

THE HARPENDEN SOCIETY COMMITTEE MEETING
Monday 17 October 2011 at 7.30 p.m. In St John's Church Hall
MINUTES

Present: John Davis, Chris Grey, Rosemary Horne, Keith Jennings, Chris Marsden, Eric Midwinter, Keith Nash, Barbara Ouston, Richard Thomas

1.Apologies for absence: Arnold Allen, Penny Ayres, Ian Fulton, Oliver Randell

2.Minutes of the meetings on 4 July and 5 September, previously circulated, were signed as a true record.

3. Matters arising not on the Agenda; there were none.

4.Treasurer's Report: a report was circulated in the absence of the Treasurer. This showed an excess of expenditure over income of £993.86 which was explained by the one-off distribution of the Newsletter to all households in Harpenden. The expenditure was covered by the reserves as previously agreed.

5.Membership Secretary's Report: a report had been circulated on e-mail and was also circulated at the meeting which showed that the Society has a total of 662 household memberships, with 66 new members in 2011; 222 e-mail addresses, with more members switching to standing orders and supplying their e-mail addresses. Barbara Ouston to check that all households in Harpenden had received the last Newsletter, as Keith Jennings reported that some houses in Cravells Road had not received it and to report her findings to the Chairman.
Chris Marsden had 3 files of membership details from the year 2000 and will take them to Barbara for her to sort them.

6.Newsletter Editor's Items:

- a) The Winter Newsletter publication date is 28 November. The Dor-2-Dor printing cost £330, similar to the Polish printers, with the advantage that it is local. Ron Taylor has agreed to do the design and layout. 1930 is to be added to the logo heading of the Common.
- b) Eric Midwinter offered to put edited abstracts of the Newsletter on the website after members had received their paper copies. This was accepted with thanks.

7.Chairman's Items:

- a) Thanks to Penny Ayres for chairing the September meeting and doing the coffee, and to Rosemary Horne for arranging meeting venues.
- b) The resignations from the Committee of Duncan Bullimore and Caroline Stanton were noted with regret. Both were thanked for their services to the Society.
- c) Richard Thomas has agreed to stand as Vice-Chairman on the understanding that this does not presume his becoming a future Chairman. Proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Rosemary Horne, unanimously elected.
- d) Co-option of additional Committee members, whose details had been circulated before the meeting: Vicky Evans – proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Eric Midwinter; Tim Riley – proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Richard Thomas; Alan Jackson (agreed to be Convenor of the Public Order Group) – proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Eric Midwinter; Ron Taylor (agreed to do layout and typesetting of the Newsletter) – proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Eric Midwinter; Steve Gledhill – proposed by the Chairman, seconded by Barbara Ouston. These co-options were agreed unanimously but like the existing Committee are subject to election at the AGM.

Following recommendation by Richard Thomas, Bob Fletcher is to be seen by the Chairman and Eric Midwinter with a view to his becoming Secretary after the AGM. Richard Thomas suggested that he might like to come to a meeting to sit alongside the present Secretary. This was agreed.

- e) Activity Group Convenors: the Chairman explained that he saw the Convenors as the key people leading the work of the Society. It is intended that the Convenors will each lead a 'virtual' group of people interested in their respective areas of activity to achieve different perspectives of life in Harpenden. Apart from leading their area of activity, the main formal requirements of the Convenors are to report progress on activities to Committee meetings, provide an annual plan and work to a budget. At the moment there is a vacancy for a Convenor on the Transport Group.
- f) The job descriptions of Committee members had been circulated and were approved.
- g) Richard Thomas and Arnold Allen are looking at the Society's Constitution and will come to the Committee with suggestions for change.

8. Working Group Issues:

a) Examples of existing groups were given as follows:

- i) Health & Society Welfare (Eric Midwinter): 8 members
- ii) Education & Leisure (Eric Midwinter, standing in for Richard Thomas): 15 members
- iii) Built Environment (Anthony Steele)/Green Belt Association (Richard Thomas): 8

members.

b) Peter Barrett is to be asked to continue his association with ANTAS (Association of North Thames Amenity Societies) and LGBC (London Green Belt Council). Richard Thomas, Keith Nash, Anthony Steele and the Chairman are to meet the Town Clerk on 7 November.

c) Proposed £250 grant to Young Parents' Group: this was agreed as a maximum amount and that any grants from the Harpenden Society should only be made for specific items of expenditure and on submission of receipts.

d) The role of the Society in the future development of Harpenden High Street: the Chairman had spoken to Keith Lunn and Tony McFarland (Retailers Partnership) about what the Society can most usefully do. The Mary Portas Report on the Future of the High Street (commissioned by the Government) should give guidance. Two successful events could be built on: the St Albans Food & Drink Festival and the Harpenden Farmers' Market. Issues that need answers: Who owns Harpenden, and How do we find out what Harpenden shoppers want? Suggestions: should the

Town Council do a survey on shoppers' expectations; letters to name and shame absent landowners.

e) Harpenden's Young People: Eric Midwinter and the Chairman met members of Harpenden Youth Town Council on 17 October. The purpose of the meeting was to find out what young people want, which could be done by a brainstorming meeting and/or a questionnaire. The Youth Town Councillors' representatives will discuss these with the full Council and meet again with Eric Midwinter and the Chairman, who made it clear that the Society wanted to support them.

f) Public meetings: these should be built around the 7 working groups. Meetings arranged:

27 October: My Time Inside: Richard Thomas

8 December: Batford Springs: Oliver Randell and team

26 January: Planning: Anthony Steele

23 February: Joint meeting with Young Parents' Group: a panel presentation to be chaired by Chris Marsden. Eric Midwinter to get speakers.

29 March: AGM

The organisation of the public meetings was clarified: The President (Ian Fulton) would introduce and thank speakers (to be confirmed by Chris Marsden); the Hall arrangements and coffee would be the responsibility of Rosemary Horne.

9. Batford Springs Volunteer Group had requested a £500 grant. It was decided to refer this to the Environment Group who should ask for details of the expenditure. It was agreed that any grants given by the Society should be for specific items of expenditure.

10. Any Other Business:

- a) Caroline Stanton's letter about the Jubilee: this was referred to the Education and Leisure Group who could make proposals for the next meeting. The Society should show an interest. Richard Thomas and Chris Grey to liaise with her.
- b) The files: John Davis to look at them with Chris Marsden, who will hold them for the time being.
- c) Richard Thomas reported that Luton Borough Council was proposing to enlarge the roundabout at Junction 10 to facilitate access to the airport.
- d) Concern was expressed about the allocation of money on projects by Hertfordshire Highways.
- e) Barbara Ouston has the template for the Society's letter heading.

11. Dates of the next Committee meetings: 28 November, 9 January, 13 February, 26 March, 29 March (AGM)

Chris Marsden

28/11/11

d) Harpenden's Young People: Eric

e)

Harpenden Society

Minutes of the Committee Meeting held at St John's Church Hall, Harpenden on 5th September 2011 at 7.30pm.

Present:

Ian Fulton (President), Chris Marsden (Chairman), Peter Barrett (Secretary), Arnold Allen (Treasurer), Malcolm Howe (Vice-Chairman), Penny Ayres, Chris Grey, Keith Jennings, John Hunt, Oliver Randell, Eric Midwinter, Richard Thomas, Anthony Steele, John Davis, Rosemary Horne, Barbara Ouston.

Apologies for absence:

Keith Nash, Caroline Stanton, Duncan Bullimore.

The President chaired the Meeting:

1) Secretary's Resignation

The President spoke of the exceptional circumstances and the purpose of the meeting to deal with the resignation of the Secretary of the Society.

Following a full and frank discussion by the Committee, the resignation was accepted and Peter Barrett was thanked for his services as Secretary over the past 4 and half years. After further discussion, Peter Barrett also decided to resign from the Committee, both resignations with effect from 1st October 2011. Peter was again thanked for his 7 years of dedicated service to the Society. Concern was expressed about the loss of his unique insights and contacts regarding public order issues in Harpenden and Peter graciously agreed to contribute his knowledge and experience to the Public Order Group, when it became established.

2) Trustees

It was agreed that a trustees meeting would be re-convened to reconsider the wording of the minutes of the Trustees Meeting held on 3rd August 2011, which had inadvertently caused offence to the Treasurer.

3) Chairman's Interim Consultancy Report

The Chairman presented his report on which there was an open discussion by the Committee. Acceptance of the report as the right direction in which the Society should proceed was proposed by Richard Thomas and seconded by Anthony Steele. A vote was taken: 10 votes in favour, one opposed and one abstention. The motion was carried.

Following the vote, Malcolm Howe tendered his resignation from the Committee effective from that evening. Malcolm was thanked for his services to the committee.

- 4) It was agreed that all matters on the Agenda not dealt with, would be carried forward to the next Committee Meeting scheduled for 17th October 2011. In the meantime, the Chairman, with the help of others will take on the various duties of Secretary. Hopefully, nomination of a new secretary will be able to be put forward at the next meeting.

The President was thanked for his handling of the meeting and it closed at 21.50hrs.

Peter Barrett
Secretary

Approved
CM Marsden
17/10/11

Harpenden Society

Minutes of the Committee Meeting held at St John's Church Hall, Harpenden on 4th July 2011 at 7.30pm.

Present:

Chris Marsden (Chairman), Peter Barrett (Secretary), Penny Ayres, Keith Nash, Chris Grey, Arnold Allen (Treasurer), Keith Jennings, Oliver Randell, Eric Midwinter, Richard Thomas, Anthony Steele, John Davis, Ian Fulton (President).

This being his inaugural meeting as the new Chairman, Chris Marsden gave a short address of introduction.

1. Apologies for absence:

Malcolm Howe, Barbara Ouston, Rosemary Horne, Caroline Stanton, Duncan Bullimore.

2. Minutes of Committee Meeting held on 9th May 2011.

2.1 Approved and signed.

3. Matters Arising

3.1 None.

4. Financial Statement

Presented by the Treasurer and accepted as a healthy state of the Society finances.

AA proposed the transfer of £10,000 (minimum requirement) to a new account with Scottish Widows paying interest at 1.75%, an account recommended by CAF Bank. The interest rate is variable and 90 days notice has to be given of any withdrawal. Approved as long as a penalty is not incurred by falling less than this sum. Two signatures will continue to be required on any withdrawals from this account.

AA raised the issue concerning the Society practice of insisting on 2 signatures re: the NatWest current account and the difficulties experienced especially when the balance is substantially less than £5,000. The Secretary gave the background to this practice adopted following the retirement of former treasurer, Penny Ayres and the compliance with the Charity Commission document "The Essential Trustee". The Committee accepted that since the document was a guideline and we were dealing only with small amounts, a single signature would only be necessary in future on all cheques applying to NatWest Bank. This would facilitate the move towards most payments in the future being made by electronic transfer. (Signatories: Chairman, Secretary & Treasurer for all accounts).

The treasurer was asked after the meeting and agreed, subject to his availability, to provide a brief report of the current year's income and expenditure status at each subsequent meeting.

5. Chairman's Items

5.1. Chairman explained that his earlier suggestion that Steve Gledhill (a member of Harpenden Lions and HS) should be co-opted to the Committee should be postponed, at Steve's request, on account of his ill-health. Steve, nevertheless, would be helping us with press relations.

5.2. Chairman explained his decision whilst at Discovery Day to agree, subject to the Committee's approval, a donation of up to £250 (matching NL members contributions) to The Nickey Line preservation Group towards the restoration of the steps leading up to the NL at Park Hill. Approved.

6. Harpenden Society Action Plan

The Chairman thanked those who attended the 'workshop brainstorm' of 13.6.11. and for their views on the Society's purpose, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) of which there had been a lively discussion. There was general agreement that the

Society was 'a non-political civic voice promoting the well-being of the Town, as critical friend of and watchdog over those providing public, commercial and voluntary services'.

After consideration, the Committee approved the following:

6.1.1 Administration of membership and subscriptions:

- membership cards or receipts for membership payments to cease,
- membership of £4 individuals and £5 for families will remain unchanged,
- existing members will be strongly encouraged to sign standing order forms whilst at the same time providing necessary details for 'gift aid',
- from September (Harpenden households Newsletter drop proposed) will be required to pay by standing order – no other form of payment will be accepted,
- life membership was considered but will not be offered,
- the next Newsletter will set out the reasons for changes (subsequently decided to do this by an open letter from the Chairman enclosed within the newsletter).
- the Chairman's wife, Sybil, together with the help from other volunteers, will assist and trawl through the membership forms held by BO and PB for email addresses and gift aid details and bring the records/forms of application up-to-date.

6.1.2 Membership drive and awareness raising:

In the light of the recent success of the Discovery Day on the Common, the following is arranged:

- Newsletter drop to commuters at Harpenden Railway Station am 7.7.11,
- a stall at the Highland Gathering, Rothamsted Park, Sunday 10.7.11,
- a proposed stall on the Concourse opposite Argos, High Street, and similar stalls at Batford and Southdown – PB arranging,
- raise awareness specifically amongst the youth & younger population; young mums groups (education issues); the youth of Harpenden eg. the local scout groups, etc; and members of the Youth Town Council,
- business groups attending breakfast invites, etc.

6.1.3 Reorganisation of facility responsibilities & working groups:

Some of the portfolios are wider than before and others are new:

Public Order/Licensing – Peter Barrett

Environmental – John Davis

Transport – Malcolm Howe

Health & Social Welfare – Rosemary Horne

Education and Leisure – Richard Thomas

Built Environment/Plans Group – Anthony Steele

Economic activity – Chris Grey

Administration: Duncan Bullimore, Barbara Ouston and the Chairman,

Harpenden Society News - Eric Midwinter, Duncan Bullimore and the Chairman.

7.1 The Chairman explained his aims with regard to a September Newsletter drop to all 12,200 households in Harpenden and quoted the costings for printing and distribution by Dor-2-Dor, a charitable body in Harpenden. Doubts were expressed about the delivery reliability and the Royal Mail was quoted as an alternative who are legally obliged to deliver – to be explored. A figure of £1300 was quoted, using the most cost effective means and the drop was approved, subject to final consideration by the Chairman, EM & DB.

8. Activity Reports – discussion of action points or issues only:

Transport – Road & Rail; Transport – Air; Environment; Plans; Commons and Greens & Town Council Liaison (to be linked in future) – HTC reserve budget now stands at £954,000; Green Belt; Batford, & Batford Springs Volunteers (website now set up and interest generated) – reports received from each.

Voice Your Choice - raised considerable local Town and outside interest. Should be repeated and the Society should progress the issue with the Town Clerk for next year.

Society Awards -- Plaque Presentations reported by Rosemary Horne:

- 8.3.1 Breathing Space – 12 midday 13.7.2011 – 3 persons currently attending.
- 8.3.2 Porters Park Development – arrangements to be finalised with Chris Grey.

7. Speaker's Evenings:

Current situation reported – Rosemary Horne agreed to greet Speaker's

- 9.1.1 Confirmed forthcoming Speakers: 22nd September – Eric Midwinter;
27th October - Richard Thomas; 8th December - Oliver Randell.
- 9.1.2 Park Hall booking for 24th November 2011 – cancelled.

8. Events

Chris Grey was thanked for his work in setting up the stand at the Discovery day and at the forthcoming Highland Gathering. The Chairman appealed for support from committee members, their families and friends to help man the stand with Chris during the day on July 10. Approval was given for Chris to go ahead and purchase two additional display signs for the stand for about £100.

9. Correspondence

None reported by the Secretary.

10. Any Other Business

Diamond Jubilee 2012 – local arrangements – not discussed. Needs to be raised at the next meeting.

- 11. Date of next meetings: 5th September 2011, 17th October 2011.
Any reports to be submitted to Secretary by 30.8.11 & 10.10.11 respectively.

Approved
C. Marsh
17/10/11

Harpenden Society Meetings
Committee & Members - Dates 2011/12

Committee Meetings – 7.30pm St. John's Hall

Mondays – 2011

14th February
28th March

AGM – 7.30pm for 8pm Thursday 31st March 2011 (Park Hall booked)
(Easter 22nd – 24th April 2011)

Mondays – 2011 (bookings confirmed 13.1.11)

9th May
4th July
5th September
17th October
28th November

Mondays - 2012

9th January
13th February
26th March

AGM Thursday 29th March 2012 (Park Hall booked 11.1.11)
(Easter 6th – 9th April 2012)

Members Meetings at Park Hall – 7.30pm for 8pm:

Thursdays: 22nd September; 27th October; 24th ~~November~~ ^{→ Cancelled 5/7/11}, 8th December 2011.

Thursdays: 26th January and 23rd February 2012 (booked 20.1.11.)

Bookings: Heather Scott @ Harpenden.gov.uk. (Park Hall) x Not immediate for
rich.klein (Clerk) re: St John's Hall. payment Sep. 2011
(klein @ biscali.co.uk)

Harpenden Society

Minutes of the Committee Meeting held at St John's Church Hall, Harpenden on 5th September 2011 at 7.30pm.

Present:

Ian Fulton (President), Chris Marsden (Chairman), Peter Barrett (Secretary), Arnold Allen (Treasurer), Malcolm Howe (Vice-Chairman), Penny Ayres, Chris Grey, Keith Jennings, John Hunt, Oliver Randell, Eric Midwinter, Richard Thomas, Anthony Steele, John Davis, Rosemary Horne, Barbara Ouston.

Apologies for absence:

Keith Nash, Caroline Stanton, Duncan Bullimore.

The President chaired the Meeting:

1) Secretary's Resignation

The President spoke of the exceptional circumstances and the purpose of the meeting to deal with the resignation, in writing, of the Secretary of the Society.

Following a full and frank discussion by the Committee, the resignation was accepted and Peter Barrett was thanked for his services as Secretary over the past 4 and half years. After further discussion, Peter also decided to resign from the Committee, both resignations effective from 1st October 2011. This also meant his standing down as the representative at the biannual ANTAS Meetings and as an Executive Member. He was again thanked for his 7 years of dedicated service to the Society. Concern was expressed about the loss of his unique insights and contacts regarding public order issues in Harpenden and he graciously agreed to contribute his knowledge and experience to the Public Order Group, when it became established.

2) Trustees

It was agreed that a trustees meeting would be re-convened to reconsider the wording of the minutes of the Trustees Meeting held on 3rd August 2011, which had inadvertently caused offence to the Treasurer.

3) Chairman's Interim Consultancy Report

The Chairman presented his report for which there was an open discussion by the Committee. Acceptance of the report as the right direction in which the Society should proceed was proposed by Richard Thomas and seconded by Anthony Steele. A vote was taken: 10 votes in favour; one opposed and one abstention. The motion was carried.

Following the vote, Malcolm Howe tendered his resignation from the Committee effective from that evening. Malcolm was thanked for his services to the Society.

4) It was agreed that all matters on the Agenda not dealt with, would be carried forward to the next Committee Meeting scheduled for 17th October 2011. In the meantime, the Chairman the help of others will take on the various duties of Secretary. Hopefully, nomination of a new secretary will be able to be put forward at the next meeting.

The President was thanked for his handling of the meeting and it closed at 21.50hrs.

Peter Barrett
Secretary

HARPENDEN SOCIETY

Committee Meeting - Monday 5th September 2011
at 7.30 p.m. in St John's Church Hall, St John's Road, Harpenden

Agenda

- 1 Apologies for absence
 - 2 Minutes of meeting held on 4 July 2011
 - 3 Matters arising
 - 4 Financial statement
 - 5 Membership Report
 - 6 Chairman's items:
 - i) Report from Young Parents Focus Group
 - ii) Communication issues
 - iii) Future committee members?
 - iv) Harpenden Commercial Retailing & Services – progress
 - 7 Secretary's items: Resignation effective from 1.10.11. – discuss arrangements
 - 8 Editor's items:
 - 9 Activity working group reports (to be tabled – discussion of action points or issues only)
 - a. Public Order
 - b. Environmental issues & services
 - c. Transport – road, rail
 - d. Health & social welfare
 - e. Education & leisure
 - f. Built environment
 - g. Economic activity
 - 10 Other groups/reports (any issues not covered above)
 - a) Town Council Meeting 1.8.11. – Regular column in the Forum!
 - b) Town Council
 - c) Batford
 - d) Batford Springs Volunteers update & consideration of a donation
 - 11 Speakers evenings – 26th January, 23rd February 2012
 - 12 Events – Diamond Jubilee 2012
 - 13 Correspondence
 - 14 A.O.B.
 - i) Response to Media – accuracy of reporting & proper co-ordination - discuss
 - 15 Date of next meetings: 17th October, 28 November, 9th January 2012
- 1) Chairman to give an update following his Memo. of 12.7.11. re: "Harpenden Commercial Retailing & Services" and my e-mail 1.8.11. via Civic Voice "Save Our High Streets"
- Call to Action". I can respond at the next ANTAS Meeting ~~30~~₂₂.10.11.
- 2) Draft National Policy Framework – Consultation concludes end of September – any views?
ANTAS are co-ordinating responses.

Secretary – 24.8.11

Mary Barrett

From: "Mary Barrett" <evelyn.barrett@btopenworld.com>
To: "Nash, Keith" <jpnash1201@aol.com>; "Arnold Allen" <arnold@ajallen.org>; "Ayres, Penny" <jandpalcock@tiscali.co.uk>; "Bullimore, Duncan" <bullimore@googlemail.com>; "Grey, Chris" <marion.grey@ntlworld.com>; "Horne, Rosemary" <rmh.Harpenden@tiscali.co.uk>; "Howe, Malcolm" <malcolm-sheila@o2.co.uk>; "Hunt, John" <gordon.hunt@sky.com>; "Jennings, Keith" <kaypjay@yahoo.co.uk>; "Marsden, Chris" <clmarsden@ntlworld.com>; "Midwinter, Eric" <eric.midwinter@virgin.net>; "Ouston, Barbara" <Barbara@Ouston.plus.com>; "Randell, Oliver" <omrandell@btinternet.com>; "Stanton, Caroline" <cvstanton@hotmail.com>; "Steele, Anthony" <ahsteele@bcs.org>; "Thomas, Richard" <richardfthomas@btinternet.com>
Sent: 24 August 2011 08:24
Attach: AGENDA.doc
Subject: HARPENDEN SOCIETY
 Dear All

I am taking the unusual step of circulating the agenda earlier than normal for our next meeting on 5th September 2011 this to take account of the forthcoming Bank Holiday. There is an increasing number of key items to discuss as you will see. It is likely to be a lengthy meeting and I would encourage all Committee members to attend. Any reports due please send to me as soon as possible. As from Friday I shall be less contactable until 1st September.

I remind you that the Concourse outside Argos has been booked with the Town Council for Saturday 3rd September 2011 - 0930 hrs to 1230hrs. I know that our Chairman and Chris Grey will be manning the stall along with me - all are welcome - praying for good weather!

I am sorry to say that I cannot now make the Speaker's Evening on 22nd September - sorry Eric but every success and good wishes. I have the basket with the tea, etc, for use in the Park Hall kitchen. I shall purchase some biscuits but a 2 litre container of milk will need purchasing - I will top up the choice of biscuits. Money is on a donation basis now and a tin will be included. Any offers please from the ladies would be welcome. Regrettably neither my wife nor Joy Steele can help in the kitchen this time. I can deliver everything and explain arrangements to the individual kindly assisting closer the time.

I shall be away on holiday from Friday 23rd September until earliest 4th October 2011.

Regards

Peter

24/08/2011

Mary Barrett

From: "Arnold Allen" <arnold@ajallen.org>
 To: "Peter Barrett" <evelyn.barrett@btopenworld.com>
 Sent: 01 September 2011 23:31
 Subject: Report to 31.8.11
 Peter herewith my clear financial report for the 8 months to 31.8.11 for distribution

Harpenden Society

Financial Report, 31 August 2011

1 Bank balances are:

NatWest, Harpenden
 CAF

2,362.63
 9,588.55
11,951.18

2 Income & expenditure for the 8 months

	£	£
Membership income		2,514.50
Summer event		80.00
Interest		8.86
		<u>2,603.36</u>

Room hire	408.25
Insurance	174.00
Print	498.12
Donations, charitable subs London Green Belt Assoc	10.00
Donations, charitable subs herts & Middx wildlife	36.00
Committee expenses	332.38
Computer external hard drive	59.98
Banners	117.00
Summer event	80.00
Special distribution	1,342.42
Highland gathering	30.00
Harpenden plaques, two	356.46
	<u>3,444.61</u>

Excess of income over expenditure	<u>-841.25</u>
-----------------------------------	----------------

Total - £11,079.93

3 Gift aid has been recovered as expected and as included in 2010 accounts

4 It was agreed to transfer £10,000 (minimum requirement) to a new account with Scottish Widov this is an account recommended by CAF bank. The interest rate is variable and 90 days notice

£2818.37 deficit in 2 months!!

This has not yet been effected but the transfer is

8

5 The operation of the NatWest current account on one signatures is now in

Arnold Allen - Hon. Treasurer
 1st September 2011

02/09/2011

Mary Barrett

From: "Chris Marsden" <clmarsden@ntlworld.com>
To: "Nash, Keith" <jpnash1201@aol.com>; "Arnold Allen" <arnold@ajallen.org>; "Ayres, Penny" <jandpalcock@tiscali.co.uk>; "Bullimore, Duncan" <bullimore@googlemail.com>; "Grey, Chris" <marion.grey@ntlworld.com>; "Horne, Rosemary" <rmh.Harpenden@tiscali.co.uk>; "Howe, Malcolm" <malcolm-sheila@o2.co.uk>; "Hunt, John" <gordon.hunt@sky.com>; "Jennings, Keith" <kaypjay@yahoo.co.uk>; "Midwinter, Eric" <eric.midwinter@virgin.net>; "Ouston, Barbara" <Barbara@Ouston.plus.com>; "Randell, Oliver" <omrandell@btinternet.com>; "Stanton, Caroline" <cvstanton@hotmail.com>; "Steele, Anthony" <ahsteele@bcs.org>; "Thomas, Richard" <richardfthomas@btinternet.com>; "Mary Barrett" <evelyn.barrett@btopenworld.com>
Sent: 01 September 2011 08:17
Attach: Chairman's interim consultancy report.doc
Subject: Chairman's report
Dear All,

Thank you to everyone who has supplied reports for the coming meeting. It is most helpful to be able to read these before the meeting so that we can focus at the meeting on those things that need discussion and decisions to be made.

Please find attached a report from me which is a kind of consultancy report reflecting my first 6 months of 'asking' all sorts of people with an interest in the Harpenden Society about the Society's future purpose, range of activities and ways of operating. It is up to you, the committee, to decide the extent to which you wish to adopt these recommendations. Discussion on this will be taken under 'Chairman's items' in the agenda.

Best wishes,
Chris.

01/09/2011

Chairman's Interim Consultancy Report.

When many of the committee met at Richard Thomas's house in March this year to be introduced to me, you were understandably concerned about agreeing to an unknown quantity becoming your new chairman. You particularly asked me whether I intended to change things. I answered that I had no intention to change anything until I understood much more about the Society and its work. I said that I intended to ask a lot of questions of a lot of people; questions about the purpose of the Harpenden Society, people's views of the society, what it does and what it might do more of in the future.

Over the last six months I have done a lot of asking. The most interesting and more formalised enquiries so far were when Eric Midwinter and I spent an evening first with an already established group of young parents concerned with primary school access and, secondly, with a new group of young parents who deliberately decided to talk about issues other than education. You will have seen the report of this second group among the papers prepared for this meeting. Those present expressed themselves keen to have follow up sessions with additional people present and I intend to use them as a kind of opinion focus group. I also intend to have further discussions with other groups, including teenagers and professional and business groups.

However, the points raised by the young parents group were so clear and so much in line with what others I have spoken to have been saying that I feel I can present them to you with confidence. In a way it is like an interim consultancy report. You, the committee, have the responsibility for deciding the way forward for the Society. It is up to you to decide whether to accept the recommendations of the consultancy report.

There are three main points to consider.

1. New Issues

The Society needs to widen its remit to address many more issues than it has in the past. Whereas planning, aircraft noise, transport and public order issues remain of great importance and are well served currently by the Society, there are many more issues we should be addressing, especially within the areas of education and leisure, health and welfare, economic activity and the environment. The current committee has limited expertise in these latter areas and needs to consider how best it can address them effectively. The new ways of working suggested below may be the answer.

2. New ways of working

Everyone from the younger generations I have spoken to, especially the young parents, are astonished at the lack of modern communication systems used by the Society. They found it hard to believe that the committee did not routinely communicate by e-mail between itself and with members, with virtual discussion groups on specific issues, open forums, etc. Although they liked the look of the new Newsletter format, they thought that it should have been produced electronically years ago. Also there should be much more communication via the web site. The committee needs to consider how it might work differently in the future, especially between formal meetings, so that issues can be addressed as they arise, enabling us to be

Harpenden Society

Committee Meeting 5 September 2011

Report for Agenda item 9(c) Transport

1) Roads etc

1.1 Harpenden Urban Transport Plan

Hopefully as promised the actual document for the Plan will be published in September.

1.2 Road Closure : Lower Luton Road B653

The work to re-surface the junction/roundabout at Batford Mill has not yet been carried out. I will try to ascertain why this is and a date.

1.3 Leyton Road/Bull Road/A1081 roundabout

Road improvements are being carried out to Leyton Road & Bull Road for 6 weeks from 22 August. This involves the re-alignment of the roads and I believe the installation of the "missing" lengths of footpath.

1.4 Hertfordshire Bus & Interlink Strategy

I have been advised by HCC that the above document has been published. Copies are available on the Hertsdirect web site and at the local library.

2) Rail

2.1 Harpenden Station Ticket Gates

As reported for the meeting of 4 July these are now operational for the times I advised. However the completion works surrounding the new building adjacent to the booking office have been abandoned and the platform exit from the booking office remains closed. When I next contact Larry Hayman of FCC I will ask why. In my opinion the layout of the gates and entrances/exits are wrong and need to be at right angles to the platform. A standard design that does not suit!

2.2 Skew Bridge

The Town Council have received an apology from Network Rail to state that the work of clearance of vegetation has not been carried out on the Skew bridge, but to Crabtree Lane bridge. I have not noticed any difference on the latter. This apology goes onto explain that because the bridge is much higher the work is more complex. Yet again a promise is made that the work will be carried out within the next six months.

MCH

28/8/2011

Committee Report of the Health and Social Welfare Working Group

This is the first report of the newly established Health and Social Welfare Group. A number of useful and interested persons have volunteered to join this group.

It will be recalled that at its last meeting the committee agreed that the HSW group should cover 'general practices, hospital & ambulance services, public health matters, domiciliary & residential care, social services & welfare provision.'

1. General Practice

It was felt that the first issue was whether Harpenden GP patients had adequate consultative and allied rights in respect of the town's three practices, all of which proved most helpful when approached for information. The result was satisfactory.

The Davenport House surgery, as is well-known, as a long-established Patient Participation Group, reputed to be one of the most active in the county.

The Elms surgery has recently launched a similar group

The Village surgery points out that its 'twin' surgery in Wheathampstead has a PPG which Harpenden patients are encouraged to join.

All three surgeries have excellent websites, generally informative about health matters as well as about the particular running of their own surgeries.

With a government initiative encouraging the creation of PPGs and against a national figure of 40% of surgeries opting for PPGs of one form and another, the Harpenden situation, apart from perhaps the rather indirect device of the Village surgery, is deemed very good.

We have committee members involved in the HSW group who are also PPG members with the Elms and Davenport House practices.

Please let us know if you – or someone you know – is a member of the Village equivalent, the better for us to observe how well these valuable PPGs perform.

2. The Red House

The recurring issue of the Red House also arose for consideration. As was reported in the HS/HTC minute (meeting of 1.8.11) the Herts Community NHS Trust is looking at the best use of the Red House. Evidently this local discussion is taking place against the background of the government's NHS proposals

We have been able to conduct some enquiries nationally into the work of community based and community involved preventative health centres that might be of help to those involved in the decision making about the Red House. The chief components of the community health centres reviewed are: the provision of a basic list of some ten or so 'high impact' preventative treatments and strategies; the engagement of the local community in the running of the centres; and the creation of a hospitable social ambience, eg comfortable surrounds, refreshments and the like.

Contact has been made with Mary Quinn, Assistant Director with responsibility for current Red House activities at the Herts Community NHS Trust, and the Society has been heartily encouraged to submit views. We are thus preparing a brief paper for consideration accordingly, entirely in terms of the Red House as a social and communal organism and without, of course, any clinical claim or input..

Eric Midwinter
for and on behalf of the HSW group

HARPENDEN SOCIETY EDUCATION & LEISURE WORKING GROUP

Report no 1. September 2011

1. Recruitment

Ten people of varying ages and interests have agreed to be consulting members of this group, ready both to advise on issues raised and draw attention to matters that come to their notice.

2. Schools

We were fortunate to have our attention drawn to the emergent Harpenden Parents Group, dedicated to working with the county education authorities in particular to solve the perennial problem of neighbourhood school placements at primary and secondary level and in general to help sustain the quality of education in the town. It is, for instance, understood that Harpenden primary schools could be between 30 and 60 places short in each of the ensuing years without substantial change in provision and it is noted that, on average over the last few years, between 35 to 40 new 'primary' arrivals have moved into Harpenden during the school year. The Group have already established good relations with the relevant county councillors and officials and it is planned to hold joint HS/HPG/HCC meetings.

Chris Marsden and Eric Midwinter have attended two early meetings of this group and, impressed by its seriousness, objectivity and all-roundedness, offered the Society's assistance in putting it on a proper footing. We have advised on the preparation of a constitution and on the establishment of a website. It is believed that this group, with our aid, could provide the town with the kind of schools monitoring that is required.

*action-point. It is recommended that, on the precedent of the Friends of the Nickey Line grant, the Society should offer the HPG up to £250 for every £ raised by the group as it seeks to formalise its activities.

3. Library.

The library service was approached via an enquiry about its consultation process that led to the substantial reduction in library opening hours across the county, albeit a preferable action to the closures that have occurred nationwide. We received a full explanation of this process and a copy of the final 22 page report that, for example, shows that 101 Harpenden library-users took the trouble to fill in the forms provided at the library. All in all, we concluded that, in the circumstances, the library service had done its utmost to secure some degree of user participation.

Furthermore, the county library customer service has invited the Harpenden Society to be a 'stakeholder' in terms of future consultation or should we wish to raise issues as a body (The only two other local 'stakeholders' are the Town Council and the Harpenden Rural Parish Council) This invitation has been gladly accepted.. Contact has also been made with the Harpenden Library Supervisor, Gordon Finlay, and he has welcomed the idea of either receiving the views of the Education and Leisure Working Group or of himself raising issues with it.

4. Youth

Chris Marsden has proposed that, during the autumn, he will convene a series of seminar discussions with representative youth of the town about their opinions and views as to facilities and the like. The subject was also raised at the first meeting of the Chairman's Focus Group. It is noted that, at the last joint HTC/HS discussion, one possibility mentioned for the use of the Oaklands College site was a Youth Centre. Naturally, the Education and Leisure Working Group will keep an observant eye on the outcome of these and allied considerations

Harpenden Society
Built Environment Report
5th Sept 2011

1. Planning Applications

There have been few contentious planning applications over the summer.

1.1 St Hildas School

There has been a lot of e-mail about the St Hildas School, but we felt that the proposed permanent buildings replacing wooden structures, was not a planning problem.

We felt the local campaign against St Hildas was very much a neighbour issue with locals objecting to the behaviour of parents collecting children from school. Having lived near a private prep school I can understand the problem but do not think it is an issue for the Society.

1.2 Taxi Rank in Kirkdale Road

Taxis seem to have started using this road as a taxi park, having taken over the small building behind Jacksons plumbers merchants.

We have objected to this change of use and discussed the possibility of a Taxi rank outside Sainsbury's.

2. Planning Policy

The new Planning Bill currently before parliament will bring major changes to the way planning is controlled. We are watching the situation carefully and hope to get involved with developing new planning policies for the area. The district will have to create new policies and there will also be the opportunity for Harpenden as a major "parish" to have its own plans.

I personally believe that the CPRE and National Trust have over reacted to the proposed legislation, which does appear to have strong protection for the Green Belt. However we are watching the situation closely.

AHS 31/08/11

Report of the Economic Activity Working Group, including BCAG.

Future of Harpenden High Street

There is a lot of interest in this issue all over the country e.g. Government appointment of Mary Portas, BBC Today Programme survey and interviews, Herts Advertiser survey, numerous newspaper articles.

The Civic Voice 'Save Our High Streets' Call to Action posed 5 questions:

1. **What do you think are the problems with the high street?**

There are many views on this but there seems to be a dominant popular outcry against domination by the big chains and the lack of variety of small shops at which you can get most things you need in a 'villagy' atmosphere. Economists would argue that you can't buck the market. High streets are up against a combination of a squeeze on consumer spending, the attraction of out of town shopping centres and the growth of internet shopping.

Some cite charity shops as a problem because they trade at a commercial advantage but they are probably more a symptom than a fundamental cause. Others cite high rents from invisible landowners who's main interest is return on capital through rents and increases in property values.

Local authorities say they lack powers e.g. they can't prevent a chain food store from taking over a shop that was previously in a similar line of business.

2. **What do you think should be done to solve them?**

Suggestions include reviewing local commercial site planning rules, councils to work more closely with landlords and retailers to entice, nurture and train retail talent, more imaginative entrepreneurial activity by local retailers, e.g. opening ours, personal service, provision of entertainment.

3. **How might these solutions work in practice?**

Look at cases which seem to be working, e.g. Gloucester Rd Bristol and Dorking.

4. **Who should be involved in taking your solutions forward?**

This needs to be a combined effort by all interested local bodies.

5. **Do you see your group having a role?**

What role should the Harpenden Society play ?

Commentary by Chris Grey

The meeting at HTC for the Harpenden Retail Partnership showed great concern at this situation, and highlighted the fact that Landlords are greedy and have a so-what attitude not only to the tenants, but to the village population as we are the customers. I would suggest take a long hard look at the way you are being forced to shop that gives the big boys maximum profits and power, but gives you the customer little or no choice. The greed acquired on increased profits year in year out is what led to the crash in our banking system not so long ago, and will be for quite sometime.

The survey I presented recently at the AGM and recent events we have taken part in, not only highlights where we are today, but what we have had in the past which people tend to forget, and of course the younger generation know nothing about. The Herts Advertiser in its survey told us what the residents want of Harpenden but mention nothing of the past, perhaps they have forgotten as well. Their survey concluded that a call for a Department Store, cheap clothes shops, fewer chain outlets, a good home maintenance and gardening shop, greengrocers, butcher, fishmonger, car shop etc. etc. "Well what do you know these and many more are what Harpenden used to have" (what goes around comes around).

Why do we go round in circles, the butcher, baker, candlestick maker, all came to our doors, now Ocado along with others do it for you, but have wiped out all the smaller boys. With the loss of businesses, the properties have changed to accommodation and this is happening in Harpenden High Street this too could become a Housing Estate, with only Supermarkets and Argos available for your requirements. Even with the big Supermarkets jobs are being lost as they have changed their manned tills to Self Service tills. Personally I do not like using this type of faceless customer relationship because of the loss of jobs, family income and tax revenue.

Any Proposed Strategy for the Harpenden Society must be to work in co-ordination with the other forces working to 'save our high streets, particularly national and local government with the implementation of new Tenant and Landlord Laws and a more balanced view of rent and rate costs.

There should be tougher restrictions of planning permission in the Harpenden area as we have done in Batford to stop yet another take-away food premises by the community had a good result. What we didn't know was that permission was given for change of use of our coffee shop and was turned into accommodation. If rules and regulations have been changed in the past to get us where we are today, I do not see the problem in changing some of those rules and regulations back to benefit the community.

Don't forget Harpenden people relied on out of town companies such as BAE Hatfield, Vauxhalls, ICI Welwyn Garden City and Murphy Chemicals Wheathampstead etc who have all gone, along with many others, our industrial base has been wasted by National Government and gone elsewhere. As a consequence smaller supply Industries have suffered.

I strongly believe every Town and City should have its own independency providing goods and services even hospitals such as the Red House, rather than put all your eggs in one basket as with the

BCAG matters

1. Footbridge over River Lea

We have been informed that the Footbridge over the River Lea at Batford Corner is due to be re-painted in one of 37 shades of Green and that Marion is attending a site meeting on Monday 5th September to discuss which colour.

2. Leacroft Flats

This site as you know, is due to be demolished of the 24 flats that are currently on site in exchange for 42 and we recently attended a viewing evening of the proposals for the re-build. We have been told that there are approximately 3 previous residents that have expressed a wish to return to this complex and therefore the other 39 flats will be available for new intake. The design is such to cover various abilities from those that can look after themselves or require in-house carers. A Salon, Shop, Fitness Suite, Community lounge diner can be catered for plus centralised catering for those who are unable to cook for themselves. Each flat will be self contained with a kitchen should they wish to cook for themselves.

As for the design of the building our thoughts are:-

It has a roof similar to that of a pringle or olympic swimming pool type with a glass faced central rotunda with a pringle on top, making it look like a modern day car showroom that has older retired models. It will be 3 storeys high which will be out of keeping with local buildings and will follow similar foundation lines as the original u shaped building. The 50 year old Cherry Tree which is in good health will be cut down, as the Architects opinion is that they do not last very long. "Oh Dear what a sad reason". Lucky it is not dying or it would have gone a long time ago. Building could start in April/May 2012 as long as I do not throw a spanner in the works as regards planning permission based on building design being unsuitable.

3. Garages

A decision on the derelict garages in Batford plus other areas is making progress, with 18 sites and 2,749 garages to go to public consultation for 2/3 bedroom affordable housing, copies of Housing 21 will be available at the meeting.

4. Golden Jubilee Meeting

This meeting took place recently to discuss the arrangements for the 2012 celebrations which will encompass the main areas of Harpenden on Saturday 2nd June from lunchtime to 9pm approximately. Some large skates are required in my opinion.

5. Security

Just to let you know that some of the main players that have been involved in trouble within Batford are now at HMP and will be for quite a long time.

Chris Grey
September 2011

Mary Barrett

AGNJA PnA. 10) 10/11

From: "Mary Barrett" <evelyn.barrett@btopenworld.com>
To: "Penny Alcock" <jandpalcock@tiscali.co.uk>
Sent: 24 August 2011 17:21
Subject: Re: Committee Meeting 5.9.11.
Penny

I am not aware of anyone other yourself receiving a copy of the accounts and at present I think it should remain that way. The information is most helpful as well as I am sure it can be relied upon.

With thanks

Peter

----- Original Message -----

From: Penny Alcock
To: Mary Barrett
Sent: Wednesday, August 24, 2011 12:31 PM
Subject: Re: Committee Meeting 5.9.11.

Dear Peter

Oliver Randell sent me a copy of the ULVG accounts for the year to 31.12.10. Did he send a copy to all the Committee? However, I have spoken fairly comprehensively to OR and I am convinced that we should try to support (within boundaries) the BSV/ULVG, as has always been the case. I do not think that we should hand over another £500 to them without question and until the handover to HTC in early 2012 I think we should discuss whether we would be willing to pay (as StADC used to) only in response to bills/receipts but clearly not in respect of any property related (ie water, rent, etc) items as this would not be in accordance with the HS's Constitution. I think, in the past, that BSV have been very clever to organise important Lottery and other funding - but I have heard no mention of any willingness to maybe raise some funds in the many ways that other charities do. And another question - are the BSV a registered charity which case that may raise another question?

I have not sent this to all the Committee at the moment.

Penny

----- Original Message -----

From: Mary Barrett
To: Nash, Keith ; Arnold Allen ; Ayres, Penny ; Bullimore, Duncan ; Grey, Chris ; Horne, Rosemary ; Howe, Malcolm ; Hunt, John ; Jennings, Keith ; Marsden, Chris ; Midwinter, Eric ; Ouston, Barbara ; Randell, Oliver ; Stanton, Caroline ; Steele, Anthony ; Thomas, Richard
Sent: Wednesday, August 24, 2011 9:26 AM
Subject: Committee Meeting 5.9.11.

Dear All

Batford Springs Volunteers - Request for donation

In circulating the earlier letter (8th) from Ian Salvage and latterly that from Oliver Randell, for which I express thanks to both, I did not include the following which may assist in your deliberations when considering the request for the donation:

In pursuance of the Society's objectives, the Committee shall have authority, under the Constitution, - see para. 9:

24/08/2011

BATFROD SPRINGS VOLUNTEERS

Progress report to the Harpenden Society committee meeting - 5/9/11

Since my last report there has been a marked increase in the level of activity at Batford Springs. Fortunately there has also been a significant increase in the number of volunteers attending Conservation Sessions. We are now getting 15 to 20 per session – could this be related to the recent launch of our website.

Work on major projects continues apace. The £2k HTC grant arising from the Voice your Choice initiative is well under way with half the site cleared for new planting and seeding and one of the two replacement picnic benches installed. The Lottery Funded signage project is nearing completion. All the boards have been constructed and delivered and installation work has commenced.

The work experience student is in the last weeks of his project to clear the Gibraltar Grove area. The river is again visible, the bank-side paths can now be walked and much of the invasive nettle and white poplar growth has been cleared.

Input from our specialists continues. The distinguished Hertfordshire naturalist Trevor James recently spent a day on the Reserve. His comprehensive report will be of considerable help to our full Advisory Group at their half yearly meeting later next month. This Group is made up of five local and regional specialists from various disciplines. They provide us with short and long-term advice and plans for our conservation work, the emphasis being on the creation and preservation of varied habitats

(The SADC approach in the past has been much more a parks and gardens orientated).

The transfer of ownership of the site to the HTC is proceeding satisfactorily. Full transfer now appears likely to be achieved in the first half of 2012.

I will be happy to update you on any BSV issues at the meeting.

Oliver Randell, Secretary.

Circulating TO HS 8/8/11
Leaving £500 - 5/7/10.
For Tools & equipment needed
will do more self-funding.

8
8/8/11

Letter from the Batford Springs Volunteers

The Harpenden Society has in the past been very generous in helping us to continue the conservation activities that we perform as volunteers on the Batford Springs Nature Reserve. We are extremely grateful for all the help you have given us.

We are a very active group these days, with a growing membership and increasing involvement with schools, Scout troops and other local organisations. We also hope that soon the Nature Reserve land will return to the control of the Town Council. Returning the land will, we believe, be of major benefit to the town as a whole, as the level of co-operation and collaboration that we have received in the past from the District Council has been extremely limited.

We have been very successful in gaining larger grants for specific improvement activities. For example, we obtained nearly £10,000 last year from the National Lottery to erect information boards on site. These are currently being manufactured, with installation planned to start in August. Recently, we also successfully applied for a grant from the Voice your Choice programme run by Harpenden Town Council, which is now being used to improve a specific area of the Reserve. We received the second highest number of votes for our project, which we were very proud about.

One of our biggest problems has been in gaining funding for the regular items that we need money for. In the past, this has mainly been limited to tools and materials for our work, and fuel for strimmers and our dumper truck. Recently however, St Albans has pulled the financial support that they used to offer for such things as electricity, water and rent for our HQ, taxation and insurance for the dumper truck, and funding for the liability insurance that we have. As we have grown as a Group, we have also needed to hire more equipment such as brushcutters and strimmers for our conservation sessions.

This has left us in the embarrassing position that our funds are fast depleting for these general items. While we are re-assured that this situation will be eased by transfer of the land to the Town, we now expect this transfer to take around 9-12 months to fully complete. We are therefore looking at a shortfall of funding in the interim.

We would like to ask if you would consider assisting us to bridge this gap. Any amount you could make available to us would clearly be of help and I am loathe to offend you by suggesting an amount that seems out of keeping with our needs. However, I believe that if we could secure an amount of £500 from each of the Harpenden Society and Harpenden Trust, we would be in a far better position to ride out this period of instability that we are currently going through in terms of land ownership.

Yours sincerely
Ian Salvage

The Harpenden Green Belt Association

When I spoke to the Society's AGM, I said that it was not then clear how Government would find a balance between economic growth and protection of the green belt in its changes to planning policy.

Since then, Government has announced that it is loosening planning controls with a presumption in favour of development, while at the same time continuing to protect the green belt.

This has been vigorously opposed by the CPRE and the National Trust, but I do not feel that the new policy will be bad for our town or District. Our town of Harpenden is surrounded by green belt, so we should be protected from fears of urban sprawl and coalescence with Luton or St Albans.

The new policy will give the District planners a headache as they try to meet housing targets without encroaching on the District's green belt. Their problem is that the District does not have much brownfield land available for development, or greenfield land that is not already green belt, and this is a real constraint for them.

Where I do feel that the new policy is weak is that it is silent on the provision of infrastructure for the new houses, or ways to meet our current infrastructure deficit which is estimated for Hertfordshire to be worth some £1.5 billion. Roads, schools, water, drainage and medical facilities are all under strain and will need to be enhanced if more houses are not to make things worse.

(As a footnote, three large sites in Harpenden are potentially in play. The PO sorting office in Station Road seems likely to become vacant as its activity moves elsewhere, and there is the old Ogglesby's site on the Luton Road. Curiously although the Gleneagle Hotel is standing idle, apparently there has been no application to the planners for a change of use and they don't know what the owners have in mind or why it has closed.)

Richard Thomas
30.8.11

Harpenden Society

Minutes of the Committee Meeting held at St John's Church Hall, Harpenden on 4th July 2011 at 7.30pm.

Present:

Chris Marsden (Chairman), Peter Barrett (Secretary), Penny Ayres, Keith Nash, Chris Grey, Arnold Allen (Treasurer), Keith Jennings, Oliver Randell, Eric Midwinter, Richard Thomas, Anthony Steele, John Davis, Ian Fulton (President).

This being his inaugural meeting as the new Chairman, Chris Marsden gave a short address of introduction.

1. Apologies for absence:

Malcolm Howe, Barbara Ouston, Rosemary Horne, Caroline Stanton, Duncan Bullimore.

2. Minutes of Committee Meeting held on 9th May 2011.

2.1 Approved and signed.

3. Matters Arising

3.1 None.

4. Financial Statement

4.1 Presented by the Treasurer and accepted as a healthy state of the Society finances.

4.2 AA proposed the transfer of £10,000 (minimum requirement) to a new account with Scottish Widows paying interest at 1.75%, an account recommended by CAF Bank. The interest rate is variable and 90 days notice has to be given of any withdrawal. Approved as long as a penalty is not incurred by falling less than this sum. Two signatures will continue to be required on any withdrawals from this account.

4.3 AA raised the issue concerning the Society practice of insisting on 2 signatures re: the NatWest current account and the difficulties experienced especially when the balance is substantially less than £5,000. The Secretary gave the background to this practice adopted following the retirement of former treasurer, Penny Ayres and the compliance with the Charity Commission document "The Essential Trustee". The Committee accepted that since the document was a guideline and we were dealing only with small amounts, a single signature would only be necessary in future on all cheques applying to NatWest Bank. This would facilitate the move towards most payments in the future being made by electronic transfer. (Signatories: Chairman, Secretary & Treasurer for all accounts).

4.4 The treasurer was asked after the meeting and agreed, subject to his availability, to provide a brief report of the current year's income and expenditure status at each subsequent meeting.

5. Chairman's Items

5.1. Chairman explained that his earlier suggestion that Steve Gledhill (a member of Harpenden Lions and HS) should be co-opted to the Committee should be postponed, at Steve's request, on account of his ill-health. Steve, nevertheless, would be helping us with press relations.

5.1.1 Ian Fulton spoke of the need for the Society to respond more strongly in the Herts Advertiser, where occasions arose, on pertinent issues in the Letter section.

5.2. Chairman conferred with the Secretary and the decision was taken whilst at Discovery Day to agree, subject to the Committee's approval, a donation of up to £250 (matching NL members contributions) to The Nickey Line preservation Group towards the restoration of the steps leading up to the NL at Park Hill. Approved.

6. Harpenden Society Action Plan

6.1 The Chairman thanked those who attended the 'workshop brainstorm' of 13.6.11. and for their views on the Society's purpose, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) of which there had been a lively discussion. There was general agreement that the Society was 'a non-political civic voice promoting the well-being of the Town, as critical friend of and watchdog over those providing public, commercial and voluntary services'. After consideration, the Committee approved the following:

6.1.1 Administration of membership and subscriptions:

- membership cards or receipts for membership payments to cease,
- membership of £4 individuals and £5 for families will remain unchanged,
- existing members will be strongly encouraged to sign standing order forms whilst at the same time providing necessary details for 'gift aid',
- from September (Harpenden households Newsletter drop proposed) will be required to pay by standing order – no other form of payment will be accepted,
- life membership was considered but will not be offered,
- the next Newsletter will set out the reasons for changes (subsequently decided to do this by an open letter from the Chairman enclosed within the newsletter).
- the Chairman's wife, Sybil, together with the help from other volunteers, will assist and trawl through the membership forms held by BO and PB for email addresses and gift aid details and bring the records/forms of application up-to-date.

6.1.2 Membership drive and awareness raising:

In the light of the recent success of the Discovery Day on the Common, the following is arranged:

- Newsletter drop to commuters at Harpenden Railway Station am 7.7.11,
- a stall at the Highland Gathering, Rothamsted Park, Sunday 10.7.11,
- a proposed stall on the Concourse opposite Argos, High Street, and similar stalls at Batford and Southdown – PB arranging,
- raise awareness specifically amongst the youth & younger population; young mums groups (education issues); the youth of Harpenden eg. the local scout groups, etc; and members of the Youth Town Council,
- business groups attending breakfast invites, etc.

6.1.3 Reorganisation of facility responsibilities & working groups:

Some of the portfolios are wider than before and others are new:

Public Order/Licensing – Peter Barrett

Environmental – John Davis

Transport – Malcolm Howe

Health & Social Welfare – Rosemary Horne

Education and Leisure – Richard Thomas

Built Environment/Plans Group – Anthony Steele

Economic activity – Chris Grey

Administration: Duncan Bullimore, Barbara Ouston and the Chairman,

Harpenden Society News - Eric Midwinter, Duncan Bullimore and the Chairman.

6.2 The Forum Circular produced by the Council – discuss with John Bagshaw coverage for the Society.

6.3 Membership Secretary – report updating current membership state – now 981 members.

7. Newsletter: Station handout (7.7.11.) and next edition (part of action plan):

7.1 The Chairman explained his aims with regard to a September Newsletter drop to all 12,200 households in Harpenden and quoted the costings for printing and distribution by Dor-2-Dor, a charitable body in Harpenden. Doubts were expressed about the delivery reliability and the Royal Mail was quoted as an alternative who are legally obliged to deliver – to be explored. A figure of £1300 was quoted, using the most cost effective means and the drop was approved, subject to final consideration by the Chairman, EM & DB.

Note: Station Newsletter drop on 7.7.11. – regarded as a success with over 2,000+ handed out.

8. Activity Reports – discussion of action points or issues only:

8.1 Transport – Road & Rail; Transport – Air; Environment; Plans; Commons and Greens & Town Council Liaison (to be linked in future) – HTC reserve budget now stands at £954,000; Green Belt; Batford, & Batford Springs Volunteers (website now set up and interest generated) – reports received from each.

8.2 Voice Your Choice - raised considerable local Town and outside interest. Should be repeated and the Society should progress the issue with the Town Clerk for next year.

8.3 Society Awards – Plaque Presentations reported by Rosemary Horne:

Breathing Space – 12 midday 13.7.2011 – 3 persons currently attending.

Porters Park Development – arrangements to be finalised with Chris Grey.

9. Speaker's Evenings:

- 9.1 Current situation reported – Rosemary Horne agreed to greet Speaker's
- 9.2 Confirmed forthcoming Speakers: 22nd September – Eric Midwinter;
27th October - Richard Thomas; 8th December - Oliver Randell.
- 9.3 Note: Park Hall booking for 24th November 2011 – cancelled.

10. Events:

- 10.1 Chris Grey was thanked for his work in setting up the stand at the Discovery day and at the forthcoming Highland Gathering. The Chairman appealed for support from committee members, their families and friends to help man the stand with Chris during the day on July 10.
- 10.2 Approval was given for Chris to go ahead and purchase two additional display signs for the stand cost £117 incl. VAT.
- 10.3 Summer Event at Stockwood Park 3.7.11. – low attendance with 16 persons but worthwhile visit enjoyed by all – thanks to Caroline Stanton for organising.

11. Correspondence:

- 11.1 None reported by the Secretary.

12. Any Other Business:

- 12.1 Diamond Jubilee 2012 – local arrangements – not discussed. Needs to be raised at the next meeting.

13. Date of next meetings: 5th September 2011, 17th October 2011.

Any reports to be submitted to Secretary by 30.8.11 & 10.10.11 respectively.

PB - 7.7.11.

HARPENDEN SOCIETY

Committee Meeting - Monday 4th July 2011
at 7.30 p.m. in St John's Church Hall, St John's Road, Harpenden

Agenda

- 1 Apologies for absence
- 2 Minutes of meeting held on 9 May 2011
- 3 Matters arising
- 4 Financial statement
- 5 Chairman's items
- 6 Harpenden Society Action Plan: Discussion followed by decisions:
 - Administration of membership and subscriptions
 - Membership drive and awareness raising
 - Reorganisation of facility responsibilities & working groups
- 7 Newsletter: station handout & next edition (part of action plan) *SOCIETY AWARDS*
- 8 Activity reports (to be tabled – discussion of action points or issues only)
 - a. Transport – road, rail
 - b. Transport – air
 - c. Environment
 - d. Plans - *14th June*
 - e. Commons & Greens /
 - f. Town Council Liaison - *Over £400,000*
 - g. Green Belt
 - h. Batford
 - i. Batford Springs Volunteers
- 9 Speakers' evenings – current situation and suggestions
- 10 Events
- 11 Correspondence
- 12 A.O.B. - *Diagrams of Buses 2012 - Local Authorities - Christmas*
- 13 Date of next meetings: 5th September 2011, 17th October 2011.
(August 30th) (10th October)

Chairman's note:

This meeting differs from previous ones and those which will follow as its main item will be discussion of the Action Plan arising from the SWOT meeting held on 13th June. There will consequently be very little for consideration of other items. Committee members are therefore urged to prepare any reports they wish to make in writing for distribution by e-mail beforehand and restrict themselves at the meeting to raising only action points or issues on which the committee needs to make a decision.
Thank you.

Secretary.

Membership, subscriptions and newsletter distribution

As Barbara cannot be at our next meeting, I met with her in order to learn about the great job she does for the Society and to try to understand the processes involved. I wanted to be able to put some preliminary proposals to the committee regarding how we might be able to do things differently in the future and thereby reduce the burden of her work.

A long term vision might be that all members pay by standing order, having signed up for 'gift aid', and are contactable by e-mail. Individual communications and general news updates can be done electronically and hard copy newsletters are less frequent.

Even if that vision is agreed, we are clearly many years from achieving it. Many older members will never be on e-mail (although many might ultimately succumb to pressure from their grandchildren). People do still like hard copy in their hands and programme cards to put on their mantelpieces. However I do think there are several things we can do in the near future.

1. Currently all members are sent membership cards and receipts for their subscriptions. This process means that Barbara can process only 32 new and renewed memberships in a day, making some 20 days work a year. I propose that we explain to members that this process is far too costly in time and effort and will be discontinued.
2. In order to encourage existing members to pay by standing order, I suggest that, again with appropriate explanation, we introduce a differential rate of subscription, say £5 for standing orders and £7 for payment by cheque or cash. The differential could be expanded over time.
3. New members could be even more strongly encouraged to pay by standing order either by financial incentive or simply not allowing any other payment method.
4. Two important pieces of membership information are currently inadequate and it is proposed that one or two willing members should be asked to go through all the membership forms, which Barbara and Peter respectively have on file, to extract the relevant information.
 - a. Members' e-mail addresses, where they exist. These need to be put on a system that allows mail merge without revealing the individual addresses.
 - b. Gift aid signatures and full names of the signatories. Currently, all gift aided subs that are paid for by standing order are accounted for. (Although there may be a problem of unrecorded deaths.) It is mainly the non-standing order subs which may not all be correctly processed.
5. The next newsletter, which it is proposed is sent to all households in Harpenden, needs to contain at the bottom of the last page, a specially designed membership application form which asks for all the information we require. Barbara has agreed to work on this and liaise with Eric.
6. The current newsletter distribution system works well, thanks to Barbara and Rosemary spending 4 hours per quarter sorting out the various piles to go to the three section distributors and then on to the 33 or so final distributors. Each distributor's list of members has to be checked and often changed each quarter. If we succeed in increasing our membership substantially, however, the burden will be heavier and this process may need to be reviewed.

Chris Marsden
29 June 2011

Mary Barrett

From: "Malcolm Howe" <Malcolm.Howe@stalbans.gov.uk>
To: <evelyn.barrett@btinternet.com>
Sent: 01 July 2011 15:13
Subject: Harpenden Society: Membership Subscriptions & Newsetter Distribution
 Peter

Further to the item prepared by Chris on the above subject (distributed yesterday), which I assume will be discussed at the meeting on Monday, I have a few comments which I would appreciate being added to the discussion.

Newsletters: I doubt if members will read a Newsletter sent by email 'off the screen' and therefore will print it. This passes the burden of cost on the member and some may question what the subscription is for. I consider the current colour printed Newsletter to be very valuable as part of the Society's image.

✓ Membership cards: I see no point to these and would have no objection to them being discontinued.

Payment of subs: I do not understand the problem of subs being paid by cheque or cash. As the Treasurer/Membership Secretary for APTU I much prefer subs paid by cheque as I know when a sub has been paid rather than having to request extra statements from the Bank to ascertain if SOs have been credited to the account.

✓ I would not support charging extra for cheques and will not pay by Standing Order.

E-mail addresses: This needs to be carefully dealt with to ensure the Society does not fall foul of the Data Protection Act. Even though members may supply email addresses it does not mean that they wish receive communications by that means. We must ask permission before doing so.

Gift Aid: I assume that the main reason for being registered as a charity is to enable the Society to claim Gift Aid on membership subs. However is the effort worthwhile? I recall last year the difficulties experienced and the work involved and I know from my wife's role as a church treasurer that it is time consuming. It would be easier to raise subs by £1.00/£1.50 (which would be "no big deal") and not claim for Gift Aid. There should be very little financial difference to the Society and a lot of work would be saved.

Newsletter Distribution: This seems very complex! If the number of newsletters to be distributed increases as a result of the hoped for membership growth, then consideration needs to be given to use of a paid-for mailing system.

Thanks
 Malcolm



****Disclaimer****

The information in this message should be regarded as Private and is intended for the addressee only unless explicitly stated.
 If you have received this message in error it must be deleted and the sender notified.

The views expressed in this message are personal and not necessarily those of St Albans City and District Council unless explicitly stated.
 Please be aware that emails sent to or received from St Albans City and District Council may be intercepted and read by the council.
 Interception will only occur to ensure compliance with council policies or procedures or regulatory obligations, to prevent or deter crime, or for the purposes of essential maintenance or support of the email system.

01/07/2011