



# Sunnyside Up

The Newsletter of Independent Councillor Norman Cutting

Issue Two - Spring 1996

## Welcome to my Newsletter

Having asked all the other town councillors to contribute, it appears that most wish to have nothing to do with communicating with the general public who actually put them where they are. I take the view that out of 4657 electors, only 817 actually turned out to put a 'mark' against my name, and I got more 'marks' than anyone else in both the Town & Borough at our end of town. I now have to convince the other 83% that the system works and I help represent the whole of our end of Berkhamsted on the Town Council and the whole of Berkhamsted on the Borough Council. The Town Council publishes its own newsletter - The Berkhamsted Conqueror - which appears to have changed from telling the town what the Council gets up to, to putting views forward on subjects and assuming no-one (or just a few) make a comment, then that view prevails. In fact a similar situation exists within the council itself. I have been accused of wasting time in committee by asking questions! That, in a nutshell, will set the tone of this particular publication.

## Your comments on Issue 1

I received 20 letters in response to issue one, all thinking it was a good idea, some with queries, some offering help with distribution, proof reading (I know I'm not perfect, but as my wife says, just trying) and one or two contributions towards the costs. You may be interested to know that I personally delivered 1700 and Cllr. Simon West helped with 200. The financial cost was around £160.00 and about 700 households did not get a copy owing to me not having time to produce & deliver all 2600 in Sunnyside. Questionnaire results:

All thought the idea was right and the general format correct. The Mayor's contribution was welcomed by several and I hope this will be a regular feature. Sunnyside items were appreciated as well as what the Town Council gets up to. Borough matters were generally not

so well received, so I will endeavour to keep to this balance for the time being.

### Points made

*From H S of Beechcroft*

'excellent idea!' - 'it's the content that matters' - being new to the area, we're anxious to learn as much as possible'

*From D T of Chesham Rd*

'Following receipt of "Sunnyside Up", my husband & I decided to attend the Council meeting held at the Civic Centre last Monday' - 'was surprised to see so few members of the public' - 'junction of Ravens Lane/Chapel Street/Holliday Street is difficult now that the priority has been changed'

*From B H of Lombardy Drive*

'Thank you for your newsletter, it's good to know somebody is fighting for our corner' - 'footpath car parking between Swing Gate Lane and the Rex Cinema'!!

*From W N of London Road*

'Yes' - 'its OK' - 'Yes' - 'Yes' - 'Yes' - 'I live on the edge of the Hall Park Estate and we never ever see a road sweeper - help please'

*From Anon*

'Yes its interesting'

*From J A of Priory Gardens*

'Yes excellent' - 'Some of the sentences are lengthy and a bit clumsy, and the punctuation is odd at times' - 'please keep up the newsletter and place copies around the town'

*From J H of Gravel Path*

'Yes to all your questions' - 'lets have more not less speed ramps' - 'keep the cobbles' - 'the installation of even more road sign clutter is to be deplored' - 'George Street on a Sunday afternoon-you cannot squeeze past the cars on foot, never mind if you have a pram' - it should be remembered that the appearance of the town has deteriorated due to the impact of road transport. As long as we give priority to the internal combustion engine in our environment this trend will continue'

*and finally from another anon who I think sums up what this new council is all about:*

'Excellent - it is the first time in 25 years I have known what is going on'

## Borough Digest

### County Structure Plan 1991-2011

Herts County Council Structure plan is being considered and public consultation

commenced on Friday 8th March & ended on Friday 19th April. The draft document will still be able to be commented on up to the autumn. This plan has far reaching implications for Hertfordshire and Dacorum. It covers the period up to the year 2011 and will affect both you and your children.

The Borough have made it clear that they are not accepting the County Councils assumption that an allocation of 1000 dwellings at Hemel Hempstead can be accommodated satisfactorily. Please ask if you require information or have a view and I will do my best to help.

### Daylight extra now

Borough is supporting the change to 'Central European Time' (add 1 hour to British time)

### Concurrent Services

Borough is giving Markyate £3300 for a dog-proof fence around a play area, £165 to Nash Mills to replace the front door of Nash Mills Village Hall, £2000 to Bovington to provide external security lighting at the Memorial Hall, £840 to Flamstead to replace footway lighting, £500 to Markyate for improvements to St John's Churchyard. In fact the list goes on with the exception of Berkhamsted!

### Developing links with Town/Parish Councils

There are 16 Town or Parish Councils within the Borough and the Borough is committed to improving relations. A meeting was held at the end of January 1996 and amongst the matters discussed were Street Nameplates, Planning decisions and delegation of some services or facilities to local councils to improve services. The Borough is continuing to pursue the enparishment of the rest of Hemel Hempstead which could involve up to 80 new councillors together with suitable support such as a meeting place.

### Other Borough Matters

- The new official town map has been issued and even though errors were pointed out before printing, a fair number still remain.

- The Borough has issued a guide to the 'Heart of Hemel Hempstead'. Some may remember the Heritage Walk around Berkhamsted that the Town Council agreed to pay for. I trust that appropriate pressure will be applied to have the Borough take on this project.
- A major change at the Borough Council is that the public will be allowed to speak at the majority of committee meetings and that some committees, such as the Town Centres committee will be held in places other than the Dacorum Civic Centre at Hemel. Guidance notes on attendance at Borough Council & Committee meetings is being

prepared and will be available shortly.

- I am pleased to say that the Works Committee have finally seen the light about the on-street parking in Douglas Gardens near our Sports Centre. In spite of lack of support by the local police, waiting restrictions are to be introduced. On the same subject, a residents parking scheme is being considered for parts of Hemel Hempstead and I know several areas in Berkhamsted which could do with a similar scheme.
- A pilot boundary recycling scheme is also being progressed and all being well, could be Borough wide within a year or two.
- The 'Coopers' site between Manor Street and Ravens Lane is going

to be the subject of a study to provide Borough members with information as to the best way to improve this site. I believe a planning application is around to clear the site for development. The Borough Council recognises that 'we should conserve certain of the quality buildings....which contribute to the historic street scene and townscape of Berkhamsted'

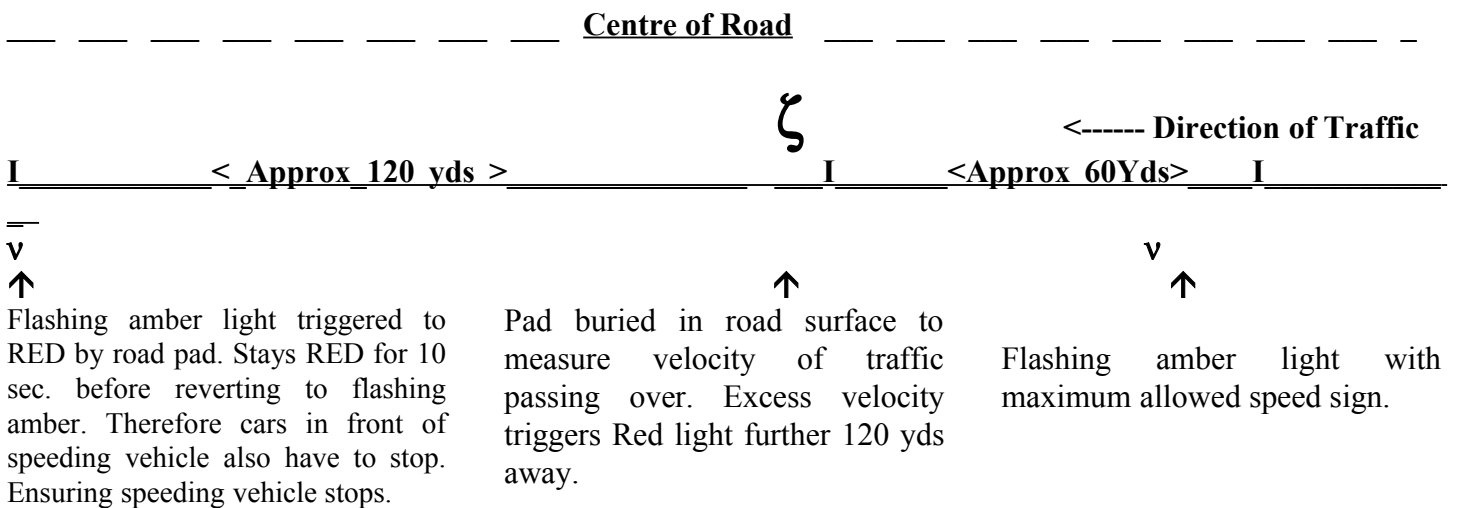
- Finally in this section, due to overspend on the lift at the Town Hall, the trust had to go back to the Borough to ask for more money. This has now been approved and makes the main parts of the Berkhamsted Town Hall accessible to both the able bodied and the disabled. The entrance is through the Shopping Arcade.

The Mayor's message was one of those items appreciated in the first issue, so I asked Cllr. Ray Dyer to write another short piece. He chose to provide us with the first concrete details of the Portuguese system mentioned in the Town Council newsletter.

### Mayor's Message

Is this a way to get rid of those generally hated ramps, pinch points, chicanes etc.?

Local friends on arriving from a holiday in the Algarve in Portugal where they stayed at a hotel owned by Deric Brown (one of the 3 Brown brothers - late of Hall Park Garage), called me along to their home to explain a system of traffic speed control which runs very successfully, is as simple as it appears and works as follows:



No ramps, no pinch points, no chicanes, no cameras, no fines.

When a long stretch of roads needs to be controlled, any amount of these speed restriction devices can be used. Speeds can be adjusted at pads according to the speed limit.

If anyone else has seen them working or going on holiday or business this year to the ALGARVE area, please get in touch on Berkhamsted 862310. I also have details of Deric's address.

## Town Digest

Before I go too much further, I had better remind you that members of the Town Council were invited to submit material for our local newsletter and all except the Mayor had one reason or the other not to. So the following reports are culled from the minutes of meetings, hearsay, rumour and gossip.

The Budget has been set and the additional £40000+ is earmarked for additional office staff and salting away to increase our reserves to over £75000!

### By-Pass Demonstration Project

The Safety Audit has now been carried out and the report issued. There are 114+ recommendations in the report, and the main changes have been listed in the main Town Council newsletter. The hatched lines in Kings Road near to Ashlyns Road allows cars to park on the road and protrude into the main carriageway. There is a suggestion to remove the hatched lines and widen the footpath so that cars park half on the road and half on the footpath.

Kerb extensions at road junctions need cars parked near to them, otherwise motorists do not notice them so white lines will be painted on the road and reflective studs installed. The 'pinch points' do slow down traffic unless there is an even two-way flow of traffic so road humps should be installed as well in 20 mph areas. It was also noticed that trees and shrubbery grow and are obscuring large numbers of the new warning signs. It is recommended that the foliage is cut back on a regular basis. I should point out that the report only addresses the safety aspect and is not concerned with minor details like, is it practical, do the public want it or does it work.

Just remember what the Transport Minister, John Watts MP, said on 11th April when defending the proposed additional lanes to be added to the M25 - 'free flowing traffic is less polluting than congested traffic'.

## Committee matters

### Environment Committee

This committee has responsibility for the management of the four allotment areas, together with all other matters not addressed by other committees and affect the environment in and around the town.

At the time of writing, both Butts Meadow and Dellfield have waiting lists but both Sunnyside old & new have plots available at silly monies if you are keen

on gardening. Remember the old saying - use it or lose it! The allotment holders expressed an interest in the formation of an Allotments Association and a meeting was held in February to discuss the matter. I believe around fifty people turned up. I also understand that the idea was rejected after one councillor, who had nothing to do with the environment committee, does not have an allotment or even live in the town, spoke on the matter. Ted Dyer has informed me that he wishes to organise a Sunnyside association, so he is the man to approach if interested.

Cllr. Simon West has taken an interest in the local hedgerows and footpaths and produced papers on both subjects. The hedgerows adjoining the Butts Meadow allotments will be refurbished by utilising the services of ex-offenders under a scheme to re-establish and conserve hedgerows. The Dellfield allotment hedgerows have been 'attacked' by the new contractors, much to the consternation of both the public and allotment holders.

Other items of interest include keeping an eye on the rise and fall of the River Bulbourne, an air pollution monitoring point to be installed outside McKays and Local Agenda 21.

**The next two meetings of this committee will be on 3rd June and 2nd September.**

### Transport & Highways

Road Safety and most other transport matters come under the remit of this committee. Apart from keeping an eye on the past, present and future 'traffic calming' measures other subjects discussed included the location of the cable TV boxes and the general state that both roads and footpaths have been left. Yours truly volunteered to be your councils representative on the Disabled Access Committee and if you have any matters relating to this subject, please get in touch. We are currently looking into the assorted pavement advertising signs that litter the High Street. The difficulty, as always, is that part of the footpaths are private property. I also took up Simons point that the number of disabled parking spots appear to be out of proportion to the needs of the town. Social Services have been asked to provide the number of Orange Badge holders issued in Berkhamsted in order that we can ensure that adequate provision has been made. Once again, your thoughts will be of interest.

May I also remind readers that we now have a countryside cycle route around Berkhamsted and the guide should be available at the Civic Centre.

The committee is still pursuing the problem with the footpaths across the A41 with the Highways Agency; and Footpath 27 (the one from Lower Kings Road to St Johns Well Lane) is still being disputed. At one of my 'surgeries' concern was expressed about the interchangeability of return tickets on the various bus routes in the town. This has been taken up both at Town and Borough level and the matter is still ongoing.

The street nameplate saga continues with the Borough Council having moved a little, the Town Council not moving at all and different designs popping up everywhere! Look at the top of Chesham Road & the top of Durrents Lane to see what I mean. These were not even options offered by the Borough, but they were installed during the period of this saga.

**The next two meetings of this committee will be on 10th June and 16th September.**

### Town Planning

The Town Planning Committee is concerned with matters regarding planning applications and developments in general. The fine line between planning and environment is considered so fine by the current chairman, Cllr Linda Foster, that if it moves, breathes, or just exists, then this council should have a major say in what happens. The planning committee continues to be involved in everything and I unfortunately do not have the space or time to provide details here. Most subject have been mentioned in the previous committee reports or in issue one of Sunnyside Up. The Town Council is a major consultee in the planning process and has just 21 days to comment on any applications submitted. In the case of the statutory undertakings; gas, water, electricity, BT and cable operators, notice does not have to be given and in fact often only 7 days notice in the conservation area is received. We have managed to get several cable TV boxes re-located and although our comment on the Mercury aerial system on the flats in Hilltop Road, suggested reusing an existing site (adjacent to Ashlyns School on Hilltop Road), it still got approval. This was followed by another application by another operator on another block of flats and the latest is on top of the old Outspan offices in the High Street. As I pointed out at the planning meeting only a week or two ago, within about a mile of my house, there are five radio aerial sites either existing or with planning applications in place. Funnily enough, an application for

another tower at Bovingdon was considered by the Borough Council recently and they recommended the re-use of an existing tower nearby. Once again, even they do not have the power to refuse all these applications. I hope this will be the beginning of the end of some of these eyesores.

Other subjects taken on by our Chairman, include responding to every consultative document that comes the way of the council and making sure that the committee does not have enough time to make considered comments on any submissions. This is a trait often found in other committees, although I must confess that Cllr Peter Such of Transport is nowhere as guilty as the others. The general environment of the Northbridge Way Industrial area is one of the current crusades (why not Environment I wonder?) along with why don't the Borough Council agree with all our planning recommendations.

**The next six meetings of this committee will be on 17th June, 8th July, 29th July, 19th August, 9th Sept. and 30th Sept.**

#### Finance & Policy

Lastly, we come to Finance & Policy led ably by the deputy mayor, Cllr Terry Lundberg. Cllr Peter Such was appointed to edit future editions of the Council newsletter 'The Berkhamsted Conquerer'. Distribution is still not 100% throughout the town and the producer is still attempting to solve this minor difficulty. The committee also recommended that a facsimile machine should be purchased for the sole use of the Town Council instead of using the Borough Council machine in the next office. Terry believes that the confidentiality of messages sent by the public to the Town Council would be cease to be compromised. So all you people out there who wish to send a facsimile message to the Town Council will be able to do so in the sure knowledge that the Borough Council employees will not be able to read it. However, until that time, facsimile messages can continue to be sent to 878326 - but it must be marked for the attention of the Town Council. Or you could just put it through the letter-box!

The Youth Council in Tring is being used as a model to encourage the young

in the town to take more of an interest in the activities taking place both within and outside the Council. More information can be obtained from Cllr. Simon West if required.

The Committee is also looking to bring back as many of the functions of the Borough that it can. This may mean even more increases in the local rates than this years 100%. The majority of the Council is taking the view that it was elected to take control back to the Town from the County and Borough Councils. The self appointed chairman's committee wandered off to visit Ware Town Council to find out how we can improve matters in our town. I have every confidence that this committee will be promoting ideas to match those of Ware. These will include increasing the precept to over £180000, and raising funds for capital projects such as new offices, visitor centre, tennis courts/lido and community centre.

On a lighter note, there is a proposal to develop the idea of a Graham Greene Birthplace Trust.

**The next four meetings of this committee will be on 29th April, 24th June, 5th August and 23rd Sept.**

#### **Other Matters**

The Annual Public Meeting that all local Councils have to hold by law, was held on Wednesday 17th April and around 50 people attended. The various current Chairmen presented a brief outline of the activities of their particular committee and several questions were asked from the floor. These included:

- Querying the colour of the bricks cladding the new Waitrose store

*Decision by Borough Development Control Committee, held on the next evening was*

- Location of the roadside cable TV boxes and the general way that things are done by the contractors.

*Like the Water, Electricity, Gas and BT companies, these are classed as statutory undertakings and as such are controlled by law. We can only put pressure on the contractors to tidy up and finish works to a reasonable standard.*

- Fly-posting and what are we going to do about it

*It was pointed out that this was generally the responsibility of the*

*County Council and I had been advised it came down to the costs of removal and prosecution. Cllr. Lundberg made the point that this was a possible role for a town warden if appointed and suggested that discussions had been held with Tring Town Council with the view of sharing such a person. I understand that one member of Tring Town Council who was present, indicated that they knew nothing about this!*

- Aircraft noise

*This is a subject near to my heart, and I informed the questioner that Luton was testing a more accurate guidance system to reduce overflying of urban areas, but most aircraft & helicopters, still use the location beacon at Bovingdon. It would be some time before all aircraft would be fitted with the new system.*

The next full Council meeting which is the last of the present municipal year will be held on Monday 13th May when any changes to both Council Chairmen and committees take place. If you did not attend the Annual Meeting on 17th April, do come on the 13th May.

#### **And Finally**

The next issue of 'Sunnyside Up' is due out at the end of July and if you have any comments or correspondence, please get it to me by 20th July at the latest. If you wish to contribute to my costs in preparing/producing and delivering this newsletter, a contribution of £5 towards my efforts would be appreciated.

#### **Local Contact Telephone numbers**

Town Clerk	862441
Cllr Norman Cutting	871851
Cllr Kenneth Duvall	872217
Cllr Ray Dyer	862310
Cllr Terence Lundberg	870262 office
Cllr Simon West	866906

#### **Don't forget**

We have also been available for informal chats at regular surgeries held on the third Saturday of each month in either the Foyer or Sessions Hall at the Town Hall between 10am & noon. The exact location depends on other events taking place.

---

The editor is Norman Cutting and the address for correspondence is 15 Chestnut Drive, BERKHAMSTED, HP4 2JL  
Views expressed in the newsletter are solely those of the contributor(s) and not necessarily those of the Town Council.