



NEWSLETTER 190 November 2003

Sounding Off

A small but vocal group of members met at the Metropole Hotel last month to talk to our two local councillors, Dawn Davidson and Roy Pennington.

Most people already know Roy who has represented us on the Council for several years. It was good to meet Dawn who became our councillor following last May's election. Previously she was councillor for our neighbouring ward, Brunswick and Adelaide.

Issue N^o 1: Rubbish

When the chairman invited members to raise issues for discussion the first speaker was Norma Williams who complained about rubbish collection and the ever present rubbish bags in the streets.

Most people were equally concerned but there were clearly mixed views about the communal bins which are to be tried in some part of Brighton next year. Jim Harris described his experience of similar bins in both Spain and Portugal and was in favour of the idea. Ros Boulden on the other hand saw lots of disadvantages, not least the fact that no one would want one outside their home.

The conclusion of a long and often heated discussion was the recognition that the Council has no money to increase the frequency of rubbish collections. So we must look carefully at the communal bins which will soon be in nearby streets such as Oriental Place: if the trial is considered a success, similar bins are likely to appear in our area as well.

Sex and Drugs

Another big item for discussion was the large amount of prostitution and drug dealing in our area. Many people felt that the police are not doing enough to prevent the use of local premises for these purposes.

One member described how one of his neighbours was nervous about walking to her car when drug dealers and users were in the street. Another member described how a resident was forced to move because a neighbouring flat was being used as a brothel and she was tired of being woken in the early hours by clients ringing the wrong doorbell.

Although this is mainly a police issue, Dawn Davidson threw some light on the issue from her experience as a magistrate. Both these problems only exist because there is a big demand for services which exist on the edge or outside the law.

Several people felt that the solution would be to treat these activities as businesses, which they are, and have them properly regulated. This would mean that before a flat could be used as a brothel it would need planning permission, just like any other business.

And the Rest

Various other issues were discussed briefly before the meeting ended.

Tony Lowery wanted to know how much Council Tax will go up next year. The Councillors did not have an answer at this stage but Dawn did point out

that the Council was very restricted in what it could do with its money: after doing all the things it is required to do by law it is left with only £2 million for other things.

Ros Boulden was worried about rumours that the Brighton Centre was to be re-developed as a tall building: she felt this would be inappropriate so close to the Regency and Old Town conservation areas. Roy Pennington explained that the Council is developing a strategy for the development of tall buildings which will identify those areas in which they are and are not likely to be approved.

Thanks...

To our councillors for taking time to meet with our Society and to the Metropole Hotel for the use of the room.

Police on Bikes

We have had a response to our complaint to the police about two officers riding through the twitten between Russell and Regency Squares.

We asked what the policy is about pavements cycling. PC Matt Ebeling has told us that police officers should not cycle on pavements except in an emergency. Those officers who use bikes will be briefed about the need to follow this policy.

As far as general pavement cycling is concerned, it is not something that the police are specifically targeting. However, community support officers will target a specific area if a particular problem has been identified, as with the twitten.

Society Contacts

Chairman: Roger Hinton ☎ 321794 email hinton@clara.net
Secretary: John Gavin ☎ 749747;
Treasurer: Andrew Walker ☎ 700340

Web site: www.regencybrighton.com

Breakfast?

We are planning a New Year breakfast to welcome in 2004. It will be at 10am on Sunday 4 January. All members and friends will be very welcome. Full details in the next newsletter.

Put it in your diary now!

Enforcement works!

Local enforcement officer, Lisa White has fined a local trader for dumping trade refuse in Castle Street.

She has also been negotiating with the Time restaurant at the bottom of Queensbury Mews about their rubbish storage. They had been keeping several bins on the pavement near the Queensbury Arms but have now given an undertaking that they will be stored off the street.

Why not visit Nora?

The Society has joined the Network of Residents Associations in English Towns and Cities (NORA).

The group was originally formed to campaign against wholesale relaxation of late night liquor licenses. It has now been established on a permanent basis to protect and improve the environment of residents in towns and cities.

If you want to know more you can visit NORA at www.nora-uk.co.uk.

Hi-tec vs. Conservation

A house on the west side of Regency Square has had a CCTV camera mounted on it for some time. It now has a satellite dish on the roof. Both these require planning permission because it is a listed building. The Council is taking action.

Farewell to Old Friends

Gail and Ambrose Simons have run the Regency Hotel in Regency Square for many years. They have also been active supporters of the Society. They have hosted Society meetings at the hotel and for a while Gail was our treasurer.

They are now retiring and will move away from Brighton.

We wish them a long and happy retirement.

Where's the Pier?

Well it's still there – but only just. More important, where have the restoration plans got to? The answer is that no one really knows yet.

In his latest newsletter pier chief executive Geoff Lockwood says that English Heritage is preparing a report which will examine every option “from demolition to full restoration.” He expresses confidence that the report will support the West Pier Trust's plans which include the controversial “enabling development” either side of the pier.

The report will be the key to the pier's future. It will be the basis for the Heritage Lottery Fund's decision about funding.

And when will this report be published? The answer is the same as it was at the time of the Trust's AGM back in July: in the next few weeks.

The starlings still love it

Meanwhile the starlings are still using the far end of the pier as a resting place. Our web site has some striking new pictures of the pier in its present state, complete with starlings – www.regencybrighton.com

The bulbs are in

We had been praying for rain so that the ground in Regency Square would be soft enough to plant some bulbs. It finally came on the very morning set for the planting.

So under grey skies and drizzle a group of “eager volunteers” assembled with forks, trowels and gardening gloves. The ground was in fact much easier to work than it had been on the first attempt. So a large number of bulbs have now been planted in Regency Square, and a few also in Clarence Square.

Many thanks to Neil, one of the Council's urban rangers who also braved the weather and the jokes about parking his horse to give us a hand. He also brought some bulbs from the Council's stock to supplement those purchased by the Society.

So keep a look out in the spring for colourful results of all our efforts!



Portsmouth's Christmas Festival

The Kingscliffe Society has organised a coach trip to Portsmouth – join actors and musicians on a tour of the historic dockyards – visit the French market and craft village – see the giant tree and lights.

The trip is on Friday 28 November leaving Brighton (Royal York Buildings) at 10:30 and leaving Portsmouth about 4:30. The cost is £17 including driver's tip & entrance to the Dockyard.

RSAS members will be very welcome. Contact Vivienne Carter (271269) or Jean Penney (694240) if you are interested.

