



# REGENCY SQUARES COMMUNITY

SPRING NEWSLETTER



MARCH 2023



# SPRING NEWS

Welcome to the Spring edition of the Regency Squares Community newsletter.

We all hope you've had a wonderful few months and we can't wait for a spot of sunshine and all the gardens back in bloom!

Thank you for your continued support and we hope you enjoy our community updates!



# MEMBERSHIP

It is that time of year where we need to ask our members for some money again!

As Members will be aware we paused membership fees for two years during COVID, and managed to run RSC purely on a donations basis.

Last year a number of members did not get around to paying their membership fees, which is understandable after the hiatus for two years. While we would dearly love to be able to get rid of membership fees permanently, we do have operating costs that we need to pay in order to keep RSC up and running - insurance, website hosting fees, costs for the gardens and gardening group, AGM costs and costs associated with the Christmas tree each year to name but a few.

Every penny of your fees goes directly to cover these costs - all of the Committee volunteers all of their time completely free.

Following the AGM last year, we have simplified the complicated member structure and fees. So now there are just two membership types: Household which is £5 and Business which is £15.

If you live outside the area and would like the newsletter posted to you, you will need to add another £6 in postage fees to your membership. And of course optional donations are always very very welcome - almost 80% of our revenues come from donations most years, which in turn helps us keep fees lows.



We try to keep our fees as low as possible, and we like to think we're good value for money. But we do not want to exclude anyone who is struggling in these tough economic times – RSC is here to represent our whole community. So if you cannot afford the fees (for whatever reason) please just contact any one on the Committee – in the strictest confidence – and we will be happy to roll over your membership fees for free until you feel able to pay again.

*There are lots of ways that you can pay us now:*

You can pay by cash or cheque by filling out the membership form that has been sent out with the newsletter and dropping it into 14 Stone Street, Brighton, BN12HB. (Please note that cheques should now be made payable to our new name Regency Squares Community – as the bank bureaucracy to go with our name change is now complete)

**You can pay by bank transfer to bank account**

**No. 30071320, Sort Code: 09-01-29**

*(please include your surname as a reference so we know who it is)*

Or you can pay by credit card on our website at:

**<https://regencybrighton.com>**

# WHO WAS THAT CHOIR?



Yes, yes, it's much closer to Easter now than Christmas but some of you may still be wondering "*who was that choir?*" on the Brighton i360 Christmas Tree Light-Up Ride?

They surprised us by breaking into the iconic soundtrack of the hit Christmas movie, 'Love Actually', as a nod to the new on-stage show, 'Choir Actually', that is touring around the UK.



Guests were on board the pod for the annual Regency Squares Community's event. They were completely unaware that the Some Voices choir was about to break out into some of the best-known songs from the movie, led by locally based conductor and composer Jade Williams.

It was such a brilliant surprise for all. After the excitement of the Christmas tree lights being switched on, everyone was so surprised when Some Voices started singing, as they had just blended in among the guests until then. It made for a very memorable event and a wonderful party atmosphere.

Once again our thanks to all who made the event come together – Brighton i360, Artist Residence, committee volunteers, Some Voices and all our guests.

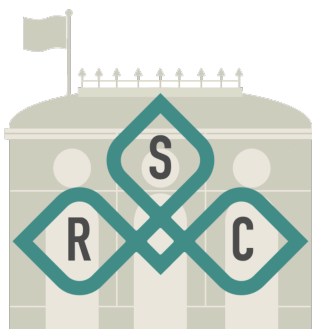
Some Voices' mission is to make singing together available to as many people as possible, building up a network of family choirs around the country:

**<https://www.somevoices.co.uk/brighton>**





"Ten, Nine, Eight" ... A Pod's Eye View of the Switch  
On.



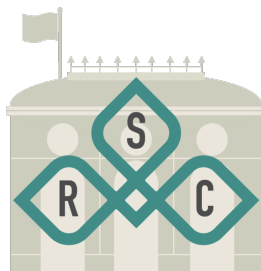
WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU ALL NEXT  
YEAR AT THE MUCH ANTICIPATED EVENT, THE  
CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHT UP!

# STREET TREES PLEASE



A terrific initiative from the Hove Civic Society and CPRE Sussex (known as the Countryside Charity) may prove a winner in our area too. A full version of these edited message highlights, endorsed by many Hove and Brighton societies, is now with our Council.

Your RSC is fully supportive ...



The  
countryside  
charity

Brighton and Hove Street Trees - giving them the priority they and we deserve: The vital importance of street trees is increasingly demonstrated and understood. Their ecological and health benefits are universally accepted, as is their highly significant contribution to achieving net-zero carbon ambitions. Their unique role in place making, creating healthy, attractive and distinctive townscapes cannot be overstated. Yet, when the City Council approved their Tree Planting Plan in November 2022, something went awry.

The plan as it stands, at best, can simply maintain the status quo with tree planting only to match the number of stumps removed, and then only in streets which have lost trees where pavements are of a certain width.

The plan concedes the difficulties in achieving a net increase in new street trees. However, although presented as a 'vision', the plan appears to be sadly lacking the ambition to see the City either increase its street tree numbers to combat climate change, or to ensure that our dense urban areas, where the need for trees is greatest, even retain their current levels of tree cover, much less become greener.

In addition to this bleak picture, as a result of the Council's new pavement maintenance regime, we are seeing pits (where trees have been removed) paved over,

seemingly on a whim, with the argument that the pavements are too narrow for trees; this on streets where trees stand and have stood for lifetimes.

We believe that both residents and street trees deserve better. Trees are a key component of our City, they need to be nurtured and we need many more than the new Tree Planting Plan envisages. The City needs a long term, sustainable and genuinely ambitious plan that can be embraced by all in the Council.

We suggest the Council seriously looks at the following:

1. Make the achievement of a high level of street tree planting across the City a corporate objective and make tree planting a policy priority.
2. Charge Town Planning with a requirement to use the City Plan and planning policies to systematically increase street tree cover in the city.
3. Review highways specifications to ensure that where there is any highway improvement; pavement widening, bike and car parking, roundabouts, chicanes and so on, tree planting is included and maximised.
4. Challenge proposals for limits to pavement widths for street tree planting - especially on streets where trees have already been planted. Also explore street tree

planting design particularly for pits and build-outs and establish a city landscape design code.

5. Introduce a fund (from the existing tree resources) to be available for matched funding from community schemes. This is a powerful way for the Council to increase funds for street tree planting. The example of Hove Civic's Restoring our Victorian Street Tree Heritage campaign, which has delivered over 100 new street trees so far.

**For more information: <https://hovecivicsociety.org/shaping-future/street-tree-heritage/>**



# WESTERN ROAD IMPROVEMENTS

One cannot fail to have noticed work has commenced on Western Road Improvements.

The Council says “We expect work to take around 18 months and be finished in May 2024. However, work will be completed in sections. This means work will only take place in certain parts of the street at a time. This is to minimise disruption.”

Here are those timings:



**You can check out what the Council proposes at:  
[https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/onejourneybetter/  
western-road](https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/onejourneybetter/western-road)**

**You can view the development plans here: [https://  
www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/parking-and-travel/  
western-road-improvement-project-plans](https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/parking-and-travel/western-road-improvement-project-plans)**

# MAY THE 4TH BE WITH YOU

**Brighton & Hove Full City Council elections are  
Thursday 4th May.**

Ward Councillors Tom and Alex are not standing for reelection this time, after a combined 22 years of councillor service and of course for Alex a year as Mayor of our city.

We thank them for their time, effort and support of the Regency Ward community over the years – seen here celebrating the bicentenary of Regency Square at the launch of “Regency Square, its history and its stories”

**(written pro bono by local historians Gill Wales and  
Suzanne Hinton - book available on the RSC website).**



**Ward Councillor Alex is third from right of picture - Tom is with then baby Rafi.**

Brighton & Hove ward boundaries have recently had a shake-up. Whilst there are 8 new wards, we remain in Regency and will again elect two ward councillors.

Not all 2023 council election candidates have been announced at the time of this Newsletter – the official candidate list will be published by 5th April.

Make sure you are registered to vote before the deadline 17th April – it takes 5 minutes and all you need is your National Insurance number:

**<https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote>**

Have your photo ID ready for the day – passport, driving licence, blue badge or bus pass; and keep an eye on this link for candidate news:

**<https://whocanivotefor.co.uk/elections/local.brighton-and-hove.2023-05-04/brighton-and-hove-local-election/>**





# COMMUNITY FORUM ON DRUG HARM

I spent a very interesting and informative day on 15th Feb at the Brighthelm Centre for a forum on drug harm. The day was organised by the Council and attended by various council departments, councillors, the police, associated agencies and residents' groups.



The police are concerned that there is a reluctance to report incidents and emphasised the importance of reporting all drug related incidents. In order to tackle problems, strong evidence is required. How best then to report?

The '101 online form' reporting had to be suspended as there was no way of risk assessing the data collected. The only online route is via [www.sussex.police.uk](http://www.sussex.police.uk) and clicking the box called 'Report'. If you want to 'phone, you can still dial 101 and there is now a call back facility - so no more long waits.

The police are aware there is a sense that, when the public report an incident and then hear nothing back, the assumption is nothing is being done. However, our report is valued. The police are working on ways to improve communication after an incident report.

We did hear of another way to report these incidents through CrimeStoppers. They are a charity organisation that guarantees anonymity.

**You can contact them online at [www.crimestoppers-uk.org](http://www.crimestoppers-uk.org) and clicking the red button "GIVE INFORMATION ANONYMOUSLY".**  
**Or by phone on 0800 555111.**

CrimeStoppers then pass the report to the police without your personal details. This approach was welcomed by the police as reluctance to report is often fuelled by fear of reprisal.

We learned a lot about County Lines and particularly Cuckooing - where organised crime groups, gangs or drug dealers target vulnerable people and use their homes to deal drugs from. It made me realise that some areas can face a much worse time than we do, with drug dealers taking over properties and essentially setting up 'shop'. The Craven Vale Estate in Brighton was well represented at the Community Forum and told how it has been particularly badly affected.

The Council told us how they are trialling Community Protection Notices to try to tackle drug-related problems. CPNs are in use today against issues such as graffiti. It may though be possible to use CPNs to ban individuals from having multiple mobile phones - a modus operandi of drug dealers.

They also mentioned the Community Trigger , which you can use if you have reported three separate incidents within the past six months to the police or the council and you are dissatisfied with the response that you have received.

Brighton & Hove Community Safety Partnership has organised a city wide drug related harm survey and is keen for our members' views - I found it took less than a minute to do:

**[https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/city\\_wide\\_drug\\_related\\_harm\\_survey/](https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/city_wide_drug_related_harm_survey/)**

It was a very informative day and I felt all taking part were keen to do as much as possible to tackle our drug problems. The forum stressed the importance of regular communication with your local PCSOs, which is something RSC has been doing for all our members for several years now as you will see elsewhere in this Newsletter.

One of the councillors left us with this sobering thought .... Brighton & Hove Council has lost £110million funding in the last 10 years. To tackle the drug harm problem full on more money is required.

## JULIE WRIGHT WAS AT THE COMMUNITY FORUM ON DRUG HARM



# PCSOs

## ALEX & LIV

Police Community Support Officers Alex Kratanos and Olivia (Liv) Giuri met again with the RSC Committee to check in on local issues. Those of which our members had made us aware included:

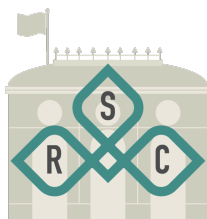
- o Drugs related
- o Anti-Social Behaviour
- o Noise
- o Crime
- o Trespass
- o Criminal Damage



Always dial 999 if it is an emergency. If non-emergency, dial 101 to talk to an operator or to get a 'Call-Back' so that you do not have to wait on the 'phone.

Please do continue to report any issues, even if via the CrimeStoppers link discussed in the article above.

**[www.crimestoppers-uk.org](http://www.crimestoppers-uk.org)**



# A GRAND DAY OUT AT THE METROPOLE

Inspired by speaker Kevin Newman's fascinating talk on the history of the Metropole hotel at last year's AGM, RSC arranged a tour of the newly refurbished hotel. The hotel built in 1890, was last renovated in 2004.

Last year saw an extensive multimillion pound refurbishment of all the guest rooms (340) and public areas, banqueting suites and conference facilities, restoring the heritage of the building while giving it a new lease of life.





THE TOUR ASSEMBLING



I'D LOVE TO HAVE THE SQUIGGLY BLUE  
CARPET ON MY STAIRS!

The dining room is Le Petit Chef Restaurant. It has projectors in the ceiling which beam a 3D moving image of 'the world's smallest chef' onto your table as he prepares your chosen meal in animation then, voila, your real meal arrives. Choose a seafood course and the table is transformed into the sea, for the ingredients to be caught.

Not everyone liked the grey blue colour scheme and we felt Brighton Artists could have supplied better artwork but it was lovely to see the Old Lady modernised. Our thanks go to Eileen Caffier who did a wonderful job of showing us around.

If you are looking to host a function for 800 people then no problem thanks to hidden sliding doors. The multiple banqueting suites transform into one space. More than 800 hundred guest? - well the conference suite with its balcony will hold more than 1,000.

We were most impressed by the upgrades to the previously tatty conference suite.





3D PROJECTORS IN THE LIGHTS AT LE  
PETIT CHEF



OUR GUIDE EILEEN



## THE PRESIDENTIAL SUITE

We really enjoyed The Presidential Suite, the hotel's most expensive. 3 double bedrooms all connecting and with its own lounge. We could really imagine a conference speech being written here.

Without a doubt our favourite room was The Chartwell Suite, previously called the Starlight Room. This space has yet to be refurbished but as the top room in the hotel, overlooking the Old Pier – it was magnificent.





## THE CHARTWELL SUITE



# NO, NO DECAUX

Do you recall that global advertising company JCDecaux had proposed eight of their giant Digital out-of-home adverting hubs in our area? RSC led objections to the Planning Department and we were quoted in the council's outright rejection of all eight.

Unfortunately we can do nothing about the similar giant screens already installed on our pavements by BT as these have replaced existing telephone boxes for which planning permission already stands.





DIGITAL OUT-OF-HOME  
ADVERTING HUBS



# THE GARDENS

*Gardens Put To Bed For Winter!*

Thank you to our gardening volunteers for stellar work and putting the gardens to bed for the winter.

Work is picking up again as spring springs. There will be an update within our next edition. *Mind the daffs as you go!*

# REGENCY SQUARES COMMUNITY

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THANK YOU FOR  
YOUR CONTINUED  
SUPPORT!

MARCH 2023

