

The One Hundred and Twenty-Ninth Annual Report

of

THE  
**HASLEMERE**  
SOCIETY



*FOR HASLEMERE  
past, present and future*

**1<sup>st</sup> July 2013 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2014**

Registered charity number 255287

*The Haslemere Society (registered charity number 255287)  
is a member of Civic Voice and the Open Spaces Society. It is affiliated  
to the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England and the  
Haslemere Educational Museum.*

**Most of our two mailings a year are delivered by hand,  
courtesy of committee members and non-committee  
members, in order to cut down on postage costs.**

**This is not an  
arduous task, as it is shared among many helpers, and  
can be an interesting and instructive way of getting to  
know what might be an otherwise unknown part of  
Haslemere and Hindhead - as well as including exercise  
and fresh air and being therefore *a good thing***

**Please let Diana Serman know  
(Tel: 01428-654 681, email: [RGandDC@haslemere.com](mailto:RGandDC@haslemere.com))  
if you would be willing to help with deliveries.**

**You would be given a bundle  
of between 4 and 15 envelopes, with plenty of notice  
and a few days to complete the task.**

# THE ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY- NINTH ANNUAL REPORT

1<sup>st</sup> July 2013 to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2014

**President**

ROBERT SERMAN FRICS\*

**Chairman**

JANE STOPFORD RUSSELL

**Vice Chairman**

JOHN GREER\*

**Treasurer**

BRIAN DELLER

**Secretary**

ANN FITCHETT

**Membership Officer**

DIANA SERMAN

**Committee**

TONY BENNETT\*

CHRISTOPHER HARRISON\*

CERI-JANE O'HARA

MICHAEL DOVER

JOE MACDONALD

MIKE O'NEIL

**Hon Auditor**

CLARE DAVID MA FCA

\*Planning Committee

## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

The 130th Annual General Meeting will be held on  
Friday 14th November 2014 at 7.30pm  
In Haslemere Hall, Bridge Road.

### **AGENDA**

1. Welcome by the president
2. Apologies
3. Chairman's report
4. Treasurer's report and accounts
5. Election of president, chairman, vice-chairman, treasurer, secretary and auditor
6. Any other business
7. Guest Speaker Professor Joe Cartwright, a noted geologist from Oxford University. He is an expert in fracking and its implications and it is expected that his visit will be timely and popular.

### **THE SPEAKER AT THIS YEAR'S AGM**

The Society's AGM confronts one of the hottest topics currently facing our area, the question as to whether fracking should go ahead in Fernhurst. In order to add more light and less heat to the debate, we have invited Professor Joe Cartwright to make a presentation at our meeting on 14 November. Joe Cartwright is a geologist, Professor of Earth Sciences at Oxford University. He has a deep scientific understanding of the processes involved in fracking and an awareness of the environmental implications of the activity. Furthermore, he believes that scientists need to get out of their ivory tower and take scientific issues out to the public, giving a balanced, both-sides-of-the-question view of such issues.

### **MEMBERS' BADGES**

Please let Diana Serman know (contact details on page 2) if you would like a member's badge.

*The subscriptions of members who pay annually by cheque are due on 1<sup>st</sup> December and may be paid to Diana Serman at the AGM if convenient.*

## **THE CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT**

Dear Members

Thank you for the support which you have given to the Haslemere Society during the past year. With our impressive history, reputation and the backing of our membership of Civic Voice, we are in a position to try to influence changes and potential threats to our lovely town. This can be very effective with the addition of your personal energy and enthusiasm and I should like to encourage you to direct this firstly towards finding new members. Our membership is substantial for any local society at 570 but we have lost members over the year and are looking to find additional support. This will not only add weight to our comments, but will be a welcome boost to our finances. We keep the subscription fees very low and extremely good value in terms of your membership benefits, but would like to cover our annual running costs, and be in a position to initiate projects to improve the community life in Haslemere. We should very much appreciate any small donation or legacy which we could put to good use in establishing new initiatives, such as prizes for civic competitions, additional seating near the shops for the elderly and others, or specific ideas which you may choose to suggest.

Our loyal committee remained the same this year with the addition of help from the membership which is extremely valuable. The planning group in particular are very committed to maintaining the charm and vibrancy of Haslemere. We are indebted to John Greer, Robert Serman and Tony Bennett who put in a terrific amount of time, energy and passion into making useful and positive representations on the issues facing the town and neighbourhood. They consider the wider implications of such proposals as the Polo Club at Barfold Farm and the housing development on Sturt Farm and have been very conscientious in highlighting these, which at the time of writing have not been decided upon.

We have also been concerned about the speed of traffic in the town which has resulted in serious accidents and are interested in supporting measures available to slow down traffic in the town. Many boroughs and rural areas throughout the country have reduced the speed limit from 30 to 20 mph resulting in the high streets becoming seven times safer. This has the knock on effect of encouraging children to walk to school and older people to enjoy the shops without fear of accident, and more people to cycle.

The newly designed Haslemere Society website is open to view thanks to the hard work of Diana Serman and professional web designer Sophie Blair, herself a Haslemere Society member. Our website is now of a similar standard to those of other local civic societies which you may have seen. We should very much welcome some help with updating and managing our website on an ongoing basis.

At the time of writing the sad news has just been announced of the closing of Nobbs in the High Street, a name which is synonymous with Haslemere having been here since the 1930s. I am sure we members did all we could to support Nobbs but the

combined effect of a reduction in footfall in the High Street due to the opening of the new pharmacy at the Health Centre and increased parking charges together with high Waverley business rates and the arrival of national shop chains in the town, have all led to the result we feared.

Finally on the good news front, we had some time ago actively supported the preservation of Undershaw, Conan Doyle's house, which is now to be used to expand the Stepping Stones School in Hindhead which provides wonderful facilities for disabled children. The owners plan to hold open days when the sympathetically restored house may be seen in its full glory. We were also very pleased that Waverley Borough Council have adopted the Old Police Station as a building of Local Historic Merit following the Town Conservation appraisal in which Robert Serman was involved.

We look forward to seeing you at the AGM on November 14th and to your support on Saturday 8th November when we are taking a stand at the Charities Fair in Haslemere Hall.

***Jane Stopford Russell***

### **INCREASE IN SUBSCRIPTION**

You may remember that, after several years without any change, an increase in annual subscriptions was voted in at the last AGM. These take effect from September 1st 2014 for those members paying by standing order, and on 1st December 2014 for those who pay by cheque or in cash. Those who pay by standing order and haven't already updated it, will find another SO form with their annual report. I should be grateful if you would fill this in and return it to me, either at home or to the museum.

#### Annual Membership

|        |        |                              |        |
|--------|--------|------------------------------|--------|
| Single | £10.00 | Single Senior (65+)          | £8.00  |
| Couple | £15.00 | Couple Senior (One/both 65+) | £13.00 |

#### Life Membership (65+ only)

|        |        |                       |         |
|--------|--------|-----------------------|---------|
| Single | £80.00 | Couple (One/both 65+) | £120.00 |
|--------|--------|-----------------------|---------|

PS We value all our members and would even like just a few more!

***Diana Serman***

## **PLANNING REPORT**

The two pending appeals reported in the Spring Newsletter for a new house at 115 Kings Road and at 31 Hill Road have both been dismissed by the Planning Inspector.

The Public Inquiry into WBC's application to the Secretary of State to develop the common land of the Wey Hill car park did not take place in April as WBC withdrew their application, following much public criticism, to allow time for Haslemere Vision to develop a Neighbourhood Plan incorporating what the public considered an appropriate development of the site.

Three Appeals have been lodged following WBC's refusal of three planning applications for permanent polo infrastructure construction in the AONB at Barfold Farm comprising the change of use of land from agriculture to equestrian and erection of three stable blocks and a yard, change of use of a barn from agriculture to stables and erection of two stable blocks and a further change of use of land to equestrian and the construction of a menage. The Appeals are to be determined at a Public Inquiry the date of which is not known at the time of writing this report.

The Society has acted in all the above matters trying to ensure that the character and amenity of the town and surrounding areas are not adversely affected.

An outline planning application has been made to develop an area of AONB at Sturt Farm and build up to 135 houses and given the degree of public interest Haslemere Town Council held their Planning Committee meeting on 28 July in Haslemere Hall to enable the public to express their views on this controversial proposal. The Society expressed its views at the meeting and subsequently in a written submission to WBC Planning Dept. We pointed out that the application appeared not to have demonstrated the exceptional circumstances required to develop a highly protected Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) nor did it adequately deal with affordability, protection of potable water extraction and drainage on the site, impact on schools and medical facilities and congestion, all of which it was felt needed to be addressed at the outline planning approval stage. At the time of writing this Report this planning application had not been determined.

WBC are developing the new Local Borough Plan for approval in about a year's time which has to provide for the building of many thousands of new homes as dictated by the Government. The quantity of house building allocated to Haslemere, yet to be confirmed, will probably necessitate the development of some AONB land. The Society considers that this degree of population increase in Haslemere should also include comprehensive infrastructure improvement plans. Whether WBC will permit the development of the Dunsfold Airport site to meet the major Borough house building target has yet to be determined. This could influence Haslemere's target and The Society considers that this should be determined together with the approval of the new Waverley Local Plan and a Haslemere infrastructure improvement plan before any Sturt Road AONB development is approved. At the time of writing this Report this planning application has not been determined.

Haslemere Vision (HV) constituted under the Localism Act is charged with extensive consultation with the public to determine how locals wish their town to develop (your chance to have your say as opposed to everything being dictated by WBC). HV has a big consultation task followed by the development of a Neighbourhood Plan embodying the results of the consultations. Everyone is strongly urged to take an interest in the Neighbourhood Plan when it is published next year and continue to seriously participate in responding to questionnaires and exhibitions etc. The Society supports the objectives of HV.

The redundant Haslemere Police Station has been sold by the Surrey Police Authority. The Society has been keen to ensure the retention of the attractive 1922 façade of this building and it is understood that this will be achieved by the new owners who are planning to refurbish the property and convert the ground floor to commercial space and the first floor to residential use. A planning application, for public comment, will be required preceding this conversion work.

***John Greer***

## **EMAIL ADDRESSES**

We do not give our members' email addresses (or any other details) to ANYONE ELSE. They are used to communicate urgent messages, reminders about Haslemere Society events and specifically relevant items of local interest and/or importance.

Some of you will find a note in with your annual report about email addresses, as we have about 100 households with whom we have no email communication. 10 of these are emails returned as undeliverable, but we have never had emails for the other 90 or so. Some of these households will be email-free, and that is fine, but if you have email and would like to be in email contact with the Haslemere Society, please send an email, with your name on it somewhere, to [RGandDC@haslemere.com](mailto:RGandDC@haslemere.com) so that we can include you in our emailings.

***Diana Serman***

## **THE SUMMER PARTY**

Members of the the Haslemere Society were privileged to be entertained by two very fine musicians at their annual summer party, held recently in the beautiful grounds of Haslemere Museum.

The chairman of the society, Jane Stopford Russell, welcomed nearly 100 guests, who enjoyed wine provided by Haslemere Cellar, food from Gilly's and beautiful weather laid on, as Melanie Odell happily noted, by the Haslemere Museum, which hosted the evening.

Mrs Odell, as museum chairman, thanked guests for coming and told them that the museum is now over half way to achieving the £1.5million it hopes to raise for planned project work.

After refreshments, members were invited indoors to hear a recital by talented local musicians, pianist, Philippa Topham and flautist, Benjamin Copeman. Philippa already has an international career, has played for ruling families in England and Dubai and is a distinguished soloist, accompanist and teacher. Benjamin Copeman, still early in his career, clearly has an equally stellar career before him and delighted the audience with a solo performance of the captivating 'Syrinx', by Debussy. The duo also performed an enchanting programme of works by Debussy, Saint-Saens and Poulenc. The music, all by French composers, somehow made for a most serene English summer's event on an evening of perfect English weather and members expressed their delight at being present.

The next two major events for the Haslemere Society are the visit to Bedales School and to the Edward Barnsley Workshop on 3 September and the society's AGM on 14 November. The latter will have as guest speaker Professor Joe Cartwright, a noted geologist from Oxford University. He is an expert on the subject of fracking and its implications and it is expected that his visit will be timely and very popular.

Details of all society events may be found on the society's website. If any one has any interesting or unusual ideas for our annual outing please let us know.

***Joe Macdonald***

## **TREASURER'S REPORT**

The accounts show a significant loss of £877 for the year due to a variety of disparate factors .

Subscription income is well down on last year, partly because our membership is somewhat reduced, but also because the previous year benefitted from a generous 3rd party donation as well as some additional life members. This subscription shortfall was offset by a very good attendance at the dinner to celebrate the life of Robert Hunter in November and also at our summer party in June. Both these events yielded a valuable surplus.

Expenditure is much higher than in 2013. This is largely due to a significant investment in upgrading The Society's website and also because the increase in subscriptions which came into force on 1st July necessitated a reprint of our application forms and information leaflets (which will last for some years ahead) .

Our cash position remains healthy and our contingency fund of £10,000 is available on short term deposit. Finally, members are reminded that, if they have not already done so, standing order instructions should be amended to reflect the new subscriptions for the current year.

The accounts are set out below. A signed copy, audited by our Honorary Auditor Mrs Clare David will be available to members attending the AGM.

***Brian Deller***

The accounts are set out below. A signed copy, audited by our Honorary Auditor, Mrs Clare David, will be available to members attending the AGM.

**The Haslemere Society**

**Annual Accounts  
for the year ended 30th. June 2014**

| <u>2013</u> |   | <u>2014</u> |
|-------------|---|-------------|
| £           | <u>INCOME</u>                             | £           |
| 3632        | Subscriptions & donations (incl.gift aid) | 3094        |
| 37          | Bank interest                             | 36          |
| 171         | Members activities & events - surplus     | 668         |
| -           | Other                                     | 49          |
| 3840        | <b>Total Income</b>                       | 3847        |
|             | <u>EXPENDITURE</u>                        |             |
| 245         | Insurance                                 | 245         |
| 250         | WBC Design awards                         | -           |
| 907         | Printing & stationery                     | 1410        |
| 50          | Postage & telephone                       | 100         |
| 654         | Amenities societies                       | 609         |
| 1340        | Meeting expenses - members & committee    | 1171        |
| 308         | Advertising Charter fair & Marketing      | 865         |
| 91          | Miscellaneous                             | 324         |
| 3845        | <b>Total expenditure</b>                  | 4724        |
| -5          | <b>Net loss for the year</b>              | -877        |
|             | <u>BALANCE SHEET</u>                      |             |
| 12217       | Opening Balance                           | 12212       |
| -5          | Net loss for the year                     | -877        |
| 12212       | <b>Total funds</b>                        | 11335       |
|             | <b>Represented by:</b>                    |             |
| 10000       | Bank deposit bonds                        | 10000       |
| 2512        | Bank current account                      | 1573        |
| -1026       | Sundry creditors                          | -815        |
| 726         | Sundry debtors                            | 577         |
| 12212       |   | 11335       |

Signed by : Brian Deller Hon. Treasurer

I certify that the statement set out above corresponds with the books and vouchers presented to me and fairly represents the financial position of the society.

Signed by Clare David MA, FCA (Hon. Auditor)