



## NEWSLETTER 211 February 2006

### Leaderless

The best laid plans ... last month we organised a meeting with council leader, Ken Bodfish, to talk about hotels and hostels in Regency Square.

Shortly before the meeting, he resigned as Council leader. Technically his resignation did not take effect until the end of January, but he withdrew from the meeting because it was "not appropriate" for him to attend. Because of the short notice, no other senior councillors were available to deputise.

Simon Burgess has been elected as the new leader of the Labour Group. The council will ratify his position as council leader on 23<sup>rd</sup> February. We plan to write and ask him to answer the same questions that we had put to Ken Bodfish. Once he replies, we will publish what he says, and consider whether to try to arrange a meeting with him.

### Incident at number 15

Meanwhile, problems with the hostels continue. There was an incident at one on 27 January, witnessed by Society members Brian and Shoshana Foster. Here is their eyewitness report:

Coming into Regency Square about 10.55 pm we saw police cars speeding into the West side of the Square in both directions, stopping outside No 15 (a conversion to a hostel). A police woman came out of the block holding her bloody hand, which was immediately taken care of by a police van. Altogether there were six police cars (including the van).

After we got back home a further ambulance arrived but by this time we were too far away to see what it was used for. As the police arrived there were about half a dozen young people making their way at haste out of the way across the green towards the East side of the Square most of them clutching plastic bags.

When questioning one of the police he said that an 'incident' occurred there (not going into detail) and was not uncommon. We said it was a hostel for the homeless and he replied that 'these things do happen in those places'.

Well, we do not want more of 'these things happening!' ... This situation seems to be getting out of hand. The CCTV cameras do not stop 'happenings' within the building (especially on very cold nights). Our Square will start (or maybe already has) having a bad reputation. We must stop this as soon as possible.

Let us know your own opinions and experiences!

### Society Contacts

Chairman: Roger Hinton ☎321794 ✉ [hinton@clara.net](mailto:hinton@clara.net);  
Secretary: John Gavin ☎749747;  
Treasurer: Andrew Walker ☎700340;

Web site: [www.regencybrighton.com](http://www.regencybrighton.com)

### “Re-launching the Station”

Nick Franklin is Assistant editor of BBC Southern Counties Radio. He will be our guest speaker at the society's AGM next month. He will give us the inside story on the recent station re-launch.

The meeting will be at 7:30pm on Thursday 30 March at the Hilton Metropole Hotel. Full details in the next newsletter.

Put it in your diary now.

### Who runs this society anyway?

The society is run by a committee which is elected by the members at the AGM. It meets once a month for an hour or two.

New committee members are always welcome. In fact they are essential to replace members who leave and to bring fresh ideas. If you would like to join the committee please contact the chairman, Roger Hinton (☎ 321794; ✉ [hinton@clara.net](mailto:hinton@clara.net)). He will be pleased to tell you more about what is involved.

### Anyone Want a Bandstand?

The bandstand on the seafront opposite Bedford Square is a sorry sight. An architect's report in 2004 indicated that restoration of this listed building would cost around £250,000.

The Council have been hoping to lease it to a commercial tenant. One alternative suggestion made recently was that it should be moved to Regency Square. The Regency Society described this as "a bold idea, worthy of consideration", adding that "a new role in a fresh location must be preferred to the current mutilation".

What do people in the Regency Square area think?

## Many thanks ...

...to society committee member Ros Boulden who has represented the society on the council's Conservation Advisory Group for several years.

She is now stepping down because of other commitments. Her place will be taken by our secretary John Gavin. Ros will continue as a member of the committee.

## The wheels grind slow!

A decision has finally been made about the CCTV camera and satellite dish on the front of one of the hostels on the west side of Regency Square.

They were installed two or three years ago without permission. There are strict rules which mean that such additions to listed buildings can rarely be made and then only if they are not visible from the street. We raised the matter with Council planners who have been trying ever since to enforce the regulations.

Finally an enforcement notice was issued and the owner of the property appealed to the Deputy Prime Minister. That appeal has now been turned down.

A further appeal to the High Court is possible. Failing that, the offending items must be removed within eight weeks.

Meanwhile, on the opposite side of the square there is a hotel where a major refurbishment has been carried out. This includes installing lights and a CCTV camera, which, again, has been done without permission. The hotel did put in a retrospective application but this has now been withdrawn.

So watch this space: the wheels of bureaucracy grind slow, but in some cases at least, they do eventually grind.

## And no demolitions (probably)

Regency Square not only has listed buildings, it is also in a conservation area. This means more restrictions on property owners. In particular, they cannot demolish anything without permission.

Or so we thought until we queried the demolition of the wall outside number 122 Kings Road.

Planning officer, Matt Gest, has told us that permission was not needed for this since it was only a "partial demolition" which does not "materially alter the front wall area".

## Archive in the Square

Those who have been members for some time may remember Joyce Evans, who was on the society committee for several years.

She lived in a flat in Regents Court. When she married and became Joyce Baker she moved away to live in Sussex Square. However, she retained a storage room in the basement of Regents Court, which she has now given to the Regency Society to store its archives.

The Regency Society (not to be confused with the smaller and younger Regency Square Area Society) was founded in 1945 to fight the proposed demolition of the terraces and squares of the Brighton and Hove seafront.

It is the oldest conservation and amenity society in Brighton and Hove. As such it has a large archive of documents, an invaluable research tool for future historians. It also has an impressive collection of books on architecture.

You can find out more about the Regency Society at [www.regencysociety.co.uk](http://www.regencysociety.co.uk).

## Annual General Meeting

7:30 pm  
Thursday 30 March 2006

Brighton Metropole Hotel

Guest speaker: Nick Franklin  
BBC Southern Counties Radio  
Refreshments

## Annual subscriptions are now due

Many thanks to those members who have already paid their subscription for 06/07. If you have not yet done so, please help to keep the Society going by renewing now. A small additional donation will help even more.

## Membership Renewal

To Andrew Walker, RSAS Treasurer, 9 Chartwell Court, Russell Square, Brighton BN1 2EW

I would like to renew my membership of the Regency Square Area Society for the year 2006 / 2007 in the category ticked below:

	£
Ordinary member	4.00
Family	4.50
Senior Citizen	3.50
Associate (non-resident)	3.50
Business (non-resident)	6.50

Basic subscription \_\_\_\_\_  
Optional donation \_\_\_\_\_  
Total enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Payment by cash or cheque payable to Regency Square Area Society please. Members' details are stored on computer for administrative purposes only.