



February 2014

The Citizen

Newsletter of the Berkhamsted Citizens Association

Working for the social and civic life of our community

www.berkhamstedcitizens.org.uk

Annual General Meeting

NOTICE is hereby given that the 89th Annual General Meeting of the Berkhamsted Citizens Association will be held in the Great Hall of the Town Hall, Berkhamsted on

**Thursday 20th March 2014
at 8 p.m.**

Nominations for the posts of:

- Chairman
- Vice-Chairman
- Hon. Treasurer
- Hon. Secretary
- Hon. Membership Secretary and
- Committee Members

should be submitted to the Hon. Secretary (Miranda Cummins, 27 North Road, Berkhamsted HP4 3DU) in writing not later than 24 hours before the AGM. Consent of the person nominated must be obtained previously.

Agenda

- 1 Apologies for absence
- 2 Minutes of the AGM held on 14th March 2013
- 3 Chairman's Report
- 4 Hon Treasurer's Report
- 5 Election of Officers
- 6 Election of Committee Members
- 7 Appointment of Independent Examiners of Accounts

The present Committee would warmly welcome other members to join them, and look forward to additional nominations for committee members. The six-weekly Committee meetings last for around two hours, and we have in addition two regular sub-committees. The Town Amenities Sub-Committee (TASC) works hard to try to ensure that changes made to the built and general environment, both in Berkhamsted and Northchurch, are for the better. It meets monthly. The Activities & Publicity Sub-Committee, which meets as and when required, plans and organises a programme of talks, walks and other events. It often does most of its business on email or phone. There are members who serve on the sub-committees who are not on the main Committee. This arrangement suits those who have a particular interest. All meetings are held in committee members' homes. In addition the BCA is represented on a number of local bodies such as the Berkhamsted Arts Trust, Town Hall Trust, Chiltern Society and the Friends of St Peter's. There is something for everybody's interests when you join the BCA Committee; and a way to involve yourself in public life.

Following the formal business of the night there will be a short break to include wine or soft drinks and nibbles, courtesy of the Association. Then the following:

Environment Awards for 2013

There were a number of contenders for the Environment Award, covering a wide variety of development and all completed by the end of 2013. The selected sites to be illustrated are listed in the pages of this newsletter.

Guest Speaker

Peter Williamson, Chairman of the Friends of St Peter's, will be talking about the new organisation and its plans for the future.

Open Forum

This will finish proceedings, we hope in a lively fashion.

Views expressed are not necessarily those of the Association

Contributions and comments to: Katy Brookes-Duncan
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Published by the
Berkhamsted Citizens Association ©
Printed by Strongs Printing Services tel: 878592

Environment Awards

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There have been a wide variety of changes to our townscape over the past twelve months, with many more still to come in the shape of developments which are currently in progress or nearing completion. We haven't forgotten that the replacement for Birchnell's shop on the corner of Elm Grove and the High Street is now practically complete, to use the layman's version of this contractual term in the construction industry. However, we took the view that the building hadn't properly taken its place in the streetscape until its hoarding had been removed and the shopfront revealed.... and this hadn't taken place by the end of 2013. We'll hold this impressive new building over for consideration at the time of next year's award.

The contenders for the Environment Award this year span (quite literally) a new bridge, the towpath upgrade, new houses, some in the extensive grounds of old residences – reflecting our changing living styles, extensions to existing properties, a new café on the block, new frontages to the High Street, and extensions to existing children's play areas.

The full list that the Town Amenities Sub-Committee (TASC) considered is as follows, with a brief description of each.



- Footbridge across the River Bulbourne, Brakynbery/ Kite Field, Northchurch
New timber bridge
- 17a/ 17b Chiltern Close
Two new houses in the garden of an existing house
- 21 West Road
Replacement of existing house with two new houses
- 55 Gossoms End (at rear, in Eddy Street)
Extension to existing house and provision of living space above garage
- 15 Kitsbury Road
Alterations to front and side elevations
- 'The Grey House', Kitsbury Road
Refurbishment and extension to existing large house

- 39 Kitsbury Road
New front wall, pathway and upgraded driveway
- 'Mariners', Cross Oak Road
Demolition of existing house and construction of 'landmark' new dwelling
- 'Ballinger', Graemesdyke Road
Construction of new house within the grounds of an existing residence
- Fives Court and new parking area at Berkhamsted School, Doctor's Commons Road
Construction of sporting facility and provision of additional car parking space
- 'Hillcote', Doctor's Commons Road
Side extension and replacement garage
- Play area at Butts Meadow, Kings Road
Extension and rejuvenation of existing play area
- 'Ask Italian' restaurant, 247 High Street
Remodelling of existing restaurant façade and boundary walls
- 'Here', 30 Lower Kings Road
New independent café proclaiming the use of locally-sourced food, drinks and staff



- Canal Towpath upgrade, Castle Street to Canal Fields
A half-kilometre of towpath improvement works
- 38 Bridgewater Road
Two storey extension to existing house
- 'Drumnessie', Ivy House Lane
Side and front extensions to existing property
- 'Pedlar's Oak', Ivy House Lane
Demolition of existing house and construction of new house and garage
- 'Bulbourne', Bank Mill Lane
Construction of new, three bedroomed property adjacent to canal

- 8 Chestnut Drive
Demolition of existing residence and replacement with two new dwellings

The Sub-Committee members independently complete a scoring matrix on the basis of design, compatibility with environment, quality of construction and benefit to the community. After ranking their selections, the number of votes for each development are counted. The winner of the BCA Environment Award, or, if the Sub-Committee feels it appropriate, a Commendation, will be revealed at the BCA Annual General Meeting on 20th March. The Sub-Committee may also decide that no development is worthy of an award or commendation.



Town Amenities Sub-Committee

Paul Crosland, Chairman

Changes to kerbside recycling

Dacorum Borough Council has agreed plans for a new waste and recycling collection scheme starting in November this year, with the aim of making it easier for residents to recycle more at the kerbside.

The new waste collection service, using three wheeled bins and a kitchen caddy, will include:

- A weekly collection of food waste
- A fortnightly collection of mixed dry recycling (to include cans, plastic, paper, card and glass - currently collected in separate boxes, bins and baskets.)
- A fortnightly collection of 'landfill' non-recyclable waste
- A fortnightly collection of garden waste (between February and November only)

More information is available your local councillor, from Dacorum Borough Council or its website.

M&S Simply Food Signs they are a-Changin'!

The arrival of Marks and Spencer Simply Food on Berkhamsted High Street has been long anticipated

by local residents. Delays have beset the project, however, and the 'Spring' opening date looks set to be put back to 'early Summer' (if we have one, that is!). The proposals for signage were submitted last November, but they included – you guessed it – internally illuminated signage on the High Street elevation, which is a 'no-no' in conservation areas. Also proposed was an internally illuminated 'totem' sign in St. John's Well Lane. The BCA objected to both these signs on the principle that this type of sign was particularly inappropriate for the building's setting adjacent to a Grade II listed building (Café Rouge). The BCA also commented on proposals to introduce a large 'trolley' logo onto the trolley store at the rear of the building. We believe that local residents know that a trolley store is for storing shopping trolleys in, and it doesn't need a trolley logo to make that clear. The planning application for the trolley store was re-submitted without the logo on the sides, and permission was subsequently granted. The arguments over the internally illuminated signage continue.

Streetscape Strategy

To bring it into line with many towns and cities across the country, Berkhamsted Town Council has recently proposed that a Streetscape Strategy document be compiled to provide developers and individuals with a guidance framework of what would and would not be acceptable on the streetscape of the High Street and Lower Kings Road in particular. The BCA has expressed its support for the Town Council proposals, which will help to maintain our Conservation Area in its current condition. The aim would not be to make the framework too rigid; seating which is appropriate for the canal towpath may not be right for the High Street, for example. The intention would be for interested parties to be provided with a copy of the Strategy document to guide them, such that when their planning application is submitted, it can be reviewed more expeditiously, provided it is compliant.

New Public Noticeboard

The BCA has approved the expenditure of funds on a new public noticeboard to be located on London Road, close to Swing Gate Infants School. The east end of the town has suffered from the loss of several noticeboards over the years, the most recent being that at the junction of Hilltop Road and Beech Drive, which was demolished by a vehicle during last winter's icy weather. Dacorum BC claims that no budget is available for public noticeboards and the BCA has therefore decided to 'fill the gap' and provide a public noticeboard with a suitable design to commemorate its ninetieth anniversary.

Assets of Community Value – it's catching!

Hot on the heels of Gable Hall being registered as an 'Asset of Community Value' under the auspices of the Localism Act 2011 (see *The Citizen*, September 2013 edition), the Berkhamsted Civic Centre and associated lands have recently been similarly registered.

Multi-Storey Car Park, Lower Kings Road

Proposals for a multi-storey car park off Lower Kings Road and adjacent to Waitrose were approved for further development at a DBC Cabinet meeting on 11 February. The car park, providing between 325 and 375 spaces, now goes for further design development before "extensive" public consultation. This is not a 'green light' to proceed with the development. Air quality monitoring has been undertaken in Lower Kings Road and even in current conditions, the content of nitrogen dioxide in the air is only marginally below acceptable limits – limits which are set in Dacorum's own approved Core Strategy document. The additional traffic that a multi-storey car park would inevitably generate is likely to push pollution levels above acceptable limits, requiring an Air Quality Action Plan to be implemented.

Town News from Other Bodies

The B-Hive is holding a Community Meeting on 12 March from 7 to 9 p.m. at Berkhamsted Civic Centre to discuss "Plans to Develop the Town Centre". More information at www.bhiveberko.org.uk.

Save Your Berkhamsted Residents Association advises that a planning application for the first phase of the residential development on the Egerton Rothesay site has been submitted. Plans can be viewed via the DBC website; the application number is 4/00262/14/MFA.

Berkhamsted Residents Action Group has flagged up that a consultant's report on the first stage of the partial review of the Core Strategy for the role and function of the Green Belt is available on the Dacorum website. The first stage report is a desk-top review of parcels of land within the Green Belt in Dacorum, St. Albans and Welwyn Hatfield council areas, judged against the criteria for designating land as 'Green Belt'. Of particular concern is the designation of the parcel of land south east of Berkhamsted, and bounded by the A41 (part of which land was the subject of the 'South Berkhamsted Concept' proposals in 2011) as being "land contributing least to Green Belt purposes".

Activities

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The Traditional Ramble on New Year's Day to Aldbury was the wettest on record. Nine hardy souls started out under the leadership of Paul Crosland, but only two came back. Paul assures us they were given a lift back, and not drowned!

The Sessions Hall was filled on Thursday 6th February for the opening talk of 2014 by James Shapland, Head of Ashlyns School, on moving from three to two-tier education in Berkhamsted. Half way through the 2-year procedure was a good time to take stock; and the assessment was reassuringly positive. He gave an overview of how his school had prepared and implemented receiving 450 pupils in one, huge 3-year intake; and how the former middle schools had coped with becoming junior and primary schools respectively. The message was that the transition had been almost totally successful; and no pupil had been left with a feeling of being a guinea pig in an educational experiment. The Association and its guests were pleased to hear the upbeat message; and wished the School well in its future plans. However that does not stop us urging the School to develop more suitable plans for its new Sports Hall, to fit in with the setting of a Grade II listed building.

Now we were wondering if you would like a celebration of this Association's 90th anniversary. The official inauguration of the BCA was on 6th July 1924. We are marking the year with a new town notice board, a reprint of the Footpath Map, the restoration of the Sparrows Herne waymark, and a Feature (we hope) in the Gazette. But there's nothing like a good do. Any ideas?

The final talk of the season is on Thursday 10th April by James Hannaway, CEO of The Rex, on how he has fared developing his new cinema called The Odyssey, in St. Albans. By April The Odyssey should be near to opening, so the message should be upbeat. James is always amusing and provocative, so we look forward to an entertaining evening – and we hope better weather on a lovely spring evening.

Membership Counts

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What a marvellous start to our new season! 15 members have joined since the programme started in October of which 10 joined at one of our three meetings. A very warm welcome to you all. This means our household membership is now 354; an increase of two from our last newsletter. It would have been higher but we sadly removed 11 members from whom we had not heard over the last year. It has also been an excellent start to the year with your prompt renewal in paying your subscription. 69% have already paid leaving only 44 outstanding. A renewal slip will be enclosed if you are one of those still to renew for this year.

Please ask a friend and/or a neighbour if they are members. If not, encourage them to join by sending me £5 along with their name and address.