



# BERKHAMSTED CITIZENS

*The heart of  
Berkhamsted*

[www.berkhamstedcitizens.org.uk/](http://www.berkhamstedcitizens.org.uk/)

**March 2021 Newsletter of the Berkhamsted Citizens Association**

## Annual General Meeting & Environment Award

Lindy Weinreb / Berkhamsted Citizens Association's Zoom Meeting Wednesday, March 31·8:00 – 10:00pm

Location: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81608747891?pwd=KONJVTNyM1puNkFOWlh3Y2NZYzYvZz09>

Description: Lindy Weinreb / Berkhamsted Citizens Association is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Join Zoom Meeting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81608747891?pwd=KONJVTNyM1puNkFOWlh3Y2NZYzYvZz09>

Meeting ID: 816 0874 7891 Passcode: 192389

NOTICE is hereby given that the 96<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Berkhamsted Citizens Association will be held via Zoom

**Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 at 8 p.m.**

**Join the link above**

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 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020
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

### **Environment Awards for 2021**

There are 5 contenders for the Environment Award, all completed by the end of 2020.

### **Census Day is fast approaching: Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2021**

A letter will be **sent** to your address in March with a unique online access code to enable you to fill it in on line according to who lives there on 21 March 2021. Census 2021 is a digital-first census, which means that you will be encouraged to respond on line if you can. You will be able to complete the census using any device, including your mobile phone or tablet. If you prefer, you **can** still return a downloadable paper form by post.

Taking part in the census is your chance to help make sure you and our community get the services we need for the next 10 years and beyond.

Census 2021 will also give fresh information to improve understanding of the pandemic. It will also help to make sure that the services you use meet the needs of our changing society. This could include hospitals, schools, universities and job centres. Organisations such as local authorities and charities use this picture to plan and fund the services we all need, including transport, education and healthcare. Without the census, it would be much more difficult to do this.

**You must complete the census by law:** It is an offence to supply false information or not to complete the census; and you could be fined up to £1,000. Some questions are clearly labelled as voluntary. It is not an offence if you do not answer these.

Dear Members,

I am using this Newsletter to give you my Chairman's Annual Report. What a difficult year it has been for us all! I hope you have all coped, and that it has not been too stressful.

It was so good to see so many of you at our Zoom meeting on the draft Local Plan on 22<sup>nd</sup> February. It seems such a long time since we were all together in one room, even if it was only virtual. I have to thank Barbara and Mischke for their sterling help with our first Zoom using our new equipment. Now we have the hang of it, it will go like clockwork next time! It was great having the opportunity to film it. As the whole film was far too long to share, we just chose the key points which you can see on the web site.

Obviously huge energies have gone into dealing with the Local Plan, as you will know from our Zoom meeting. Do look at the web site: [www.berkhamstedcitizens.org.uk](http://www.berkhamstedcitizens.org.uk) We should praise the local councillors for their diligence in working cooperatively with interested local groups on the Local Plan; and our Mayor, Garrick Stevens, for his easily understandable film, which is on our website. A big thank you to all our members who responded individually! As you will have seen from our correspondence, and on the website, we cooperated with other groups in our region to send a ONE VOICE ALLIANCE statement to Dacorum Borough Council as well as our own response.

As you will all remember we started 2020 with the opening of the Ravens Lane Bridge refurbishment. It has given a great deal of pleasure over the lockdown period. I have recently been working hard on a similar renovation of the Lower Kings Road Bridge as a joint venture between Hertfordshire County Council, Osborne the contractors, and us, Berkhamsted Citizens Association. The art work is stunning. As I am sure you all know castles are traditional to canal art, so for this bridge we have used Berkhamsted Castle from three different views, to promote the excellent work of the Berkhamsted Castle Trust on which we are represented. The Bridge will open at 4pm on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> March. Sadly we will still be ruled by Covid 19 restrictions, so our celebrations will be on Zoom and physically at a later date; watch this space!

Paul and I have been working to find an acceptable way of achieving the refurbishment of the railings opposite the station. Not an easy task during lockdown, but we will achieve it as Berkhamsted Town Council seems to be with us on this, but it may take a little longer than we had hoped. Sincere thanks go to Tony, our Town Clerk, for all his help and commitment.

Susan and the Townscape team have been working really hard, but I won't steal her thunder. Her report is here in the Newsletter. Be assured there is a great deal of work continuing behind the scenes.

We look forward to the re-opening of non-essential retail - which turns out not to be so non-essential after all!

This Christmas we asked you to nominate the shops that have gone the extra mile for the community during Covid. The two shops that stood out from your recommendations were '**Berkhamsted Arts and Crafts**' and '**Open Door**'. Thanks to them both, who have given their all during this difficult time, and thank you to all of you who wrote and recommended them. This year there were joint winners for the Christmas Window displays, **Bel Caffe** - everything in their window was hand made by the owners. It was warm and inviting. The other joint recipient of the Christmas Window cup was **Colton Shoes** - they had a Christmas tree made by the staff from the cardboard inserts which are always in new shoes. So not only was this home-made but also sustainable, an idea that we loved. The two runners up were Woods and Home & Colonial. A big thank you goes to all the shops that took part when it has been such a difficult trading year.

Now is not the time to relax. We must be vigilant in watching the progress of the draft Local Plan and keep an ever watchful eye on whether our comments are being listened to and, more to the point, acted upon! I was delighted to read the response to the consultation from our youngest individual member Elizabeth Ashley (19). Do read it on the web site. I am not surprised that she is reading politics at university.

**Remember** we have the County Council Elections in May.

**Don't forget to come to our virtual AGM by joining the link above.**  
***(as we cannot supply the wine this year, do bring a glass with you!!)***

My warmest thoughts go out to you all, stay safe!



Lindy Weinreb, Chairman, Berkhamsted Citizens

## Townscape Group

*Susan Johnson, Chairman*

Three months on and we are still in lockdown! Although the end is in sight, we are told. Notwithstanding, planning and development progresses, if such a term is justified, and your **Townscape Group** works together to make life a little better for the historic built environment; and looks to celebrate changes over the last year. Progress has been made on several cases on which we commented and campaigned. 58-60 High Street's replacement was refused; 36 Kitsbury Road came again, was turned down and is back out to Appeal; 13 Shrublands Road's dual applications are both out to Appeal; the new 6<sup>th</sup> Form Centre at the School rumbles on; the new Crystal Palace PH application hangs in the balance (with over 100 objections!) but currently the application for Community Asset status has been turned down – again. Mabuhay in Brownlow Road was turned down at DBC's Development Management Committee, after an 11<sup>th</sup> hour intervention by the Chairman of the Castle Trust. Before that, we and the Town Council laboured alone – it seems the DBC officers thought the design and its position new and exciting (!). Land adj. Heron Place, and Rosemary Cottage, Northchurch are not yet resolved. More recently 291 High Street is under siege by the zinc roof epidemic (touch of Mabuhay); land opposite Newlyn, George Street is once more up for development; the Old Dairy in Castle Street is being reconsidered; and we seek a more suitable appearance for another 'lost' PH at Rose & Crown House, Gossoms End. Sometimes I think we cry in the wilderness (or is that The Wilderness?), but we can often rake in other arbiters of good taste, with a little coercion.

After the marathon comes a sprint. We move on to this year's **Environment Award**. We ended up with a long list of 22 and promptly panicked. So, in view of the distinct probability of a Zoom AGM and no way of considering all of those in this appalling weather, we opted, for this year only, to consider only the 5 'public benefit' contenders, as follows:

Multi-storey car park



Railings at the front of Ashlyns School



Flower bed behind the station



Cemetery transformation



Ravens Lane bridge





Tune into the AGM to find out who won what!

Get in touch if you want any help with responding to a planning application, especially in the conservation areas; or any enforcement issues. We'll do our best to help!

Finally (and thank goodness it's not my task to respond on our behalf) I hope you have written to the consultation on the next **Borough Plan 2020-2038**. The date for responses had been extended to 28<sup>th</sup> February 2021 to give everyone a fighting chance.

## **Membership Counts**

Christopher Talbot-Ponsonby [membership@berkhamstedcitizens.org.uk](mailto:membership@berkhamstedcitizens.org.uk)

Our membership stands at 309 households. A warm welcome to the 3 new households who have joined this year. There are 18 still to pay for 2020, but we will not be deleting them. Additionally, your committee decided that, given the difficulties that we are all facing in dealing with the effects of the pandemic – with the potential of reduced incomes, additional expenses, unemployment – we would declare a 'subscriptions holiday' for 2021. Members who still feel able to pay their subscription, which is £10 p.a. (£30 for three) per household, are, of course, welcome to do so. The BCA does have on-going expenses, so we would still appreciate receiving your payment, if you feel able to give it. Of those that have renewed, 60% have done so for three years.

A renewal slip will be sent to the 79 members who are up for renewal for 2021 and the 18 who have yet to pay for 2020.

Please contact me if you wish to take advantage of the subscriptions holiday. Those of you on existing three-year subscriptions will be offered an extension when the time comes. You can pay your subscription/ donation direct to our bank account: 60-02-21 (NatWest): 51 85 84 87. Don't forget to use your name as the 'Reference'

With continued Covid restrictions we have again decided to send newsletters by email to all members for whom we have email addresses. This is to ensure this newsletter arrives promptly, as deliverers may find it difficult to get out. We will revert to normal delivery as soon as restrictions are lifted.

Thank you very much to those who have indicated that they are happy to continue to receive them electronically. We also fully understand the situation of those that cannot.

For those that have not contacted me and are prepared to receive our newsletter electronically, please let me know.

## **Membership & GDPR**

I need to remind you of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (2016) which became widely enforceable in May 2018. This meant I had to consult you to get your explicit consent to let us keep in touch. Silence does not mean consent, even if membership has not expired.

I am the sole holder of your records and they are not shared with any committee member or third party without prior consent.

## **Buried Treasure? – continued from the November 2020 Newsletter**

At the Committee Meeting held on September 3<sup>rd</sup> 1924 it was proposed and seconded 'that the following programme of work embodying a survey of existing conditions in Berkhamsted be placed before the General Meeting for approval on the understanding that it will be taken in as time and other considerations permit by Sub-Committees strengthened by the addition of ordinary members of the Association in accordance with the rules of the Constitution. The Survey shall include the following matters:

- |                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| 1) Housing                          | 7) Relief Agencies   |
| 2) Care of Children                 | 8) Refreshment Houses and Clubs                                    |
| 3) Care of Adolescents              | 9) Local Government  |
| 4) Recreation                       | 10) Religious Organisations  |
| 5) Adult Education                  | 11) Roads & Paths.   |
| 6) Forms & Conditions of Employment | 12) History & Antiquities including Rights of Way & Local Records. |

Carried unanimously.' *That was some ambition!*

In March **2006** we carried out a survey of our 500 individual members (this equates to our 309 household members today) of which we had 80 responses (a return rate of 16%).

**Views etc**

“You are an excellent pressure group, we need you”

**Best responses to the question “Why do you not attend social events?”**

“Geriatric inertia”

“Sloth”

“Unsociable old cuss”

**Age Profile of respondents**

63% over 70

22% 61-70

9% 51-60

6% 31-50 (no-one under age 30 responded)

**Importance attributed to BCA Committees’ work**

Scrutiny of planning applications (75 responses)

Campaigning on local issues (75 responses)

Conservation Issues (73 responses)

Environment Award (51 responses)

Representation on other organisations (47 responses)

Newsletter value (80 responses)

Interest in Talks (72 responses)

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**Paul Crosland, vice Chairman** says ...

**Please be seated**

Berkhamsted Citizens Association has thanked Berkhamsted Town Council for replacing four decrepit roadside public benches with new benches at these locations:

- Chesham Road at Priory Gardens
- Gossoms End
- Swing Gate Lane, near Hillside Gardens
- Cross Oak Road (opposite Greenway)

Our town's hilly topography means that the renewed seats provide an opportunity for a welcome 'breather' for those on foot, climbing up the valley!

**Parking nightmare....**

As we emerge from lockdown, thanks go to Waitrose in Berkhamsted for not resting on their laurels during this difficult time. They have matched the speed of the vaccine roll-out by steadily increasing capacity in their car park. Last week, there were 27,000 spaces, and the 30,000 milestone was passed by the end of February. By the time you next visit, who knows...?! There will always be *someone* who can't find a space, though.....



(Photograph acknowledgement to McMorran Media)

**BERKHAMSTED CITIZENS ASSOCIATION**  
**TREASURER'S & MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT AGM: 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021**

This report covers the accounting year ending 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020.

It has been a quiet year as all our activities have been carried out behind the scenes since this time last year.

**Overview**

**Our subscription income is up £300**

**Cost of printing newsletters down by 20%**

To reduce unnecessary contact by delivery, we decided to contact members electronically wherever possible. Three editions were again produced in 2020.

**Meeting expenses down by £530**

The AGM on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020 was the last meeting we were able to hold in public on account of the lockdown.

**Website expenses down by £500**

Work to the website has been carried over to 2021/2.

**Environment Award Scheme expenses up by £250**

A plaque was awarded, the first since 2014.

**Advertising and publicity up £350**

The production of a plaque showing our involvement with the Ravens Lane bridge project.

**Maps sales down by £670**

National Trust Ashridge shop and Waterstones have been closed the majority of the year

This meant our overall income total was up by £1,000 to £15,352.

*This increase of income over expenditure cannot consistently be maintained without the unrecorded 'donations' from various committee members who choose not to submit petty cash expenditure vouchers for stationery, stamps or petrol and the like. This is certainly appreciated.*

**NEWSLETTERS**

On account of Covid restrictions we took the decision only to deliver newsletters for whom we had no email address. This meant around only 40 printed newsletters were needed for each edition. I am grateful for the forbearance of those who would rather have had hard copies.

**MAP FUND**

On account of lockdown our sales outlets have temporarily diminished. We could not have survived without Wigginton Community Shop (325) & Hill Farm Café (260) who between them in the last 15 months have ordered nearly 600 maps. So if you are out, and you need a new one, please go and visit them. Thank you - they would welcome your support.

At the time of going to press we have 2,609 maps in stock.

**THANKS**

As usual to Colin Gray and Co, Chartered Accountants, Hardy House, Northbridge Road. They have again given their time freely to check over the accounts; Jane Tang deserves special mention. The company has been examining our accounts since 2003.

The accounts are attached as a separate document. Although not signed by our Chairman due to Covid restrictions, the accounts were agreed by an exchange of emails on 28<sup>th</sup> January 2021.