

Minutes of the
FORTY SIXTH ANNUAL ASSEMBLY
of the
BERKHAMSTED TOWN MEETING

Held in the Great Hall, Berkhamsted Town Hall
on
THURSDAY 14 March 2019
at 7.30 pm

PRESENT:

Council Members

Cllr S Beardshaw (Town Mayor);
Cllr B Newton (Deputy Town Mayor);
Cllr A Armytage;
Cllr D Collins;
Cllr E Collins;
Cllr G Corry;
Cllr F Earl;
Cllr J Jones;
Cllr I Reay;
Cllr T Ritchie;
Cllr G Stevens;

Members of the public

Over 145 members of the public were present

Officers

Mrs J Mason – Town Clerk
Mrs J Harley – Deputy Town Clerk

1. Welcome from the Town Mayor, Councillor Sue Beardshaw.

Cllr S Beardshaw, Town Mayor, thanked members of the public for their attendance and extended a warm welcome to everyone present. She was delighted to introduce Mr R Prendergast, President, Berkhamsted Rotary, whom she would now join in presenting The Rotary Club of Berkhamsted Bulbourne Centenary Civic Awards (Senior and Junior) for 2019.

Mr Prendergast introduced the recipients, Mrs P Perry who would receive the Senior Civic Award, and Ms N Mannell, who would receive the Junior Award. Prior to the presentation, he paid tribute to both recipients as follows:

PENNY PERRY.

"This year the nomination for the Senior Award is Penny Perry. Penny does outstanding work for the benefit of many young people in Berkhamsted, in her role as Coordinator of the Swan Youth Project where she has been working since 2014. She is

the Manager, responsible for the staffing and smooth running of the centre and reports to the Trustees of the Swan Charity. Many people know where the Swan premises are, but may not be aware of what is being achieved there. It is Penny's skill, enthusiasm and drive that help young people there, to make real progress in their own development.

She is trained in Empowering Learning - which is about supporting people with learning difficulties. She also has a Masters degree in Linguistic Programming; and is currently studying for a Psychology degree.

In addition, Penny is a mother of 3 children who have all benefitted from the centre.

The aims of the Swan Youth Project are:

- to provide excellent youth services in the heart of Berkhamsted.
- to provide a safe and fun-space that every young person can enjoy.
- to offer a range of activities, support, and opportunities that can help young people to broaden their horizons "

The Centre is run for all in the age group of 12 to 18 years and is open every week-day in term time.

The Swan provides:

- Support and Mentoring – the centre is free of drugs, smoking and alcohol and Penny makes sure that the young are helped to understand the dangers of drugs and over-use of alcohol; time is found to discuss the importance of relationships; of sexual health and the value of citizenship .
- Creative Learning - is encouraged in the Arts, Music, and Drama and here the young people benefit from Penny's experience of running Berkhamsted Youth Theatre. There is a recording studio with drum-kit, electric guitars, and keyboards.
- there is a wide range of indoor leisure activities – video making is popular; and out of doors skateboarding and skateboard training feature prominently. The young people get involved in Fundraising, and events such as the Annual Duck Race on the canal, which raised £3,000 last year.

There are also some preventative objectives too; reducing Unemployment; improving the take up of Education ; reducing substance abuse and cutting crime and anti-social behaviour.

Most importantly however, what we are recognising today is the way in which Penny runs the Centre with seamless precision. The young people are given a sense of ownership and responsibility for the place and its activities.

She has a wonderful empathy with them and a feeling for what each young person requires of the Swan. She has the ability to help them to flower and develop the positive aspects of their abilities and personalities, without overpowering them.

Penny has created "a safe place to be "for those going through the difficulties of moving from childhood to teenage life. She shows them the respect of knowing that they are our community of tomorrow. Her training in life-coaching, enables her to help those who are coping with difficulties in their lives, or for whatever reason, have lost their way .

Penny , your invaluable way of working and helping these young people in this Town is – admirable .

We are delighted to be able to make this award to you."

NATASHA MANNELL

"Natasha was until recently a pupil of Ashlyns School and has been going to the Swan Youth Project for 3 years now.

During that time, she has developed her skills and knowledge and her willingness to help others. She is now the most active and supportive young volunteer member.

She has developed her communicating skills, standing up and speaking for The Swan at community events. She spoke at this Annual Town meeting last year.

She participates in many of the Swan activities : a YouTube of the club's "World of Work" project was a notable achievement; she is an active member of the music group as a pianist and singer and has performed at the annual Berkofest event; she is the Group's "go to " photographer, recording the main activities of the club. Whenever a project is proposed, Natasha can be relied on to jump up with a ready offer of help, and to go the extra mile. This readiness to help has become more evident as she has developed and matured – so that she now commands the respect of her peers - and undertakes peer mentoring.

Natasha is interested in developing further in community volunteering - and plans to apply through Community Action Dacorum for the European Volunteering Programme .

Natasha, we are pleased to recognise all that you have achieved at The Swan Youth Project – and we hope that this Award will encourage you to go on to further success in your chosen vocation."

Both recipients were delighted to be honoured in this way and received their awards to very enthusiastic applause.

2. To receive apologies for absence.

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr P Matthews; Cllr C Green; Mr J Shapland; Ms C Manning and Fr S Vivian.

3. To receive and confirm the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 26 April 2018.

Cllr B Newton **proposed** and Cllr I Reay seconded that the minutes of the meeting held on 26 April 2018 be **received and confirmed**. The Town Mayor then signed the minutes.

4. Report from Berkhamsted Youth Town Council.

The Chair of Berkhamsted Town Council gave an update on the activities of the group. He reminded the audience that Berkhamsted Youth Town Council are based at the Swan Youth Centre and are a voice for all young people in Berkhamsted and the surrounding villages. Members are aged between 12 - 18 years and make sure that young people's voices are heard in many aspects of their community life. Council meetings are held on a monthly basis in Berkhamsted Town Council's Chamber. A recruitment drive is currently being undertaken and further fund raising initiatives are being explored. The group has recently completed a consultation and prepared a petition to lobby Hertfordshire County Council about reducing the speed limit in Chesham Road together with a request for a new bus shelter and road crossing point,

all aimed at improving safety for pupils at Ashlyns School. He thanked his fellow Council members for their help and support and urged people to spread the word about the work of the Youth Town Council.

5. The Hospice of St Francis - Kate Phipps-Wiltshire, Chief Executive Officer: "The Hospice of St Francis Thank you for 40!"

Ms Phipps-Wiltshire was delighted to have the opportunity to speak in this year marking the 40th anniversary of St Francis' Hospice. So much had changed in those 40 years, particularly in the care of cancer patients. 40 years ago $\frac{3}{4}$ of sufferers would not survive long after diagnosis but now that figure was nearer 8/10 surviving. The Hospice's care enables people with terminal illnesses to live life on their terms and also supports the whole family. In 2019 2,100 will be supported and it is hoped that the reach of care offered will be doubled. The professional staff team is supported by excellent volunteers. Fund raising is relentless and although there is never a reduction in the need for care amongst the people of Herts and Beds, NHS funding to the Hospice has been cut by 15% despite a care Quality Commission ranking of outstanding. The Hospice shops are "the Harrods of Berkhamsted" and are extremely popular and well managed.

Forthcoming fundraising events include a fashion show at Shendish Manor and in June there will be a party at Ashridge. She paid tribute to all the people and organisations who hold the Hospice dear and raise funds through coffee mornings and sponsored events. She urged people to get involved and encouraged them to join the 40p a day donation campaign to raise money during this 40th anniversary. In conclusion, Ms Phipps-Wiltshire emphasised the deep gratitude everyone at the Hospice has for the kindness shown by people in Berkhamsted through volunteering, regular donations and contributing to fund raising events.

6. Heritage Projects in Berkhamsted

Representatives from the Berkhamsted History and Museum Society and the recently formed Berkhamsted Castle Trust gave an update on developments affecting the Castle and progress with the lottery funded Berkhamsted Heritage Hub project.

Dr J Moir, Project Manager, Rectory Lane Project and member, Berkhamsted Castle Trust, reflected on his boyhood when the Rex Cinema had been ripe for demolition, grand pianos were smashed up at the Castle and the Wilderness was just that. Since those far off days conservation of heritage assets had crept up the agenda and the Town's fabric is preserved and protected. However, behind that edifice there are thousands of hidden gems in both public and private collections. There is so much more that can be done to develop new ways of sharing and interpreting the Town's history and heritage to promote understanding, valuing and caring for these assets. The establishment of the Heritage Hub Project will progress these ideas and the following presenters would illustrate some of the projects that are already taking forward these ideas.

Ms K Campbell, Community Engagement Officer, Rectory Lane Project, summarised the history of the site which had fallen into neglect but was now being transformed into a hidden gem in the centre of the Town. The project was established by the Friends of St Peter's and Heritage Lottery Funding has been won to transform this "dead space into a living space". The group are 17 months into a 36 month programme and have restored memorials and other stonework. In the current year landscaping is taking place with accessible paths and beautiful seating areas being planned together with an elegant garden of remembrance. Many exhibitions and events have taken place and are

planned for the future involving a wide range of groups and subjects. For example, the inaugural Berkofest Book Festival will see readings and events at Rectory Lane of a ghostly nature.

Mr A Barham, Chair, Berkhamsted Castle Trust, reflected on how blessed the Town is in its motte and bailey Norman Castle. Although owned by the Duchy of Cornwall, the Castle has been operated by English Heritage since 1929. In recent years, however, BLHMS colleagues tracked down the previously unknown owners of the three acre area of land to the east of the site. The land had passed from owner to owner over the years, most recently moving through a series of complex pharmaceutical company mergers and acquisitions. The current owners were US pharmaceutical company Mallinckrodt. Following detailed discussions the company generously agreed to donate the land to the newly formed Berkhamsted Castle Trust together with a donation towards maintenance and set up costs. The land was handed to the Trust at an event at Berkhamsted Castle on 11 May 2018.

The Trust will focus specifically on providing education about, promoting and maintaining Berkhamsted Castle. It aims to foster the use and enjoyment of the castle by the public, and undertake historical research and archaeological investigation into the castle and people or events of historical significance connected to it. The Trust's work will enable more local management of some aspects of the Castle's management to be managed more locally and its establishment provides a step change from the invaluable work undertaken by the Castle Liaison Group (CLG) to a more formal, business relationship with English Heritage. All stakeholders involved previously with CLG have seats on the trust and he thanked the Town Council for its encouragement and support in the Trust's creation. The Castle would have a pivotal role in the development of the Heritage Hub concept and links were also being forged with the University of Hertfordshire, local schools and other organisations. The Trust had already taken over as keyholders for English Heritage and were well on the way to seeing English Heritage funding a comprehensive Conservation Management Plan. Results of a geophysical survey are expected in the summer. In conclusion, he hoped that these exciting developments would encourage people to donate or volunteer to support the Trust in its work to protect and promote this important national institution. Further information can be found by following this link <https://www.berkhamstedcastle.org.uk/about/trust> .

Mr N Groves, of the Heritage Hub Project and BLHMS, was very pleased to have the opportunity this evening to explore the idea of widening accessibility to Berkhamsted's heritage through the development of the Heritage Hub project. The approach would have to be both entertaining and affordable. Following support from the Town Council and the awarding of Heritage Lottery Funding, initial work had evolved around seeking views of stakeholders to find out the best ways of making Berkhamsted's hidden heritage more accessible. This had resulted in the production of an issues and options paper with a wide menu of options which would now be prioritised. These ranged from the creation of a visitor centre to an online virtual museum. Other suggestions included running a history festival, pop up events and competitions and bronze street figures. The Heritage Hub project is in its early days and will take several years to complete with detailed discussion and consultation with stakeholders together with a multi-agency approach to working. Any further ideas would be welcome and in the meantime more about the work of the Hub can be found by following this link. <https://berkhamsted-history.org.uk/heritage-hub>

The Town Mayor thanked all presenters for their valuable contributions and for the vital work they undertake on behalf of the people of Berkhamsted. . During the break there would be the opportunity to look at the Heritage exhibition and to ask questions.

Refreshment interval and exhibition (Rectory Lane Project)

7. The Council Year 2018 – 19

The chairs of committees and convenors of working groups will summarised highlight key issues, events and achievements:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Finance and Policy | Cllr Barbara Newton |
| 2. Transport and Environment | Cllr Tom Ritchie |
| 3. Town Planning | Cllr Anthony Armytage |
| 4. Allotment Management Team | Cllr Barbara Newton |
| 5. Canal and Riverside Partnership | Cllr Anthony Armytage |

Copies of the full reports are available on the Town Council websites and attached to these minutes. The Town Mayor thanked all Councillors for the tremendous amount of work they undertake on behalf of the Town.

8. Berkhamsted Safer Neighbourhood Team, Hertfordshire Police - Inspector Jeff Scott talked about priorities and challenges facing his team in Berkhamsted.

Inspector Scott advised that he covered Markyate and Tring as well as Berkhamsted. His team in Berkhamsted was led Sergeant Ryan Hemmings. An “excellent supervisor”. In addition to more regular police duties, the team works with DBC and the Community Safety Partnership to tackle anti-social behaviour. For example, properties where drug dealing had been taking place had now been closed down through very effective partnerships working with the Borough. There would soon be a permanent CCTV camera at the Skate Park where targeted policing had led to a reduction in anti-social behaviour. Despite pressures on resourcing and a rise in crime figures elsewhere in Hertfordshire, crime rates had reduced in Berkhamsted. Turning to a new Mini Police Project, Inspector Scott described work with year 5 pupils in local schools which was proving very popular. In conclusion, he reiterated the challenge of resourcing and that increases in police numbers would lead to an increase in the police precept.

Thanking Inspector Scott for his contribution and the much valued service provided by his team, the Town Mayor opened the Question and Answer Session.

9. Open Forum - Question and Answer Session.

Mrs L Weinreb gave an update on the repainting of the canal signs which would be undertaken using anti-graffiti paint. Herts County Council would also be repairing and repainting Ravens Lane bridge.

Ms S Hampton asked the Town Council if it would be debating and declaring a Climate Emergency as so may Councils had already done. She asked that an action plan to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030 be set in place. In response, Cllr T Ritchie advised that if she made an application to the Town Clerk then the council would be happy to discuss this important matter.

Mr P White referred to the planning application for a temporary car park on The Moor and the consternation in the Town regarding the original proposals to remove some beautiful mature trees to make room for the entrance and the overall detrimental impact on The Moor itself. Cllr T Ritchie reminded the assembly that temporary car parking provision had been a condition of the planning consent for the building of the Multi Storey Car Park. He agreed with these comments and advised that the Town Council had raised its serious concerns about these aspects of the planning application with DBC and as a result the plans had been amended to change the entrance position. The Town Mayor gave absolute assurances that the car park was indeed temporary and The Moor would be reinstated by DBC on completion of the Multi Storey Car Park project.

Mr J Gray raised concerns about the state of the cobbles in Church Lane; untidy and messy community bins; smokers' litter and general disrespect and lack of appreciation for an area of great historic beauty. Cllr I Reay, who is also the Herts County Councillor, reminded people that the cobbles had been replaced around five years ago and the work had indeed been disappointing. The cost of redoing the work would be too expensive and in the meantime ad hoc repairs would be undertaken. A more extensive repair project was on his radar. Members of the public should continue to report faults to the Town Warden at the Town Council. Mr C Birch expressed surprise that the original contract with the supplier did not contain a clause that obliged them to remedy latent defects. Cllr Reay undertook to raise this with officers at HCC.

Ms A Haeri raised the issue of improvements to air quality. She would like to see no idling of car engines particularly in the Town centre. She was aware that air quality was monitored by the Borough, however, she was concerned about the lack of monitoring at lower heights and particularly the effect of pollution on children in buggies whilst waiting to cross roads. She was advised that she would be very welcome to attend a T & E Committee meeting to discuss this issue and was advised to e-mail the Town Clerk to discuss arrangements.

Mr A Harbridge hoped that CIL or s106 monies could be used to promote green travel and steps to achieve carbon neutrality. There must also be a commitment to ensure that all developments incorporated the highest possible standards of energy efficiency with electric charging points on site and available elsewhere. Cllr T Ritchie advised that such matters had been raised recently at the Parking Forum. The new car park had been designed to be future proof, with electrical charging points and ducting to accommodate more as required. He envisaged that in future, petrol stations would convert to the provision of charging points.

Mrs S Johnson, Chair of Berkhamsted Citizens Townscape Group, explained that the group's aim was to improve quality of design in the built environment and to ensure the conservation of the Town's building heritage. She invited people to attend the Citizens' AGM on 27 March.

Mr C Birch urged the Town Council to hold more frequent Parking Forum meetings to ensure adequate consultation as the scheme develops to achieve the best outcome for the Town. He also hoped that the Forum would consider wider parking improvements rather than concentrating solely on the multi storey car park.

Also discussed briefly were the Conservation Area, car share schemes and an invitation to a Memory Loss event at the Civic Centre on 3 April.

10. Close of meeting

Thanking all for their contributions and attendance the Town Mayor closed the meeting at 10.10 pm.

Signed.....

Date.....

Berkhamsted Town Council
Annual Town Meeting
Thursday 14 March 2019
Items 7 The Council Year 2018 - 19
Reports from Chairs and Convenors of Committees

FINANCE AND POLICY - COUNCILLOR BARBARA NEWTON

FINANCE

Precept

A key role of the Finance and Policy Committee is to assess the Town Council's income and expenditure and to recommend the annual level of precept for Berkhamsted, as part of Council Tax levied by Dacorum Borough Council, and to deliver a balanced budget.

The precept for the coming financial year, 2019 – 20, was set in January at £197,165. This represents an increase of 1.98% to a band D council tax payer (£23.17) and an actual increase in demand to DBC of 2.8%. (£191,843 and £22.72 in the current year.)

Accounts and Audit Reports for 2017/18

The Town Council's financial accounts and annual return is audited each year by an independent external auditor. This year was the first under newly appointed external auditor, PKF Littlejohn. The report for the year ending 31 March 2018 concluded that the Town Council's Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) was in accordance with proper practice and no matters came to the auditors' attention that gave cause for concern.

The annual return and accompanying reports for 2017/18 are available for public inspection in the Town Council offices and on the Town Council website.

Income and Expenditure for 2018/2019

The Town Council accounts for 2018/19 will be finalised following the conclusion to the current financial year. These will be ready for inspection by our internal auditor in May and Town Council approval by early June 2019 together with the AGAR referred to already. The accounts will then be available for public inspection.

This year we have had to hold the Town Meeting a little earlier than normal because of elections coming up in May. The year end figures have not yet been prepared as we are still in March. Income is boosted significantly by Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) receipts which can only be spent on infrastructure projects supporting development in the town. My colleague Tom Ritchie will pick up this subject when he refers to the work of the CIL Working Group.

Youth Centre and Projects

Funding of the Swan Youth project continues and you may recall that funding was increased this year to £15,000. The Group carries out a much valued and important service.

I am also pleased to report that the Town Council continues to let Lagley Meadow to Happy Days Pre School, as the main tenant at the Youth Centre. The area behind Lagley Meadow is to be restored during the Easter holidays following years of repeated vandalism.

Grounds Maintenance

The Town Council continues to manage maintenance contracts for grass and hedge cutting at the allotment sites. Sunnyside Rural Trust undertakes the maintenance of flower beds at Gateway Gardens, London Road and Durrants Lane/Coombe Gardens.

Grant Awards

The Town Council operates a grant awards scheme to provide financial support of up to £1,000 to voluntary groups and community organisations working 'in the interests of the town, for the benefit of residents, to improve the range of services and activities in the town, or for the residents of the town.'

In 2018/19, the Town Council made grants to:

- The Royal British Legion;
- Berkofest Kids Zone;
- Chamber of Commerce;
- Berkhamsted Junior Park Run;
- The Open-Door Project; and
- Sunnyside Rural Trust.

On Monday of this week the Committee considered and granted applications from The Hospice of St Francis, Chiltern Open Air Museum, Northchurch United Charities and Berkofest (Book Festival).

Budget 2019/20

The Finance and Policy Committee considered budget proposals for the new (current) financial year and made recommendations to Full Council.

The budget for 2019/20 agreed by the Town Council is as follows.

INCOME

Precept/Tax Base Adjustment	£197,165
Concurrent Services/Town Warden	£22,313
Festival of Light	£7,000
Allotments	£9,020
Lagley Meadow Youth Centre	£12,000
Interest	£2,000
Parish Paths Partnership/HCC grants	£3,000
CIL	£10,000

TOTAL INCOME **£262,498**

EXPENDITURE

Support services	£130,233
Office and Administration	£48,100
Projects	£45,000
Youth Centre	£30,028
Allotments	£7,270
Civic, Environmental & Gardens	£15,231
Grants	£10,999
Elections	£18,000

TOTAL EXPENDITURE **£304,861**

POLICY

Festival of Light

The Festival of Light was held on Sunday 25 November 2018, with funds raised for local charities, schools and other organisations. The Town Council passes on its thanks to the Rotary Club, the Chamber of Commerce, Berkhamsted Citizens, Community Action Dacorum, all other volunteers who gave their time to the event and to everyone in the town for attending the Festival in such large numbers. Many thanks to parents from Westfield School and members of Rotary who stepped in to ensure that Santa was able to visit on the day and that the Elves Posting House was fully staffed by suitably qualified elf personnel. Special thanks must also go to The Faith Works Trust, who kindly sponsored the London Community Gospel Choir, and of course, the Hertfordshire Constabulary Neighbourhood Team for their invaluable help, courtesy and efficiency on the day.

This year's event will be on Sunday 24 November 2019.

Staffing

During the year we have said goodbye to two members of staff. Ann McHugh retired at the end of May after nearly 19 years' service with the Town Council. Last month, our Finance and Allotment Officer Christine Jerram chose the same route. We wish them all the best for a very happy future. Joanna Harley joined as Deputy Town Clerk in November 2018 and is settling in very well. We will be advertising for Christine's replacement in the near future once an appraisal of the duties has been completed by the Town Clerk and Support Services Group.

Councillor Barbara Newton
Chair, Finance and Policy Committee

TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE – COUNCILLOR TOM RITCHIE

Over the year the Committee has addressed and commented on many issues and some of the more significant items covered are highlighted below:

Transport

Traffic Lights at Junction with High Street, Kings Road and Lower Kings Road

The phasing of the lights at this junction has been the subject of ongoing discussion between the Town Council and Hertfordshire County Council. The sequencing does not reflect the flow of traffic throughout the day with tail backs in rush hour and long waits between changes during quieter times. A site meeting is being arranged with HCC officers to discuss this and other associated matters.

Parking in Bridgewater Road

As a result of the consultation process last year the proposed commuter parking restrictions were slightly reduced. Cllr Reay has advised that it is proposed to undertake a second consultation following the monitoring of displacement parking. In the meantime, as indicated, the yellow lining arising from the original consultation would be limited to between Murray Road and Delahay Rise. The Town Council will consider whether to contribute to this second consultation.

Road Safety Improvements in the Vicinity of Ashlyns School

At the committee's 12 November meeting members of Berkhamsted Youth Town Council presented a petition and letters of support for the implementation and installation of the following provisions:

- zebra crossing at Hilltop Road & Chesham Road junction;

- safe bus stop on opposite side of Chesham Road from Ashlyns School; and
- speed limit reduction to 20 or 30 mph from the roundabout at the top of Chesham Road.

Herts County Council officers have been notified and more detailed discussions will be arranged to discuss the feasibility of the work proposed.

Speed Activated Device High Street Gossoms End

The Town Council funded the installation of a sign to warn drivers to keep to the speed limit. This measure arose from residents' concerns about speeding which were substantiated by a speed and volume survey undertaken by the County Council but paid for by the Town Council.

Parking Forum

The key aim of the Parking Forum, which is attended by members of the public and town councillors, is to develop and propose solutions and recommendations relating to parking and traffic flow in the town. Over recent years the multi storey car park project has been one of the Forum's key areas of interest. This time last year we were anticipating a project start date of September 2018 with completion mid-2019. However, the project start date was revised and work began in February of this year. The most recent Parking Forum meeting was on 12 March and was attended by DBC's Project Manager who gave an update and answered questions from Forum members. The Town Council is also pressing for the changes to the waiting restrictions in Lower Kings Road and the proposed mini roundabout to be installed as soon as possible to facilitate traffic flow arising from the construction of the car park.

Supplementary parking during construction has been provided at The Moor. This has not been without its issues. The original planning application required removal of some ancient trees at the entry point. Following representations by the Town Council and members of the public the planning application was amended and trees saved. When the site opened for parking earlier this year, there were problems with surface water and extremely muddy conditions underfoot. DBC had to temporarily close the car park to attend to the problems and install a different surface. I would like to confirm that the area will be restored to grass once the multi storey car park can be opened.

Parking is disabled bays on market days

The Town Council has been pressing the Market Fund to stop stall holders from parking in disabled bays apart from when setting up or packing up at the start and finish of their day.

ENVIRONMENT

Play Area at Normandy Drive/Dellfield

The new play equipment at Normandy Drive was installed over the summer holidays to the delight of children and parents alike. The Town Council pressed hard for this project to be undertaken and contributed £5,000 from CIL receipts towards the overall cost of £25,000. Dacorum Borough Council owns and operates the site and has not ruled out the possibility of an additional set of swings.

Berkhamsted Castle

At last year's meeting the transfer of land at the Castle from Mallinckrodt to the newly founded charity Berkhamsted Castle Trust was about to take place. Almost a year on, there has been good progress with the Trusts as you will have heard earlier at tonight's meeting. The Town Council nominated Trustee is Cllr P Matthews who has a deep interest in the Castle and reflects the Town Council's support for the Charity's objectives.

English Heritage will be undertaking a Conservation Management Plan this year and this will inform the future maintenance strategy of the Castle and facilitate plans for more local management of the site as a whole. Such plans are in their infancy and of course subject to

discussion and development through dialogue with partner organisations. The outcome will impact on the role of the Town Council's Castle Liaison Group and Castle Site Working Party and these groups will be subject to review as events progress.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Working Group

To-date the Town Council has received five instalments of payments of just under £73,000. So far £5,000 has been spent on the contribution to the Normandy Drive play area. As reported last year a Working Party has been established with representation from the Berkhamsted Citizens to formulate project proposals. CIL regulations state that a local council spends CIL receipts by funding:

- The provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure; or
- Anything else concerned with addressing the demands that development places on an area.

A list of projects will be formulated and resident's views will be sought.

Plastic Free Berko Group

Following last year's meeting it was agreed that the Plastic Free Berko group could use the Council chamber for their monthly meetings. Cllr B Newton also attends these meetings.

Trees

The Committee has had a number of representations from residents about tree removal (arising from, for example, work by the landowner or a planning application) and shares the view that if trees are removed then whenever possible replacements should be planted. We will be reenergising our efforts this area in the coming months to encourage DBC to plant more trees in the Town.

Play streets

In our November newsletter we included an article on whether play streets should be introduced into Berkhamsted. This received favourable responses from members of the public and the practicalities will be investigated in further detail.

TOWN PLANNING COMMITTEE – COUNCILLOR ANTHONY ARMYTAGE

The Town Planning Committee of Berkhamsted Town Council is a consultee in the planning process. Our purview is to scrutinise all planning applications in the civil parish of Berkhamsted. The planning authority is Dacorum Borough Council and more specifically the Development Management Committee of the Borough Council. The decisions of the Town Planning Committee are forwarded to the planning authority so they may be taken into consideration within the broader context by the planning officer allocated the case.

The decision reached by the Committee after debate, with regard to each application, can be in one of three forms. Either it is No Objection, Concern or Object. The decisions are made on material planning grounds which are based on national policy [e.g. the National Planning Policy Framework] and local policy [eg the Dacorum Core Strategy]. If the decision is Object and this is at variance with the planning officer who has been allocated the case then the application will

be referred to the Development Management Committee of Dacorum Borough Council, which meets at The Forum, Marlowes, Hemel Hempstead for the final decision. In such instances and taking into account the strength of our case, taking into account public feeling etc, a member of the Committee would attend to argue point of view. Often the Development Management Committee will support our view. A recent example was the proposed change of use, from veterinary practice to residential of the premises at 320A High Street. The final stage in the planning process is where an application objected to by the planning authority is appealed to the Planning Inspectorate, based in Bristol. In such instances the Committee's view are on record for consideration by the Planning Inspector.

Over the year 2018 the Committee considered 492 applications. This is an increase of 51 applications over the previous year. These can be broadly categorised as follows:

- Alterations to existing properties, such as loft conversions, where the foot print is left unchanged;
- More significant alterations e.g. extensions where the footprint is enlarged;
- Demolition of existing properties to be replaced by new build at greater density e.g.;
- Significant new build development e.g. Phase 2 of Bearroc Park; and
- Change of use e.g. veterinary practice to residential at 320A High Street.

Of the Standing Committees of Berkhamsted Town Council the Planning Committee meets most frequently every third week and normally on a Monday evening in the Council Chamber at the Civic Centre. The meetings are held in public but are not public meetings. The public are invited to attend and are given the opportunity to make a representation to the Committee and it is encouraging that many people affected by planning applications, whether positively or negatively, do so. Consideration is given to these representations, whether they be in writing or verbally, and they are taken into account in the decision-making process. So effectively the considerations and deliberations of the Committee represent the "local voice". Planning officers pay strong regard to local opinion.

Of considerable public interest is the emerging Local Plan. Currently the Strategic and Regeneration section of the Dacorum Planning Department advise that they should have completed the analysis, by the end of this month, of the responses received in the Issues and Options consultation. The evidence base arising will be developed with a number of studies being carried out. Reports on that work will be available as part of the consultation on the draft pre-submission Local Plan that is intended to be held in Autumn this year. Berkhamsted Town Council will be involved in the consultation.

I would like to thank the Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk for their efficient and professional support. And, finally, I would like to thank the members of the Planning Committee for their time and diligence in their discharge of this important function of the lowest tier of local government.

Councillor Anthony Armytage
Chairman, Town Planning Committee

ALLOTMENT MANAGEMENT TEAM – COUNCILLOR BARBARA NEWTON

Allotment Sites

Berkhamsted Town Council fulfils its duty as a responsible Allotment Authority by providing residents with the opportunity to keep an allotment at any of the three allotment sites in the town.

The Town Council currently has 427 tenanted plots, with 65 at Butts Meadow, 70 at Dellfield, 186 at Sunnyside Old and 106 at Sunnyside New.

These sites are an invaluable enhancement to the ecology of Berkhamsted providing green havens close to the centre of town. Sunnyside Old site boast a butterfly and bee garden. Allotment gardening is good exercise and the sense of community at the sites enhances a sense of well-being. Please do consider applying for an allotment; the waiting lists are short at present. Contact the Town Council on 01442 800146 or look at our web-site for further information and an application form.

Allotment Management

Overall responsibility for the management and administration of the allotment's rests with the Town Council, and in particular with the Allotment Management Team which comprises Councillors and representatives of each site including the Sunnyside Rural Trust. The Allotment Representatives do a fantastic job communicating with plot holders and reporting issues to the Town Council.

Allotment Rents

The Town Council requires the allotment holders to pay a rent, to abide by the allotment rules and guidelines and to maintain their plot properly. Allotment rents and water rates are £12.50 (rent) and £7.50 (water) for half a plot and £25 and £15 respectively for a full plot.

Income and Expenditure

The Management Team, which meets quarterly, reviews income and expenditure and discusses improvements and projects. We are about to undertake an extension to the water supply system at Sunnyside New Allotments together with two new water tanks and hose connection points.

Allotment Administration

The Allotment Management Team works to improve allotment administration over the year. Tenants with water licences are asked to water plots sensibly and not excessively.

Allotment Risk Management

The Allotment Management Team, with the assistance of the Town Warden assesses potential risks at the allotment sites on a regular basis and any issues are dealt with promptly.

The allotments continue to be well run and I thank the allotment representatives, the Town Clerk and the Town Warden for all their hard work and the allotment tenants for ensuring that their allotments are well tended.

Councillor Barbara Newton

Allotment
Management Team

CANAL AND RIVERSIDE PARTNERSHIP (CARP) – CONCILLOR ANTHONY ARMYTAGE

CARP is a partnership between the Town Council, the Canal and River Trust [formerly British Waterways], Dacorum Borough Council, the Inland Waterways Association, Chiltern Chalk Streams and Berkhamsted Citizens.

CARP's role is to promote and protect the Grand Union Canal and the Bulbourne chalk stream that runs through the town so that everyone – residents, visitors, walkers, cyclist and boaters – can enjoy the waterway, its heritage, flowers and wildlife.

Unfortunately, this year it has been difficult to arrange meetings due to staffing issues at the Canal and River Trust. It is the Town Council's wish that regular meetings throughout the year resume so that the valuable work of the group can continue. To conclude on better news, the signs removed from over the canal for repainting, are to be reinstalled in the near future.

Councillor Anthony Armytage
Canal and Riverside Partnership
