

We'll meet again!



We are delighted to be able to announce that (covid permitting) we will shortly be holding our much delayed AGM. So please put **7.30 pm on Tuesday April 5th** in your diaries. For those who are able to join us in person, the meeting will be held in the Hilton Metropole hotel. Thanks as ever to the Hilton for agreeing to provide a function room to the Society's members free of charge.

We recognise that not everyone will feel comfortable, or indeed be able, to meet in person. With this in mind, we are going to attempt to hold a hybrid AGM, where we offer the option to join us via Zoom if you cannot attend in person. We have no idea how easy this will be in practice – so we hope everyone will bear with us! – but we want to try and give as many people as possible the option of joining in.

Way back in 2020 before the AGM had to be cancelled due to covid, we had booked Kevin Newman to give his fascinating talk on the history of the Hilton Metropole hotel. We are pleased to announce Kevin will finally be able to give his talk! And as always, the

annual report, financial accounts and details of who will be standing for the RSAS Committee positions will be circulated to members ahead of the AGM.

If you would like to stand for any position on the Committee, please get in touch at RSASCommunity@gmail.com

We hope to see everyone, virtually or in person, there!

Money money money

After suspending fees for RSAS members for the last two years, in order to help out during the pandemic, unfortunately we will again have to start collecting subscriptions from 1 March this year. The subscription renewal form went out with this newsletter.

While we would dearly love to be able to operate the Society as a permanently free resource for the community, we do incur costs to run the Society: we have to pay for our website to be hosted, we need insurance for the events that we hold throughout the year, we pay the costs associated with our gardens, we pick up all of the ancillary costs of the Christmas tree event each year, etc, etc.... All of our committee members work on a volunteer basis, so every penny we collect goes directly to running the Society.

We always try to keep subscription fees as low as possible, and with that in mind we have kept our fees frozen at pre-pandemic levels. Membership for the first year remains free, and of course we will continue to suspend membership fees for any member who is struggling.

Christmas tree lighting event

The Committee was delighted that we were able to host the annual Christmas tree lighting event again, in conjunction with the Artist Residence and the BA i360.

Covid meant that the event had to be cancelled in December 2020, so it was wonderful to be able to see everyone again last December. The flight on the BA i360 filled up faster than any previous year (and we had a huge waiting list!) – so our local community was ready to celebrate! Massive thanks to the BA i360 for providing a free flight to the local community to enable this event.

The tree itself was one of the largest we have ever had in Regency Square – huge thanks to Sussex Trees for providing it, and the Artist Residence for funding it!



We also had lots of positive feedback on the coloured lights, and how much more festive they looked – huge thanks to the team from the BA i360 who did such a beautiful arrangement with the lights! We are aware that the tree has lingered longer than is ideal, but as we are reliant on a volunteer team from the BA i360 to remove the tree, sometimes taking it down takes longer than we would like.

The RSAS WhatsApp Group

As we mentioned in our last newsletter, Committee member Fran Coates has set up the “Three Squares” Whatsapp group for our local community. We have had lots of positive feedback that this is a great idea, but it also seems that many people are unfamiliar with how to join a Whatsapp Group, or are having technical difficulties doing so.



With that in mind, we are going to opt all our members into the group where we have your mobile phone details on file. If you do not want us to do this for you, please just let us know, and of course you can drop out of the Whatsapp Group at any time. If we don't have a mobile number for you on file and you would like us to opt you in, please drop us a line with your number.

Fran will be on hand to offer technical support for anyone who needs it. Her number is 07985594756.

We hope that the Whatsapp Group will allow us all to share useful day to day information and allow us to swap plants and furniture, tips for best WiFi/broadband supplier, help with heavy lifting, child sitting, parking vouchers, car sharing, shopping, lift to hospital, etc. The list is endless.

The Regency Square garden – next phase of the transformation begins soon!



In our last newsletter we gave an update on the big planting day in the Top/North garden in Regency Square. Phase one of our gardening plan was to tackle the most neglected part of that garden: the South border, where the Christmas tree planter sits, and that work is now well underway, with almost £1,000 of planting gone into that one bed. The newly planted plants are doing well, and very soon there will be daffodils and tulips poking through to make us all smile.

While the gardening group was out recently to spread compost, at the moment there isn't a lot to do. On the whole, gardens are best left alone in winter, because bees, beetles and other important insects are sheltering in the soil and among the fallen leaves. Weeding and tidying before temperatures are consistently in double figures – usually around the beginning of March – can do more harm than good.

Once we do get underway again, as per our Council approved five year gardening plan, the next big piece of work is to tackle the central round bed. As we set out in previous newsletters, the plan is to shrink this bed and turn it into something that would be much easier to maintain. As part of that plan, we had hoped that we could maintain some of the larger bushes that are already there, but recent inspections suggest that most of those bushes are on their last legs.

Instead, we are considering turning the central bed into a herb garden as an attractive option that would also be easy to maintain (and would smell amazing!) As a last resort we may have to consider grassing over the area, though we know many members are opposed to this due to concerns about ball playing in

the summer. We would very much like to hear your views on all these options: email us at RSASCommunity@gmail.com

Members will also notice that some signs have gone up around the garden to give people information on how to get involved as one of our community gardeners. These signs use the beautiful painting by our ex-RSAS chair Diana Dunn, which gives an impression of what the garden will look like once it is all done! We hope it inspires even more people to come out and join our growing gardening team as we move into Spring.

The newly planted plants in the Top/North garden in Regency Square have bedded in so well that we have been able to take down the protective mesh fencing around them. But these are still baby plants so please please take care not to walk on the bed or allow dogs to walk/dig in it. Also, given the previous issues with thefts, if you happen to see someone at that bed – **especially** if they seem to be removing plants – please do take photos/video if you safely can and contact us at rsascommunity@gmail.com so we can make sure any theft is reported to the police.

Freedom of information request...again!

Finally, on the funding of our gardens, as we set out in our last newsletter the Committee has not forgotten that the Regency Square gardens are owed a significant amount of money from the Council under the conditions of the BA i360's planning approval. This money would go a long way to repair structural defects in those gardens such as the pavements, steps, bins, etc and would complement the planting work of the RSAS volunteer gardeners.

With that in mind we have – again! – submitted a freedom of information request to the Council to see exactly how much money the Council has now received under this fund. We have now had a response back, and the shocking news is that as at 1 September 2021 there was £71,523.48 sitting unused.

The Council states in its response that *“Under the terms of the s106 Agreement the contribution must first deliver signage of the site area related ecological interpretation. Project costs are to be finalised.”*

While it is correct that this signage was specified under the s106 agreement, the Council consistently fails to actually DO anything about it, and then uses the fact that this project is not underway to refuse to release the money for use in our gardens. This same excuse has been used for years now, when that money should be going into the local community.

We are meeting with our Councillors to discuss!

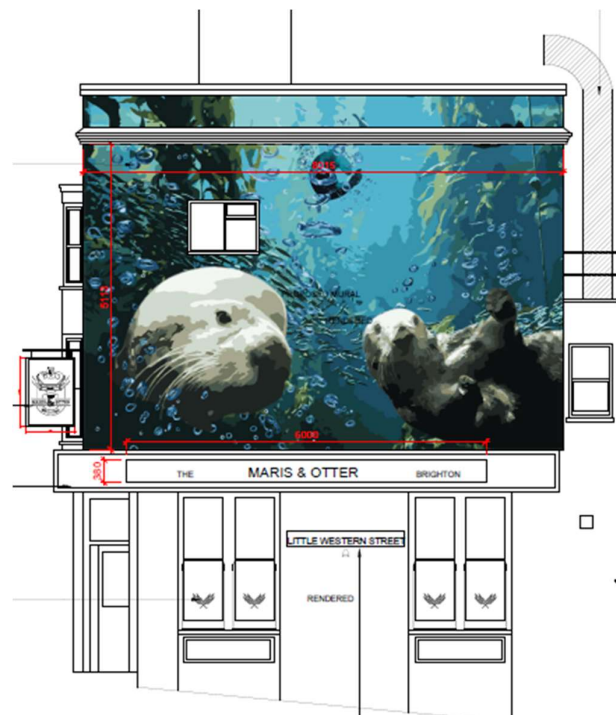
Local planning update

Mr Fish and Chips (name withheld) is at it again. He is not happy to just have his first three fast food outlets sit at the bottom of all reviews, be prosecuted by the council for hygiene breaches and be found guilty of “false evidence” in losing an employment tribunal. Recently he made a land-grab attempt by doctoring Land Registry documents to try to claim ownership of the pavement area outside his fourth venture, 86-87 Preston Street. Following our vigilance, the council enforcement department is demanding the removal of his illegal terrace, “excessively large signage” and “excessive A-boards”. Watch that space to see if he really has had his chips this time.

What about that “No Loading At Any Time” section of Stone Street? The one that had all the trucks from early morning each day “definitely not really loading at any time”? It has gone. Thanks to our campaign it has been replaced by shared paid and zonal parking bays. Most of the trucks are no more. Local residents on Stone Street can sleep.

So too can the residents of Castle Street as a ‘retrospective’ application to legitimise a rooftop bar above the snooker club has also been knocked back on our watch.

We like otters too. But not on giant adverts in the conservation area. We dissuaded Harvey & Sons brewery from this proposed huge mural:



However, perhaps money does talk? The inheritors of the John Guest £500,000,000 plumbing empire put in reasonable proposals on Kings Road to amalgamate the Cecil and the Granville into one hotel. But they also

consistently uses its “reverse beepers” at 5am, when they should not be used at all between 23.30 and 7 am. We will follow up with the companies involved and contact Environmental Health as necessary.

You may have noticed that the junction markings all around Regency Square have been repainted and are looking very smart. This is because we were very fortunate that one of the people who attended our Christmas tree lighting event is responsible for road markings in Brighton. While on the BA i360 flight she noticed the worn state of our junction markings and organised for a repaint – how efficient is that?!

Too much noise!



Thank you all, and stay safe and well

The RSAS Committee

To contact any member of the committee please use our committee email:



<https://twitter.com/RegencySquareAS>

We have also had a number of noise reports about pubs operating beyond the terms of their pavement licences, or permitting drinking on the street without pavement licences, especially at weekends. RSAS will be contacting the pubs and will follow up with licensing and Environmental Health as necessary.

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