



NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2017

Update on the Lower Heath – Ariston Site

So what is happening on the Ariston Site, you may be thinking – since Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) told us in December 2016 that it would be marketed in Spring 2017?

Well, we don't know either! We do know that HCC have earmarked the Lower Field as a potential primary school site and will retain it when they sell the rest of the site. We also know that St Albans District Council (SADC) in the latest iteration of its struggles to develop a Local Plan has identified the Lower Heath as a separate brownfield site from the rest of the Ariston Site with potential to meet the District's housing needs – but the implications of that are currently not clear. SADC had confirmed last December that they still considered the 2002 Planning Brief to be the blueprint for the future of the Ariston Site and that the Lower Heath would be kept open "in perpetuity".

We have been told by HCC that the area behind the Pioneer remains fenced off because of an "anomaly" – although we were originally promised that the fences would go by the end of August. Again, we don't know what that means. We are however grateful that – thanks to the clearance work by the Friends – HCC has allowed pedestrian access from the Lower Heath to the road to Heathlands to resume.

Everyone else seems to have forgotten the commitment to "public access (to the Lower Heath) in perpetuity". The Friends will continue to campaign for that for our community.

"Perpetuity" has already been nearly twenty years from the start of our fight! If you are new to Bernards Heath, there's a good deal of background information on our website – <http://www.bernardsheath.org>

Sandridge Road Wastes

The designs and text for two interpretation boards at each end of the Wastes, compatible with the boards already on the Heath have been agreed. We are not sure yet whether SADC will share the cost with the Friends.

Every Spring we see the beautiful red and white cherry trees in bloom along Sandridge Road. We have noticed that some “wrong” trees have been planted. SADC has been given details of them and we have been assured that they will be removed and the correct trees will be planted.

Bernards Heath Play Area

The Heath’s land owner, the Spencer Estate, has approved a request to expand the play area to double its present size. The next step will be for SADC formally to apply to the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) to approve the request. Notices will be placed at the site and in the Herts Advertiser, leading to a wider consultation. Funding will then need to commence, and tenders put out to equipment manufacturers.

St Saviour’s Christmas Tree Festival

Look out for our FoBH tree at the Christmas Tree Festival from 16 – 23 December. Our theme is “Christmas on the home front: Bernards Heath in 1917”. Have you any stories to tell of the 34 young local men who were killed in 1917 (more than half at Passchendaele), or the Christmas traditions here in 1917? If so we’d love to hear from you – and welcome if you’d like to help.

Dog Owners’ Alert!

With so many fallen leaves on the ground, it is often hard to see our dogs’ “offerings”. Please be vigilant, as it is very unpleasant to step in dog poo. Our aim is for the Heath to be clean and welcoming for everyone.

As always, a big “thank you” to the many people who pick up litter as they walk on the Heath.

Bernards Heath Memories

Some of our older long term residents will have memories of the Heath in times past, before the many changes of more recent years. We should love to hear your reminiscences so that they are not lost to the wider community.

Our contact details

www.bernardsheath.org

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Subs are due (Jan-Dec 2018) at £10 per household. Please fill in the form and send a cheque to the treasurer, 21 Road Warwick Road, AL1 4DJ.

Name.....

Address.....

Phone.....

Email.....

I enclose a cheque for £10 (payable to Friends of BernardsHeath)

Signed.....