



BERKHAMSTED CITIZENS

*The heart of
Berkhamsted*

www.berkhamstedcitizens.org.uk/

June 2024 Newsletter of the Berkhamsted Citizens Association

Chairman's Report *Susan Johnson writes*
chairman@berkhamstedcitizens.org.uk

Well, I've now had to rewrite and reorder this report, which I had completed several weeks ago, to take account of a General Election on 4th July. Every local and national story has been swamped by Election fever; and our preparations for Hustings have taken over my life. And a new constituency for us – Harpenden & Berkhamsted. We have been buffeted around over the years, and now find ourselves in with Harpenden, Tring and even bits of St Albans. Being apolitical, this organisation is ideally placed to host Hustings. They will take place on **Thursday 20th June at 8 pm** (doors open at 7.30 pm) in the Great Hall, Berkhamsted Town Hall. Come early for a good seat! Send in your questions in advance.

But there is another downside (?) to the date of the election – it is the BCA's foundation day and, as I never tire of telling you, we have reached our Centenary. Specifically on **Thursday 4th July at 11 am** outside the Civic Centre the Mayor will help me unveil the new Town Post and Shield: our contribution to the Town, and replacing the old one, also donated by us. Please join us! I know it is already in place, but we need to put down the marker; and thank all those who made it a reality. There are also all the Committees of the last 100 years to thank, and all the membership who stood behind them.

Speaking of committees, I must thank the hard work of last year's members. The most important thing that the BCA achieved last year was the updating of its website. Our thanks must go to Gordon Bluck for leading that. We try and keep the news and events section up to date. Gordon is now Vice Chairman of the Association, and has taken on responsibility for Townscape. The man likes hard work! He is ably assisted by the whole Group, especially Paul Crosland, who is really good with the website. You can see under the 'Townscape' section what happened at the Environment Awards at the AGM. Solid, and not shocking.

Now, you might recall I have been Chairman before ... six times. You have only to look at the newsletter archive to see my history. Although I am honoured to take office for the seventh time, I do regret having

to do it so often. It's not that I am a retiring soul but, reflecting on the importance of the BCA as the independent civic society for the town, it would be great if Citizens were queuing up to take up the reins. It is great we have survived and continue important work when so many of our ilk have gone, but we now realise why. So I urge you members, and prospective members, to step up. Social media is fine (?), but it does not cut through bureaucracy or encourage person-to-person involvement. It does not form local friendships or make personal connections.

In fact, between us the Committee covers most activities in the town. We sit on various bodies, as Trustees or just reps. We hope you join in these specific interest groups – artistic, practical, historical, musical – there's something for everyone. It is one of our main functions to encourage participation in town life, which is vibrant for the most part. Even the shops are on the up, as long as you like coffee ... and have time to drink it.

So keep an eye out for our events (there might be a talk or two in addition) and those of the town generally. We'll keep you as informed as we can.

Have a lovely summer, and we'll be in touch!

Townscape Group

Gordon Bluck, Chairman, writes

Following the AGM, Susan Johnson took over as Chairman of the Association again and I replaced her as Chairman of the Townscape Group and Vice Chairman. I have been on the Group some 30 years if you count its predecessor TASC (Town Amenities Sub Committee). The highlight of our AGM was of course the Environment Award presented on the screen by Simon Heywood. There were no outstanding entries and so no plaque was awarded. However, the following commendations were made:

The Old Cottage Barn Extension, Bank Mill Lane.

Kinderzimmer, 205 High Street

Montague Mews, High Street, Northchurch.

15 Shrublands Avenue.

We continue to offer help to Citizens who are unsure of the planning process. Disappointingly, in most cases the information offered does not result in a new membership. Please remind people how easy it is to join via our website for a modest £10 annual fee. We need to grow our membership to ensure that we continue to have a voice in keeping the town in good health. Turning to the major planning matters we have looked at and commented in the last 3 months:

Change of use from agricultural land to SANG together with a vehicular access, car park, paths, fencing and landscaping at Castle Hill.

We have responded as a Consultee by strongly objecting to this application situated in the Green Belt and the AONB. Following submission of amendments I addressed Berkhamsted Town Council to reinforce our already lodged objections. We await the Dacorum planners' decision.

Our battles to stop the installation of **internally illuminated signs** in the town centre continue to have success with the removal of the sign at 125A High Street, and the one at Crystal Mangal, 79 High Street. Concerning **Display of an illuminated fascia sign at front of restaurant at 5-7 Lower Kings Road**, we have objected and wait an outcome.

Demolition of existing buildings and redevelopment of the site to provide 86 residential units etc at Haresfoot Farm.

We have objected on the grounds that this constitutes an unacceptable development in the Green Belt; overdevelopment which introduces an urban housing estate in open countryside to the detriment of its rural character. Outcome is awaited.

We are trying where possible to resist the loss of bungalows especially where the larger replacement does not fit into the street scene.

Demolition of existing 4 bedroom dwelling and replacement with a new 4 bedroom detached dwelling including ASHP (heat pump) at 19 Upper Ashlyns Road.

The group considered the loss of a bungalow, replaced with an inappropriately designed house in a prominent corner location to be unfortunate and damaging to the character of the street scene. Outcome awaited.

Demolition of the existing bungalow and construction of 8 apartments at Waterworks Bungalow, Greene Field Road was also strongly

objected to on the grounds of overdevelopment and we considered this to be an unimaginative and inappropriate addition on a prominent corner plot in the town centre and adjacent to the river Bulbourne.

Development of 8 flats with undercroft parking at 25A Lower Kings Road

The group raised strong objection on the grounds of overdevelopment in a small town centre site and considered this to be a missed opportunity to bring an imaginative, creative design to this site. The additional residents would be likely to contribute to traffic congestion in the area. Outcome awaited.

Change of use from agricultural land to a Suitable Alternative National Greenspace (SANG) at Haresfoot Farm (commercial).

I regret to report that the Development Control Committee voted 9 to 2 to agree to this application. So that is that. Can't win them all!

There were some 270 planning applications submitted in the last year regarding Berkhamsted, plus Northchurch applications; and we as a group look at them all. I receive a copy of all of them to my brimming email account.

Membership Counts

Christopher Talbot-Ponsonby
membership@berkhamstedcitizens.org.uk

Our membership stands at 261 households. We welcome the 7 households who have joined this year. We have regrettably removed 15 households who last paid for 2022.

A reminder will be sent to the 50 households who are up for renewal for 2024. We hope you still wish to remain members.

Our preferred method of payment of your subscription is by Bank Credit Transfer (BCT) direct to our bank account: 60-02-21 (NatWest): 51 85 84 87 (Business). Please use your name as the 'Reference'. Cash or cheque is also accepted. Or, if you prefer to pay by credit card, you can pay as a 'new member' through our website at: www.berkhamstedcitizens.org.uk/membership.

As mentioned in an earlier newsletter, we only send newsletters by email to members for whom we have email addresses.

We also fully understand the situation of those that do not have an email address. 25 newsletters are still printed.



Berkhamsted Citizens Association

COMMITTEE 2024 / 2025

www.berkhamstedcitizens.org.uk/

Chairman:	Susan Johnson
Vice-Chairman:	Gordon Bluck
Treasurer:	Christopher Talbot-Ponsonby
Secretary:	Miranda Cummins
Membership Secretary:	Christopher Talbot-Ponsonby

Committee	Paul Crosland
	Simon Heywood
	Tony Statham
	Jeanne Woodcraft

RESPONSIBILITIES

TOWNSCAPE GROUP	Gordon Bluck
NEWSLETTER	Christopher Talbot-Ponsonby
ACTIVITIES	To be recruited

REPRESENTATIVES ON OTHER BODIES

Berkhamsted Castle Trust	Susan Johnson
Berkhamsted Neighbourhood Plan	Susan Johnson / Gordon Bluck
Berkhamsted Town Hall Trust	Christopher Talbot-Ponsonby
Dacorum Local Plan	Susan Johnson / Gordon Bluck
Festival of Light	Miranda Cummins
Friends of the Bulbourne (formerly CARP)	Paul Crosland
Festival of Light	Miranda Cummins
Friends of St Peter's	Paul Crosland
Graham Greene Birthplace Trust	Susan Johnson
Parking Forum	Paul Crosland

Berkhamsted Town Council Working Parties, for the most part, have been abolished and their business dealt with through the main Council agenda.

BERKHAMSTED & NORTHCHURCH COUNCILLORS

BERKHAMSTED Town Council, 161 High Street, HP4 3HD

www.berkhamsted-tc.gov.uk

Castle Ward

Cllr Ian Bristow Cllr Wendy Conian Cllr Susan Jordan (Mayor)
Cllr Thomas Pedrick Cllr Leslie Tate

East Ward

Cllr Michael Bromberg Cllr Kevin Fielding Cllr Adam Hawkswood
Cllr Garrick Stevens Cllr Nigel Taylor

West Ward

Cllr Patrick Fisher Cllr Peter Holditch Cllr Rebecca Mackenzie
Cllr Nicholas Morrish Cllr Robert Stewart

NORTHCHURCH Parish Council, Langley Hill, Kings Langley, WD4 4EJ

www.northchurchparishcouncil.gov.uk

Cllr Lyndsey Abercromby Cllr Michela Capozzi (Chair)
Cllr Parul Dix Cllr Neil Pocock
Cllr Lara Pringle Cllr Mark Somervail

Representation on Dacorum Borough Council

Castle	Cllr Ian Bristow	Cllr Rick Freedman
East	Cllr Garrick Stevens	Cllr Nigel Taylor
West	Cllr Robert Stewart	Cllr Sally Symington
Northchurch	Cllr Lara Pringle	

Berkhamsted's & Northchurch's representatives on Hertfordshire County Council

Berkhamsted **Cllr Nigel Taylor**
Northchurch (Bridgewater) **Cllr Terry Douris**

Harpenden & Berkhamsted Member of Parliament Pending

Police & Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire Jonathan Ash-Edwards