



August 2016

# The Citizen

Newsletter of the Berkhamsted Citizens Association

Working for the social and civic life of our community

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

**This is my first Newsletter as Chairman;** I look forward, with your help, to tackling this role with enthusiasm. I have lived in the town for over 50 years and love it dearly as I know you do!

First of all I would like to pay tribute to Susan Johnson who has steered the ship so ably over many years. Her tireless commitment to our town can only be admired and I will try to emulate it.

We should aim to be the **vibrant heart** of the community, vocally and publicly engaged with the townscape of our historic market town. We need to support a compelling calendar of events to showcase and develop our already robust local economy. Despite the relative health of our town there is lots of room for necessary improvements, which require connected community involvement.

All of you loyal members of the Citizens are, of course, our lifeblood.

Now we must **all** recruit new active members and connect with previously under represented people in our town. We need to reach out to new residents, commuters, young parents, educators, and business leaders. We need to draw them into the life of the town which will encourage and equip them to effect change for the benefit of all.

We will develop compelling story lines, explaining the benefits of membership and helping the Citizens achieve its aims. We need motivated active members who will find it rewarding to belong. We know that time is precious. We promise to make involvement fun, **making great friends & lasting memories.**

There is great work already being done, like the Lions Fête, Pitch Perfect, and many more. Some of these existing local events are facing increasing pressures on resourcing. How can we help? Perhaps it could be as part of a broader consortium of local organisations. We all have the same commitment, to ensure Berkhamsted remains a beautiful and fun place to live.

## **What do we need to do?**

**VISUAL:** How the town presents itself to residents and visitors. This means being concerned with the visual landscape and campaigning against inappropriate or visually jarring developments, from housing and shop fronts to road signs. We already monitor all planning applications. We need more involvement from the rest of the community - **WE NEVER HAVE A SECOND CHANCE TO MAKE A FIRST IMPRESSION!**

**HOUSING:** New residents need to be encouraged to feel a part of our town and play a role in its future. We, *all of us*, should become an effective body to lobby and challenge planning issues that do not benefit our town. We all need to assess the impact of major new housing developments on our infrastructure and local services. We must encourage all our residents to join The Citizens and get involved.

**RETAIL:** The national trend is to see small independent stores close, to be replaced by cafés, estate agents and charity shops. Slowly but surely the vibrancy of the High Street is diminished. What can The Citizens do to help staunch this trend and encourage independent retailers to our high street?

**BUSINESS:** A business start-up area is needed in Northbridge Road to encourage local entrepreneurs and inward investment – how can we make this happen? It is an essential part of revitalizing our town and protecting our environment and prosperity.

**ARTS:** The Citizens need to promote actively Berkhamsted as a **centre for the arts**, encouraging a regular and enjoyable arts offer. How do we add to the rich historic tapestry of our town?

**It is arts, architecture and literature on which we, and history hang our memories!**

We need a vibrant re-launch. You, The Citizens can make it happen, we need to extend our team, and work hard. The opportunities are legion. These are just first thoughts, please add to them – I will!

So where do we go from here? **Over to you ... please write to me or email me with your ideas**, and of course come along to all our events, the first one is celebrating our local arts.

Lindy Foster Weinreb

## Townscape Committee

Previously **Town Amenities Sub Committee**

Gordon Bluck

We have decided to rename TASC, which we felt is rather outdated and meaningless. I took over as Chairman about 25 years ago and was replaced by our previous Chairman, Paul Crosland, some 5 years ago. What a success he was! Unfortunately, his home and work commitments have led him to step down, but he is still on the main committee. The name "Townscape" better reflects our role. Our new Chairman, Lindy, is very keen to raise the profile of Berkhamsted Citizens and I totally agree. Our committee still looks at all planning applications and has been strengthened by Sarah Caradec, a new resident in the town with young children. She has knowledge and a planning background. Welcome.

Back to planning matters. Christopher Talbot-Ponsonby advises us on all applications having been Chairman of the Town Council Planning Committee; his wise counsel is vital. We confine ourselves to proposals which affect the town; we are not a NIMBY group!

We are disappointed that the S106 working party, which I proposed at a Town Council Meeting some 10 months ago, has not met yet. It is important that you understand that the Citizens support and complement our elected Councillors. I am continuing to stay in touch with the Senior Planner at Dacorum Borough Council with a view to spend the £1,500,000 plus in accumulated Section 106 funds in the town. Developments are awaited.

Chairman Lindy and I hit the front page of the Gazette with our campaign regarding the loss of the weekday Southern Rail service to Clapham Junction. Our MP David Gauke has written offering support.

Paul Crosland is supporting us on the knotty problem of the multi storey car park. Some of the town's residents feel that people should walk and cycle and cars are not welcome. With my knees, I say "In no way"!

During the recent consultation by the Canal & River Trust on mooring on the canal, some people (members and non-members) got the impression that the Citizens are against the boaters – which we are not! We were made aware of a minority of boaters who had caused a nuisance along the towpath, but we acknowledge that the majority of canal users follow the rules. The canal is an important amenity for Berkhamsted and as long as those who use it respect it, The Citizens has no axe to grind.

Views expressed are not necessarily those of the Association

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## Membership Counts

*Christopher Talbot-Ponsonby*  
*membership@berkhamstedcitizens.org.uk*

There are 15 members with outstanding subscriptions. If you are one of them, a reminder is enclosed with this newsletter. If you have already paid or no longer wish to remain a member, please let me know. This may be your last chance to pay. We continue to circulate our members, by email, on important issues that may affect you and the town. Over 50% now receive these messages together with reminders of our events. Of these a third choose to receive newsletters electronically. Would you like to be added to this list?

## Lower Kings Road Multi-storey Car Park

Paul Crosland

The saga of the new multi-storey car park grinds on. In May 2016, the Berkhamsted Town Council Parking Forum (on which The Citizens is represented) raised a list of concerns with regard to the proposed design of the car park with representatives of Dacorum Borough Council, the promoters of the car park - and, of course, the local Planning Authority. Members of the Forum felt that if fundamental aspects of the design of the car park and how it fits into its environment are not addressed, the traffic and parking situation in central Berkhamsted could be made worse rather than improved.

The Parking Forum also commented on the proposed design of the car park and the lack of co-ordinated, 'intelligent' signage around the town to direct motorists to car parks where spaces exist.

In response to the objections raised to the Planning Application, Dacorum Borough Council commissioned a further traffic study to address Herts CC's concerns and has also discussed other mitigation measures such a traffic light re-phasing and replacement of the lights with a mini-roundabout. The Council has recently resubmitted plans for the car park and these can be viewed on line at <http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/home/planning-development/planning-applications/search-planning-applications>. Search for application reference 4/00122/16.

Dacorum Borough Council is understandably keen to proceed with the multi-storey car park project and wishes to focus limited budgets on tangible construction rather than continual studies and re-designs, even it seems, at the expense of achieving the 'correct' solution. In parallel with addressing traffic and design issues, Dacorum has made proposals for changing existing parking arrangements in Water Lane, St. John's Well Lane and Canal Fields car parks. These went to public consultation in June, however, the Town Council objected to the majority of the proposals at its June meeting of the Full Council. There is clearly more discussion to come before the excavators can get busy.....

# BERKHAMSTED & NORTHCHURCH COUNCILLORS

**BERKHAMSTED Town Council**  
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F TE P **refer to the committees on which the councillors serve:**  
Finance & Policy; Transport & Environment; Town Planning

## NORTHCHURCH Parish Council

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\* Also serves on **DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL**

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# Berkhamsted Citizens Association

## COMMITTEE 2016 / 2017

[www.berkhamstedcitizens.org.uk](http://www.berkhamstedcitizens.org.uk) - our web site needs redesigning – have we a volunteer to help?

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Dan Marsh	<b><a href="mailto:admin@swanyouthproject.com">admin@swanyouthproject.com</a></b>	
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### SUB-COMMITTEES

ACTIVITIES  
TOWNSCAPE

Barbara Gainsley  
Gordon Bluck

### RESPONSIBILITIES

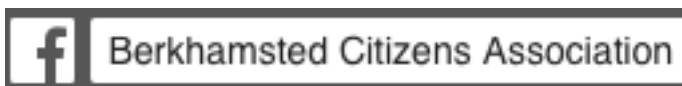
NEWSLETTER  
PUBLICITY

Christopher Talbot-Ponsonby  
Lindy Foster Weinreb

### REPRESENTATIVES ON OTHER BODIES

Berkhamsted Arts Trust  
Berkhamsted Community Partnership  
Berkhamsted Parking Forum  
Berkhamsted Town Hall Trust  
CARP (Canal & Riverside Partnership)  
Castle Liaison Group  
Chiltern Society  
Friends of St Peter's Great Berkhamsted  
Graham Greene Birthplace Trust  
Parish Paths Partnership

Rita Jones  
Tony Statham  
Paul Crosland  
Christopher Talbot-Ponsonby  
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