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# THE HARPENDEN SOCIETY

## **Objects, Aspirations and Achievements**

The Harpenden Society was formed in 1930. At its first public meeting Clough Williams-Ellis said, "You are shareholders in Harpenden's heritage"; its aims and objects are defined in the Constitution as follows:

"To exert a strong local influence to safeguard the amenities of Harpenden and its environs and to preserve, develop and improve the features of Harpenden which are pleasing and those which promote the well-being of its inhabitants.

"To these ends the special attention of the Society will be directed to zoning schemes, particularly including open spaces, building development, roads, footpaths, rights of way, to the prevention of disfigurement caused by ill-placed advertisements, by the unnecessary destruction of trees, by smoke or by other nuisances; also to the preservation of buildings of architectural or historical interest and to the amelioration of such conditions as tend to detract from the amenities of the locality."

The Society has at present about 275 members. Its affairs are conducted and managed by a broadly representative committee consisting of three officers and twenty-one elected members. A small executive committee of five, drawn from the general committee, deals as necessary with emergencies and technical matters. The Society is affiliated to the

Council for the Preservation of Rural England, the Commons, Open Spaces and Footpaths Society, the Keep Britain Tidy Group, and the Hertfordshire Society, and is registered with the Civic Trust.

The Society is vigilant in its care for the township and the interests of the residents. It makes representations to the Urban District Council and other authorities on what might be done and what should not be done to preserve the town's distinctive character. An expert sub-committee scrutinizes proposals for development as received by the Urban District Council and submits opinions on such proposals as seem to justify objections. We are frequently represented at public enquiries and tribunals. We draw the attention of the authorities to remediable disfigurements and nuisances, and the authorities occasionally consult us as representatives of public opinions. It is an advantage to a local council, for example, to know that a representative amenity society will support its determination to preserve the good features of the locality.

The Society influenced local opinion towards the purchase of Rothamsted Park for the people of Harpenden, and presented the design for the entrance. It has given to Harpenden its Village Sign on the Common, and has planted trees and provided benches on the Common and elsewhere.

For the interest and entertainment of members and friends the Society arranges each summer a half-day outing to a place of historic or architectural interest (e.g. Guildford Cathedral, Blenheim Palace, Sulgrave Manor, Churchill College, Cambridge), and an Autumn Meeting and Wine Party whereat documentary films and slides are shown and a visiting speaker of renown addresses us on a germane subject.

Since 1950 the population of Harpenden has increased from 15,000 to 21,000. The Planners

intend to limit it to 26,000. In resisting the spread of residential building into the surrounding countryside, they have the support of the Harpenden Society and of all the residents who appreciate the character of the town and its natural features. The Society has no powers but it demonstrably has influence, and that influence would obviously increase in proportion to the membership. To quote our President (Capt. K. H. Bond, M.C.) at the 1966 Annual Meeting, "A watchdog with no teeth must seem to be a big dog and have a loud bark. It is members, not money, that we want." Harpenden deserves a strong amenity society. If you care for Harpenden as an independent residential town of comeliness and character, will you join us? The minimum annual subscription is five shillings (seven and sixpence for two members of the same family).

1967

MEMBERSHIP FORM

To the Hon. Membership Secretary,  
The Harpenden Society,  
27 Milton Road,  
Harpenden, Herts.

I/We desire to join the Harpenden Society and enclose  
..... as my/our subscription for the current year

NAME.....

ADDRESS .....

DATE.....

The minimum annual subscription is 5/- for individuals, 7/6 for two members of the same family. Subscriptions may also be left in an envelope (with the member's name and address clearly written thereon) in the box which Kingston House Stores kindly allow the Society to keep at their cash desk. Cheques should be made payable to The Harpenden Society.