



NEWSLETTER 224 September 2007

Where can I put my bike?

Bikes are great! They are cheap, provide good exercise, don't create greenhouse gases, rarely kill people and take up far less space than other types of transport.

But they do take up space. Look around and you will see bikes parked everywhere. They block the pavements. Those who live in basements often have their view obscured by bicycles chained to the railings.

One possible solution, suggested by a Society member, is to provide cycle stands. We are thinking of approaching the Council with a request for cycle stands in Regency and Russell Squares.

We have identified three locations in Regency Square, two on the middle green and one at the top. In Russell Square there is a cobbled area next to the entrance to Russell Mews which might be suitable. (See pictures.)

We can't see anywhere suitable in Clarence Square, where there seem to be fewer bikes anyway

What do you think? Are cycle racks a good idea? Can you see any problems with the locations we are proposing? Can you suggest any alternative locations? Contact Roger Hinton with your views (☎ 321794 ✉ hinton@clara.net)



Regency Square, middle green, east and west



Regency Square top



Russell Square

Ball games or not?

Last month we asked for views on a proposal to allow ball games on the lower greens in Regency Square and put a flower bed in the centre of the top one to discourage them.

Many thanks to those who responded. The general view seems to be against lifting the ban for the lower two greens. For example, one member argued that "...those of us who live beside the two lower greens, and visitors to the Square, deserve as much peace and quiet as those living higher up the Square."

Another member suggested that seats might be better than a flowerbed in the centre of the top green. They would need to be fixed in place to ensure they could not be moved out of the way by those wanting to play football.

A member in Russell Square took a broader view: "... as a primary landmark in the city, about to host our newest attraction, i-360, one would like to think the Council would wish to give it (Regency Square) a makeover from the hideous, broken and in some places dangerous 60s crazy paving, excessive amounts of street car parking and general shabbiness."

Not everyone who lives in our area is a member of the Society (why not?) so our councillors are organising wider consultation before making any proposals. If you receive another request for your views, please respond.

Another dish up!

Satellite dishes are not allowed in the conservation area if they are visible from the street. One has just appeared on the side of a house near the Regency Tavern. We have asked the planning department to investigate.

The LPO is back!

The London Philharmonic Orchestra will be back at the Brighton Dome this season and are again offering a discount for Society members. You can have the best seats in the house for a mere £12 each.

Tickets are available for 22 September and 12 January. To get the discount you need a booking form. Contact Roger Hinton if you want one.

Planners say "no" to Regency Tavern

The Regency Tavern wanted to put several new signs and lights outside the pub. The Council refused permission for some of the proposals because they were out of keeping with the character of the listed building.

The brewery appealed but the Council's original decision was upheld. The planning inspector described the Regency Tavern as "a fine example of Regency architecture that contributes in a positive way to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area."

For that reason he refused permission for aluminium fascia and panel signs, a modern looking hanging sign and for strip lighting. He allowed plans for a menu board, a brass licensee plaque and a half lantern, all of which he believed would preserve the character and appearance of the building and the area.

The big bin debate

The Council has been thrown into turmoil following the recent press release announcing over 500 new communal bins for the central areas of Brighton and Hove.

The environment committee, which met on 13 September was asked to approve the scheme. This was in spite of the fact that most councillors on the committee had not been told whereabouts the bins would be located in their areas. As a result they were not able to consult residents.

Why does the Council want them?

The reason given for putting bins everywhere is to make the streets tidier. We are all aware of the mess created by seagulls when people put rubbish out on the wrong day.

However, there is another reason why the Council is so keen on the scheme. It will produce savings of £970,000 over seven years. The savings arise from the fact that the bins can be emptied by just one worker, operating an automatic vehicle. No more need for whole teams of “bin men” throwing black sacks into the back of refuse trucks.

What does the Society think?

We do not want these bins in our area.

We have endured messy streets for years but things are now much better. Rubbish is stored in basement areas. Enforcement officers persuade people to put rubbish out on the right day. Of course problems still occur, but they are usually dealt with quickly once reported.

The communal bins are large and ugly. They tempt traders to dump waste rather than pay for collection. Large items get left by the bins which should be collected separately.

All of this makes the streets more rather than less tidy, and is completely at odds with attempts to protect the environment within a conservation area.

At present the Council collects rubbish from basements or immediately outside people’s houses. With communal bins we will be expected to carry rubbish to the nearest bin. This reduces the service provided by the Council and will be a real problem for the elderly and disabled.

Finally, where will the bins be put? We don’t know, but would you want one outside your home?

What’s the current position?

At the environment committee meeting on 13 September the proposed scheme was neither approved nor rejected. Members of the Labour and Green groups, including our own councillor, Sven Rufus, successfully argued that no action should be taken until there had been full consultation with residents, and the results reported back.

We’ve been through a consultation on this issue before. However, many people felt that the conclusions reported did not properly reflect their views. Let’s hope the consultation is done properly this time.

The final bang?

Have you heard the banging car park door in Regency Square? It was on one of the stairwells. Because of a faulty closer it banged loudly every time someone used it.

We have been pursuing NCP to correct the fault. There have been numerous phone calls and letters, including ones from Councillor Hermione Roy and MP David Lepper. There have been promises from NCP to solve the problem. In spite of all this activity nothing was done to the door for months and it continued to annoy those within earshot.

At last it seems that the closer has been adjusted. It still doesn’t close properly but the noise seems to have been reduced. If anyone is still being disturbed by it, please let us know and we will resume the campaign.

Why does such a simply problem take so long to solve?

Public Garden – Keep Out!

The east gate into the garden in Clarence Square has a parking space outside it. Cars often block the gate so that it is almost unusable. Anyone pushing a pram or with a disability would probably not be able to get through it.

There should be a double yellow line outside the gate, as there is on the north side of Russell Square. This could probably be done without the loss of any parking spaces. We have asked to Council to look at the problem.

I see no i

Yet again the date announced for work to start on the i360 has come and gone with no sign of any activity. The market stalls are still trading; the cycle repair shop is still repairing cycles; the pétanque players are still pétanquing.

So what is happening? Rachel Clarke of the West Pier Trust has told us that “the start date has slipped slightly again thanks to the need to sort out various new conditions requested by the Council. We’re expecting work to begin on site later this month or early in October.”

We’re in the Brighton Society

Our society has become a member of the Brighton Society, which aims to “encourage the preservation of architecturally and historically interesting buildings, and value the individual character of local neighbourhoods.”

This means that our members will be welcome at Brighton Society events. We will keep you informed about what is happening. You can also keep up to date with the Brighton Society at www.brighton-society.org.uk.

Society Contacts

Chairman: Roger Hinton

✉ hinton@clara.net ☎ 01273 321794

Secretary: Rhidian Hughes

✉ rhidian.hughes@ukonline.co.uk ☎ 01273 718009

Treasurer: Andrew Walker ☎ 01273 700340

Web site: www.regencybrighton.com