



February 2013

The Citizen

Newsletter of the Berkhamsted Citizens Association

Working for the social and civic life of our community

Annual General Meeting

NOTICE is hereby given that the 88th Annual General Meeting of the Berkhamsted Citizens Association will be held in the Great Hall of the Town Hall, Berkhamsted on

**Thursday 14th March 2013
at 8 p.m.**

Nominations for the posts of:

- Chairman,
- Vice-Chairman,
- Hon. Treasurer,
- Hon. Secretary,
- Hon. Membership Secretary and
- 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 8th March 2012
- 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
- 8 Any other business

The present Committee would warmly welcome other members to join them, and look forward to additional nominations for committee members. The six-weekly Committee meetings last for around two hours, and we have in addition a regular sub-committee. The Town Amenities Sub-Committee (TASC) works hard to try to ensure that changes made to the built and general environment, both in Berkhamsted and Northchurch, are for the better. It meets monthly. We would also like to 'resurrect' the Activities & Publicity Sub-Committee, which would meet as and when required to plan and organise a programme of talks, walks and other events. It often did most of its business on email or phone. There are members who serve on the sub-committees who are not on the main Committee. This arrangement suits those who have a particular interest. All meetings are held in committee members' homes. In addition the BCA is represented on a number of local bodies such as the Berkhamsted Arts Trust, Town Hall Trust and the Friends of St Peter's. There is something for everybody's interests when you join the BCA Committee; and a way to involve yourself in public life.

Following the formal business of the night there will be a short break to include wine or soft drinks and nibbles, courtesy of the Association. Then the following:

Environment Awards 2012

There were a number of contenders for the Environment Award, covering a wide variety of development and all completed by the end of 2012. The selected sites to be illustrated are listed in the pages of this newsletter.

Guest Speaker

Our speaker that evening will be John Highmore, the volunteers' co-ordinator of the Canal & River Trust (CART), formerly British Waterways.

Open Forum This will finish proceedings, we hope in a lively fashion.

Views expressed are not necessarily those of the Association.

Contributions and comments to: Katy Brookes-Duncan 58 Woodlands Avenue HP4 2JQ or k.b-d@hotmail.co.uk

Published by the Berkhamsted Citizens Association ©
Printed by Strongs Printing Services tel: 878592

Environment Award 2011

Paul Crosland

Berkhamsted has not been immune from the recession in the construction industry, and this is reflected in a reduced number of developments being considered for the Environment Award this year. Paradoxically, the number of Planning Applications made in the past twelve months has increased by around ten per cent compared with 2011. The majority of permissions are, however, mainly for domestic-scale extensions, alterations and small works (including landscaping and tree pruning). That said, the contenders for the Environment Award this year span a number of building types - single residences, an apartment block, a new entrant on the High Street, a new landmark on the canal, the refurbishment of the station and a refreshment facility at our community football club.

The full list that TASC considered are as follows, with a brief description :-

- **Berkhamsted Station upgrade**, Lower Kings Road, Berkhamsted HP4 2AJ
Works to the ticket hall, platform canopies and the connecting passageway.
- **'Brasserie Blanc'**, 262 High Street, Berkhamsted, HP4 1AQ
Refurbishment of High St. frontage and addition of new rear extension.



An improvement on Magoo's?

- **11 Bank Mill**, Berkhamsted, HP4 2ER
New house on constricted site adjacent to railway line.
- **The Paul Beard Centre at BerkoAstro**, Ashlyns School, Berkhamsted, HP4 3AE
Conversion of dilapidated school outbuilding into refreshment facility for Berkhamsted Raiders CFC.
- **Castle Wharf Boatyard development**, Bridge Street, Berkhamsted, HP4 2EB
Construction of one 4-bedroom house and two additional houses on site of canal-side boat builders and repairers.
- **'Compton'**, Ivy House Lane, Berkhamsted, HP4 2PP
Demolition of existing house and building of new 4-bedroom executive home.

- **5A Castle Hill Close**, Berkhamsted, HP4 1HR
New 4-bedroom executive-style home.
- **'The Glebe'**, Chesham Road, Berkhamsted
Demolition of existing house and construction of 12 x 2-bedroom apartments
- **'Orchard House' & 'The Old Orchard'**, Rectory Lane, Berkhamsted, HP4 2DH
Demolition of existing house and construction of two new 5-bedroom houses, behind the Rectory Lane cemetery.
- **'Spring Meadow'**, Shootersway, Berkhamsted, HP4 3ND
Construction of new detached house near to junction with Cross Oak Road.
- **12 West Road**, Berkhamsted, HP4 3HT
Side and rear extension to existing property.
- **16 and 16A West Road**, Berkhamsted, HP4 3HT
Demolition of existing house and building of a pair of semi-detached houses.

The Sub-committee members independently complete a scoring matrix on the basis of design, compatibility with environment, quality of construction and benefit to the community. After ranking their selections, the number of votes for each development are counted. The winner of the BCA Environment Award, or, if the Sub-committee feel it appropriate, a Commendation, will be revealed at the BCA Annual General Meeting on 7th March. The Sub-committee may also decide that no development is worthy of an award or commendation.

New Lodge, Mill Bank Lane

The clearing of the site for a housing development has revealed the 17th century building which hasn't been visible for a number of years. This gorgeous but derelict building will be renovated and divided into four flats. The BCA commented on the planning applications to ensure the development was more acceptable to local residents.



CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

Katy Brookes-Duncan

This time I'd like to write about roads, pavements and street lights this time. I don't want to jinx it as I'm writing this on 21 January and there is plenty of winter to go but Herts CC seem to have got the gritting of the roads right this year. I live near a bus route and have been aware of the gritting lorry going up or down the hill several times a day, even in the early hours of the morning. Well done chaps!

Not so well done on the street lights though! I've noticed the street lights going off as early as 23:45 hrs and as late as 00:15 hrs. As you might have gathered I am rather accident prone but after breaking my ankle falling off a step last summer I am more cautious than before. In October 2011 I tripped in a pothole hidden in the shadow of a car parked on a pavement. On that occasion I only broke a decent bottle of Sancerre, the skin on my right knee and my dignity! However, now I ensure I plan my walk home from the Town or the station so that I'm not caught half way up the hill with no street lighting but when you don't know when the lights will go off that is difficult. My message to the County's Councillors is that you set an agreement with the electorate that the street lights would be turned off between 00:00 and 06:00; please honour it. If you have noticed this phenomenon and have comments or concerns please get in touch.

Finally pavements. Unless it is just laid snow, icy pavements are horrible to navigate on foot and even more horrible on the steep hills around the Town. Even before I broke my ankle and became more mobility conscious, I was out as soon as possible clearing a decent pathway from my front door to the pavement and along the pavement in front of my property. Before you think 'it's alright for her'; I clear over 20ft of pathway and thirteen steps on my property and 30ish ft on the street. Over the years I've discovered the best process is to use a snow shovel to clear as much snow as possible. Then use a stiff-bristled broom to sweep away any remaining snow. Finally grit the cleared areas (I'm so obsessive I have a hand held spreader for the task!). You will find that a light sprinkling of snow won't settle and even if the snow does settle it is much easier to clear a second time.

Many people have said to me they are afraid to clear the pavement in case someone slips and sues them. However, Eric Pickles, the Minister for Communities and Local Government, has reminded people that they would not be subject

to legal action under health and safety laws if they used common sense to clear a pavement or help grit a path. Wouldn't it be neighbourly if we all cleared a little bit of the pavement so no one had to fear walking into Town when their road is not gritted? If you are unable to do it yourself perhaps you could ask a younger neighbour to help. If you know someone who can't clear their pathways then that is a very good reason to offer to do so and check they are coping with the cold.

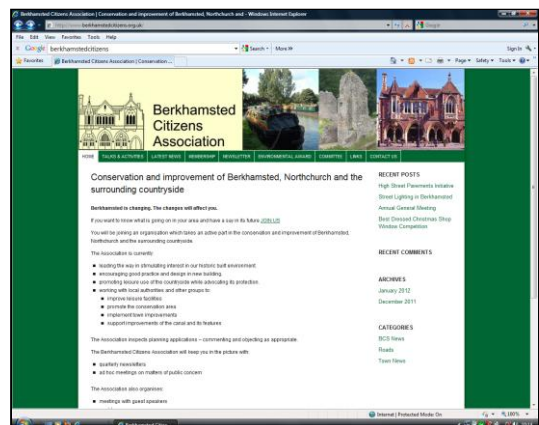
To end my column I have a request to everyone... If you live in the Town please only toboggan or sledge down what are usually grassy slopes! Common sense? Apparently not! I see many young children sledging down our hill or parents dragging children on their sledge up hill on the pavement. The ice run that is left behind is quite scary for those of us less steady on our feet. Still, my darker side finds digging a clear patch of Tarmac to interrupt their icy run a satisfying revenge! ;-)

Finally we have a plea, as we had last year! **We need new Committee members;** particularly people willing to help with jobs. Please consider joining us! It's not too onerous if activities are shared out. And you get to be involved in everything that's going on in the town. We have a wide remit!

BCA's Website and Facebook Page

Don't forget to check our website page where we post news as we hear it. We have also added a FB page to our communications armoury! If you use FB please 'like' our page and post on our wall any views you have or anything you think we need to know about.

www.berkhamstedcitizens.org.uk
www.facebook.com/#!/BerkoCitizensAssociation



Town Amenities Sub-Committee

Paul Crosland, Chairman

TASC has been busy and not just focused on the Environment Award.

The Community Infrastructure Levy

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a new charge, to be imposed by Dacorum Borough Council (DBC), on new developments, including new and rebuilt domestic dwellings, for raise funds for use on infrastructure to support the growth of the borough. The CIL will initially run alongside section 106 payments, but will ultimately supersede these. The preliminary draft charging schedule is published for consultation from until 12 March 2013 and can be seen on the DBC website. The proposals for CIL have been published for public consultation, and the consultation period closes on 12 March 2013. There is a link to the CIL pages on the Citizens Association website, www.berkhamstedcitizens.org.uk.

The latest stage of the CIL project was reported to DBC Cabinet last November, at which time the levy tariffs were agreed by Cabinet. In short, CIL will apply to all new developments for which a charge will be levied (noting for example that commercial developments such as offices and industry, there is a zero charge) on the net additional floor space created – a developer will only pay CIL on new floor space, so for example if there is a proposal for 3 new homes of 150 square metres each (i.e. 450 square metres in total) which replace one home of 200 sq m, CIL is payable only on the gain of 250 sq m.

Except for substantial extensions, most extensions to domestic properties are exempt. However, proposals for single new dwellings will be liable.

The Friends of St. Peters, Great Berkhamsted

A new organisation, called the 'Friends of St. Peters, Great Berkhamsted', is being set up with the aims of preserving, renovating and improving the fabric of the church of St. Peter's, Great Berkhamsted and its churchyards, including the Rectory Lane cemetery. The intention is that the new body will be formed as a Trust, and registered as a charity. There will be a launch meeting on Wednesday the fifteenth of May in the Court House. Please do come along !

The BCA, SYBRA and BRAG

Apologies for the proliferation of acronyms, but doubtless you will have seen, and may have become members of, local groups which have been set up, such as Save Your Berkhamsted Residents Association (SYBRA) and Berkhamsted Residents Action Group (BRAG). These groups were initially set up in response to single issues which arose in the town, for example the proposal to build houses on the Egerton Rothesay site in Durrants Lane in the case of SYBRA, and the 'South Berkhamsted

Concept', the 800 – 1,000 homes between Hall Park, Swing Gate Lane, Ashlyns Hall and Shootersway. BRAG in particular has spent much time, effort and money on formulating submissions to the Dacorum Borough Council Core Strategy hearings in the autumn of last year. The resources allocated by BRAG, for example, in hiring consultants, are far in excess of what the Citizens Association has at its disposal. The BCA offers support to these groups where it feels it can do so, where these are of benefit to the community, which is in line with the BCA's constitution. If you have any queries in this regard, please feel free to contact the Chairman.

Sugar Lane

Sugar Lane - which runs between Long Green, where Swing Gate Lane crosses the A.41, and the west end of Bourne End – has been re-graded and re-surfaced by Herts Highways recently and now provides a good surface for walking in all seasons. The Lane is a 'Byway open to all traffic' or BOAT which means that motorised traffic is permitted to use it. There are notices in place which request users to off-road vehicles to use the Lane 'considerately'. Please advise the BCA if you come across inconsiderate use of Sugar Lane or, indeed, of any other rights of way in and around the town.

Be heard!

As always if you have any comments about developments or amenities in the Town please let me know at peejaycee@yahoo.com

BCA Activities

Susan Johnson

Our New Year's Day Walk was a great success (14 human walkers and a dog). The weather was beautiful too. As I write now we are several inches into snow; also beautiful but inconvenient.

Our talk on Thursday 7th February was on *The Berkhamsted Games 2012* which was a delightful tour through our very own mini Olympics held at Bridgewater School last summer. Louise Collins, who was herself an Olympian and Chair of the organising Committee spoke passionately about the event. Louise competed in the 200m at the Soeul Olympics but broke her ankle 3 weeks before the Olympics in Barcelona. Louise says that the character she developed in her sporting life has helped her since.

The voluntary and business support that enabled the Berkhamsted Games last year characterised

the seven Olympic and Paralympic values. Berkhamsted was unique in having such an event! Children from the 10 state schools in Berkhamsted had an amazing day that will no doubt leave them a lasting legacy. Find out more at: <http://berkhamstedgames2012.co.uk/>

Activities Forward Look

Our next event is the AGM and Environment Awards evening on Thursday 14th March. Our speaker that evening will be John Highmore, the volunteers' co-ordinator of the Canal & River Trust (CART), formerly British Waterways. A very full, entertaining and interesting evening!

The final talk of this season will be given, we hope, by a special guest on Thursday 11th April. Watch for posters and our website! All talks take place in the Town Hall and start at 8 p.m. Tell your friends and neighbours!

Finally there is a summer Ramble on Sunday 30th June at 10.30 a.m. from the station.

As you are aware, the Activities Sub-Committee which used to organise these events does not exist at present, due to lack of volunteers. If we do not have some new volunteers to help with this task by the next AGM, the activities side of the BCA may disappear, with the exception of the AGM and the walks, by July 2013; which would be a shame. I know it is something that the membership holds dear and enjoys enormously; and it often introduces us to new members. So think urgently about how you could help! Please, get in touch with the Chairman as soon as possible; or on the night of the AGM. Your Association needs you!

Membership Counts

Christopher Talbot-Ponsonby
christopher@talbot-ponsonby.org

A big welcome to our 2 new members who have joined since the last newsletter. They were both recruited on a recommendation from an existing member. This means our household membership is 353, nearly fifty down on this time last year. Surely we can sink no lower? It is 100 lower than it was 30 years ago. We did get up to 611.

As we have consistently said "joining is not just going to meetings, or receiving newsletters, but it is to help us have an influence in having a say." It is therefore very important that we maintain our membership because if it continues to fall we may no longer be listened to.

There are currently 73 members with outstanding subscriptions. If you are one of them, a reminder will be enclosed with this newsletter. Thank you to

the 74 members who have paid as a result of the renewal notice enclosed with the last Newsletter.

You know what the Citizens Association does. Please ask a friend and or a neighbour if they are members. If not encourage them to join by sending me £5 along with their name and address. It would be marvellous if we can get it back to the same level as it was when the last renewal notices went out (396).

Finally, on behalf of the Committee, I would like to say a very big thank you to all the deliverers, which we are apt to take for granted for both delivering and on many occasions, collect the subscriptions as well. It makes my life all that more easy. Several have certainly been doing it for 30 years, when my mother was Membership Secretary!

Electronic Newsletter

Would you like to be among the growing band of members to receive this Newsletter electronically (pdf), which we started last year? By getting it this way, members receive it in advance of other members and in colour!

If interested please let me know. E-mail addresses will be maintained confidentially by the BCA. They will not be disclosed to other members or made available to third parties under any circumstances. The newsletters are of course sent out as blind copies.

The Canal in the Snow!

