the Bedford Society for us to send representatives to a meeting to be held on 28th January in conjunction with the Civic Trust.
- (b) Mr. Pettingale had replied about the noticeboard near the George bus-stop. This would be re-sited, probably on the concourse in front of Woolworths.
- (c) On the subject of viewing planning applications, the Secretary had written to the Chief Technical Officer but had been told that there would be considerable difficulty in arranging an extension of hours and there was obviously concern over security.
- (d) A reply had been received from the District Council concerning conservation areas. Under the Civic Amenities Act 1967 such areas could be designated by the local authority and confirmed by the D.O.E. No further conservation areas were envisaged within the Harpenden area. With regard to the setting up and modus operandi of conservation area advisory committees, no reply had yet been received from the Civic Trust.
- (e) The Secretary had received a list of publications and visual aids which may be hired from the Civic Trust. The committee agreed that two films should be hired for the meeting on December 4th.

8. CONSTITUTION

The Chairman said that the sub-committee had met and discussed the Civic Trust model constitution, copies of which had been circulated to all committee members. This would be a major item for discussion at the next meeting. He would include with the minutes a note of the advantages and disadvantages of adopting this model constitution as seen by the sub-committee. The Chairman asked that every member of the committee should give serious consideration to this important matter so that a vote could be taken at the October committee meeting.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- (a) Christmas lights - Mr. Usher reported that the Parish Council had decided not to erect lights in the High Street (thereby saving some £500). After some discussion on the desirability of having lights, the committee agreed that the Secretary should write to the local Chamber of Commerce (copy to the Parish Council) asking if they would be able to finance the putting up

of lights over the Christmas period. If not, the Parish Council would be approached to see if they would consider a more modest scheme, such as putting lights in the trees on Church Green.

- (b) A letter had been received objecting to a new advertising sign in very large letters on a building behind the Silver Cup. The Plans Sub-Committee were asked to check that the sign had received planning permission,

10. NEXT MEETING

The next committee meeting will be held on Tuesday, 22nd October at 8.00 p.m. in the Public Library, and the dates of the following meetings were provisionally fixed for 19th November and 17th December.

* * * * *

J. H. Brown.

EPB/ 11.10.74.

The Constitution

The Committee has discussed various aspects concerning the constitution over a period of eighteen months without a final solution and although there are some voices who wish the matter had not been raised, we were in fact charged by the A.G.M. in March 1973 to consider certain aspects of it. The constitution is the written embodiment of the Society and is a subject on which everyone should have a view. I, therefore, ask that you give time to consider, from an objective viewpoint, the constitution which you believe to be best for the Society and its membership.

A sub-committee was asked to look into the relative advantages and disadvantages of adopting the draft constitution for local amenity societies drawn up by the Civic Trust which would enable the Society to obtain charitable status. The sub-committee discussed the draft constitution and its effect upon the Society and were unable to form a consensus opinion, three members being for adopting the draft, two abstaining and one against. The purpose of this note is to put before you the various advantages and disadvantages of adopting the draft as these were seen by the sub-committee, so that you can form your own opinion. The decision is not an easy one but the alternatives are clear because the draft Civic Trust constitution was drawn up in conjunction with the Charity Commissioners and has to be adopted without amendment to ensure registration under the Charities Act 1960 with a minimum of formality.

The main benefit accruing to the Society would be the removal of the liability to pay tax on all dealings accepted by the Inland Revenue as for a charitable purpose within the constitution. All bequests of property and monies held in trust by the Society would be exempt from tax. The Society would have the right to claim back all taxes paid on monies which were given to the Society under deed of covenant. Subscriptions could be given under covenant and local firms or members could be asked to covenant monies for particular projects. Thus, £5 given to the Society annually for seven years under deed of covenant would enable the Society to reclaim the tax paid, which at the present generally operating rate would be £2.47. The Society would, therefore, receive £7.47 per annum and the donor would give £5. The disadvantages of such a scheme centre on the fact that in order to reclaim the tax paid the monies have to be given under deed of covenant and used for a purpose acceptable to the Inland Revenue. Thus, monies collected at any one time for a specific purpose would not be eligible and many members would be dissuaded from signing a covenant for seven years, especially for subscriptions. Many of the present membership are retired and may be paying lower rates of tax and the Society can only reclaim the tax paid. Finally, in order to reclaim the tax paid the Society would have to arrange for each donor to sign annually a form stating the level of tax paid by him before paying the Society.

The Society would have the right to call itself a charity which could well attract further support. The Civic Trust advises that registration as a charity does not place any onerous burden upon a society, but concern was expressed about our lack of knowledge within this area and attempts will be made to clarify the precise liabilities placed upon the Society before the Committee meets in October.

The Civic Trust draft constitution has been drawn up objectively, away from local bias and historical considerations, and can thus form an acceptable basis for a society for all members. The objectives stated in the draft are sufficiently wide to cover all possible interests of the Society while being helpfully specific. The draft also has the advantage of including items not presently included in the Society's own constitution, although this could be changed. Conversely, the isolation in which the Civic Trust constitution has been drawn up makes it difficult to reflect the character and pattern of any individual society which already has its own constitution.

Finally, the draft constitution solves the problem of continuity by requiring that all officers and committee members retire annually and are eligible for re-election. The A.G.M. voted overwhelmingly to maintain the bar on committee members serving for more than three years consecutively but asked the Committee to examine ways of increasing the continuity of the chairman.

These are the main points as seen by the sub-committee and although there are undoubtedly many smaller facets of the problem, the decision must rest on these major points. I would ask that discussion in the main is centred on these points and in conclusion you will be asked to vote on whether you wish to adopt the Civic Trust draft or to continue with the revision of our own constitution.

25th September, 1974.

D.A. Brown,
Chairman, The Harpenden Society

THE HARPENDEN SOCIETY

Minutes of a committee meeting held on Tuesday, 22nd October 1974
at 8.00 p.m. in the Public Library

Present: In the chair - Mr. Brown
Judge Dow, Messrs. Borthwick, Brandreth, Derrett,
B. Nixon, Pattison and Wilson, Dr. Potter
Mrs. Brown, Mrs. Cunneen, Mrs. Elliott, Mrs. Goss,
Mrs. Johnstone, Mrs. Jones, Miss Pratt, Mrs. Russell

Apologies for absence were received from Lady Bawden, Dr. Bowden
and Mr. H. Nixon

1. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 24th September were taken as read
and approved.

2. MATTERS ARISING

(a) Bowers Parade supermarket

Mrs. Russell had spoken to Mr. Pettingale about the outline planning permission for this development and the conditions which had been placed upon it. These were that before development could start detailed plans for parking, access and the segregation of pedestrians from traffic would have to be approved by the District Council (the Council's engineer was examining the effect of increased traffic in this area) and secondly that detailed designs for the facade of the shop would have to be submitted for approval by the Council (especially as it was not known who the occupiers of the premises would be). He knew that the Society would be disappointed by the outcome, but the plans had been hanging around for a long time and more or less were the best compromised that could be reached. He added that our comments on planning proposals were much appreciated by the Planning Committee for their quality and liveliness and we should not be dissuaded from continuing.

No reply had been received to the two letters detailing our objections to the scheme which had been sent to the Chief Technical Officer. Although Mr. Pettingale had indicated there was no longer any chance of a public enquiry being held, this point would be checked with the Civic Trust, as the committee were concerned that the proposed development would prejudice the opportunities for redevelopment of this part of the conservation area. It was agreed that we should write to the Chairman of the District Council Planning Committee (copy to the Chief Technical Officer) asking them to reconsider their decision and to hold a public enquiry into the proposed development and its impact upon the conservation area. Copies of this letter would also be sent to the Department for the Environment and to the Parish Council.

A second letter to the District Council would propose the setting up of an advisory committee for the conservation area within Harpenden using Bowers Parade as an example. Mr. B. Nixon provided committee members with some interesting background information on these advisory committees.

Mrs. Russell was asked to contact Mike Graham of the Herts Advertiser to see if he would be interested in airing both the specific issue of the granting of planning permission for a supermarket and the more general issue of development within the conservation area.

(b) Other planning applications

Health Centre - Press reports indicated that the whole scheme was now being jeopardised by the withdrawal from it of some of the local doctors.

26 Douglas Road - Mr. Dixon had examined the outline plans for a 3-storey block of flats with a 4-storey one behind, but no indication of heights was given. He was seeking further information and, if necessary, would write a letter of objection. Mrs. Russell would check on what action had been taken.

The lists of planning applications were now much shorter and issued only fortnightly.

3. REVISION OF THE CONSTITUTION

The committee discussed at length the paper setting out the advantages and disadvantages of adopting the model constitution for amenity societies suggested by the Civic Trust. It seemed probable that any tax advantage to be gained from convenanting subscriptions would be small after deducting the costs involved in collecting them in this way, but of course this method of collecting subscriptions would not have to be followed. The other main concern was that all committee members and officers could stand for re-election every year and at the A.G.M. in March 1973 the membership had voted overwhelmingly for retention of the three-year rule. Eventually the motion was put that the committee should recommend to the A.G.M. that the Society should adopt the Civic Trust model constitution with the major amendment that the three-year restriction on membership of the Executive Committee be inserted in para. 6. The motion was carried by 9 votes to 6 with 1 abstention.

The new constitution as it would be circulated to members prior to the A.G.M. on March 11th would be made available to the committee at the December meeting, and would be distributed by post in January.

4. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- (a) Following her letter to the Chamber of Commerce about the Christmas lights, the Secretary had been assured that they would look into the matter and do their best to arrange something. (Post-meeting: According to the local press the Parish Council had now agreed to a limited scheme of lights on Church Green)

- (b) Two films were selected for the meeting on December 4th and the Secretary was asked to go ahead with the arrangements for this meeting.
- (c) Mr. Pattison distributed copies of the Bus-Coach-Rail Guide to services from Harpenden which had now been printed. Copies would be made available in the Public Library and further copies sent to organisations within the town which might be interested in distributing the information.
- (d) The Chairman said that Mrs. Brown would no longer be able to act as minute secretary or attend committee meetings due to the imminent arrival of a baby son. While accepting her resignation with regret, the committee thanked Mrs. Brown for the excellent work she had done in preparing the minutes in the last $2\frac{1}{2}$ years and wished her well in her new role. Mrs. Brown had agreed to continue as membership secretary. In future committee meetings would be minuted by committee members in turn.

5. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the committee will be held on Tuesday, 19th November at 8.00 p.m. in the Public Library, and the dates of the following meetings provisionally fixed for 17th December and 21st January.

* * * * *

J A Brown

EPB/ 13.11.74.

Minutes of a committee meeting held on Tuesday, 19th November 1974 at 8.00 p.m. in the Public Library

Present: In the chair- Mr. Brown

Messrs. Borthwick, Derrett, H. Nixon, Wilson,
Dr. Bowden, Dr. Potter, Mrs. Elliott, Mrs. Goss,
Mrs. Jones, Mrs. Johnstone, Miss Pratt, Mrs. Russell.

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs. Cuneen, Mr. Curl,
Mr. Brandreth, Mr. B. Nixon, and Mr. Pattison.

1. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 22nd October were taken as read and approved.

2. MATTERS ARISING

(a) Bowers Parade supermarket

The Chairman had written to St Albans District Council expressing concern at the manner in which permission had been granted for this development, and although the Mayor had acknowledged this, it was not considered to be official. Councillor Bilsborough had also been approached on the matter, and had promised to look into it.

There seemed to be some confusion as to whether Council sub-committees possessed delegated powers in such matters, and it was hoped that this would be clarified, as the whole thing seemed to have been dealt with in a very unsatisfactory manner.

The Chairman had again written to Councillor Bilsborough, Mr. Pettingale, and Mr. Hunt with regard to the setting up of a conservation advisory committee, and a reply is awaited.

It was stated that there was no legal requirement for the Planning committee to hold a public enquiry in connection with the supermarket development.

It was generally agreed that the local press had given good publicity to the Society's efforts on this subject, although Dr. Bowden thought that the word "row" in the headline was not the best way for our discussions to be described.

Mrs. Johnstone said that the Society should be

Mrs. Russell for her work as press officer, this was agreed unanimously.

(b) Bowers House committee

Mr. Wilson gave an up to date report on the committee's enquiry into the possibility of "opening up" Bowers House.

The committee had received considerable support from two local architects who had had a discussion with the developer's architect and this had proved quite interesting. Apparently the amended design of the supermarket did comply with the Town Centre Development Plan, but the details of the facade had not yet been completed.

Mr. Wilson said that Mr. Cuddihy of the Herts. County Council had informed him that there were no grounds for refusal of permission to develop the supermarket site, as the plans met with all requirements. Mr. Cuddihy had also said that there would be no objection to the Society discussing with the County Council any future development proposals to adjoining properties if and when these should arise.

Ownership of adjoining properties had been surveyed, and it was found to be very piecemeal, and would no doubt cause considerable difficulty when discussing the possibility of "opening up" Bowers House.

The Chairman expressed his thanks to Mr. Wilson and his committee for the considerable progress which had been made in so short a time.

All adjoining owners had expressed willingness to attend a meeting to discuss the matter if this should be considered expedient.

Mr. Wilson reported that Mrs. Cuneen had updated the requirements of the Town Centre Plan for the use of the committee, and Mr. Wilson said that he thought that the sub-committee's terms of reference could well be extended to include conservation matters.

(c) Other planning applications

Mrs. Johnstone expressed concern at the condition of the roofs of the buildings on the High St., West side site, (Rolt's), and thought that they could quickly deteriorate, and render them unusable as planned, and it was agreed that the Chairman should bring the matter to the attention of the Council.

3. TREE GROUP

Mrs. Goss reported on a recent meeting of the Tree Group at which Mr. Arnold's proposed talk at the Next A. G. M. was discussed.

Mr. H. Nixon had attended the meeting later, and detailed to the group the purpose of his future meeting with the Parish Council, when he and Mr. Shirley of the County Trust hoped to convince the Council of the urgent need for management of the Common, and to offer them the benefit of their advice and experience of the management of similar commons in the County,

4. MANAGEMENT OF THE COMMON

Mr. H. Nixon tendered a written report on his meeting with the Parish Council, when he on behalf of the Harpenden Society, and also in company with Mr. Shirley of the County Trust, offered the benefit of their experience in the management of the Common. Mr. Usher who was at the meeting, thought that the Council were not entirely unanimous in their opinion as to what was precisely meant by "management" in this context, but it seemed likely that a further meeting might be held which would be devoted entirely to the matter.

Mr. Nixon said that he had sent a copy of his report to the owners of that part of the Common adjoining the A6, and reaching from Redbourn Lane to Maple Cottages, as this was in a very poor state and needed immediate attention. He had received a very helpful letter in reply.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Nixon for his efforts.

5. WORK TO BE UNDERTAKEN BY THE COMMITTEE

- (a) Mrs Jones would be arranging a walk over the footpaths in the near future.
- (b) Various suggestions were put forward re methods of increasing membership, e.g. advertising in the local press or by leaflets, (Mr. Usher undertook to design a draft leaflet), better communications with existing members, fuller reports by sub-committees in the Newsletter, etc.

- (c) Publicity to be arranged for the next General Meeting at the Public Hall on December 4th.

6. CORRESPONDENCE

- (a) From St Albans District Council re Christmas Lights, confirming that Harpenden would get fair share of any money allocated for this purpose.
- (b) From Hertfordshire Society, as a result of the abandonment of the Maplin Scheme, they would be keeping a sharp eye on any possible development at Luton airport, and would liaise with L.A.D.A.C.A.N.
- (c) From Civic Trust. stating that arrangements have been made for the Harpenden Society to be informed of all proposals for the demolition of listed buildings and requesting that they are informed of any omission on the part of the Council to do this.
- (d) From Secretary at Rothamsted enclosing a report on the trees on the estate which had been prepared by a forestry consultant. This was handed to the Tree Group for examination.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- (a) The Chairman said that time must be given at the next meeting to the finalisation of the draft constitution, in order to ensure that it will be ready for presentation at the A. G. M. on March 11th 1975.
- (b) A reminder was given to the committee by the Chairman that eight members would be resigning under the "three year" rule and that nominations would be required for new members.

The meeting closed at 10.00. p.m.

J. A. Brown.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the committee will be held on Tuesday, 17th December at 8.00 p.m. in the Public Library. The dates of the following meetings were provisionally fixed for 21st January and 18th February.

THE HARPENDEN SOCIETY

Minutes of a committee meeting held on Tuesday, 17th December 1974
at 8.00 p.m. in the Public Library

Present: In the chair - Mr. Brown
Mrs. Jones, Miss Pratt, Mrs. Russell, Mr. Borthwick,
Dr. Bowden, Messrs. Curl, Pattison, Squires, Usher, Wilson

Apologies for absence were received from the Secretary, Mrs. Cuneen,
Mrs. Goss, Messrs. Brandreth, Derrett, B. Nixon and H. Nixon

1. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

Mr. Wilson requested deletion of the last phrase, first sentence, second paragraph of item 4, Management of the Common. The phrase was unintentionally derogatory.

Mr. Wilson also requested that the last paragraph of item 2(b), Bowers House Committee, be amended to read 'Mrs. Cuneen had obtained up-to-date information on conservation area legislation for the use of the committee, and Mr. Wilson thought that the sub-committee's terms of reference could be extended to include the conservation area as a whole'.

Subject to these amendments, the minutes of the meeting held on 19th November were approved. The Chairman thanked Mr. Derrett for drafting the minutes.

2. MATTERS ARISING

Bowers Parade development

The Chairman read a letter from Councillor Bilsborough. It would appear from this letter that St. Albans District Council was not willing to reconsider this matter. Councillor Bilsborough's main points were:

- (a) that a considerable reduction in scale of the revised proposals went some way to meeting the Society's objections;
- (b) the Town Centre Study was a consultative document, not a statutory instrument;
- (c) that, provided the development was architecturally in harmony with surrounding areas, and the developers met requirements and obligations imposed by the Council, the development was architecturally acceptable and council demands had been met.

The Chairman was concerned, notwithstanding the reduction in scale of the development, that it still represented, for one project, almost half the floor space envisaged, in the revised Town Centre Plan, as permissible to 1981. He thought this might adversely affect development between now and 1981.

Mrs. Russell noted that the change of designation from 'supermarket' to 'large store' was some concession to the Society's views, but pointed out that a prime objection was not to a supermarket or store as such, but that any large single development would create a major traffic hazard on the A.6. Mr. Curl said that the potential traffic hazard was still a valid objection. Mr. Wilson said that the new Town Centre Plan showed the projected service road running in a broad sweep from

Sun Lane to Thompson's Close, in order to avoid residential land. But the approved development plans included a service road which cut through residential land owned by Putterills; this had resulted in a request from Putterills to discuss the proposed road with the Council, but there had been no response. The service road seemed unrealistic. As noted by the Bowers House group at the last committee meeting, ownership of the area was complicated, including leases of varying lengths. Extensive, and expensive, land purchase would be necessary to allow construction of the service road and this would inevitably be a long process. Meanwhile, there was some urgency since the developer was searching for a client, and once a client was found, about six months was all that would be available for any further action.

After much further discussion, it was agreed that the Chairman should seek a meeting with St. Albans District Council Planning Committee, and, on Mr. Curl's suggestion, would try to include Mr. T. Biggs, chairman of the North Area Planning Committee, in the discussion. The Chairman would emphasize particularly the traffic hazard, with which was connected the uncertainty about the service road; and also that, in the Society's view, the revised design still fell a long way short of the standard required in a conservation area. Mr. Wilson would consider, with the Bowers House group, whether it would be possible to have another look at the conservation area as a whole, to see if any further ideas emerged which might also interest the developer.

The Chairman noted that the new Town Map had been published and was available at 10p.

3. CONSTITUTION

Mr. Borthwick presented appropriate forms of words for completion of the model constitution. The Committee agreed to the following (items numbered with reference to articles of the model constitution):

1. Name of society - 'The Harpenden Society'
2. Objects: the area of benefit to comprise 'the civic parish of Harpenden and its environs'.
3. Membership: the Society's year to run from 1st January.
4. Subscriptions:
 - (a) insert 'minimum' to the annual subscription
 - (b) delete section on life members
 - (c) for full members: 50p
 - (d) joint annual subscription for full membership for married couple: 75p
 - (e) add Old Age Pensioners to categories
 - (f) subscription for junior members and old age pensioners: 25p
 - (g) shall be payable on or before 31st March
5. Meetings:
 - (a) an annual general meeting shall be held in or about March of each year
 - (b) at end of first sentence of this article insert 'The Secretary shall give members 21 days notice of the AGM.'
 - (c) notice of ordinary meetings to be seven (7) days
 - (d) quorum for special general meetings to be 40.
6. Officers: Delete Vice-Chairman
7. The Executive:
 - (a) the Executive Committee shall consist of the officers and not less than eight (8) and not more than fifteen (15) other members

- (b) At line 18 of this article, sentence beginning 'Members of the Executive Committee shall be elected ...' delete from 'annually' to end of sentence and substitute: 'at an Annual General Meeting for a period of three (3) years and after three years (3) years' continuous service shall not be eligible for re-election until after the lapse of one year'.

4. SECRETARY'S CORRESPONDENCE

A copy of a Tree Preservation Order, affecting a group of trees at Moreton End Lane and Moreton Avenue, had been received.

There was a letter from St. Albans District Council thanking the Society for its responses to and comment upon planning applications and other matters.

A Civic Trust newsletter was available.

The Bedford Society was organising a meeting, in the form of a two-hour seminar, on behalf of the Civic Trust. The Secretary would be attending and it would be possible for one, or two, other members to attend this meeting on January 28th.

5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There would be a public enquiry, concerning development of the land between Piggottshill and Crabtree Lanes, on 7th May. It might be desirable to convene a group to finalise the Society's ideas, particularly about the through walk.

The Chairman, representing the Society, had planted a tree, as part of a tree-planting occasion at Hatching Green on 14th December.

A request had been received from St. Albans' Library for more copies of the public transport guide. Mr. Pattison said that copies of the guide had been deposited with Harpenden and St. Albans libraries, council offices and transport companies. Of the latter, British Rail had not acknowledged. Following press notification, the Echo had featured the guide but the Herts Advertiser had not responded. A County Council representative was to visit Mr. Pattison to discuss public transport in Hertfordshire. There was some discussion of the unsatisfactory state of bus services; Mr. Pattison said there were two genuine reasons which, at least partly, explained poor services - a shortage of drivers and of spare parts - particularly piston rings!

Mr. Curl reported that the bus shelter for Batford Corner had arrived, in a knock-down state. The County Council had asked all Parish Councils for proposed bus shelter sites, these to be included in next year's estimates.

Mr. Usher reported on a Parish Council meeting held on 25th November, to discuss the Common and the reports made to the Council by the Society and the Herts & Middlesex Trust. Although the Parish Council was interested in the management of the Common and would seek expert advice, Mr. Usher thought there was some resistance, on the part of some councillors, to non-representative bodies becoming actively involved in the management of the Common. Mr. Curl confirmed the interest of the Parish Council in the reports addressed to it. The Council had decided on the first of a series of inspections of the Common. In response to a request from the Chairman,