



BERKHAMSTED CITIZENS

*The Heart of
Berkhamsted*

November 2017 – Newsletter of the Berkhamsted Citizens Association

Hello Everyone,

There has never been a more important time to involve yourselves with, and **support Berkhamsted Citizens**. The town, we all love, is threatened by proposals in the new Local Plan. Our concerns are not only within the town, but on the outskirts (including loss of the Green Belt). www.dacorum.gov.uk/newlocalplan We all know that Berkhamsted doesn't have the infrastructure to support our current community, let alone several thousand more people, driving to the station, needing to park to shop, requiring medical support, needing education for children and grandchildren. Every new home generates six car movements per day, and our roads are already grid locked. What we are offered could damage our environment and fail in some cases to allow land use to reflect the interests of the community as a whole. We need to ensure that we reconcile the conservation of our environment with development needs. Come and make your feelings known at 8pm on November 15th. The Citizens are holding a Visioning Meeting in the Great Hall of the Town Hall, come along, hear more about what is happening, and have your say! Also, don't forget January 24th Burns Night Dinner in the Court House – tickets £28 a head "A delicious meal & wonderful company". Book your tickets with Miranda Cummins on 01442 866075 by December 20th.

See you on November 15th – warmest wishes to you all,

Electronic notification

As many of you are aware, we are able to email you with a digital version of our Newsletter. We can also notify you on things that affect the town and giving reminders of our events.

Please email christopher.tp@hotmail.co.uk if that would be your preference for future editions or for notifications. Also do let us know what you think of this edition; your feedback is really important to us.

Increase in Membership subscriptions

Christine Manning, Hon. Treasurer

Further to my article in the September Newsletter, at our last meeting your Committee discussed the level of subscriptions, which, by careful stewardship, has been unchanged since 2004. I would like to thank the six Members who responded to my article, very positively and in favour of an increase. There were no negative responses.

We have been able to cover our outgoings and keep subscriptions down for thirteen years but if we want to invest in a better Association going forwards, we do need now to increase them and **the Committee agreed that the annual Membership subscription would be £10 going forwards from the end of this year. Those Members who have already paid their 2018 and later subscription will receive it at the current year's rate. I would encourage Members to take up the three year subscription of £30 as this minimises administration and does protect you from any further increase during the term.**

For their money, Members receive three (occasionally four) Newsletters each year, and free entry to the programme of meetings and events (Dinners and special events will usually incur an additional charge). Your money also contributes to the running costs of the Association and the funding of the work that we do. Perhaps most importantly, we hope that the increase will build up our reserves. This means, we can not only invest in better and more interesting meetings to attract new Members and ensure our continuing existence, but also, when the need arises, enable us to have the financial means available to fight for our Town. An example might be paying for professional advice when needed.

Our town is changing, as it must, but your Committee will do its best to make that change work and our voice heard on behalf of Members. Read more of the imminent tasks in the Townscape report by Susan Johnson and our Chairman Lindy's comments.

Views expressed are not necessarily those of the Association
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Published by the Berkhamsted Citizens Association ©
& Printed by Strongs Printing Services tel: 878592

Townscape Group

Susan Johnson

Townscape has been very busy over the last two months. Between us we have spotted several unwelcome additions to the conservation area, commented on a number of planning applications, and chased a disappearing street name plate – all with varying degrees of success. All this activity on our part adds to the already heavy workload of DBC Enforcement, Planning and, most notably, the Conservation officers. I am of the opinion that more work put into education – not just of developers, but also of householders and shopkeepers – would actually lessen this load. Meanwhile we all soldier on.

Other topics currently covered:

- Replacement trees for the High Street – very slow progress but some hope we will not miss the upcoming planting season, if only HCC would co-operate on surveying the utilities underground
- Rebuilding the bridge access to Townsend Gate, now underway, but slow to progress
- Social housing started at the corner of High Street/Swing Gate Lane – coming along nicely
- Fencing around the Moor play area – to be put in place with the use of s106 monies, we hope
- Multi-storey car park – progress on the contract negotiations with a view to building next year
- Annual Environment Award – we are currently listing and sifting contenders – do contribute

We are, of course, very involved in the Borough Plan Review, concerning Green Belt sites. The consultation dates set by DBC are 1 November to 13 December. Look out for the public exhibitions! We sit on the Town Council Working Party formulating a response. Our Association Chairman, Lindy, is extremely well-versed in this subject; and I go along also. We contribute as much as possible, and will endeavour to make a BCA response also. Our main concern, apart from 'guarding against the coalescence of settlements', (the primary function of Green Belt), is the lack of infrastructure, current or planned, associated with these possible housing allocations. Please, come along to the 'Visioning' evening on 15 November at 8 pm in the Town Hall to help us put forward your concerns and ideas.

Meanwhile, keep your eyes open for anything odd or jarring in the streetscape. It is easy to report on line. There is a special form for doing it on the DBC website; or you can write (on paper!) to the Planning Enforcement Team at The Forum, Marlowes, Hemel Hempstead, HP1 1DN. It is important we defend against erosion, little by little, of the conservation area.

Paul Crosland writes

Shootersway traffic lights

The new traffic lights at the junction of Shootersway and Kingshill Way by the BFI were brought into use in July. After some initial teething issues as drivers got used to the new arrangements, the consensus

seems to be that the lights have cut delays at the junction. Should the further housing developments proposed for Shootersway come to fruition, the investment in traffic lights will have been money well spent. Any comments concerning the traffic lights should be addressed to your Herts County Council member for Berkhamsted, Cllr. Ian Reay.

On Your Line – London Midland transfers to West Midlands Trains

On 10th August the Department for Transport announced that the new Franchise for the West Midlands – which includes the Euston to Northampton route - would be awarded to West Midlands Trains Ltd, a joint venture between Abellio (Netherlands Railways), Japan East Railway Company, and Mitsui & Co Ltd. The new company will take over from London Midland.

The new franchise, which begins on 10th December 2017 and runs until March 2026, will provide for compensation of twenty-five percent for delays exceeding 15 minutes (the current minimum is 30 minutes). On the Euston line, improved Sunday services are promised – but only "by 2021". Further details are available on the DFT website :

<http://maps.dft.gov.uk/west-midlands/>

Paul Crosland

Membership Counts

Christopher Talbot-Ponsonby
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A warm welcome to our 27 new members who have joined this year. Our membership continues to grow and now stands 404; our highest for 8 years.

22 members have outstanding subscriptions. If you are one of them, a final reminder is enclosed. This is your last chance to pay at the old rate of £5, as subscriptions increase to £10 on 1st January 2018. If you have already paid, please let me know or you will be removed from our records. We want to keep you. On behalf of the Committee, I would like to say a very big thank you to the 60 deliverers, which we are apt to take for granted for both delivering, and on some occasions, collecting subscriptions. It makes my life all that more easy. Several have certainly been doing it for 35 years, when my mother was Membership Secretary. Dare I say it, but it just goes to show how loyal and old some of us are becoming!

Subscriptions for 2018

Enclosed with this newsletter is a renewal form to the 200 members who are due to pay for 2018 (£10). Please consider paying a £30 three year subscription. It would make my life all that much easier this time next year. Instead of paying by cheque or cash, subscriptions can be paid on-line to:

Berkhamsted Citizens Association:

Sort code 60-02-21: Account N° 51 85 84 87

Please ensure your name and initial is shown in the payment reference, and notify the Membership Secretary you have paid your subscription this way.