

THE HARPENDEN SOCIETY

Affiliated to the Council for the Preservation of Rural England, the Commons Open Spaces and Footpaths Preservation Society and the Hertfordshire Society. Member of the Town and Country Planning Association and the Keep Britain Tidy Group. Registered with the Civic Trust.

President: His Honour Judge R. G. Dow.

ANNUAL REPORT 1967

Under the Chairmanship of Mr. Fred Goacher the Committee met seven times in the past year. The full Committee numbered twenty-four: the average attendance was eleven.

Additionally to the usual correspondence and representations arising from its charter of interests and responsibilities, the Committee considerably extended their activities through individuals and sub-committees in: (1) the promotion of the Make Harpenden Tidy Campaign, (2) the promotion of a Membership Drive, (3) the formation of a Development Sub-Committee. The activities of this last will be elaborated later in this report.

THE MAKE HARPENDEN TIDY CAMPAIGN was quietly and continuously successful (but a few black spots remain). Its manifestations brought credit and publicity to the Society. The schools competition, the 'prestige' litter-bins presented by the Society to the town, the pictorial exhibition in the Library and other demonstrations seem to have made the residents, if not the Common visitors, litter-conscious. May the condition continue.

THE MEMBERSHIP DRIVE. The selective distribution (by the members) of the Society's new descriptive leaflet has been successful in recruiting new members. In six months the number of names on the register has increased from 220 to 260, the total membership now being over 360. We understand from our marketing experts that for a non-commercial object this is a good yield. The Society is now growing through the efforts of the members. More leaflets may be had on demand from the Hon. Secretary.

ST. GEORGE'S SCHOOL FOOTPATH. The local press congratulated the Society on the effective part it had played, by advising the Minister of the number of regular users who were known to it, in the successful opposition to the closure.

ANNUAL OUTING. On 24th June a coach-load of members and friends spent a wet afternoon and a fine evening visiting Disraeli's home (Hughenden Manor) and two new and markedly different residential developments near Beaconsfield. Mr. Patrick Wilson (who arranged the outing) had thoughtfully invited two architects associated with these schemes to explain the ideas realized in them. Incidentally, there was a sumptuous tea at Beaconsfield.

THE GROWTH OF HARPENDEN. Arising out of a resolution which was carried by a large majority at the 1967 AGM., a Development Sub-Committee was formed to investigate the extent to which planning and building could be influenced and controlled in a growing township.

It studied the legislation and official directives affecting planning, development and amenity, and enquired into the situation in other towns with heritage character and established environment. The subject was discussed and debated at the Autumn Meeting on 21st November, when the Deputy County Planning Officer, Mr. L.C. Kitching, spoke on "Planning Harpenden in Relation to its Regional Setting", and answered many searching questions.

Simultaneously with the deliberations of the Development Sub-Committee, a number of the many architects and members of allied professions who live in Harpenden have been meeting informally to discuss these same topics. Recently they have formed themselves into an association, to be called the Harpenden Urban Design Group, and it is proposed that a joint committee, representing both the professional and the lay opinion of Harpenden residents, should be formed from the Group and the Society.

The initiative appears markedly appropriate at the present time. The Minister of Housing and Local Government, towards the end of last year, announced that he was setting up a committee to study means by which the public could play a bigger part in the formulation of development plans. The terms of reference of this committee are: "To consider and report on the best methods, including publicity, of securing the participation of the public at the formative stage in the making of development plans for their area".

In the light of this, we may anticipate that our own Urban District Council may find it of advantage to have such a joint committee available for the kind of consultation envisaged by the Minister, and the Clerk of the Council has been informed that it has been constituted.

SUBSCRIPTIONS for 1968 were due on 1st January. (New members have been notified by receipt if their subscriptions covered 1968). They may be paid to the Hon. Membership Secretary, Mr. C.M. King, 27 Milton Road, or they may be left in the Society's box which Kingston House Stores kindly allow us to keep at their cash desk. (Please write your name and address clearly on the envelope). Over eighty subscriptions for 1967 and even earlier were unpaid in October, and a reminder only halved that number. We do not wish to infer that the remaining defaulters have left the Society either by design or accident, but constitutionally members who are more than two years in arrears can be deemed to have resigned. The minimum annual subscription is 5/- (7/6 for two members of the same family).

From: Maurice Johnstone,
Hon. Secretary,
6 East Common,
Harpenden. Tel: 3504.

March 1968.