



NEWSLETTER 235 September 2008

Local residents say “Yes!”

The Council has now made a definite decision to introduce communal bins. In our area there will be five bins in Regency Square, two each in Russell and Clarence Squares and Preston Street. Stone Street, Castle Street and Queensbury Mews will have one each. There will be no bin in St Margaret’s Place; residents there will have to walk round to Russell Square.

The society campaigned against the bins and argued successfully for a public consultation before they were introduced. The result of that consultation has now been published. All streets in our area had a majority in favour, with the exception of Regency Mews, which has only 5 houses and will not have a bin; residents there will have to use a bin in Preston Street.

23,000 questionnaires were distributed, of which 24% (5,520) were returned. Of these, 56% were in favour and 36% against. The published results do not show how many people responded in our area so we are asking the Council to give us that information.

Many streets had a majority against. Some of these, such as Adelaide Crescent, Brunswick Square and Lewes Crescent will not have communal bins. Others will be forced to accept them. This seems to be based

on the view that the grandest of the seafront squares need special treatment. Ironically it also amounts to an admission by the Council that the bins are undesirable from the point of view of conservation.

Local Councillor Jason Kitcat spoke out against the bins at the meeting when the decision was made. He said that the scheme would not be sensitive to conservation areas and would “rip the heart out of our recycling programme”.

Passing the Esca Bar Bin Buck!

Apologies if you are already bored to death reading about the Esca Bar rubbish bins that are blocking the pavement at the junction of Regency Square and Preston Street (see photo over the page). However, they don’t go away – much as we wish they would.

The latest news is that the problem has been passed from Cityclean (the Council’s refuse collection department) to the planning department. However, the planners say that they can’t take any enforcement action because “the planning permission granted in 2005 for the use of the site as a Restaurant/Bar/Café does not have any condition relating to the storage of refuse”.

The Council is supposed to have a policy (see below) of not granting planning permission unless adequate refuse storage is included in a scheme. Oops!

The planning department has now passed the problem on to the highways team in case “they might be interested in it from an obstruction point of view.” They certainly should be, but they’ve had the problem for over a month and the obstruction is still there.

Council departments seem to be passing these bins around amongst themselves, while nothing happens on the street. So we have written to the chief executive, Alan McCarthy and asked him if he can do something to get them moved.

So What’s the Policy?

We asked the Council to let us know their general policy on the use of the footway to store trade waste.

Their reply says that “wherever possible” they will “avoid commercial waste bins being placed on the highway permanently.” They do this through “planning conditions for new commercial premises or changes of use that require adequate waste storage arrangements within the curtilage of the building.” They also say that “where the Council is aware that unauthorised items, including bins, are placed on the public highway, enforcement action is taken to ensure their removal.”

There are exceptions. These include “where there is no alternative due to the design and historic use of the premises . . . particularly food premises where internal storage of waste may give rise to a health hazard.”

A second exception states that “Containing food waste in bins can be preferable to leaving bags on the street which are then subject to attacks by seagulls and vermin with the resultant mess spread over the streets.”

Perhaps the answer is that the Esca bar could dump their rubbish in the communal bin, which is to be located just a few yards away across the street. After all, it wouldn’t cost them anything (provided no one tells the Council)!

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A Summer Sailing Trip

The 31st July saw 12 members and friends, board a boat at the Marina for a trip between the two piers, lasting just under an hour.

Yes, it rained (the first in three days), but that did not diminish the fun and laughter. It was nice to have children with us. One of our party was sure that he had seen dolphins swimming in the Marina !

Many thanks to Margaret Brisley for suggesting the trip and Paul Michaelson for organising it.

First you don't see it, then you do.



No sooner had Council workers cleaned the graffiti from this wall behind the Esca Bar bins than another batch appeared.

Council Graffiti Officer, Sarah Leach has arranged to have it painted out again as soon as possible.

The wall has also been added to the list of sites where society members have volunteered to paint out any future daubings, using paint supplied by the Council.

Unfortunately, the rubbish bins allow graffiti artists to climb up to attack higher parts of the wall, making it harder to paint out. Another reason for moving them!

If you would like to adopt a particular wall or area please contact Sarah Leach (☎ 292929 ✉ cityclean@brighton-hove.gov.uk) or Roger Hinton (☎ 321794 ✉ hinton@clara.net).

Discount tickets for the LPO

We have received details of the new season of concerts at the Dome by the London Philharmonic Orchestra. The first one will be on 8 November with music by Tchaikovsky.

Further concerts are also planned for January, March and April, with music by Rossini, Rodrigo, Tchaikovsky, Berlioz, Grieg and Sibelius. Many of the pieces are old favourites such as Symphonie Fantastique and the Peer Gynt Suite.

Society members can buy tickets for the best seats at a discounted price of £14, simply by quoting "Regency Offer". If you would like more details contact Roger Hinton, preferably by email (hinton@clara.net), or by phone (01273 321794).

New Faces on the Beat

There are changes afoot within the Regency Team at Brighton police station.

PCSO Cat Thick has attended a number of our meetings but now she is moving on to work for the Roads Policing Department.

PC James Marter has also been a familiar face at society events. He was one of the main instigators of the Local Action Team (LAT), which brings residents and business people in the area together with police, councillors and Council officials. It is through the LAT that we have developed our contacts with the Council graffiti team.

James will also soon be moving on, but hopefully not before has introduced us to his replacement.

Don't forget you can contact the police team for non emergencies (☎ 0845 60 70 999 ext. 50738 / 50240 ✉ regency.team@sussex.pnn.police.uk).

What future for the Car Park?

The car park underneath Regency Square used to be managed by NCP. The Council has now taken over direct responsibility for running it

We have been recording occupancy levels in the car park. The results suggest that it is under-used. It can be full at times during summer weekends, but it is less than 50% full during weekends in the winter, and less than 20% full on weekdays throughout the year.

Meanwhile the streets are full of parked cars, causing congestion and blocking access to the gardens, and new residents have to wait months for a parking permit.

Our committee is looking at ideas for making more and better use of the car park. Suggestions included:

- extra residents' spaces,
- storing and re-cycling trade waste from local businesses (a new home for the Esca bins?),
- creating more empty space on the street, especially where traffic tails back from the car park entrance causing gridlock on busy days.

There were mixed reactions to these ideas from committee members. Some were concerned that residents would not want to use the car park, which is seen as unsafe and unsavoury. Others were keen to remove on-street parking from around the gardens in Regency, Russell and Clarence squares.

Committee member, Tom Mackillop, who did the survey is looking again at the issues in preparation for further discussions. If you have any views, please let Tom know (✉ thomas@bluefocus.eu ☎ 710049).

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