



**Berkhamsted
Citizens
Association**

NEWSLETTER

March 1983

1. Spring is Here

The Association's Year really begins in the early Spring, although much of our 'public' activities ie. meetings and talks, occurs in the Autumn and Winter period. The plans for this and the objectives for each year are developed in April / May at committee meetings soon after the Annual General Meeting. This was held as usual in February and well attended, but some years has been adversely affected by bad weather. Our Constitution called for AGM's to be held in January / February, but this has been changed by AGM resolution to February / March, thus allowing it to be held after the likely bad weather period. Just wait for a later winter in 1984! Another reason for holding the AGM slightly later is to allow more time for the accounts to be audited.

The public 'Activities' are normally completed by early April with no formal programme until the following September / October. The exception to this are the Spring and Autumn Rambles and occasional public meetings in Election Year. Maybe this will happen this year if the Prime Minister so decides. There will be local Council Elections and there may be a call for us to hold a 'Meet your Candidates' meeting. When a General Election is called we almost certainly will, as Berkhamsted will have new faces in the ring with Mick Lyell standing down, Robin Corbett (ex.M.P.) not standing and the new Parliamentary Constituency Boundary in operation. But all this brings us back to the Association's elections and the AGM.

2. Annual General Meeting

This was held on 15 February and attended by some 80 people. The current Chairman Guy Moores was nominated and elected for the normal second year and Norman Binks after two years as Chairman and one year as 'outgoing' Vice-Chairman reverted to Committee member status, with Norman Williams elected to be 'incoming' Vice-Chairman. The other elected officers of the Association are Sheila Walton - Secretary, Peter Braybrooke - Treasurer, and Hazel Ward - Membership Secretary. Details of telephone numbers and addresses are given at the end of this Newsletter. The Committee meets mostly on the first Thursday of each month with the exception of August.

In addition, there are two main sub-committees described as a) Town Amenities and b) Country Amenities with occasional sub-troupe to tackle specific matters. These meet every two months. The Autumn / Winter programme is planned by the Activities committee in Spring but after this generally does not meet again once this work is completed.

So that is the broad structure and clearly involves a lot of work behind the scenes. To ensure members are made aware of specific subjects these are reported on in the Newsletter issued five times a year ie. March, May, July, September, November, plus the Chairman's Report in January. In addition, we have a regular article in the monthly

Berkhamsted Review, which has a greater circulation. We do not know how many members buy (20p) the Review, but hope the majority do both to support the Parish Magazine and to obtain some interesting information about Berkhamsted Past, Present and Future.

3. Plans for the Future

These are not formally stated until the Chairman has discussed them with the Committee, but they will be referred to in the next Newsletter. Each year sees some new aims, and a continuation of older ones. Many of the items necessarily straddle two or three years because they are linked with encouraging local authorities to consider and act upon our suggestions. The Tree planting programme, development of Lower Kings Road site, Leisure Services, all have originated in action taken some three years ago and now appear to be coming to fruition. Other items such as footpath clearing and commenting on planning applications go on all the time.

The Activities programme last year included two Open Forum meetings including the AGM and as this is a deliberate facility to allow members to meet to discuss local issues and to be briefed in more detail, they will continue whilst they are supported.

4. The Town Hall

One cannot quite say that the end is in sight, because that would imply that the whole of the Town Hall would soon be in use, but it looks as if the shops and the Sessions Hall will be ready by the beginning of June. It is all very exciting!

When the interim Trustees took over from the Town Council in 1979 they believed it was possible to recreate a Town Hall for public use. This has resulted in a properly constituted Trust with representatives from local authorities, local bodies - such as the Citizens' Association and elected members. The new Trustees, so to speak, stuck their necks out in tackling the difficulties of this project. However, their faith and that of many helpers now looks like being justified. Much has been achieved slowly but surely and success looks in sight. Shop lettings are under way and the builders, Donald Lockhart, are getting on at a great rate, with some really beautiful brickwork among other things.

Money is still short, but the Half-Marathon and Fun Run on 6 March, organised by the Berkhamsted Rotary Club, will probably bring in about £3,000 which will go a long way towards furnishing the Sessions Hall for its opening this summer. Let us hope that the Assembly Hall can be completed before long together with the Museum and then our town will have its own community centre, created by the efforts of the townspeople. Almost like going back to the last century when it was built by public subscription. Who says history does not repeat itself?

5. Dacorum District Plan - Inspector's Report

This report has now been issued following the Public Inquiry on the published District Plan. It contains much of interest but a specific point concerns the line of the Amenity Corridor along the Common, and as relating to the Golf Club. Given our interest in this, it is appropriate to reprint in full the Inspector's comments.

Inspector's Conclusions

"I attach considerable weight to the Order giving the public access to the land controlled by the Trustees of the Berkhamsted Golf Club, including the area the subject of the proposed modifications. Quite clearly an agricultural operation involving ploughing and cropping would restrict public access. If treated as an agricultural asset and intensively grazed in such a way as to allow public access, then much of the bracken and undergrowth would disappear. I was impressed with what I saw on site of the attractive nature and layout of the existing course and its surroundings where the public are free to wander. The rights of access for air and exercise are, in my view, ones associated with a low intensity leisure activity and more in keeping with an Amenity Corridor than an Agricultural Priority designation.

In the interests of conservation and public access it rests with the Trustees of the Golf Club in consultation with recognised organisations to assess how best to manage the overgrown area. As to a second golf course, this is a matter upon which I can make no comment. It is for management of the Club to decide whether a revised application should be submitted and for the council to deal with it on its merits.

Inspector's Recommendation

I recommend that the proposed modification to the boundary of the Amenity Corridor as it relates to the land controlled by the Berkhamsted Golf Club be deleted."

The Dacorum Council can accept or reject the Inspector's recommendation. The final Plan will subsequently be published indicating which points have or have not been incorporated. If the recommendation regarding boundary of the Amenity Corridor is accepted, it means that the Golf Club land will remain in the Amenity Corridor ie. not be designated Agricultural priority areas which gives a slightly higher degree of 'protection' in planning terms but does not preclude use for certain types of leisure activities. Any objectors to the effects of a second Golf Course would not have this planning principle available to include in their objections.

6. Home and Car Protection

Our membership of the local Crime Prevention Committee has given us information on the rise in house and car burglary. The reports received also indicate how incredibly careless we all seem to be and this makes it easy, almost offering our homes and cars to be burgled. Many signs are given to villains such as leaving cars unlocked and / or leaving desirable goods open to view within the car. This is not a local but a national behaviour pattern, which the police are trying to remove by educating us to better habits. To help this, two pamphlets have been produced and we are attaching these to this Newsletter. We hope these may help you and your neighbours to prevent such activities. Extra copies can be obtained at the Library or Police Station.

7. Leisure Services

We have been active for some three years now in seeking improved facilities for the Town. This started with resistance to the proposals for closing the Open Air Pool, continued with comments on the Leisure Services Strategy and other means of recommending priorities. We have been particularly critical of the low amount of capital spending on new

facilities in the Town for many years, going back to the Urban District Council. There are signs of some improvement in this situation as plans have now been announced and finance approved for Civic Centre improvement and Canal Fields development. Following consultation with local councillors we have written to many local organisations to ensure adequate knowledge of these proposals and encouraging comments.

A synopsis of the proposals is given below.

1. Canal Field Area

This is the area from Park Street to the Open Air Swimming Pool.

- (a) Clearing / Cleansing of old Water Cress Beds.
- (b) Landscaping of land adjacent to Canal Towpath.
- (c) Improvement of footbridge from St. Johns Well Lane to Canal.
- (d) Building of Climbing Frame.
- (e) Building of Footbridge connecting St. Johns Well Lane carpark. to that in front of Swimming Pool.
- (f) Provide access steps from Park Street Canal Bridge on to Canal Towpath.
- (g) Provision of Bowling Green at North East corner of Canal Fields.
- (h) Maintenance of Open Air Pool indefinitely.

Budget Amount - £160,000 to be spent between 1983 and 1985

2. Civic Centre

- (a) Improved Décor and carpeting of Entrance Corridor.
- (b) Provision of Larger Stage.
- (c) Increased Seating area 160 to 260.
- (d) Lighting and sound facilities improved.
- (e) Replacement and improvement of seating.

Budget Amount - £160,000 to be spent between 1983 and 1984

3. Ashlyns School

- (a) Provision of new Sports Hall. Size?
- (b) Provision of New 25 metre Swimming Pool.

No Budget provision to date.

8. Committee Members

Tel.

Chairman - Guy Moores	-	44 Gaveston Drive	6783
Vice-Chairman - Norman Williams	-	Brecon, Castle Hill Ave.	5291
Hon. Secretary - Sheila Walton	-	11 Murray Road	5988
Hon. Treasurer - Peter Braybrooke	-	16 Castle Hill Ave.	4955
Hon. Membership Secretary - Hazel Ward	-	Red Lodge, Graemesdyke Rd.	5604
Norman Binks	-	123 High Street, Northchurch	6300
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Valerie Clark	-	329 Bridgewater Rd. Northchurch	01-240-2771
Miranda Cummins	-	27 North Road	6075
Tony Hutchinson	-	5 Trevelyan Way	4440
Bruce Nixon	-	2 Castle Hill Ave.	4856
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Pauline Parsons	-	5 Bridge Street	6084
Jane Osborne	-	Longmead, Meadway	5010
Derek Smith	-	c/o Nucleus House, Lower Kings Rd.	6926
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