

AMERSHAM
and district
RESIDENTS
ASSOCIATION



2012



We've included a membership
form with this Newsletter

Please ask a friend or neighbour to join
ADRA

Our strength is in our growing numbers!





Letter from the Chairman July 2012

Dear Members,

Welcome to the 2012 ADRA Newsletter. In this issue you will find as usual, the minutes of our AGM held this year on the 12th April at the Amersham Free Church. We had a very good turn out, not surprising in light of what lies ahead for our community!

Our guest speaker was Mrs. Janet Wheeler, Amersham Town Clerk who was kind enough to help us understand the workings of the Town Council, the County Council and the District Council. Please help us represent you by making your views known, there's so much happening in our community which will affect us all, but now more than ever you need to be engaged.

Our January Social Evening will be held at the Large Barn Hall in the Community Centre on Wednesday 16th January 2013 from 7-9pm. Please put the date in your diary and join us.

The 2013 AGM will be held on Tuesday 23rd April 2013 at the Amersham Free Church Hall – 7 for 7.30pm. We hope to see you there.

Yours sincerely

Bron Curley
Chairman

It is with great sadness that we note the recent tragic passing of Michael Teychenné who served so well as ADRA's Membership Secretary. Michael's contribution was enormous and he will be greatly missed.



Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

Held on 12th April 2012 at Amersham Free Church Hall

1. Chairman's Welcome The Chairman welcomed approximately 60 members to the 51st Meeting of ADRA.
2. Apologies for Absence
Ian Donnelly, Ros Long, John & Minna Meighan, Jan Stanworth.
3. Minutes of AGM held on 12th April 2011 Adoption of the Minutes was proposed by Brian Woods and seconded by Julia Holroyd.
4. Treasurer's Report (Geoff Platts)
As attached.
5. Planning Officer's Report
As attached.
6. Highways Report (Geoff Platts)
As attached.
7. Environment Officer's Report (Ann Terry)
(Read by Christine Summers in Mrs Terry's absence)
As attached.
8. Membership Records Officer's Report (Michael Teychenne)
(Read by Bron Curley in Mr Teychenne's absence)
As attached.
9. Chairman's Report (Bron Curley)
As attached.
10. Re-election of Committee
There were three Committee members up for re-election: Bron Curley, Ann Terry and Michael Teychenne. Their re-election was proposed by Carolyn Spencer and seconded by Brian Woods.
11. Election of Honorary Auditor
Ernest Newhouse has agreed to continue as Auditor. His re-election was proposed by Ros Aitken and seconded by Joan Savage.
12. The Chairman introduced Mrs Janet Wheeler, Amersham Town Clerk,



who addressed the meeting on the way Amersham Town Council operates.

Future events were also highlighted as follows:

13th May - Clean Up 12noon Mayor's Awards at 2pm followed by band concert

3rd June - Street party in Old Amersham

4th June - Jubilee Day on King George V Playing Field

11th August - Big Screen Event on King George V Playing Field to show Olympic events

9th September - Heritage Day (with historic properties opening their doors and guided walks)

13. Open Forum

The formal business of the meeting having been concluded, the proceedings continued in the manner of an Open Forum.

1. A member queried the status of Amersham Bowls Club. Mrs Wheeler said they were hoping to make improvements and working on a planning application. The meeting was informed that one rink was for public use which needs to be publicised by the Town Council.
2. Mrs Wheeler was also asked about Old Amersham's status. She explained that it was a Ward mainly for electoral purposes which included Amersham Common, Weedon Hill and Amersham-on-the-Hill. There will be consultation before the next election to see how many councillors residents will be voting for.
3. Brian Woods informed the meeting that the newly refurbished St. Michael's church forecourt will be opened on Saturday 4th August for the Bishop of Oxford to consecrate St Michael's Square. There will be a road closure from Sycamore Road to the Pizza restaurant. There is to be entertainment including choirs and possibly a marching band.
4. Brian Lorkin of Clifton Lawns queried whether Amersham Town Council would be able to support a dispute on a property just the other side of the



boundary that was in the process of being decided. Mrs Wheeler felt the Town Council would be able to comment if a member so wished.

5. Roz Aitken raised the issue of ADRA donations totalling £1500 towards HS2 and whether more were planned. The Chairman responded by saying although we have no committed plans for further donations, ADRA will contribute more if it is felt appropriate to do so. He also told the meeting ADRA were supportive of the AdiZone project and think it good for Amersham, particularly now that Raans Road fields are no longer available.

Meeting closed at 9.07pm.



Treasurer's Report

The top left hand side of the Annual Accounts records the income during 2011 with corresponding figures for 2010. The subscription income in 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011 was respectively £1461, £2078, £2534 and £3459. These yearly increases reflecting the change from a 3 year subscription to an increased annual subscription of £5.00 per household. The donation amount of £10.99, comprises a donation of £5.00 and the purchase of a bottle of wine by a member, at cost, unopened during the AGM.

Referring to the items of expenditure on the top right hand side of the Accounts. The main differences in expenditure are a contribution of £500 towards Christmas lights in 2012 and three amounts of £500 in 2011 for publishing the financial case against the construction of HS2 and its environmental cost, in the hope that the Government will abandon this project. The next result of the expenditure in 2011 was a deficit of just under £58.

Moving on to the Balance Sheet on the lower left hand side of the Account. The closing supplies, £2747, was only slightly lower than in 2010. Some members continuing to pay annual subscriptions in cash or by cheque, paid for several years in advance totalling £145. This complicates the accounts and may cause further adjustments if a member dies before the advance subscription becomes due. The funds held at the end of 2011 are marginally greater than those held at the end of 2010, in spite of £1500 used to oppose HS2, indicating that the financial state of the Association is sound.

AMERSHAM
and district
RESIDENTS
ASSOCIATION



AMERSHAM AND DISTRICT RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Accounts for the year ending 31st December 2011
(including for comparison a summary for 2010)

<u>2010</u>	<u>INCOME</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>EXPENDITURE</u>	<u>2011</u>
£		£	£		£
2524	Subscriptions	3459	683	Printing, stationery, postage & telephone	440-02
			225	Hire of Halls	287-80
			33	Affiliation Fee	33-00
			225	Insurance	227-15
			84	Social Evening	117-87
			355	Millennium Garden	303-00
				Opposition to HS2	1500-00
			86	Newsletters 2010*/2011*	366-21#
			10	Chesham Bois Fete Stall	
35	Donations	10-99	50	AGM Speaker 2010	
			38	AGM Speaker 2009	
			90	AGM Refreshments	78- 02
			500	Christmas Lights	
			75	Adverts for AGM & Social	129-72
			25	Donation	
				Bank charges	35.14
				Refund of Subscriptions	<u>10-00</u>
			2479		3527-93
			80	Surplus/(Deficit)	<u>(57-94)</u>
<u>2559</u>		<u>3469-99</u>	<u>2559</u>		<u>3469-99</u>

*Cost of printing donated by a member of the Association. # Cost of stamps for distribution.

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 2011

<u>2010</u>		<u>2011</u>	<u>2010</u>		<u>2011</u>
£		£	£		£
2725	Opening Surplus	2804-77	211	Current Account	218-99
80	Surplus/Deficit on year	<u>(57-94)</u>	2622	Deposit Account	2672-07
2805	Closing Surplus	2746-83	1	Cash in Hand	0.77
	Subs Paid in				
29	Advance re 2011 after 2011	145.00			
<u>2834</u>		<u>2891.83</u>	<u>2834</u>		<u>2891.83</u>

AUDITOR'S REPORT

I have audited the above accounts having regard to the matters referred to below. This Association, in common with many others of similar size and organisation, derives a substantial portion of its income from subscriptions, advertisements, etc., which cannot be fully controlled until it is entered in the accounting records and is not therefore susceptible to independent audit verification. In my opinion, subject to the foregoing the accounts give a true and fair view of the Association's affairs as at 31st December 2011, and of the Income and Expenditure for the period then ended.



Highways Report

Regrettably I cannot say that the general condition of roads in Amersham, taken as a whole, has improved over the past year. Short lengths of road have been resurfaced and road markings renewed, but other sections have further deteriorated, with only the largest potholes receiving attention.



I regularly report the locations of the potholes, damaged or unlit bollards, inoperative zebra crossing lighting, worn out road markings and road flooding, but clearly can only do this for the roads I use. I urge all of you to report potholes to 'Highways on Call' tel. 0845 230 2882 – my experience is that such information is acted upon, though not always

immediately. However there seems to be great reluctance to deal with embryonic potholes, even when in close proximity to larger ones. This repair work is carried out by contractors, rather than Council employed staff, who work to instructions issued by the Council as regard the minimum size of potholes to be dealt with.

I wrote to Bucks C.C. regarding the proposal to build a Waste Transfer Station on the London Road, requesting that if this proposal goes ahead, a turning right lane of adequate length be provided for Waste Transfer traffic approaching from the direction of Amersham.

It was good to see that the pavements of the shopping streets of Amersham had been quickly cleared after the heavy snowfall in the winter.



ADRA Membership Report – Year 2011 -2012

Last year we held a campaign to visit all the households which were not our members. We are lucky to have a band of Distributors who are prepared to deliver to houses around where they live. I pay tribute to them, for without them the task of Membership Registrar would be impossible to fulfil. Through their efforts we won 150 new members last year, a stunning achievement.

During last year we also completed the three-year plan to migrate the collection of membership fees to Bank Standing Orders. This has simplified, and made more secure, the collection of subscriptions and the reconciliation of our records.

During the year we send out a number of communications, some by paper, such as our Annual Report, but also increasingly by email. We would encourage you to keep us informed of your current email address (including changes) because it is a swift, secure and free means of communication. Our use of the post is diminishing all the time, prompted by increasing postal charges.

As we communicate with you, please feel free to write to use, so that we know more of your concerns and desires for the progression of our community.



ADRA – Planning Officer’s Report – Year 2011/12

In this report, I will cover not only some significant developments in our District but also some general issues including the biggest shake-up of planning laws in half a century as they will affect all future applications.

The National Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework published on 27 Mar 2012 replaces about 1,300 pages of guidelines with just 50. The simplified policies are aimed to speed up development.

Most controversial part of it is ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development’. It means building would not be held up by local councils unless approving it went against the ‘collective interest’. It may have implications for us – for instance, at May Hall Farm in Copperkins Lane. The good news is that the policy requires councils to favour “brownfield” sites for new development over previously undeveloped sites.

Town Centres are more strongly protected. While support for converting offices to residential use are encouraged as a means of increasing housing supply, local authorities have get out clauses to prevent all office stock being converted to residential use in areas where house prices are high.

At the Chiltern District Planning Committee meeting held on 29 March 2012, the Chairman stated that decisions made from that day will reflect compliance to the new policy.

Neighbourhood Plans

There is now scope for people to get involved in Neighbourhood Plans under the Localism Act. The Government encourages local neighbourhood to be more involved in planning local initiatives. There are supposed to be special tools to enable you to do this. But without volunteers and with limited resources within the Council’s Planning Department, I am not sure as to how it will evolve in this area.



Council's core strategy - Affordable Housing

During the year, Chiltern District Council published a supplement on 'Affordable Housing' to its Core Strategy. Developers need to incorporate a proportion of new build into their plans or else make financial contribution towards 'Affordable Housing'. There should be at least 1 affordable house if the net increase in dwellings is between 5 to 7, and 2 if the net increase is 8 to 9 and so on. If there are less than 5 houses, then the financial contribution will be dependent on the additional gross footage, number of dwellings etc. but with a cap. I hope the Council is not unduly influenced in their planning decisions by the prospect of financial contribution from the developer ... especially in contentious situations where, say, a householder is building another house in their back garden. In one case in South Heath, for a back garden development of one detached chalet bungalow, the stated contribution was around £17,000.



A fair amount of affordable housing are being included in two major developments – about 42 in Bury Farm in Old Amersham, and a fair proportion of 60 new homes at Donkey Field behind Chenies Parade in Little Chalfont.

Some specific developments

Moving on to some specific developments, I hope that many of you may have seen a very comprehensive exhibition in recent months at the former Starbucks Coffee Shop in Sycamore Road. Jointly with exhibits from the anti-HS2 Campaigners, Amersham Action Group had displays of their vision for Amersham on the Hill and some major projects in the pipeline to improve the Town Centre.



St Michael's Forecourt / Entrance:

You may have noticed that the area has been boarded up for improving the entrance to the church and the forecourt. The forecourt can become an attractive focal point for us. It is scheduled to be opened officially by the Bishop of Oxford on Saturday 4 Aug 2012. Included in the plans is a performance area with a canopy but that part is likely to be added later when funds permit.

Sorbon Estates:

Some developments are also in the pipeline for the adjacent building, Sycamore House, at the corner of Woodside Road and Sycamore Road. The plan is to replace the fitness centre on the first and second floor with eight flats, and to improve the pavement so that it blends in softly with the St Michael's Forecourt developments. The first application was refused as the Council did not want to lose the Gym facility but an appeal is in progress.

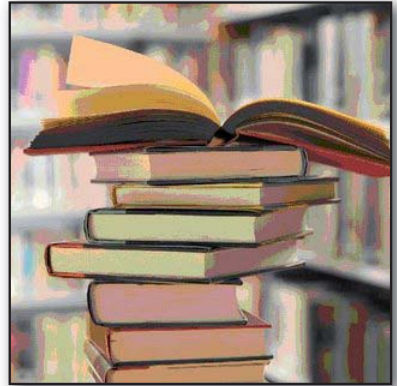
Hillcrest Court:

There are plans to improve the building accommodating Perry's Alfa-Romeo Garage and the flats above it, as well as the flats round the corner in Hill Avenue above Shanti Indian Restaurant. At the ground floor level on Hill Crest Avenue, there will be retail units and eating places/coffee shop. A gym is also in the plans. On behalf of the Residents Association, we objected on the grounds of increased density of housing, as well as the 'out of character' frontage in Hill Avenue affecting the street scene. The Council rejected the plans, and one of the reasons was the impact on traffic on the already crowded Oakfield corner – what they call the A416 'Congestion Management Corridor'. Revised application is in the pipeline with improvements to frontage in Hill Avenue and an appeal against traffic assumptions.



Sainsburys:

The subject of Sainsburys in Amersham has risen again, and closed meetings have been held between Sainsburys and the Council. We will await the outcome. To get members' initial views on this can we please have a show of hands as to who are in favour and ...those who are not....



Library and Day Care Centre:

Bucks County Council and Chiltern District Council had plans to build a new Library and Day Care Centre at the site of the current Library. As you may have read in the local papers, the plans were being rushed through as a part of reorganisation of Bucks Day Care Centres in the County, with Chesham losing out. The plans for the new building have fallen through, and the Day Care Centre may well be located in Chesham after all. This leaves a clean slate for Amersham Action Group members who have a strategic vision for developing the whole area around the Community Centre including the Library area.



Waste Transfer Station in Amersham:

This was covered at length in my last year's annual report. We had concerns about the Traffic Management at the junction with A413. A fairly comprehensive report from the Highways Department allays our fears. Chiltern District Council, however, have objected strongly to the application. But a final decision by the County Development Control Committee is still awaited ... may be on 1 May 2012.

It is worth noting that there are two related applications – one is for a second Waste Transfer Station, similar to the one in Amersham, at High Heavens by Wycombe Air Park. That has been approved. The other is for an Incineration Plant at Greatmoor, near Calvert, north of Aylesbury. Decision on that has been deferred until the outcome of a Strategy Report on Bucks Mineral and Waste Core Strategy.

Former NHBC Building (Buildmark House) next to Amersham Station:

Planning permission has just been given to provide a new replacement office building on the site for Barnett Waddingham. The company will be able to consolidate their offices in Amersham in a modern building with prospect for additional employment.

There have been some good success stories in smaller developments as well

...

- We supported local residents around **Ruckles Way** against an application for a mobile phone mast.
- We supported a member in **Clifton Lawns** against persistent attempts by his neighbour's extension plans and appeals which would have affected the member's amenities.
- We supported the residents in **Clifton Road** and its neighbourhood when a developer presented plans for three houses as an alternative to a previously successful but highly contentious application for nine flats in an ERASC area [Established Residential Area of Special Character].



I hope that gives you an idea of the range of Planning issues that we have covered over the year. There are about 13 applications per week, on average. Google's 3-D views and street view maps have helped us to reinforce our responses to the Council. If you need any further information on any of these or other issues of concern, please contact me.

Our understanding of the planning issues have been broadened and improved through our close association with Amersham Action Group headed by Brian Woods. Many thanks to them as well as to all the local Councillors and the Council's Planning Officers who understand and take into account our Association's views.

With constant vigilance, and action when necessary, there is no reason why we cannot continue to make this area a thriving, pleasant and desirable one.
B A Guruswamy



Chairman's Report 51st AGM - ADRA

Good evening ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to the 51st AGM of ADRA. It's good to see we have a good turnout tonight, and some new members as well. If this is your first meeting, a special welcome. ADRA is a volunteer organisation whose purpose is to work on behalf of its members to encourage actions and activities which will maintain and improve the quality of life in our communities. This is usually facilitated by working to establish effective communications on behalf of our members with TOWN, DISTRICT and COUNTY Councils and sometimes other agencies and groups. As a volunteer organisation we are totally reliant on the efforts of those who come forward in order to be successful. We have no paid or elected staff. We do our best to respond and serve the membership, but our ability to do so is clearly finite. Our structure and method of operation are not complicated. Most Committee members have a portfolio. Matters related to their particular area are picked up by them, and worked as thoroughly as possible contacting whomever is appropriate to try and get a pot hole filled, an overgrown hedge cut back, a verge trimmed, a burnt out light replaced, litter in a park cleared. In addition to the stuff we do off our own bats so to speak, we attempt to respond to your requests for action. This works best when we can support what you've already started. Two letters are generally better than one.

I would like to stress however, once again, that quite candidly, we need help. Some of us have been at this for too long. Our tenure is running into double digit numbers. Lyn has been Secretary since the last Century. Geoff was Treasurer when the double entry method of accounting was first proposed. You have heard from your committee members reports that they have had a busy year attempting to propel the organisation forward, and working to meet its objectives. We can't go on forever. Participating can be a light task. One meeting a month (except August) for an hour and a half. We believe we have a purpose. We'd like others to demonstrate their support as well.



Let me move on to a couple of things we've spent some time or thought on. You are all aware that the government has decided to press on with HS2. The fundamental issues still haven't changed (NO BUSINESS CASE, NO ENVIRONMENTAL CASE, it's not AFFORDABLE), but nevertheless they're pressing on. Some announcements were made two months ago about slight changes to the route, extension of tunnels and depth of cuttings in an effort to quell the protest, but it hasn't worked. Currently challenges are being mounted both here and in Europe. A Judicial review is being sought by the 51M group of local authorities, and HS2AA is mounting a challenge in the EU on environmental grounds, as well as a challenge to the inherent unfairness of the compensation proposals. Fund raising has been very successful in support of these.

The structure of HS2AA has changed. A new full time coordinator is in place and a change of tack to include a widening of the net to MP's beyond those on the proposed route has been adopted.

A more professional approach is underway. Meanwhile the HS2 Ltd. charm offensive is underway.

We have supported HS2AA with donations to PR and Management Consultancy and will probably continue if we find progress can be made. This is far from over. We'll keep you informed.

Another project I'd like to mention is AdiZone, which Mayor Harker as well as the Amersham Town Council have put their weight behind. It will provide a new outdoor play facility in King George V field, next to the existing play park, with basketball and football nets, a climbing wall, tennis wall and 8 station outdoor gym.

We support this initiative.



Let me close by thanking you, our members, and also thanking the Committee. We have made real progress. Our membership as you heard is growing and our finances robust. All we need is your help. Please consider joining us or perhaps coercing someone else to. Also give us your input. If you have suggestions for projects you'd like us to support or get involved in, please let us know.

A suggestion came after the last AGM that we move the open forum forward to precede our guest speaker. This year however I think we should stay with the usual format, because our guest is Mrs. Janet Wheeler, Amersham Town Clerk. Since so many of the usual open forum questions involve areas where Janet's knowledge and experience might be helpful, let's let her tell us what the Town Clerk actually does, and then move to the forum.

Thank you again, and let's Welcome Mrs. Janet Wheeler.



Calendar of Events June 2011 – June 2012

Date	Function	Committee member attending
22/06/11	Amersham Action Group	Attended by Christine
14/07/11	Amersham Action Group	Attended by Guru
01/09/11	Amersham Action Group	Attended by Christine/ Guru
20/10/11	Amersham Action Group	Attended by Guru
07/12/11	Amersham Xmas Shopping Evening	Attended by Guru, Ann, Christine & Bron
12/01/12	Amersham Action Group	Attended by Christine
18/01/12	ADRA Social	Attended by Committee
10/05/12	Amersham Action Group	Attended by Guru
03 - 05/06/12	Various Jubilee Events	Attended by Committee
15/06/12	HS2 Murder/Mystery evening	Attended by Christine



*If you have any ideas or thoughts don't keep
them to yourself!*

**Bring your suggestions for a better
Amersham to the next AGM**



ADRA 2013 AGM

Tuesday 23rd April 2013

***Amersham Free Church Hall
7:00pm for 7:30pm***



ADRA Social Evening

**Please join us for a Social Evening on Wednesday
16th January 2013
between 7pm and 9pm.**

**Venue: Long Barn Hall, Amersham Community
Centre.**

Come and have a drink and meet some of your fellow members.





Amersham in Bloom 2012

Flowerbed designed by
Vincent Lin-Chapman
Chestnut Lane School