



**Berkhamsted  
Citizens  
Association**

# NEWSLETTER

A U T U M N 1 9 7 3

## AROUND THE HALLS

The tale of our favourite dodo - the Town Hall - creeps slowly on. No firm decision from Dacorum. Unable to fix a demolition schedule. Can't accept offers for commercial leases. Disrepair too bad for temporary use. The Phoenix must wait. But we continue to apply pressure and suggest ways and means. We are at present collecting facts on the state of the building and shall be convening a special meeting soon to seek a way out of the dilemma. The U.D.C. has meanwhile been asked to keep us and other interested bodies in the picture.

Now for the hopeful news. As you may know, a lease on St. Peter's Hall has to be sold in order to raise money to restore and extend the Court House. The lease will be put to public tender - probably early in 1974. Planning permission has been given for the Hall's use for commercial purposes, and at least one local firm wants to tender. At the instigation of the Citizens' Association, a sub-Committee of the Community Council has been set up to try to retain the Hall for community purposes. Plans for submitting a tender are being drawn up. Application for grants has been made to the County Council and the U.D.C., and a public appeal will be launched probably in March 1974. If the Community Council is successful in its bid, it is hoped that there will be enough money available to make much-needed improvements and extend the Hall's equipment. It is planned that about half the Hall will be set aside for youth activities. Most people support St. Peter's in its Court House project; but it would be a great pity if this meant losing the Hall, with all its present usefulness and future potential.

## TOWN AND COUNTRY

With the production by the County Planning Officer of the final Berkhamsted Town Centre Map 1973, it is interesting to assess the value of the various study meetings held in January by the Citizens' Association. The public meeting held in December by the County Council in St. Peter's Hall, and the public exhibition, were merely exploratory. It was only with the four "mini-meetings" that true understanding began to take form. The Citizens' Association invited local experts to attend these meetings and many interested members of the public also came. Mr. Jed Griffiths from the County Council was there to answer questions and discuss informally, and his open-mindedness and good humour enabled both sides to learn a lot from each other.

What was very interesting was the way that ideas gradually got clarified, particularly with regard to the one-way road systems. Many of those present had answered the County Council questionnaire, and had voted in favour of the short term one-way system to the west of Lower Kings Road. It was only through discussion that it became apparent that little would be gained, until eventually there was a change of opinion.

In order to crystallise the major points and comments which arose in the meetings the Citizens' Association sent a memorandum to the County Council and also to the Berkhamsted Urban District Council in time for their meeting and decisions on the Town Centre Study. This has had its effect on the final plan; the short-term one-way system has been dropped, and the necessity for a car-park on the South side, the provision of hotel accommodation, walk-ways and canal-side development has been acknowledged.

The manner in which the County Council envisaged tapping public opinion by means of exhibition and a single meeting and questionnaire was proved to be inadequate. This

was mainly because this process did not allow people to think and argue through the proposals, but rather tended to encourage snap responses. The Citizens' Association, by providing time and the right atmosphere for adequate discussion of all facets, showed that this was a better method for public participation in planning. Because of its informality, it is also superior to the quasi-legal planning enquiry.

We, therefore, can feel that we have not only enabled the town to contribute in this particular case, but have set a pattern for future interactions between planners and people.

#### BY THE WATER -----

One of our canalside pubs calls its bitter "Grand Union". Well, the canal might taste all right, but it doesn't look too pretty at the moment. So we're going to do something about it. In the short term we shall be clearing away rubbish and weeds, and planting trees (donations and physical help, please!). We shall be asking local industry to co-operate in tidying their own canalside areas; for the long term, we hope soon to set up a joint Committee with the U.D.C. to ensure that their ambitious and long-overdue plans do not bite the Dacorum dust.

#### ----- AND IN IT

Have you ever been to Amersham swimming pool? Many of our citizens have. They go there because of the inadequacy of the changing facilities at Berkhamsted pool. We have written to the U.D.C. to see what improvements could be made, and we understand that they might consider using part of a special finance allocation recently offered to them by County. But more important than this is safety at the pool. Swimming nationally seems to be one of those areas where an accident is needed before precautions are taken. We don't want that to happen here and the U.D.C. Open Spaces Committee, at our instigation, have recently had serious discussions on possible improvements, and are seeking more information.

#### SAFE -----

Our representative brought up several points at the town's Road Safety Committee, and from these it was agreed that Greenway, Anglefield Road and Hilltop Road road markings should be improved. We were also concerned about the works being carried out by British Rail at the Station bridge. Whilst B.R. may be making the bridge safer for their trains they do appear to be making it more dangerous for pedestrians. We accept B.R.'s view that they cannot be expected to upgrade the condition of the roadway under their bridges but we see no reason why they should be permitted to downgrade it either. However, we have been assured that the footpath will remain.

#### ----- AND SOUND

According to our M.P., only residents of Little Gaddesden and Harpenden are still complaining to the authorities about aircraft noise. This is particularly disturbing in view of recent reports that Maplin might not get off the ground, which would almost certainly mean greater commercial use of Luton. If you object to the noise please 'phone or write to the Department of Trade and Industry. There will come a time when even shouting from the rooftops won't be heard.

#### THERE'S A BRANCH NEAR YOU

Or there could be, if you helped us with our tree-planting programme. Just hard labour this time - or good healthy exercise, depending on your frame of mind. We have offered to help with the planting of trees which are being given (yes - free) by County. If you would like to help, please ring Norman Binks at 6300.

LIBERATE A FOOTPATH!

Already we have 20 members covering footpaths in different areas, and reporting on progress. If you want to help to keep footpaths open, please 'phone us.

FUTURE EVENTS

Please make a note in your diary -

On Wednesday, 10th October, at 8 p.m. in the Gable Hall, Mr. Holman, the Chief Cataloguer at the National Film Archive, will be talking about his work, and answering questions. Plus the showing of one of his rare gems - "Paris 1900-1914". Coffee will be served after the film.

On Tuesday, 13th November at 8 p.m. in the Gable Hall, Mr. D. Miller (Senior Maths Master at the Boys' School) will be explaining "The New Maths". We guarantee you'll understand it. Coffee will be served at the end of the meeting

On Monday, 10th December, at 8 p.m. in the King's Hall, come and hear Antony Hopkins. We are expecting a large number of people at this meeting and we would like to ensure that seats are reserved for our own members who wish to attend. If you would like to come, please 'phone Beryl Edwards at 2013 in order that your seat can be reserved.

Our next walk - Sunday, 21st October at 2.30 p.m. will start from the intersection of Cross Oak Road and Shootersway. Parking has been arranged. The route is by way of Hockeridge Wood through to Ashley Green, then west towards Willow Wood Farm (with splendid views towards Hawridge) and down to the Vale of Chesham. It will continue to "Rossway", the home of Major Hadden-Paton for refreshments, and a shortish walk home via Marlin Chapel Farm and across the motorway line back on to Shootersway. So that we can arrange refreshments, we should be grateful for a phone call from you to say you're coming.

---

Chairman:	Alan Havelock, 7 Barncroft Road	2140
Vic a-Chairman:	Ken Sherwood, 42 Gaveston Drive	5158
Secretary:	Megan Peplow, 20 Millfield	3089
Mem. Secretary:	Beryl Edwards, Amberley, Graemesdyke Road	2013
Treasurer:	Stuart Rosser, Lloyds Bank Ltd.	71271
Committee:	Diana Allen, The Grey House, Kitsbury Road	5212
	Hilary Talbot-Ponsonby, Edgeworth House	5882
	Norman Binks, 22 Lombardy Drive	6300
	George Cameron, 34 Castle Hill Avenue	3774
	Peter Chadwick, Littledean, Castle Hill	4321
	Michael Day, Snelston, Shrublands Road	2716
	Roger Ford, Rosebank, Gravel Path	5027
	Max Hageman, 5 Murray Road	4670
	Ted May, 60 George Street	
	Ray Miles, 17 Ashridge Rise	
	Max Struthers, 51 Cedar Road	4345
	Peter Taylor, 84 Cross Oak Road	3277

-----

BUY 'BERKHAMSTED REVIEW' FOR REGULAR CITIZENS' NEWS