

The Citizen



Newsletter of the Berkhamsted Citizens Association
Working for the social and civic life of our community

March 2006

Annual General Meeting

NOTICE is hereby given that the 81st Annual General Meeting of the Berkhamsted Citizens Association will be held in the Wellcome Great Hall of the Town Hall, Berkhamsted, on **Thurs 23th March 2006 at 8 pm.**

Nominations for the posts of Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Hon. Treasurer, Hon. Secretary, Hon. Membership Secretary, Independent Examiner and Committee Members should be submitted to the Hon. Secretary (Miranda Cummins, 27 North Road, Berkhamsted, HP4 3DU) 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 last AGM
3. Chairman's Report
4. Treasurer's Report
5. Election of Officers
6. Election of Committee Members
7. Appointment of Independent Examiners
8. Any other business

Following coffee:

BCA Environment Awards 2005

There were a number of nominations for the Environment Award for the year 2005 representing a wide variety of entries. The selected short list below, will be illustrated at the award presentation prior to the winners being announced.

55/57 High St., Northchurch
21 Swing Gate Lane, Berkhamsted
Newbury Grove, Kings Road, Berkhamsted
2A Ridgeway, Berkhamsted
16 - 18 Ashlyns Rd., Berkhamsted
46 & 48 Charles St., Berkhamsted
152 George Street, Berkhamsted
Barnett House, 144 High St., Northchurch
1a Billet Lane, Berkhamsted
'Voelas', Dr Commons Rd., Berkhamsted
'Gatsbys' within The Rex Cinema, High St., Berkhamsted

New Development
New House
Gated Development
New House
Three New Houses
Loft Conversion
New Garage and Extension
New Development
Two 1-bed flats
New Garage and walling etc.
New Restaurant

Open Forum

Finally there will be an Open Forum in which members will be able to ask questions and make comments. It is hoped that as many members as possible will stay to make this a lively end to the proceedings!

The present committee would warmly welcome other members to join them and look forward to additional nominations for committee members.

Prior to the meeting, our Speaker will be Zena Bullmore of the Dacorum Hospital Action Group.

Activities Sub-Committee

Rita Jones - Chairman reports:

About 20 people enjoyed the Traditional New Year's Day Walk to Cholesbury and back, an excellent start to 2006. We do hope you will join Bill Willett on the Midsummer Walk on Sunday, July 2nd. (see separate report).

A very enjoyable 'Seasonal Celebration', the Burns' Night Supper on January 21st, followed this success. The Haggis was ceremonially piped in by Stuart Latto, who, later in the evening, entertained us with a Scottish Medley. The Haggis was then rousingly addressed by Alistair Cuthbertson. Ceremonies over, we enjoyed a very good meal provided by Carol Warren and her team and the evening was cheered along by the Jolly Jazzers. Most people stayed on after the 10pm Auld Lang Syne and, since then, several people have suggested that the dinner should be repeated next year, which must indicate something. However it was so nearly a failure. There were only 50 tickets to sell and, in spite of a poster in Bookthrift after Christmas, we had sold fewer than half the tickets, with only 2 weeks to go. Too many people would have been let down had we cancelled, so up went the posters and many of the committee spent time rallying round friends, members or not. We finally sold 49 tickets, but about half only were to members and almost half of these were Committee members. For more than 20 years this has been the main social event for members and it is really discouraging that it is now so poorly supported.

As I write, posters are up for Phil Pennington's talk on 'Wildlife and the Boxmoor Trust' on February 8th and when you read it, the talk will be over, an interesting evening I hope.

The season ends with a welcome return visit by Nick Siney of Dunton Brothers, on Thursday, April 6th, as usual at 8pm in the Sessions Hall. He will give his postponed talk on 'Bricks: Restoring the Past'.

Finally, I should like to thank everyone who helped to make the winter events such a success.

Our Chairman adds:

What the above fails to mention is the enormous amount of work Rita put into the preparations. The idea was hers, and she found the venue, enthused the committee, arranged all the bookings and masterminded the planning with her usual meticulous attention to detail. As I was delighted to say on the night, everything about the evening which was a success (which was practically everything) was thanks to Rita.

New Year's Day Ramble –

a short report by Christine Manning

This year I went on my first New Year's Day ramble under the leadership of Bill Willett, who turned out to be a fountain of knowledge not just about the route but every site and building we passed! We were treated at every turn with snippets of local history, including amongst other things, the establishment of the Metropolitan Line.

It was a damp but not unpleasant day though rather wet underfoot. We were a motley group – certainly not all hardened walkers as I had expected and of all ages, including a dog or two!! The route took us up through Berkhamsted using pathways that I did not know existed, to the top of Shootersway. Thereon we travelled through Pancake Wood and then via Hog Lane and the Chesham Vale and Hawridge up to our lunch halt at the Full Moon pub in Cholesbury, which was unfortunately absolutely packed but very jolly!

I forgot to count our number but reckon that we were around twenty five in all. Some of the less hardy left us after lunch to cadge a lift back home with friends, but they were replaced by a few others who joined us to do the homeward journey, which was a lot quicker taking a straight route across country to Rossway and Shootersway so as to get back before dark. I'm not quite sure how long the whole route was, perhaps about nine miles there and back, but it didn't seem that far because I didn't stop chatting all the way!!

I have to say that the day made a wonderful start to the New Year., and the time went very quickly. Walking's a very sociable occupation and I met lots of new people who I now seem to be bumping into all the time. A big thank you to Bill – I for one, am now looking forward to the Summer Ramble to Aldbury on 2nd July when I shall try to remember my camera and binoculars. I hope that there will be lots of Members joining us as I know that you will not be disappointed.



Just to remind you that the 'winter' promised, didn't actually arrive - in case you forgot what it looks like.

Chairman's Column

Our Chairman writes:

Those attending the forthcoming AGM will be able to read my report containing something of what the Association has done this year. However, even I do not know all that committee members and officers manage to do for the benefit of our town. I am also conscious that other members (particularly the families and friends of the committee) are actively promoting the well-being of the Association.

I know that some former members felt membership had lost its point when increasing age or infirmity precluded attending our public meetings. Can I therefore take this opportunity to point out that our members give us our strength in our representative functions. Even a full house at the Town Hall only represents a small proportion of the total membership, and many of our members never come to a meeting. However, their support is still valuable. If you are considering cancelling your subscription, may I encourage you to keep it up.

As I approach the end of my second spell of two years in office, I am pleased to take this opportunity to thank everyone for what they do.

Your committee hope as many of you as possible will be at the AGM. If you have not come to one of our meetings before, do make yourself known to one of the committee members.

GRAHAM SPITTLE

Editorial

Norman Cutting has his say (again)

Once again a lot is going on and not enough space or time to fit it all in. We are quietly (pardon?) helping with raising the awareness of 'our Hospital' by posting information on our web site, indeed, we are lucky to have Zena Bullmore of the Dacorum Hospital Action Group to say a few words at this years AGM. We are hoping that as many members (and their friends) come to get the latest information. Several committee members will be available to answer questions and gather queries to be followed up later during the Open Forum.

Along with Lindy Foster-Weinreb, we helped raise concerns over Bridgewater Wharf and the Stag Lane Development still needs our input via Gordon Bluck (chairman of our Town Amenities Sub-Committee) to help ensure that an unsuitable development does not take place.

As I write, the Borough Council has circulated a 'consultation notice' regarding a small piece of land between the High Street and Water Lane. The attached map includes the Water Lane Car Park and Tesco and the consultation will be to see if it is suitable for 'retail development'.

You will not be surprised to hear that I flagged this 'opportunity' up last year and a senior Borough Council source informed me:

'You say that the Water Lane car park will be used to build an expanded Tesco. This is not true. There are no plans to do anything with the Water Lane car park.'

For the latest on everything we get up to - and more - visit our web site:
www.berko.org.uk/bca

No internet? Get in touch and I'll sort out some 'hard' copy for you.



Town Hall Garden



When it rains, don't use your car!

Town Amenities Sub-Committee

Gordon Bluck, TASC Chairman reports:

The Town Amenities Sub-Committee main job at this time of year is to refine the short list of contenders for the annual Environment Award which as you know has been lead for many years by the late David Brunt and it will be much more difficult without his guiding hand.

This year we have considered 11 developments and a list appears elsewhere in the newsletter. This year John Cook will take the slides and I will do my best to present the results at the AGM.

On planning matters we objected to the proposed new dwellings at the Bridgewater Boats site on the basis that the loss of the site to housing should not be accepted until all possible options to retail/develop the site with British Waterways and English Heritage. If this has not happened within 6 months the site should not be left in its present form. If a development goes ahead it must be in keeping with this important area. The plans, since rejected, do not do this.

Norman Binks represented the Association on the Berkhamsted Canal Partnership with Town and Borough Council and British Waterways representatives and had a recent meeting and it was decided the signs along the canal are to be refurbished. We have also objected to the standard of design of the proposed bridge connecting Lagley House in Douglas Gardens.

The next major thing coming up is the proposals to build 150 dwellings at the Stag Lane site, 50 of which will be Housing Association properties. Our committee has not had a chance to discuss the plans but I have seen them and on a personal note most of the development is frankly ugly.

Having spoken to the planners at the Borough Council they are unimpressed and I would urge all members to have a look and make their own observations to the council. As a final note we will be discussing soon the discussion paper "A Future Berkhamsted" issued by the Town Council and would welcome any input from members.

Contributions to:

The Citizen

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Web site: <http://www.berko.org.uk/bca>

Edited and compiled by Norman Cutting

GRAHAM GREENE at the REX

Susan Johnson writes:

I am delighted to say that one of the film screenings of the Graham Greene Festival this year will be at "possibly Britain's most beautiful cinema" (those are the FT's and the Daily Telegraph's words, not mine – but I'm not going to disagree).

The GG Festival in 2006 will be from Wednesday evening 27th September (the Literary Quiz at Ashlyns in aid of the Hospice – very popular on its first outing last year) through to Sunday 1st October. On the Thursday evening 28th the film will be at **The Rex** and we hope it will be 'The Honorary Consul', if a suitable print can be found. This is courtesy of James Hannaway, to whom we are indebted. It is a first for both our organisations and, we hope, the beginning of a successful partnership. Tickets for the Festival, including the films, will go on sale in the summer. Watch out for the programme launch.

I trust you have all tried the Rex already. If not, I assure you it is a treat. Comfortable, sumptuous, spacious, and no popcorn - a place for grown-ups. Please go along and try it.

There is one downside – it is now so popular with audiences far and wide that tickets have to be bought very promptly. See you there!

The Rex Tel: 01442 877759 Box Office open Mon - Sat 10.30 a.m. to 6 p.m. www.therexcinema.com



The Bulbourne at its 'best' and 'worst'



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Views expressed are not necessarily those of the Association

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