



BERKHAMSTED CITIZENS

*The heart of
Berkhamsted*

February 2018 Newsletter of the Berkhamsted Citizens Association

Annual General Meeting & Environment Award

NOTICE is hereby given that the 93rd Annual General Meeting of the Berkhamsted Citizens Association will be held in the Great Hall of the Town Hall, Berkhamsted on

Wednesday 14th March 2018 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 16th March 2017
- 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

A 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 2018

There are 8 contenders for the Environment Award, all completed by the end of 2017.

Guest Speaker: Hugo Hardy

He is an internationally trained Chartered RIBA and ARB Architect. He will be speaking on the importance of our local vernacular architecture.

Hello everyone

Firstly, a very happy New Year to you all!

Thank you for your support over this very busy two years. It has been wonderful seeing so many of you joining in our events, helping to make us a really vibrant part of our local community. It makes this busy job really worthwhile. Please explore our 'new web site' and hopefully make suggestions to help us make it even better. You can read all about what we have been doing in detail with film and pictures of our events. I am particularly delighted at your very enthusiastic work at our Visioning Evening on the new Local Plan. Your thoughts were communicated to Dacorum Borough Council; we hope they listen! You will also find a précis of what you all said and a short film at www.berkhamstedcitizens.org.uk

We hope you will take part as one of our Civic Watchmen. Our hustings were really well attended, both the one for 'Remain or Leave' and the event for our last General Election where you all made really valuable contributions. We are planning many more interesting events. However we will need to keep our attention firmly on the next stages of the Local Plan. I am convinced we will need further visioning evenings, to ensure our feelings are well recorded. Our warm thanks for your continued support. We look forward to an increased membership, which as you, know increases our ability to influence change.

Chairman, Berkhamsted Citizens

Townscape Group
Susan Johnson, Chairman

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 the new developments in the previous year for the **Environment Award 2018**. The most significant (but not necessarily all to the good) appear on the following list, in no particular order:

29 Shrublands Road: Demolition and replacement with 3 dwellings



305 High Street (formerly Berko Café)
Conversion to residential and refurbishment



New Road & Chandler Mews, Northchurch
Demolition of light industry and replacement with three 2-bed and one 3-bed dwelling



183-187 High Street, Berkhamsted
Demolition of police station and replacement with Library and residential



24 Castle Street (formerly Heritage Antiques)
Change of use and refurbishment



The pedestrian/cycle bridge at Townsend Gate: Rebuild



Junction enhancement
Kings Road/Kingshill Way/Shootersway



Elizabeth II Avenue, Cecily Close & Charlotte Close off Shootersway – 92 residential units



The recipients of any Award will be invited to the AGM on Wednesday 14th 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: recording the sites throughout the year; viewing and judging them by all members of the Group; intense discussion at meetings of their merits (or otherwise), but certainly their significance, to the townscape; reducing their numbers to a manageable level; then writing and illustrating the review; rehearsing its performance; producing the plaque (if awarded) and certificates; and arranging the attendance of recipients. Please come along to hear the results!

Other topics covered by **Townscape** in the previous three months:

- Replacement trees for the High Street – very slow progress but some hope we will not miss the upcoming planting season
- Multi-storey car park – progress towards awarding the contract to build in 2018/19
- Raising awareness of the upcoming reduction of ‘free’ parking hours in the Waitrose car park
- Borough Plan Review – helping to submit both a response to the document from the BCA, and helping formulate a response by the Town Council
- Reviewing and commenting on several applications in the conservation area, especially those for Dickman’s Chemists and Berkhamsted School’s Old Hall
- Keeping track of Enforcement breaches

In November we had a meeting with DBC’s Conservation Officer and its Enforcement Officer to discuss DBC’s and our priorities. This proved useful for us to understand their position, and we to put forward our concerns. We agreed to work together in various ways to enhance the conservation area. Another welcome, recent development has been the Berkhamsted Local History & Museum Society identifying a Committee member to oversee planning applications and possible enforcement in the conservation area, to liaise with the Townscape Group. We share many members and ideals.

Please get in touch if you would like to discuss any topics that have been raised by this article; or any other matters relating to the town’s historic fabric, or planning. If I can’t help you, I’m sure I can think of someone who can.

Events

Barbara Gainsley, Events Organiser

berkhamstedcitizensevents@gmail.com

We’ve had an exciting programme of events during the past two years, and they have been as interactive as possible, from Berkhamsted Love Food, with many local suppliers giving us the chance to try their wonderful produce, to Berkhamsted Art in Action supported by many local artists. It gave our members the opportunity to walk around and talk to each about their inspiration, much of it from our Berkhamsted countryside. We also had a totally packed hall for our last event, where a great many of our members were given detailed information about plans for local development, and how it will affect our environment. A great opportunity for our views to be represented to Dacorum Borough Council! Please check our new web site to read about our activities in more detail. We are planning many more events, including a Majestic wine tasting (I’ve been to one; it was very good!); and a talk about behind the scenes at the Royal Opera House. Please contact me if you have any suggestions for events. We’d love to hear from you!

Paul Crosland, Vice Chairman

Multi-Storey Car Park

Dacorum Borough Council has given approval to the award of the contract to design and construct the multi-storey car park to German specialist Huber Car Park Systems International GmbH in the sum of £4.37 million. Work will start on site by September of this year and be completed in June 2019. The Town Council Parking Forum, on which the Citizens is represented, will monitor the emerging design to ensure that the car park is fit for its intended purpose.

Bridge across the Bulbourne at Bank Mill

You may recall that, in our September newsletter, we reported that construction of the footbridge across the River Bulbourne, to link Bank Mill with Townsend Gate (previously New Lodge) was underway but that progress appeared to have stalled. We are delighted to announce that the works were completed in October and the bridge is now open. The bridge provides a useful link to the canal and across the valley and we are pleased that our persistence in getting the bridge completed, two years after the main development was completed, has finally paid off. It serves as a reminder that the granting of planning permission is not the end of the story – enforcement of the plans and of the conditions of the planning permission are as important in ensuring that buildings are constructed in harmony with their environment and, where necessary, to the benefit of the community.

PC

Rectory Lane Cemetery Project

Part-time roles for Project Manager and Community Engagement Officer for the Rectory Lane Cemetery project were announced in October. James Moir brings his wealth of experience and knowledge of delivering heritage projects to the role of Project Manager, while Kate Campbell has already taken on the role of Community Engagement Officer with enthusiasm and vigour! The regeneration of our historic town cemetery in to a 'Living Space', whilst retaining its function as a place for quiet contemplation, is a project that needs to involve the local community in all aspects, and to have a sustainable future. If you are able to contribute in any way, or simply want to know more, please contact Kate via campbellkate01@gmail.com or 07866 024254. Look out for the Project stall on the Saturday market during the spring and summer (first Saturday in the month). **PC**

Littering

The screening of 'The Blue Planet' on BBC1 during the autumn has spawned a public debate on the use of plastics and its effects on the seas and oceans and the wildlife that lives in them. It seems to me that this debate needs to be taken further as we seem to be drowning in a sea of plastics, cans, paper and other detritus, which is everywhere around us. On our New Years Day walk, for example, our homeward leg took us down Newground Road from Aldbury to the canal, and I was struck by the amount of litter just discarded into the hedgerows – probably thrown out of passing cars. The By-Pass is another example of a road whose verges and central reservation are choked with rubbish. Cuts to local authority budgets means that litter is removed less often than it used to be, with the result that many roadsides, urban and rural, and public open spaces, amenity greens etc., are an unsightly mess. The Government has made a half-hearted gesture to reduce plastic waste by some far-off date in the distant future. In the meantime, I believe it is incumbent upon us all, as citizens - with a small and a big 'c' - to do our bit to rid the streets of waste. What can you do? For a start, join the Berkhamsted Litter-Pickers, who have done sterling work under the leadership of Colin Garrett, and latterly, Jenny Jones – both Citizens members. If there are persistent problems with rubbish and litter, contact Dacorum Borough Council's Clean Safe and Green Department – or Berkhamsted Town Council's Town Warden, John Bushby townwarden@berkhamstedtowncouncil.gov.uk.

PC

Library Consultation

Herts County Council Library Services is once again consulting on the future of library services across the County. The consultation documents can be found on-line, or Berkhamsted Library has paper copies available (though they can be reluctant to hand them over, with the policy being to encourage on-line participation. The website details are

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/about-the-council/consultations/libraries-and-archives/inspiring-libraries-2018-2021.aspx>.

Closing date is 18th February.

PC

Membership Counts

Christopher Talbot-Ponsonby

membership@berkhamstedcitizens.org.uk

Our membership has increased for the third year running with household membership at 399. There are 94 subscriptions outstanding. Thank you to for renewing promptly. It is satisfying that nearly half have renewed for three years despite the increase in the subscription rate. It shows you think we offer good value for money. A renewal slip will be enclosed for those still to renew. As we are currently on the up, can it continue?

Electronic notification

Two-thirds 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 I do not have your email details and you would like to be added to either of these lists, please let me know.

And finally, the Chairman says

We are so sorry that Rita Jones is leaving our main Committee after 26 years of sterling service; we thank her sincerely for all her hard work. We are also sad to lose our valued Treasurer, Christine Manning, who has filled this exacting position for 17 years, but are delighted Christopher has volunteered to take on the mantle. We would like to give special thanks to Christopher T-P for his continued reliable hard work for the Association.

Visit our facebook page which can be accessed on www.facebook.com/BerkoCitizensAssociation for updates and of course our website at www.berkhamstedcitizens.org.uk

Views expressed are not necessarily those of the Association

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