



December 2013

The Citizen

Newsletter of the Berkhamsted Citizens Association

Working for the social and civic life of our community

www.berkhamstedcitizens.org.uk

Chairman's Column

Katy Brookes-Duncan

Over the last couple of weeks each time I have gone along the High Street more shops have been putting in their Christmas Windows. I don't feel particularly festive yet but this has definitely helped me along! There are some gorgeous windows this year but the winner was...



It is a privilege to live in such a thriving Town with a strong sense of Community. In the run up to Christmas please continue to shop locally to support the shops and markets.

2014

90 Years of Protecting and Improving Berkhamsted

Next year the Citizens Associations will be celebrating its 90th year. We will be undertaking a recruitment drive for new members to maintain the strength of our voice with the Town, Borough and County Council and developers. We are thinking about holding a celebratory event, probably in the summer when the weather might be better! What sort of event would you like?

Subscriptions

Continuing a practice of many years, we are enclosing with the Winter newsletter a renewal slip to our 174 members who are due to pay for £5 for 2014. If you were to consider paying a three year subscription (£15), it would make our life (and yours!) all that much easier this time next year.



Town Amenities Sub-Committee

Paul Crosland, Chairman

BCA Environment Award

As the nights draw in, the leaves fall, and many people's thoughts turn to Christmas, the members of the BCA's Town Amenities Sub-Committee (TASC) start to review what has changed in the townscape of Berkhamsted and Northchurch in the past twelve months. 2013 has seen the canal towpath upgraded between Castle Street and Canal Fields, and several of the town's children's play areas improved with the addition of new equipment.

A new pre-school nursery called Toadhall has occupied an extension to the former Elderly Persons Day Centre at Gossoms Ryde by Lagley Meadow. Berkhamsted School has built a Fives Court and added new off-street car parking in Doctors Commons Road.

We have a new restaurant boasting locally-sourced food and staff, that's Here – where? At 28 – 30 Lower Kings Road, that's where! There's LoveLo Cycle Works and the Hairdressing School tucked away off the High Street, and the usual crop of residential new builds, extensions, conversions and refurbishments.

There's always something happening in our town, and we will be reviewing the changes that have happened during the past year during our Environment Award presentation as part of the BCA's AGM in March.

What's your view? What's good, what's not so good, what's downright awful?! Your committee wants to know your views, so please contact Paul Crosland, the Chairman of TASC, via peejaycee@yahoo.com. Is any new addition worthy of an Environment Award plaque? We haven't awarded one since 2009!

Retaining Wall at Lincoln Court , Charles St

Some stabilisation work was carried out during late summer on the retaining wall along the Charles Street frontage to Lincoln Court, near to Kings Road – mainly soil removal at the back of the wall, some brick courses removed and a new coping put in place. The adjacent footway has been re-opened. We gather that the work that has been done is a temporary fix and a phased replacement of the retaining wall will take place over the next five years or so.

Core Strategy

I reported in the September edition of *The Citizen* that the Inspector appointed by the Department for Communities and Local Government had approved

the Dacorum Borough Council Core Strategy for the period 2006 to 2031. The Core Strategy was adopted by the Council on 25th September 2013, and now forms part of the Development Plan for the Borough.

I understand from the Berkhamsted Residents Action Group (BRAG) that the developers of the South Berkhamsted Concept – proposing 800 homes on land between Swing Gate Lane and the A41 – have made a legal challenge to the validity of the Core Strategy. Further details of this can be found on the BRAG website: (www.nosouthberkhamstedconcept.com/gui-make-legal-challenge)

Berkhamsted Door to Store Community Transport Service

Community Action Dacorum (CAD) has recently contacted me so that they can let the BCA know about a new community transport service, Door to Store, which they are implementing in the rural areas of Dacorum including Berkhamsted, Northchurch and Tring.

CAD is a local charity providing a circle of support to individuals and organisations across Dacorum. They are developing a Community Transport service to include Door to Store. As a result CAD will be rebranding the current Berkhamsted Shopping trip and looking at how it can be improved. The service will use an accessible minibus and take individuals from their home to the local supermarket. The idea is for the trip to provide a social outing as well as an opportunity to purchase groceries. CAD also provides information and support on healthy eating and cooking for one.

CAD wants to hear from residents to find out whether they would use such a service and what it should look like i.e. day of week, time of day, location of supermarket. If you would benefit from using the Door to Store service or know someone who would, please contact Deborah on deborah@communityactiondacorum.org.uk or 01442 253935 to discuss.

Sparrows Herne Trust Waymark Restoration

The BCA has been successful in securing grants worth a total of £650 from Berkhamsted Town Council and the Berkhamsted Community Partnership towards the cost of restoring the Sparrow's Herne Trust Waymark. The waymark is located under the window of National Tyres on Berkhamsted High Street at the junction with Park Street. It dates from when the High Street was part of the Sparrows Herne Turnpike, a toll road linking Bushey with Aylesbury. It is one of only two such waymarks

surviving. Adjacent to the waymark is a stone marking the old boundary between the parishes of Berkhamsted and Northchurch. A more extensive article will be included in *The Citizen* after the restoration work has been done.

Libraries Consultation

A reminder that Hertfordshire Library Service is holding a public consultation, which runs through to 31st December. Further details available at the library or on the website: www.hertsdirect.org, following the links to 'Library Service Consultation'.

Appeal for Help with our Website

We would like to be able to include, on our website, our archive of newsletters dating back to the 1960s as well as the Minutes of Meetings held by your committee, and Minutes of the AGM.

The structure for doing this is already on the website (www.berkhamstedcitizens.org.uk/newsletter-back-copies), but we need the help of someone who has the time to upload the documents. If you have experience of the workings of web-sites, particularly WordPress, or you know someone who has - possibly a son, daughter or grand-child (!) - and who might be able to help us, please contact the website administrator, Paul Crosland, (email above). Thank you in advance.

BCA Activities

Susan Johnson

The Sessions Hall was filled to capacity on Thursday 10th October for the opening of the 2013-14 season of talks, on the WW1 Trench Mapping Project on Berkhamsted Common. Members and non-members alike gathered to see and hear about the Project which had been undertaken over the summer months to record the position and shape of the practice trenches dug during WW1 by the Inns of Court Regiment, known as "The Devil's Own" - a name given them by George III. The dig had been organised by the Chilterns Conservation Board in co-operation with the Golf Club, on whose land the trenches stand, and the Berkhamsted Local History and Archaeological Societies.

The talk was particularly interesting in recalling the camp set up on what became known as Kitchener's Field (for obvious reasons), and the choice of Berkhamsted because of its proximity to the City of London (where the Regiment still has its HQ) and the good rail links to the centre of the town and countryside.

This project is part of the WW1 commemoration and is being undertaken in many parts of country, although the Berkhamsted trenches are the most

extensive and complete to survive. Not only did the Regiment practise trench warfare but also many battle procedures such as night manoeuvres, artillery firing and the use of horses for transport of weapons in the surrounding countryside. The illustrations included pictures of the Devil's Own as they conducted the works, and also a film montage of the modern Mapping Project.

The BCA was appreciative of the speakers, Norman Groves and Brian Shepherd, and was sure that the talk would be heard widely over coming months as invitations to speak had been coming in from many local organisations.

The second talk, on Thursday 7th November, was by Sgt James Bartlett of the Herts Constabulary and covered the varied duties which fall to the Rural Policing Team. It was truly amazing what the four officers who make up the squad have to cope with: errant dogs, hare coursing, crocodiles, theft of birds' eggs, tractor stealing. Much of their work is done in association with other agencies like the RSPB, RSPCA and National Trust; a real partnership operation.

Our next contribution to the town will be running and judging the **Best Christmas Shop Window Competition** for the Festival of Light on 24th November. I hope you enjoyed it and agreed with our judgement. This year, in a bid to support the retail community through the Chamber of Commerce, the BCA has upgraded its profile in the publicity and contributed to the costs of the promotional flyers. You will see them about town and on our website: www.berkhamstedcitizens.org

Our next event is the **New Year's Day Ramble**, led by Paul Crosland. Meet at the station at 10.30 am and remember your sensible clothes and shoes. Dogs optional.

Our next talk is on **Thursday 6th February 2014** and is to be given by the Head of Ashlyns School to tell us how the reorganisation of education in Berkhamsted, from three to two-tier, is going. Half way through the procedure should be a good time to take stock; and I am sure many parents and grandparents will be keen to join us that evening.

Finally I am pleased to be able to report that a member has joined our informal Activities group. A warm welcome to Jackie Hicks from Northchurch, whose help and ideas will be much appreciated. But we welcome more members. Please, get in touch with me or the Chairman if you are interested in joining us, or other activities undertaken by the BCA.

Your Association needs you!

Membership Counts

Christopher Talbot-Ponsonby
christopher@talbot-ponsonby.org

According to our records, there are still 11 yet to pay their subscription for 2013. We regret that we have to enclose a **final** reminder, inviting them to pay for 2014 as well. As we do not want to lose members, please may I have your subscription? If you have paid, and have been sent this reminder, would you please contact me as a matter of urgency? If you do not intend to renew it would be good to hear from you giving your reason.

Membership currently stands at 362 households, Again another warm welcome to our eight members who have joined since the last newsletter joining the 13 who have joined over the course of the year. This makes an encouraging 21 for the year. This will for the first time in many years exceed the number we may lose but it is 36 down on this time last year. You know what the Association does. We have tried in the past newsletters to encourage you to recruit a new member. Please could persuade a friend or neighbour to send me £5 together with their name and address? It could be considered as giving the same Christmas present to two people: your friend and us!

On behalf of the Committee, I would like to say a very big thank you to the 60 deliverers, which we are apt to take for granted for both delivering, and on many occasions, collecting subscriptions. It makes my life all that more easy. Several have certainly been doing it for 30 years, when my mother was Membership Secretary.

Electronic Newsletter

Would you like to be among the 11% of members who will receive this Newsletter electronically (pdf)? By getting it this way, members receive it in advance of hand delivered copies and possibly in colour!

If interested please let me know. E-mail addresses will be maintained confidentially by the BCA. They will not be disclosed to other members nor made available to third parties under any circumstances. The newsletters are of course sent out as blind copies.

In addition we maintain a list of those that have asked to receive a reminder in advance of our meetings (or other important announcements). If you would like to be included in this register, please let me know. Nearly a quarter of you have signed up to this service.

Views expressed are not necessarily those of the Association.

Contributions and comments to: Katy Brookes-Duncan
58 Woodlands Avenue HP4 2JQ or k.bd@me.com

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The Best Christmas Window Display Highly Commended shops were (L to R):

Air & Graces

Boltons

Peter John

British Red Cross