



NEWSLETTER 108 July 1995

The Big Issue

Permission has been granted for 23 Preston Street to continue as a distribution centre for the Big Issue magazine and a counselling centre.

105 objections were received including 25 from Regency Square.

Councillor Boggon wrote objecting and said that Big Issue salesmen were "causing actual harm and immense drop in prestige to this very important area of Brighton." He also said that "windows have been deliberately broken by these people. Threats have been made and carried out. . . The "sellers" have taken to congregating in the Street late at night and the effect of that on restaurants can be readily imagined."

Councillor Pennington wrote to support the application provided it was issued with conditions and for a trial period of one year. He pointed out that the manager of the distribution centre "operates strict controls on those who are provided with copies of the magazine, such that if there is any anti-social behaviour, the person(s) concerned are not provided with copies." His view is that the "Big Issue provides a worthwhile service to the community, which is nationally recognised as such."

If so many people objected, why has the Council given permission? The answer seems to be that the Council is worried that there would be an appeal if permission was refused. The Planning Officer advised the committee that such an appeal would probably be successful and that costs would also be awarded against the Council.

This has not pleased the many objectors, especially those running businesses in Preston Street. They had an opportunity to express their views at a public meeting on 3 July.

Assurances were given that the situation would be monitored closely. Those who were aware of problems caused by people visiting the premises were encouraged to keep a written log of events. The planning officer agreed to provide traders with some advice about the kind of behaviour that would provide evidence against a renewal of the permission after the first year.

So it seems this particular big issue will not go away, at least not for a while.

An Even Bigger Issue ?

The Council has issued enforcement notices against three hotels in Regency Square: the Sutherland, Le Flemmings and the Adelphi.

The notices allege that these premises, which are used to house homeless people, have undergone a change of use from hotel to another type of accommodation.

This is a difficult area of planning law. The Planning Officer has said that in order to succeed with the enforcement he needs evidence that the change of use was having an adverse effect on the town's tourist industry.

Owners of other hotels in Regency Square plan to provide this evidence.

But is it not the Council which causes the problem by housing homeless people in these premises ?

Up to a point this is true. However, there is now a policy of phasing out the use of premises in Regency Square. This cannot happen overnight because of the shortage of suitable accommodation elsewhere in the town.

Even if the council does stop sending homeless people to Regency Square it does not necessarily mean that they will not come. The hostels which currently house people sent by the Council could start to provide accommodation for people receiving housing benefit. Although the Council administers the housing benefit system they cannot specify where people receiving it should live.

A Bid for Funds

The Council is making a bid for "Challenge Funding" from the Government to restore Regency Square to its former glory.

No, this doesn't mean removing the underground car park. But it would involve new railings, restoring the gardens, improving the car park and street lighting.

Preston Street, Russell Square and Clarence Square would also benefit.

A decision on whether the bid has been accepted is expected in December 1995.

Beating the Drums

Squatters have taken over a number of the lower arches opposite the old boating pool by the West Pier.

They make their presence felt most obviously through the drumming festivals that they hold in the evenings and at weekends.

The Council plans to serve notice on certain individuals to stop them from playing drums. They will also brick up the arches to prevent further squatting.

Admission £500 (people free)

The Society has complained about the increasing number of people taking dogs into the railed part of Regency Square.

As a result the Council are planning to put larger signs on the gates warning dog owners that there is a penalty of up to £500 for taking a dog into a dog free area.

Oh No ! Not Again !

Those members who can remember the Society's early days will know that one of the biggest campaigns it ran was against the late night clubs which operated from the basement of the George IV hotel.

It has been suggested that the hotel, which recently changed hands, might start to operate again as a club.

The Society believes that any late night commercial activity would be quite inappropriate in Regency Square which is a residential and hotel area where large numbers of people sleep.

We have been assured by the Council that permission would be needed for a club to start operating so there would be an opportunity for local people to object.

Keeping Us Posted

The new bollards outside the Mama Mia restaurant in Preston Street are good for keeping cars off the pavement. But they are not very nice to look at.

We asked the Council to replace them with something more attractive. You've guessed the answer - not enough money.

The Great Storm Re-viewed

Everyone remembers October 1987 when Sussex, and many other parts of Britain, were struck by a great storm. Not least Warren Lynch who spent four hours trapped beneath a fallen chimney at the top of number 39 Regency Square.

The BBC "999" programme have decided to re-create the event. They spent the evening of 4 July filming in Regency Square. A wind machine was used to re-create the storm.

Actors played the parts of people living in the house but the firemen and ambulance crew who were there on the actual night played themselves.

A crowd of local people gathered to watch. One person complained about the noise of the wind machine and general disruption, which went on until midnight.

A house in Brunswick Square was used the following night to film the interior scenes.

The programme is due to be screened next Spring.

Bus and Rail Map Available

The Society has been sent copies of the new Public Transport Map showing bus and rail routes throughout east Sussex. Call Roger Hinton (321794) if you would like a copy.

SOCIETY CONTACTS

CHAIRMAN Harold Lawson tel 328203
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To Brian Smith, 45 Regency Square, Brighton.

Please renew my membership of the Regency Square Society for 1995/96 in the category ticked below:

Ordinary member	3.00
Family	3.50
Senior Citizen	2.50
Junior	1.00
Associate (non-resident)	2.50
Business (non-resident)	5.50

Name _____

Address _____

Cheques payable to the Regency Square Area Society please.

**A cross in the
box means your
sub is due !**

