

THE HARPENDEN SOCIETY

Minutes of a committee meeting held on 21st January 1975
at 8.00 p.m. in the Public Library

Present: In the chair - Mr. Brown (until 8.55), Mr. Borthwick
Mrs. Elliott, Mrs. Goss, Mrs. Johnstone, Mrs. Jones,
Mrs. Russell
Mr. Brandreth, Mr. Derrett, Mr. ^BNixon, Dr. Potter,
Mr. Usher, Mr. Wilson

The Chairman offered his apologies because he would have to leave early, and it was agreed item 3 should be taken first.

3. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - 11th March

The procedure to be followed at the AGM was considered. It was agreed that at the beginning of the meeting the committee should recommend adoption of the new constitution, and (assuming it is accepted) new officers and committee members would be appointed in accordance with its rules. Members were reminded that although the new committee would have 15 members instead of 20 at present, there would be 7 vacancies because of the number of retiring members. There was some discussion of how best to fill these: Mr. Nixon suggested that we should try to elect people professionally qualified in the fields that most concern us - architects, planners and the like. The committee agreed to think of suitable people to nominate.

It was reported that Mr. Arnold, the City Arborist, who would be talking on 'Trees in the Urban Environment' after the business part of the meeting, would welcome questions on his work.

The Chairman left the meeting at 8.55 p.m.: the chair was then taken by Mr. Borthwick.

1. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 17th December were approved.

2. MATTERS ARISING

(a) Bowers Parade development

The Secretary reported that the Department of the Environment had replied to her letter, but said that there were no grounds for re-opening discussion on the planning permission granted. (Apparently only parties to the agreement can apply to have it re-opened.) Mrs. Russell said the urgency had now gone, as Beeson End Development Co. had not been able to find a client for the proposed supermarket and the project has been postponed for a few years: the present shops are being re-let for between 3-5 years. Mrs. Russell also reported that there were two conflicting planning applications in for the same site in the January list: one for the installation of light engineering machinery (an application opposed by the Parish Council) and the other for demolition of the premises. Mr. Usher said that under recent laws there must be a formal application to demolish buildings within a conservation area. The Council does not want the building demolished until just before

rebuilding. Mrs. Johnstone proposed, and it was agreed, that despite the immediate reprieve the committee should keep a watching brief on developments on this site.

It was proposed that Bowers House Working Group should be enlarged into a Conservation Area Group, but agreed consideration of this suggestion be left to the new committee.

(b) Contact with St. Albans District Council

It was reported that there had been no progress on this matter.

4. SPOTLIGHT ON LEISURE EXHIBITION - 13th-15th March

After some discussion it was agreed that the Society's stand should be manned and Mr. Wilson undertook to organise a rota, Mr. Usher offering to do Thursday evening. Mr. Usher agreed to plan the stand and asked for suggestions for items to be included in our exhibit. It was agreed to give some publicity to the Harpenden & District Local History Society.

5. TREE GROUP REPORT

Mrs. Goss reported that some trees in Old Rectory Close, which had been lopped recently and now looked unsightly, had required urgent treatment and would look much better soon.

Tree preservation orders have been placed on trees in Cross Lane and Crabtree Lane. Mr. Derrett said he was attempting to obtain better copies of tree preservation orders than those he already held.

The committee were asked to consider questions suitable for Mr. Arnold at the AGM, and to submit them in advance. A note to this effect would be included in the notice of the meeting.

6. PLANNING MATTERS

Mrs. Russell reported that application has been made to redevelop Nos. 33A, 33B and 35 High Street (The Studio, DER and Rose Cottage) to provide three shops with offices and flats above. The committee viewed this application with concern, it being an important site within the conservation area. The plans showed a mansard roof with dormer windows. It was agreed to write to the District Council, objecting to the change of use of Rose Cottage from residential to shop and office.

7. MAY MEETING

At the meeting on May 5th Mr. Overton will give an illustrated lecture on Phase Three of the County Structure Plan.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- (a) Mr. Wilson said that the Town & Country Planning Association were holding a two-day seminar on making local plans. The committee felt that it would be valuable to send a representative to this meeting on 25th & 26th February and agreed to pay part expenses for Mr. Wilson to attend.

- (b) Mr. Wilson reported that Wheathampstead Parish Council had called a public meeting, addressed by Mr. Michael Hislop, the Countryside Officer of the Hertfordshire Council for Voluntary Service, and as a result a Wheathampstead Lea Valley Working Group had been formed.
- (c) The Third Annual Dinner will be held on Wednesday, 2nd April in the Large Public Hall. Mr. Derrett said that the caterers were not yet able to give him a firm quotation, but there was likely to be about an 12% increase over last year. The committee agreed to subsidise the dinner if necessary. Dr. Fowden has accepted the Society's invitation to speak after the dinner, and arrangements for tickets and a notice to members are in hand.
- (d) Mr. Usher asked if the Society had written to the Parish Council about a public notice board, as the Council appeared to have had no response from local societies. The Secretary replied that four letters had been sent to Pettingale suggesting sites. Mr. Usher agreed to look into the matter.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the committee will be held on Tuesday, 18th February at 8.00 p.m. in the Public Library. The AGM will be on March 11th, and the first meeting of the new committee on March 18th.

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Jean D. Elliott
18.2.75

THE HARPENDEN SOCIETY

Minutes of a committee meeting held on 18th February 1975
at 8.0 p.m. in the Public Library

Present: In the chair - Mrs. Elliott
Mrs. Cunneen, Mrs. Johnstone, Mrs. Jones,
Miss Pratt, Mrs. Russell
Drs. Bowden & Potter, Messrs. Brandreth, Dixon,
Derrett, B. Nixon, Usher & Wilson
(part-time) Mr. Pattison

Apologies for absence were received from Mr. Brown,
Mr. Borthwick, Lady Bawden and Mrs. Goss.

1. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

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

2. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

(a) Spotlight on Leisure exhibition

Mr. Usher reported that it was planned to have display boards showing various aspects of the Society's work. One would be devoted to the Tree Group and another would show recent planning applications in which the Society had been involved. Other possibilities were one on the management of the Common, on footpaths and on the development of the land between Crabtree and Piggottshill Lanes. He would be consulting Mr. Brown on the choice of photographs. Mr. Meadows had kindly agreed to produce prints at cost price.

The Local History Society and the Upper Lea Valley Group would be providing slides for display.

(b) Membership leaflet

Mr. Usher had prepared a leaflet publicising the aims and interests of the Society for general distribution in Harpenden to stimulate interest in our activities and to encourage membership. The content of the leaflet was agreed, with minor amendments.

After some discussion on the cost of printing and distribution to every house in Harpenden (a figure of £40-50 for 8,000 copies was quoted) it was decided to run a pilot scheme, spending £20 on printing and distributing to selected areas only. The matter would be discussed further at the next meeting.

(c) Annual dinner

It was agreed to invite the Mayor and Mayoress of St. Albans (Mr. & Mrs. I. Fulton) to be the Society's guests at the dinner. Notices for display and tickets for sale were distributed to members of the committee.

Miss Pratt pointed out that she and Mr. Derrett would be retiring from the committee and would not be able to be responsible for future dinner arrangements. It was agreed it would be the responsibility of the new committee to find members to carry on this work.

(d) Public notice boards

Mr. Usher said he had received the agenda for the next Parish Council meeting, in which it was suggested that a subcommittee be formed to look into this matter, and that of bus shelters. The new committee might like to contact him for further information and developments.

3. REDEVELOPMENT OF GORSELANDS SITE

Mr. Usher and Mr. Wilson reported that they had seen the latest plans. The Parish Council had approved them without comment. They were a vast improvement on the previous proposals and took account of many of the criticisms the Society had made; the only reservations concerned the design of the elevations which was mundane and uninteresting. After some discussion it was agreed that Mr. Usher should write to the District Council, congratulating the developers on the improvements made but pointing out that the elevations were unimaginative and disappointing for such an important site. Mrs. Russell undertook to inform the press of the action we had taken.

4. PLANNING MATTERS

- (a) The Secretary would enquire whether a letter had been sent to the District Council giving our objections to the proposed demolition and redevelopment of Rose Cottage and adjoining properties.
- (b) Mrs. Russell said an application had been made for 3/4 storey office development for Jarvis in Vaughan Road. The site was zoned for commercial purposes in the Town Map and it was agreed not to comment on this proposal.
- (c) An outline planning application had been made for twelve detached houses in Beeson End Orchard. Mrs. Jones agreed to check on the exact site and report.

5. SECRETARY'S CORRESPONDENCE

- (a) A letter had been received requesting the Society to try to preserve the 'miniature nature reserve' at 24 Roundwood Lane, which appeared to be ripe for redevelopment. Mrs. Russell reported that a planning application had been made for the demolition of the house and the erection of two detached houses for Kingsbury Homes. Mr. Derrett said the Tree Group were aware of the problem. It was agreed to look at the site and the dwelling and report back.
- (b) Complaints had been received about horseriders spoiling the surface of the Common and the football pitches. The Secretary would write to the Parish Council supporting these complaints and asking what action was being taken to ensure that horseriders complied with the byelaws and kept to the specified bridle paths.
- (c) It was agreed to renew for the following year the subscription of £2.00 to the Herts Federation of Amenity Societies.
- (d) The Secretary reported that an invitation had been received to attend a reception before the opening of the Spotlight on Leisure exhibition on 15th March.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- (a) Mr. Wilson reported that the seminar organised by the Town & Country Planning Association was fully booked, and he would not be able to attend.
- (b) Mr. B. Nixon suggested that an advertisement for membership should be included in the Herts Advertiser whenever any major article relating to the Society's interests was being published. Mrs. Russell would investigate the possibility and cost.
- (c) Mr. Pattison reported that the public transport plan had received general approval. The Parish Council was going to look into the provision of bus shelters.
- (d) Mrs. Johnstone raised the question of providing a footpath from the Queen's Head to the bus stop at the bottom of Crabtree Lane. Mr. Pattison would look into the possibility.
- (e) Mrs. Johnstone asked whether trees could be planted around the water tower. Dr. Bowden agreed to raise the point with Mr. Arnold.
- (f) Mr. Wilson reported that Mr. Fletcher was the new St. Albans Planning Officer. As well as acting as one of the seminar leaders at the T&C Planning Association conference, Mr. Fletcher had been involved in informal discussions with the Harpenden Urban Design Group when the Town Study Plan was being prepared.
- (g) The Secretary stated that a meeting on the subject of the Common would be held in September. Suggestions for other meetings would be welcome.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Following the AGM on March 11th the committee would meet on Tuesday, 18th March and 15th April.

Mr. Brandreth would try to arrange for the library to continue to be opened at 8 p.m. If this were not possible, meetings might have to start at 7.30 p.m.

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THE HARPENDEN SOCIETY

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on Tuesday, 11th March 1975
in the Small Public Hall, Harpenden at 8.0 p.m.

The President, His Honour Judge Dow, took the chair with over one hundred members present. Apologies for absence were received from Mr. David Booth.

1. MINUTES

The minutes of the Annual General Meeting of 12th March 1974 were read, confirmed and signed by the President.

2. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman's report opened with the encouraging news that the membership of the Society had increased and now stands at 439. There followed a wide-ranging and very comprehensive report on the activities of the General Committee on behalf of the Society.

The Common Sub-Group had a particularly formidable task, since the management of the Common is of prime interest and vital importance to Harpenden. The Common Sub-Group, in conjunction with the Herts & Middlesex Trust, had been in consultation with the Parish Council in the urgent matter of the management of the Common.

Mr. Brown went on to stress the pleasure derived from trees in Harpenden and outlined the efforts being made by the Tree Group to preserve trees, especially those which were focal points on the skyline.

The General Committee and a Constitution Sub-Committee had given lengthy consideration to the constitution of the Society, and their proposals would be taken as a separate item on the agenda.

Mr. Brown then turned to planning matters. He described the close scrutiny given by the Committee to planning applications and indicated the comments and recommendations submitted to the County Planning Department for the County Structure Plan. In particular he said how the Society supported the District Council in its refusal to allow building on the land between Piggottshill Lane and Crabtree Lane, which the Society hopes to see remain as an open space with the trees along the ridge retained. The Society had joined the Council in welcoming the proposed imaginative plan for the development of the properties between Rowe's Bakery and Rolt's shop in the High Street. Mr. Brown went on to outline the Committee's objections to the redevelopment plan for part of Bowers Parade as a supermarket: these were (i) that it was not included in the Town Centre Study, (ii) that the size of the proposed building was out of keeping with those surrounding it, (iii) that a traffic hazard would be created, and (iv) that a survey of members had shown there was no need for another large supermarket in the town centre. It was imperative that members take an active role in making their views on planning matters known to the authorities.

Mr. Brown stressed the importance of the Society's role being a positive and constructive one. He personally was dismayed that the Town Centre Study, an excellent document, was only consultative, and urged members to study the newly published Town Centre Map and to decide how they see the future in Harpenden.

Retiring members of the committee were thanked for their tireless efforts, and Mr. Brandreth was thanked for allowing the committee to meet in the library.

The President thanked Mr. Brown for his excellent report.

3. TREASURER'S REPORT

Mr. Borthwick presented the Accounts and referred to the Analysis of Income and Expenditure for 1974 which was available to members. The balance in hand for the Harpenden Society was £105.18¹/₂p. The Treasurer drew attention to the considerable increase in expenditure arising from hire of the hall for lecture meetings and the production of the special bulletins issued to members about specific planning applications, but delivering notices by hand had cut postage costs.

The report was seconded and received by the meeting.

4. PROPOSAL TO ADOPT A NEW CONSTITUTION

The Chairman gave details of the Committee's findings regarding the constitution and proposed that the model constitution of the Civic Trust should become the new constitution for the Society, with an amendment to the effect that the 'three-year rule' restricting perpetual membership of the committee included. This was agreed by the meeting.

5. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The Chairman proposed the re-election of the President, His Honour Judge Dow, who took such a 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 and in recognition of their contributions to the Society in the past, recommended that they become Vice-Presidents for life. Capt. Bond, Miss Finnie and Mr. George were re-elected unanimously.

The Secretary, Mrs. Elliott, and the Treasurer, Mr. Borthwick, were both re-elected.

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

6. ELECTION TO THE GENERAL COMMITTEE

There were seven vacancies to be filled and the following members had been nominated and seconded:

Mr. D.L. Booth	Mr. J.C. Savage
Mr. M.K. Brinn	Mr. L. Scowen
Mr. R.G. Dixon	Dr. D.J. Watson
Mr. I.A. Noble	

There being no other nominations, the above were elected and welcomed to the committee.

7. ANNUAL DINNER

The President called on Mr. Brown to give the final details of the third Annual Dinner to be held on April 2nd.

There being no other business, the meeting was concluded.

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Following the business meeting, Mrs. Goss, a member of the Society's Tree Group, introduced Mr. Arnold, the St. Albans & District Arborist, who gave an illustrated talk on 'Trees in the Urban Environment'.

Mr. Arnold showed some excellent colour slides of many different varieties of trees and discussed their habitat, rate of growth and suitability for planting in a variety of sites. He also described the management and 'cropping' of woodlands, both in the past and as carried out today. His infectious enthusiasm for his subject and his detailed knowledge contributed to the most interesting and wide-ranging discussion which followed.

The President thanked Mr. Arnold for his talk, and Mrs. Booth for providing coffee at the beginning of the meeting.