



BERKHAMSTED CITIZENS

*The heart of
Berkhamsted*

<http://www.berkhamstedcitizens.org.uk/>

September 2025 Newsletter of the Berkhamsted Citizens Association

Chairman's Report

Ian Reay, Chairman

The High Street in Berkhamsted has survived well in recent years as the retail and hospitality sectors have suffered from recent economic conditions. In July it was reported that Oakman Inns, a hotel and pub chain that is based in Berkhamsted High Street, had gone into administration. The business had been affected by the Covid pandemic but was subsequently hit by a reduction in customer numbers and rising operating costs, such as increased National Insurance and wage inflation.

Six of the chain's twenty sites across Southern and Central England have been closed (including the Grand Junction Arms near Tring); however, fourteen of the sites have been sold to Upham Group Limited and will continue to operate. These include The King's Arms and The Penny Farthing in Berkhamsted, and The Red Lion in Water End. Once again Berkhamsted is performing well despite gloomy national trends.

Town Warden

Berkhamsted Town Council used to have a Town Warden. The Town Warden would deal with issues raised by the public such as posters erected without permission, plumbing issues that arose on the allotment sites run by the Town Council and so forth. The Warden would be able to direct to the responsible authority if issues arose, such as dangerous paving on walkways, which were outside the responsibility of the Town Council.

The Town Warden left the Council last December and has not been replaced. Let us know if you think that we should continue to have a Town Warden and we will pass on your views to the Town Council.

Berkhamsted Social Club

Based in Farriers Hall on the footpath which leads from the High Street next to T G Jones (formerly W H Smith) to the car park, the Berkhamsted Branch of the British Legion broke away from the national body last year, and it is now an independent body called the Berkhamsted Social Club. It had a major refurbishment over the Easter period during which it had to close for a few weeks, but it is now fully open.

Membership of the Club is very reasonably priced at £10 a year. It has a bar and offers light snacks at lunch time. The Club offers social events such as quizzes, bingo and other entertainment, and its central location in the town makes it an ideal place to meet up with friends. The Citizens Association now uses one of its spaces for our committee meetings.



A proposed new Artisan & Makers' Market.

The market in the High Street which operates each Saturday and Wednesday brings people to the town from a wide area.

A Farmers' Market runs on the 3rd Sunday of the month with a range of stalls, and more recently the Antiques and Vintage market has been filling the High Street with stalls and visitors on the first Sunday of the month.

Now, a brand-new market – an **Artisan and Makers' Market - is to run on the second Sunday of the month from March next year.** There will be "launch markets" on Sunday 12th October and Sunday 30th November. This should be another big draw to the High Street.

The Market is being organised by The Friends of St Peter's (FoSP), a charity that fundraises for St Peter's Church. It also supports the Rectory Lane Cemetery which, following its £1.25m makeover, needs funds to maintain its community green space.

— Come & Find Something Special —

ARTISAN MARKET



Sunday Oct 12th- 9.30 to 3.30:

High Street Berkhamsted

— www.berkhamstedartisanmarket.co.uk —

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

We are planning two more evening talks this year. Both will take place in the Clock Room of the Town Hall, at 7:30pm. They will be free of charge for members but there will be fee of £5 for non-members.

Thursday 2nd October.

Trevor Standen, a retired planning barrister, will talk about the impact that the new Government planning guidelines will have on the Local Plan and developments in the Town.

Thursday 6th November

Representatives from Berkhamsted School will talk about their new Masterplan to develop the Mill Street area of the school.

Townscape Group.

Gordon Bluck, Chairman,
gordonbluck@hotmail.com

The Townscape Group has continued to meet every month, so my last report was covering up to end of May 2025. The Regulation 19 Draft Local Plan for Dacorum Borough, 2026 to 2041, will imminently be placed in front of the Planning Inspector. Planning matters do tend to take a long time to resolve, for example there are several breaches at the Rossway Estate. There is no permission for the dog recreation area, a new farm shop and a lapsed application for installation of 135 storage containers. Dacorum Planning Department have advised me that they will do an overall review of the planning of the whole estate. Turning to one of the larger schemes named as “South Berkhamsted” this estate of over 700 dwellings has stalled due to an unworkable traffic scheme in the town centre. A new scheme is awaited.

Revised plans for a new Evangelical Church in Kings Road, opposite Clarence Road, have resulted in another flurry of objections - including ours. The new plans have only minor changes which have not

addressed the over-development, height, bulk etc. There are quite a number of supporting submissions which appear to be from non-residents, and I wonder if this is the reason the planning department has withheld the addresses of supporters /objectors. The BCA continues to strongly object as a consultee and the Town Council has done similarly.

Another controversial application, reference 25/01843/FUL, is for a change of use of land off Swing Gate Lane, Berkhamsted (near to the bridge over the by-pass) to a travellers’ caravan site for 5 mobile homes. We have lodged a strong objection on the grounds of inappropriate development in the Green Belt with no proposal to release the land from the Green Belt. Access to the site is via a single-track road which is inappropriate for the transport of mobile homes. The proposal for use as a travellers’ site appears to be contrary to Dacorum policy CS22 “New Accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers” which states that sites should be “located close to facilities”. When permission was granted for the horse sanctuary in March 2022 (22/0960/FUL conditions 6 and 7) specifically noted that the land should not be used for commercial purposes and no external lighting of any type should be used in order to preserve the character of the Green Belt.

We have received an outline application for the development of 80 dwellings on land west of Blegbury Gardens, Shootersway which is actually in Northchurch parish not Berkhamsted Town but as we have a number of members there and we represent the whole area we have met with the developers. We have objected to the application as the land is not designated for development in the current local plan.

A number of you will have noticed a new close-boarded fence at the corner of Bridgewater Road and Brownlow Road which appeared when the existing hedge was totally removed. Unfortunately the works were done without planning permission and a ‘retrospective’ application was needed. When the application was declined, the BCA requested Enforcement action; however the Planning Officer noted he is anticipating a revised application. Why are we objecting? Our main objection is that the fence is very close to a Scheduled Ancient Monument (Berkhamsted Castle). When the original house (Fosse House) was built in 1989 the planning conditions required the retention of the hedges “at all times”. Whatever is decided is bound to be expensive - a lesson to us all to check with Dacorum Planning department before undertaking works at home.

Regarding the new proposed food store (Lidl) Ref 25/01567/MFA we have objected to the loss of 30 affordable dwellings from the original plans granted in 2014. Despite the wealth in parts of the town there is a vital need for affordable housing and this is an ideal location. There are several other matters which should be addressed and these have been set out in our two submissions on the consultee page of the planning portal, too long for this newsletter.

We have continued to make our views clear on resisting the replacement of wooden windows by uPVC and even restoring wood when plastic wears out. This only affects buildings in the Conservation Area and also those covered by an Article 4 Direction.

A lot of work has been spent on resisting a proposed 'self-build' dwelling at the plot adjacent to 22 Castle Hill Avenue. The Lime Tree Walk Preservation Society has prevailed, with help from the BCA and the second application has been refused. It is an important victory.

We have offered our support to the Town Clerk who is quite rightly addressing the proliferation of large plastic banners especially the four on the railings opposite the station. The Clerk is in dialogue with the Borough Council.

On another matter, there are a number of missing street signs either lost or stolen which will be ordered by the Borough in a batch, to keep costs down, apparently. Let us know of any that are missing where you live.

Regarding the short piece of highway at the rear of 162-192 High Street, Sorbon, the freeholder developers, have applied to the Department of Transport to "stop up" the highway. We have objected, as have the Town Hall, as any restriction on access in the future would be a problem.

Finally, we have been trying to get acceptable signage at 125a High Street which is a listed building and in the Conservation Area. There is a desire by the BCA to involve planning enforcement to improve the current pock-marked façade.

I would like to give my thanks to the Townscape members for all their support especially the 'minute man', Paul Crosland.

STOP PRESS Regarding the South Berkhamsted development, the latest plans are on the planning portal (Ref. 24/02868/MOA) and reveal that the crossroads in the centre of the town will lose its traffic lights and become "free flow": Heaven help us!

Paul Crosland writes:

Bus 500 – an update

In our previous newsletter in May 2025, we recorded that the erstwhile Arriva X5 bus service between Aylesbury and Hemel Hempstead was being replaced by the 500 and new 560 and X500 services, all operated by Red Eagle Buses. This change meant that a half-hourly service was maintained for most of the day between Berkhamsted and Hemel on Mondays to Fridays, but the service on to Tring, Aston Clinton and Aylesbury was reduced to hourly. Thanks in part to pressure from local MPs, who have liaised with the bus operator, a half-hourly service on this travel corridor will resume on Mondays to Fridays from 1st September. Buses will run alternately as 500 and X500 – the latter omitting Aston Clinton and running instead via the A41. On Saturdays buses remain hourly, also running alternately as 500 and X500. As now, there will be

no evening service serving Berkhamsted and Northchurch. The last buses are at 18.57 (Mon-Fri) and 19.27 (Saturday) from Berkhamsted Town Hall towards Hemel and 20.10 from the same point towards Aylesbury.

The timetable for the new service can be found online at www.intalink.org.uk/services, then scroll down to '500'.

Lagley Meadow Hall

Lagley Meadow Hall has recently been refurbished by Berkhamsted Town Council to a high standard and is available for hire. It offers a main hall (the Robert Stewart Hall, in memory of Town Councillor and Mayor-elect who sadly passed away in 2025), two meeting rooms, a reception area, covered outdoor space and a fenced garden. The Hall's flexible space is perfect for parties, meetings, events, classes and more, with free parking outside. The premises are fully accessible and the address is Lagley Meadow Hall, Douglas Gardens, Berkhamsted, HP4 3PE. Bookings can be made via <https://lagleymeadow.com>. Do make use of the new facility where you can !



John Sayer Almshouses

The Almshouses are a familiar sight on our High Street, on the corner with Cowper Road. Modernisation and upgrading of this Grade II Listed Building is underway and the northernmost housing unit (of four), no. 241, is currently undergoing restoration. The John Sayer Almshouses charity ran two open days during the summer to raise awareness of the restoration project and to appeal for funding.

Almshouses are probably the oldest form of social housing and have been in existence in the U.K. for more than a thousand years. The John Sayer Almshouses have been in existence for more than 300 years. John Sayer was a loyal supporter of Charles II and became the King's chief cook. He lived at Berkhamsted Place. On his death in 1681, John Sayer's will bequeathed £1,000 in trust "for the building of an almshouse and the purchasing of lands for the relief of the poor in Berkhamsted St. Peter." Several other endowments were given over the years since John Sayer's initial bequest.

The beneficiaries of the almshouses were initially six poor widows, over fifty-five years of age and constant frequenters of the Church of England. This was later modified to Christians with a preference for Church of England, and to single women.

In 1965, the original six almshouses were converted to four, with the provision of an internal bathroom.

Further details of the history of the John Sayer Almshouses, the restoration project for No. 241, and how to make donations to the project is available on the website, <https://johnsayeralmshouses.org.uk>.

Heritage Open Days

The annual Heritage Open Days events will take place across the country this September between Friday 12th and Sunday 21st.

Check out eighteen tours and events in Berkhamsted organised throughout the week in the town by Berkhamsted Local History and Museum Society and others through this [link](#) (highlight 'link' and then press 'Ctrl and click')

By-Election Result, Berkhamsted West

The by-election on 24th July, resulting from the untimely and sad death of Cllr. Robert Stewart, led to the election of Cllr. Will Janukowski as Liberal Democrat councillor for the Berkhamsted West ward of both Dacorum Borough Council and Berkhamsted Town Council.

Will was formerly a Councillor on St Albans City and District Council and is an Account Manager with a company that describes itself as “existing to ensure that the built environment is used as a catalyst for positive change.”

THIS AND THAT

Recycle your coffee pods

Berkhamsted recycling centre now collects used coffee pods. Hertfordshire County Council is working with 'Podback', the Pod Recycling Service, to bring this service to Berkhamsted.

Management options for dog fouling

Dog fouling is a problem for both landowners and visitors, including those with dogs. Managing dog fouling can improve the countryside and create safe, welcoming environments.

It's crucial for dog owners to clean up after their pets on farmland to protect animal health and maintain responsible access practices. It is not a case of just stick and flick!

Risks to Livestock:

Disease Transmission:

Dog faeces can contaminate pasture, feed, water, and bedding, leading to the transmission of parasites and diseases to livestock.

Bovine Neosporosis:

Dogs can shed oocysts of *Neospora caninum* in their faeces, which can infect cattle, potentially causing abortions.

Other Parasites:

Parasites in dog faeces can also infect sheep, leading to illness or even death.

Contamination:

Dog waste can contaminate grazing land, potentially affecting animal feed and water sources.

Membership Counts

Christopher Talbot-Ponsonby
membership@berkhamstedcitizens.org.uk

Our membership stands at 256 households. We welcome the 10 households who have joined this year.

A reminder will be sent to the 34 households who are up for renewal for 2025. We hope you still wish to remain members. If you don't, please let me know.

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

This is for a single year only unless you repeat it for extra years.

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

We understand the situation of those that do not have an email address or prefer not to use it. 25 newsletters are still printed.

Views expressed are not necessarily those of the Association.

Contributions to the Editor: Christopher Talbot-Ponsonby, 15 Shrublands Avenue, HP4 3JH

or via email to: membership@berkhamstedcitizens.org.uk

Published by the Berkhamsted Citizens Association © & Printed by Gemini Print Services tel: 871017