

The Hadleigh Society

Caring about Hadleigh, yesterday, today and tomorrow

Minutes of the 29th Annual General Meeting of The Hadleigh Society held in Hadleigh Old Town Hall on Monday 20th June 2011 at 8.00pm

Apologies for absence: Mike Woods, Roger Kennell.

Attendance: There were 26 Members of the Society attending.

Minutes of the A.G.M of 21st June 2010 were accepted as a true record of the meeting. There were no matters arising not covered elsewhere in the agenda.

Treasurers Report: Chris Drake as Treasurer was happy to report that it had been a boring year on the financial front with no nasty surprises. The increase in subscription rates has had no discernable effect on membership figures and has given us the desired increase in income: thank you all for paying up!

Any variations in income and expenditure between the past year and the year before are mainly explained by idiosyncrasies in the way bills are presented and paid. The exception is in the donations made: this was not in cash but consisted of giving our small remaining stock of tea towels to the Friends of St Mary's. (Our stock had got down to the level where looking after it and promoting sales was more trouble than it was worth while the Friends could make good use of them in line with our aims.)

As before, expenditure from the Fighting Fund is dictated by activities on the Tesco front and this has been very quiet for the past year, with only the one flyer sent out with the Community News last July. Activity has now resumed so it is as well as that we have cash available quickly to meet urgent needs.

Chris expressed his thanks once again to Paul Garrard of Walter Wright Chartered Accountants for his help in the preparation of the accounts and asked that if any members had any questions relating to the accounts he would do his best to answer them.

The various accounts and balance sheets were supplied.

History Group Report: Sue Angland reported that the History Group presentation last July of The Dean's Diary was very well received when it was performed at the 'Churchmen of Hadleigh' study day in St Mary's Church. John Druce had kindly stepped in to play the role of the Dean.

The History Group had continued to work on their project: 'Trades and Occupations in 19th Century Hadleigh' for the rest of 2010, and their two years of toil finally came to an end when they were pleased to present their findings to the Society on 19th January this year. They had amassed so much information it could not all be included. Even so it was a long session but the audience were most attentive and the Group received many favourable comments afterwards.

Sue Andrews, the unofficial leader of the Group has decided to take a rest from attending the monthly meetings. She is concentrating on the publication of her 'Hadleigh Historian' booklets that you may have seen around the town. Sue expressed the Groups thanks for the support and guidance Sue had given over the years.

The Groups next project would be 'Hadleigh 1910 – 1920'. What was life here like during that decade? Did the First World War impact greatly on Hadleigh? Did the Spanish Flu epidemic affect many people here? The Group hoped to answer these and many more questions They have started looking at the Parish magazines for that period to give them a taste of everyday life in Hadleigh. Sue commented that she has already discovered that whist drives were all the rage and that 1911 was a very long hot summer, so let's hope that 2011 would be the same!

Planning: Jan reported that the major planning issue is yet again Tesco. At the A.G.M last year we expected Babergh to hold their meeting in July and a decision to be made. Here we are another year on with a date for a July decision day.

We have of course a number of new members on the Babergh planning committee to whom this will be relatively new.

We do not yet know what the recommendation will be from the Planning Officer, though expect it will have to be approval. Also the papers for committee members are not out yet we do not know how he will be in his summary.

All of the letters and petitions are available for members to look at, but as we understand there are 1350 letters as well as the petitions I doubt if the members will be able to seriously assess them.

We understand that last week a company employed by Tesco was knocking on doors asking people to sign their petition, and also that their supporters are sending pretty postcards to the members of the planning committee at their homes.

Whilst the Hadleigh Society will be sending a folder of information to the members at home we had not initially intended to send individual letters, but I have been lead to understand that some members are taking note of the number of cards. So, if you are prepared to send a copy of the letter you sent to the planning department to all or any of the committee councillors it might just be helpful. We have a copy of their names and addresses here tonight. It will identify that unlike Tesco responses, i.e. we want cheap food, you're letters identify the serious concerns about the damage a supermarket on that site will cause our Town.

I hope by Wednesday to have re-prints of one of our posters for distribution to all of the properties in the main streets which councillors will pass when in town for their site inspection. We believe that this may be the 1st July. We have gone for a reprint of an existing poster because it obviously annoyed Tesco enough for them to print their own variation of it. Has anyone seen it in windows?

The planning meeting is open to the public but only three representatives for or against may speak and for only three minutes. It appears that on the day if more than three people wish to speak then they fight amongst themselves for the privilege and if they can't resolve the fight then nobody can speak. Obviously on the day we must have three speakers who can make their points on planning grounds and give the councillors the facts to work on. We have three speakers lined up and hope that we do not have anybody else turn up wishing to make their point, but it is a wait and see.

So, who knows, by our A.G.M next year, what we will be talking about!

Hadleigh Traffic Working Party: Nina Sherwood reported that the Hadleigh Traffic Working Party had stopped meeting and was invited to attend the Environment and General Purposes committee meetings instead.

Clarifying signage about the weight limit at Benton Street has been focussed on this year and Benton Street residents have been trained for carrying out Lorry Watch.

A suggestion has been made to have yellow lines along one side of Guthrum Road, as access is often difficult because of people parking there since parking charges began at the Magdelene Road car park.

We have been invited to suggest new street names for the new housing development at the top of Lady Lane. Roger Kennell had suggested a range of names given over time for different types of fields and Sue Andrews had suggested names of well know Hadleigh women over time.

Suffolk County Council are proposing to turn off street lights from midnight to 5 am in many places, except where it would be dangerous to do so.

The community speedwatch equipment is ready and volunteers are invited to apply.

Other discussion points have included the request for a zebra crossing at Angel Street near the High Street , the change in bus routes and bus stops, and litter in the town, with equipment for litter picking to be bought from a small budget for community projects and developments.

Greener Hadleigh: Nina Sherwood reported that Greener Hadleigh is a group of 5 or 6 people who have an interest in developing a sustainable future for Hadleigh.

Last year it held an event at the Ansell Centre about renewable energy, food, building materials and reducing waste. This year a second event will focus on traditional skills and crafts, to be held on 17th September.

Chairman's Report: Jan Byrne gave the Chairs report saying that "To-night we complete the twenty ninth year of the Hadleigh Society. Years in which we have seen the Society grow in membership. Throughout these years we have enjoyed a large number of speakers and study days and have learned so much about Hadleigh and what has made it such a superb place to live in.

We have watched the town grow sometimes with trepidation, but so quickly have new residents settled in and learned to love living here as much as most of us do. This last year has been fairly settled with the one exception that there has not been anything outstanding to comment on in the area of planning in which we take an interest. We have enjoyed a good selection of interesting speakers, not least of which have been our own History Groups presentations.

In May, as usual, we had our display at the May Show. Each year the working-party start by looking at the tent and try to remember how it goes up! This year was very slick so I am thinking of raising money by renting out our tent raising team. We hope you enjoyed our slightly different exhibition on Hadleigh's warship and the display of the new development at Lady Lane and the new Community facility which attracted a lot of comment.

I do thank, on your behalf, all of the members of the Hadleigh Society Committee who keep the Society running and arrange the meetings, which also includes tonights refreshments. Every member of the Committee has a part to play and I am deeply indebted to them for their work and support.

I had my first term as Chairman back in the 1980's and looking back over the minutes of that period they do read amazingly similar to today, including in 1987 the first attempt to pull down Cinch and build a supermarket on the ground behind it. On that occasion the District Council turned it down both at the planning stage and also refused to put the site on the District Plan. One can but wonder how much longer the Society will be discussing the problem, but the really sad thing is that the parts of the site from the Brett works to the bungalow in Bridge Street which Tesco either own or have agreements on have been allowed to become derelict.

However to more cheerful matters: The Committee are arranging what we hope will be an interesting programme for next year and you have some good speakers for the rest of this year. I do hope that when the Chairman makes the report at next years Annual Meeting that one subject will be missing from it".

Proposal to increase Membership fees: A further increase of fees would be listed as an item at the next AGM.

Amendment to the Constitution. The amendment has been explained in the Newsletter and we have been very fortunate having Chris prepared to keep on performing the role of Treasurer. While we would be so pleased to have the opportunity to have new members on the Committee we have not had anyone prepared to join us and take on the Treasurers role. Chris is a really valued member of the Committee and we hope you will pass the Amendment to the Constitution.

Proposed by the Executive Committee and seconded by John Bloomfield. Passed in favour.

The Election of Officers and the Executive Committee

Chair : Jan Byrne

Vice Chair : Margaret Woods

Secretary : Steve Sherwood

Treasurer : Chris Drake

Membership Secretary : Margaret Woods

Members : Graham Panton, Sue Angland,. Nina Sherwood, Hattie Bawden,

The Chairman asked that the Officers be elected en block. Passed in favour.

Any Other Business

Sue Andrews proposed that the Committee look at a change of venue within the Guildhall complex as some members had difficulty in climbing the stairs. Jan confirmed that this will be discussed at the Committee meetings and explained of the difficulty in arranging for the lift to operate as stairs would still be involved.

Jane Haylock drew the meetings attention to the Hands off Hadleigh facebook site.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 8.35 pm and was followed by the serving of cheese and wine.