



# BERKHAMSTED CITIZENS

*The Heart of  
Berkhamsted*

## February 2017 Newsletter of the Berkhamsted Citizens Association

**Annual General Meeting** of the Berkhamsted Citizens Association will be held in the Great Hall of the Town Hall, Berkhamsted on **Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> March 2017 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 17<sup>th</sup> March 2016
- 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

*Only paid up members present at the AGM are eligible to vote!*

*Following the formal business of the night there will be a break for a visit to the bar, followed by:*

### **Environment Awards for 2016**

*There are 9 contenders for the Environment Award, all completed by the end of 2016. The sites are listed on the back page of the Newsletter. There will be a surprise speaker followed by an OPEN FORUM, which will round off the evening in a lively fashion.*

*Dear Members,*

*We have welcomed a number of new members over the last year; please all get to know each other. The more we work together the greater impact we can make on our town. As you can see we are planning a number of events to encourage bonding as a team – do come along. Please let me know if there is a burning issue on your mind that you would like us to address, I am always delighted to hear from members.*

*I would also like to know if there are any social events you would like us to organize. We are here to serve the town and facilitate what will make this an even better place to live!*

*I am working on a new web site, which I hope to have up and running very soon – meanwhile our Facebook page can be found under Berkhamsted Citizens Association if you search in Google. Our membership secretary Christopher will let you know when we soft launch the web site and we will welcome your comments, and any changes you would like to see made.*

*Chairman, Berkhamsted Citizens*

## Future events

The Chairman is proposing extra events throughout the year. Put the dates in your diary now.

### Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> April

Love your local food

### Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> May

Vision for Berkhamsted

### Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> September

Taverna Night

### Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> October

Berkhamsted Art in Action

### Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> December

Festive Party

The Town picnic on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> June on the Moor has had to be cancelled due to administrative arrangements.

*Paul Crosland*

### A Seat to Remember

This is not a story about an unforgettable Spanish car, but rather about the competition to design a seat (or seats) for the Rectory Lane Cemetery Project. Subject to approval of a final submission to the Heritage Lottery Fund and Big Lottery Fund, the Project should enter its delivery phase - i.e. works on site - in the first quarter of 2018.

The seat competition, organised on-line through a dedicated website, attracted entrants from around the world. The brief was to design a single seat or 'family' of eight seats, to be placed at various locations around the cemetery. Three additional seats – not part of the competition – are planned to be sited in a new Garden of Remembrance. There were fifty-two entries by the time the competition closed on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2016.

The selection of the winning entrants has been undertaken on three separate levels. A 'panel of experts' - comprising three Architects and the Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce - undertook a review first. The public had their say via an on-line poll which closed on 31<sup>st</sup> January and the Rectory Lane Project Board – with representatives from the Friends of St. Peter's charity, The PCC of St. Peter's, Berkhamsted Town Council and Dacorum Borough Council, will undertake their vote in February. The winners of the competition – who stand to win a cash prize and the pride of seeing their design concept delivered – will be notified during March, at which time the result will also be made public.

Dr. James Moir, convenor of the Rectory Lane Cemetery project, commented "the competition entries have been to a high standard, although not all can be considered as suitable for our cemetery. Whichever design is selected, I am

sure the seats will contribute greatly to the enhanced environment in the cemetery, providing a place at which to rest a while, and contemplate those who have contributed to the history of the town".

### Lower Kings Road Car Park update

The Planning Application for the Lower Kings Road car park was approved and signed-off by the Planning Authority (Dacorum Borough Council) just before Christmas – 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2016 to be precise. We understand that the procurement process for the delivery of the multi-storey car park is now under way. This being Berkhamsted, however, nothing is straightforward, and a group of residents and businesses has come together to mount a legal challenge - a judicial review – of the approval decision by Dacorum. The judicial review process is governed by a strict timetable and is not an 'opening up' of the Planning Application *per se*, but rather a review by a Judge to establish if the decision taken by Dacorum was lawfully made. Judicial reviews do not come cheap, however, and it remains to be seen how the various stages in the judicial process play out.

The construction of a multi-storey car park on the Lower Kings Road site has divided opinion in the town. Some people think that provision of more parking spaces is long overdue and the car park should just be built. There are those who argue that the £3 million cost of a multi-storey car park is money that could be better spent elsewhere, others who believe that more parking is needed but that building on the Lower Kings Road site will cause traffic gridlock in the town, and yet more who want more parking but consider the proposed car park design to be ugly and out of keeping with its location in the Conservation Area. Another view is that the planned layout of the car park is out-dated and fails to address the changes in car design which mean that the dimension of a 'standard' car parking bay are no longer adequate for today's vehicles. We wait to see what develops.

### Parking Forum

Berkhamsted Citizens has secured representation on the Town Council Parking Forum, which meets every couple of months. Your views on what is right and what is wrong with parking in Berkhamsted are needed. Should grass verges be paved over to provide more parking spaces, as is happening in Hemel? Should some amenity greens be sacrificed to allow for additional parking – perhaps with Grasscrete surfacing or Astroturf to maintain a green appearance? Please respond via the Chairman of the Townscape committee ([tasc@berkhamstedcitizens.org.uk](mailto:tasc@berkhamstedcitizens.org.uk)), or let the Chairman know your views.

## Townscape Committee

*Gordon Bluck*

Your Association continues to monitor all Berkhamsted and Northchurch planning applications under the stewardship of Christopher Talbot-Ponsonby and comments on your behalf as necessary. We try and conduct an even furrow by not objecting to simple extensions or domestic matters. Internally illuminated signs in the High Street have always been a “no no” There was a recent proposal at 181 High Street (HSBC) which has now been amended. As Chairman I have decided to stand down after over 25 years on the Committee and most of that as Chairman. Susan Johnson will replace me after the AGM and as you will know she is a safe pair of hands. I will continue as a Committee member of Townscape and resign from the Main Committee. Jenny Habib is standing down from this Committee having served us for many years and her profession as an architect and her position with the Chiltern Society has made her a wise councillor. We will miss her. We welcomed a new member, Karen Rattray and she had a positive contribution to make. Unfortunately her personal circumstances have meant attendance at meetings is difficult. We have suggested a sabbatical with her copied into the minutes. Sarah Caradec has proved an excellent new member having worked for the Victorian Society and has agreed to prepare the ever popular environment award presentation which will happen at the AGM. We have objected to a dropped kerb at 5 Shrublands Road as the plans involve extensive earthworks damaging the streetscape. Regarding Castle Wharf and the proposal to install new glazing, we have expressed the view that if installed, any works should be reversible to enable the building to return to commercial use. We are delighted that the Environment Award plaque has now been installed at Mariners. This was awarded at the March 2014 AGM. As our group has shrunk, we would welcome new members who are interested in planning and conservation. Meetings are once a month and last about an hour and a half in the evening. Please phone me on 873548.

## Paperless Planning

In a proposal that started at least 7 years ago, Dacorum Planning has finally gone paperless and plans will only be available to view online. The Town Council Planning Committee on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> March will be the last in which councillors will see hard copy plans.

Members of the public will only be able to view the plans online at home or at the library at:

[www.dacorum.gov.uk/planning](http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/planning)

They cannot be viewed at the Civic Centre.

The library is generally open for longer than the Civic Centre, including Saturday; but it is closed all day Thursday.

We expressed concerns at how this could work.

## Membership Counts

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

It is encouraging to note that membership has increased for the second year running. Our household membership currently stands at 385; an amazing 27 up on last year. Thank you to those who have renewed promptly. 71% of those due, have paid, leaving 58 subscriptions outstanding. A renewal slip will be enclosed for those still owing. As we are currently on the up, can membership reach 425 by our next AGM?

## Electronic notification

We must be doing something right! We continue to receive e-mails from members thanking us for notifying them on things that affect the town. Since our last Newsletter, we notified 58% of our members on several occasions, by e-mail, on things such as: the re-introduction of Southern Trains from Berkhamsted & Tring and the work of the Friends of St Peter's Cemetery. If you would like to be included in this service, please contact the Membership Secretary. E-mail addresses are kept confidentially.

Views expressed are not necessarily those of the Association

Contributions and comments to:  
*chairman@berkhamstedcitizens.org.uk*

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Of all the developments completed by the end of 2016, we have selected nine as contenders for the Environment Award.

They are, with a brief description:

70 (r/o) George Street



*Replace builder's yard with a 3 bed dwelling*

Giggling Squid, 296-298 High Street



*Refurbishment*

*This was the first BCA award in 1981 when it was Monks Cottage*

Celyn, Doctors Commons Road



*Demolition of two timber garages  
And construct one 4-bed dwelling*

David Case Pavilion, Chesham Road



*Replacement sports pavilion  
and new changing room block*

38 Kitsbury Road



*Replace front wall & piers;  
lay Victorian tiles on pathway*

21 South Park Gardens



*Two storey side and single storey rear extension*

17 Finch Road



*Part single, part two storey rear and side extensions*

14 Orchard Avenue



*Side and rear extensions; front landscaping;  
including removal of raised hardstanding*

16 Orchard Avenue



*Two storey side and single storey rear extensions*

Townscape members independently complete a scoring matrix on the basis of design, compatibility with the environment, quality of construction and benefit to the community. The selected developments are ranked, and the number of votes for each development is counted. The winner of the BCA Environment Award or, if they feel it appropriate, a Commendation, will be revealed at the Annual General Meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> March. Townscape may also decide that no development is worthy of an award or commendation. This year, views have also been received from members of the main committee.