



BERKHAMSTED CITIZENS

*The heart of
Berkhamsted*

www.berkhamstedcitizens.org.uk/

February 2020 Newsletter of the Berkhamsted Citizens Association

Annual General Meeting & Environment Award

NOTICE is hereby given that the 95th Annual General Meeting of the Berkhamsted Citizens Association will be held in the Great Hall of the Town Hall, Berkhamsted on

Wednesday 11th March 2020 at 8 p.m.

Nominations for the posts of:

- Chairman
- Vice-Chairman
- Hon. Treasurer
- Hon. Secretary
- Hon. Membership Secretary
- 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 27th March 2019
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

Reminder: only paid up members present at the AGM are allowed to vote

Following the formal business of the night there will be a short break for a visit to the bar. This will be followed by:

Environment Awards for 2020

There are 11 contenders for the Environment Award, all completed by the end of 2019.

Thank you to Paul Crosland who arranged his usual New Year's Day walk!

We have a lot of work to do in the coming year with a new MP who is a stranger to our town, so we need to make sure we introduce him to the concerns of our community and our love of Berkhamsted.

We have a big and exciting joint venture starting at the beginning of February. The Ravens Lane bridge over the Grand Union Canal is being completely refurbished. We, Berkhamsted Citizens, have partnered with the County Council and Osborne (the contractors) in the design of the decoration of the bridge. As you know the Port of Berkhamsted signs were removed for repair and these are being re-installed, which is great. Many of you have been asking about them. Hand painted canal art plaques are being painted by the doyenne of canal art, Phil Speight, and the bridge will look spectacular. Some of you will sadly be disadvantaged by the closure of the bridge for six weeks; however, this is short term pain for LONG TERM GAIN.



Working with Jon Miller of Osborne just shows us how great it is to work with contractors who understand and love the heritage of our town. We are so grateful for this very positive partnership to enhance our town and know both you and visitors will all derive a great deal of pleasure from the enhanced bridge. We have some other exciting plans in the pipeline so do watch this space!

Some of you have been asking me where we are on the Local Plan.

A very Happy New Year to you all.

It has been a really busy time since our last Newsletter. Many thanks to all our members for the excellent questions you sent in for the Hustings we organised. It was extremely well attended with lots of interesting and searching questions.

The Borough will report on the Strategic Options during April. The Strategic Sites Design Guide will be made public by the end of May. The Borough meeting to discuss the plan is scheduled for 17th June, so the report should be in the public domain for consultation during the third week in June, all being well. We will be representing you on the Town Council working party on the Local Plan, as we did before. You may remember we arranged a public meeting to discuss the issues and options – here is a link to our findings and the papers and films we presented on your behalf to Borough last time.

<http://www.berkhamstedcitizens.org.uk/2017/11/21/citizens-visioning-2017/> We intend to follow a similar format when we have all the facts before us and will of course welcome your ideas and comments.

Meanwhile, we look forward to seeing you all at our Environment Awards and AGM.



Chairman, Berkhamsted Citizens

Membership Counts

Christopher Talbot-Ponsonby

membership@berkhamstedcitizens.org.uk

Our membership currently stands at 310 households; the same as last year. We have sadly had to say goodbye to 15 members who did not renew their subscription for 2019. Thank you to those who have renewed promptly. A renewal slip will be enclosed for the 56 yet to renew.

Over 85% of our members now choose to receive **electronic notification** of things that affect our town and giving notice of our meetings. Nearly a third of our members also choose to receive our newsletter electronically. If you would like to be added (or removed) to either of these lists, please let me know.

Anne Foster writes

Berkhamsted Sports Centre

DBC is proposing to replace the existing Sports Centre on Lagley Meadow with a new centre on the same site with a new footprint. Planning is at an early stage and full consultation with interested groups and individuals is planned before final proposals are put together. Two controversial suggestions cause some concern: the possible re-siting of the entrance onto the High Street at Gossoms End, and possible traffic issues with the entrance to Lidl (if it ever opens) on the same stretch of road; and particularly the suggestion that 3G artificial pitches might be sited on one of Berkhamsted's few open spaces, East Meadow, the field next to the sports centre.

The current timetable expects construction of the new centre to commence October 2021 with completion July 2023. The existing leisure centre will remain open during construction. The original report (March 2019) also proposed additional housing on the sports centre site, though that does not appear to be being discussed at the moment. BCA will keep its finger on the pulse and ensure that Berkhamsted's interests are represented.

Ashlyns School Places

Hertfordshire County Council is currently predicting a large shortfall in places at Ashlyns school viz: 20/21 – 54, 21/22 – 62, 22/23 – 57, even before any increase in pupil numbers as a result of additional development to be proposed in the new Local Plan has been considered.

BCA is sufficiently concerned to have raised the issue with Children's Services at Herts County Council. We are told that a feasibility study into expanding Ashlyns is underway as part of a review of Secondary School expansion in Herts, and that they are monitoring the situation. (As will we!) Berkhamsted currently has approximately 90 more Year 6 pupils each year than can be accommodated at Ashlyns. Traditionally this shortfall has been accommodated with some parents choosing schools other than Ashlyns - Grammar Schools, Faith Schools, Independent Schools - but as development increases in all areas, school catchment areas are shrinking, and fewer out of area places will be available.

We have to remember that these are only forecast figures; we will have a better idea of how realistic they are when this year's allocation of places is released in March, but we will continue to monitor the situation and to press the case for all children from Berkhamsted and Northchurch to have the opportunity to attend their local secondary school.

Lower Kings Road Multi-Storey Car Park

Love it or hate it, the Multi-Storey Car Park (MSCP), off Lower Kings Road, is due to open shortly. Through our representation on the Town Council Parking Forum, Berkhamsted Citizens has been working hard to try and ensure the new car park meets the town's expectations, and that the requirements of users, the safety of pedestrians and users of disabled parking spaces, and the environment in the surrounding area are all taken account of as far as is possible.

The Car Park provides 298 spaces on eight split levels and 15 disabled spaces external to the main car park structure. The current DBC Management Plan proposes:-

- a) Top 2 floors (levels 6 & 7): 78 bays for local business season ticket holders only on Monday to Friday only (£375 per annum)
- b) Middle Floors (levels 4 & 5): 75 Long Stay (4 hours or more) bays (£4.00 for four hours plus)
- c) Lower floors (levels 0, 1, 2, 3): 145 Short Stay (up to 4 hours) bays, of which 6 are solely for electric charging.

Surprisingly, although the MSCP plan provides for an additional 75 Long Stay places, on weekdays there are only 23 additional Short Stay places - 17 if you exclude the charging bays - over and above the 122 places we had in the original Lower Kings Road car park.

The Citizens are concerned that so few additional Short Stay places for shoppers and visitors will be provided, particularly as an ad hoc survey of the St John's Well Lane car park indicated that this is now predominantly a Long Stay car park. Will current users of St. Johns Well Lane move to the MSCP and free up space for short term parking? We believe this is unlikely. It is, perhaps, more likely that the additional long stay provision will be taken up by commuters transferring their allegiance from the station car park, in view of the price differential. We are therefore pressing DBC hard to amend their plan and make the St. John's Well Lane car park 'Short Stay' only to ensure that businesses, residents, and visitors will all benefit.

After the MSCP opens, it is proposed that the Water Lane car park (behind Tesco) remains as it is at present, i.e. 2 hours maximum stay. DBC tells us that more than 50% of parking in Water Lane is 2 hours or less, but the Citizens believes there would be more flexibility if Water Lane returned to as it was before - up to 4 hours parking allowed.

At the weekend, the top floors in the MSCP, reserved for business users with season tickets on Monday to Friday, are released for general use (4 hours maximum stay), so at least weekend parking should be easier for everyone.

Contrary to rumour, the pricing profile for the MSCP is the same as for other car parks in the Borough. These are, incidentally, all subject to an increase from April 2020.

We are assured that works will begin to remove the temporary car park from The Moor as soon as the new Multi-Storey Car Park is open.

Read in Peace: Rectory Lane

Paul Crosland

On behalf of the Friends of St. Peter's Great Berkhamsted and the Rectory Lane Cemetery Project, a very big 'thank you' to all who contributed to the 'Read in Peace' Seat Appeal before Christmas (see November 2019 newsletter). The target of £11,800 - including match-funding from the Appeal's sponsor, the National Lottery Heritage Fund - was successfully achieved. The Lottery has now provided just over £1 million towards the cost of the project to restore the cemetery.

Preparatory work to install the seat and the tree are now in progress as part of the landscaping works for the project. For further details, please contact Kate Campbell. campbellkate01@gmail.com

Townscape Group

Susan Johnson, Chairman

We have been monitoring developments in Berkhamsted over the last 3 months and there are ups and downs. Disappointingly, the list of enforcement cases grows, and few are resolved; and the Vet's site developer won his Appeal. But we seem to have achieved a change of heart from Berkhamsted School, as it is currently consulting the town about the proposed new 6th Form Centre on its Castle Street site *before* submitting a formal planning application. One notable success was the refusal at Development Management Committee of the overdevelopment of 13 Shrublands Road, through the sheer determination of the neighbours in the Road and the Avenue, and the help of local councillors. Other successes were the refusal of the additional house at 36 Kitsbury Road; the refusal of the 26 Station Road site development; and the refusal of the loft extension at 31 Bridge Street. I know it sounds all very negative, but we exist to try to stop inappropriate development in the Conservation Area, in co-operation with neighbours who share our concerns. Sometimes we have a 'positive' success, as with the refurbishment of *The Lamb* PH – even down to the retention and repainting of the Boxwell Road nameplate! We have also been inputting to the MSCP debate; and continue to monitor the

new traffic arrangements associated with it. As you can see in these pages, the **Environment Award** is upon us.

Townscape has a dual role at this time of year. We go on reporting and commenting on planning applications, the state of the historic built environment and things changing in the infrastructure of Berkhamsted; but we spend quite some time – out in all weathers – judging the worthiness of new developments completed by 31 December 2019 for the **Environment Award 2020**. The most significant, the so-called ‘shortlist’, appear below:

Gutteridge Farm, Ivy House Lane
Conv of extg bldgs to 3 residential units



2 Shrublands Road
Single & two storey extns, loft conv



25 Hall Park (adj)
Dem of garage & construct 4-bed dwlg



Mulberry House, Shootersway Lane
Two storey front extn etc
(major rebuild)



23 Gilbert Way
Demolition of extg dwelling
and construct new



123 George Street
Alts to and raising height of
extg outbuilding



12 Shrublands Road
Garage conversion; side extns &
amended loft conversion



The Lamb, 277 High Street
Refurbishment
& works to rear yard etc



35 Shrublands Road
Two storey side extn, loft conversion
and alts to roof



Colwyn, 1Greenway
Dem of extg garage & replace with
a 2.4m high front garden wall etc



Corn Mill Ct, 9-13 High St & Swing Gate La
Demolition etc for 11 new dwellings#
through conversion and new build



The recipients of any Awards given will be invited to the AGM on Wednesday 11th March to be publicly congratulated. But the review that night of all the contenders is what really entertains! Please be aware that a lot of work goes into that presentation, and not just for that evening. Please come along to hear the results!

Views expressed are not necessarily those of the Association
Contributions to the Editor: Christopher Talbot-Ponsonby, 15 Shrublands Avenue, HP4 3JH
or via email to: membership@berkhamstedcitizens.org.uk
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