



NEWSLETTER 245 October 2009

Council Scrutinises Access

The Council's Scrutiny Commission has established a scrutiny panel to look into issues related to street access. Behind all this local government jargon it seems that something quite useful may be happening.

The panel is a group of five councillors, chaired by our own, Sven Rufus. They are gathering evidence about problems faced by users of our streets, particularly those who are disabled in some way. Much of what they have heard concerns A-boards and café tables and chairs.

We asked them to look at trade refuse bins. Our chairman, Roger Hinton, showed some photographs and described the problems we have had in getting Council officers to take any action.



For example there is a bin which regularly blocks the footway in Queensbury Mews. A Council officer has visited the premises at a time when the bin was on a private forecourt, so he was not able to take any action. Local people know that often it is blocking the footway.

You can see our full evidence to the panel on our web site (www.regencybrighton.com).

The panel members agreed that it was unacceptable to store trade waste on the public footway.

They expressed particular surprise when they heard that in some cases enforcement officers give permission for bins to be left on the pavement, like those outside the Regency Tavern. One councillor described it as “disgraceful”.

Hopefully the panel’s final report will include some recommendations to clamp down on this abuse of the public footway by businesses.

The “Ch” Word!

It really is too early to mention that celebration in December. But sometimes you have to plan ahead.

We are planning a Ch... lunch at 12 noon on Thursday 17th December at the Gallery, the City College training restaurant in the North Laine. The restaurant entrance is near the junction of Cheapside and Whitecross Street (not the main college entrance).

The cost is £19.50 for a three course meal plus mince pies and coffee. You can buy drinks on the day. If you would like to come please contact Ros Boulden, (☎ 01273 323690)

To reserve a place please send Ros £19.50 per person (8 Abbots, 129 Kings Road, Brighton BN1 2FA); she will also need to know your telephone number and whether you want the vegetarian option. Ros will need to confirm numbers before the end of October so please book now!

Come and celebrate with your neighbours, and bring your friends! But don’t mention the “Ch” word!

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A New Blue Plaque

This plaque appeared on the north side of Western Road recently near the Heart Foundation shop. It commemorates Sir Edward Codrington, a British naval commander who played a key role in the Greek war of independence. The plaque was unveiled at the end of last month by the Greek Ambassador.



Thanks to Delia Ives for the photo

Congratulations to our neighbours in the Montpelier and Clifton Hill Association whose efforts made it happen.

Trips to the Little Theatre

It's not too late to book a ticket for "Blood Brothers" by Willy Russell (the play not the musical). We are going on Thursday 5 November; the play starts at 7:45pm. . If you want to come please send your name, telephone number and £7.50 per ticket to Ros Boulden, 8 Abbots, 129 Kings Road, Brighton BN1 2FA, by 12 October.

The December production will be "Dracula" by Liz Lochhead, from Bram Stoker's classic novel, "a tale of tragedy and the madness that comes with desire and power." (The production contains nudity.)

We are planning to go on Wednesday 16th December, at 7:45pm. Arrangements for booking are the same as for "Blood Brothers" above. Book by December 1st.

Those Peregrines Get Everywhere!!

It seems that the Sussex Heights peregrines have their fans in all four corners of the world. They appeared last month in a scientific research paper presented by a wildlife biologist from Alberta, Canada at a conference in Pitlochry, Scotland.

The paper was entitled "When Peregrines Fight: Territorial Advertisement and Defence Behaviour" and included images from the nest box fight last Spring.

Cycle Wheels Turn Slowly

It was back in February last year that Councillor Sven Rufus organised a meeting for us with Council cycling officer, Abby Hone to talk about putting some cycle stands in Regency Square. The idea was to reduce the number of bikes locked to railing around the square.

Several enquiries since then went unanswered. Finally last month we had a response. New cycling officer, Tracy Davison tells us: "I do have Regency Square on my radar and will be pushing this to be implemented over the coming months."

It's about time the Council got out of bottom gear and started pedalling a bit faster!

Parking Petition

Our petition about parking in Regency Square was to have been presented to a Council Environment meeting last month. Unfortunately this was not possible. It will now be presented directly to the full Council on 8 October. It would have had to be passed to the full Council anyway so there has been no real delay.

Strength in Numbers

Is your neighbour a member? If not, why not encourage them to join? Contact Roger Hinton for membership leaflets (☎ 01273 321794 ✉ hinton@clara.net)

Still Shrouded in Scaffolding

Just what is happening to the war memorial in Regency Square and when will it be finished?

The latest report is that a firm called Rupert Harris Conservation started work restoring the bronze plaques early in September. They were expected to finish the work by the end of that month.

We have seen a detailed statement by the firm outlining the problem and the way they plan to deal with it. The work involves removing all the existing paint and corrosion using “controlled abrasive blasting”.

A coloured “chemical patina” then needs to be applied to the surface, which is apparently what would have been done by the foundry when the plaques were first made. Three coats of wax are then needed to protect the surface from weather. This wax coating will need regular maintenance.

The large letters will be painted to match the patina. The missing “R” needs to be recast.

Better Gardening

Two committee members met with landscape architect, Virginia Hinze recently to hear her views on what could be done to improve the appearance of Regency Square.

She gave us a lot to think about but her main message was that in the short term the square needs “better gardening”. She also suggested painting the railings round the top green. The committee is considering Virginia’s ideas and how we might implement them. Watch this space!

If you have any views about the gardens in Regency Square please let us know (✉ hinton@clara.net ☎ 01273 321794).

Work on the i360 to Start this Month

Don't get too excited. It's a good headline but it needs a little explanation.

Planning permission for the West Pier observation tower was granted back in 2006. One of the conditions was "the development to be commenced within three years." That deadline runs out on 25 October.

Rather than apply for an extension the developers are planning to dig a few holes on the site before then. This will, it seems, count as commencement of the development so the permission will not lapse.

This interesting bit of legal nonsense was revealed at the AGM of the West Pier Trust earlier this month, in answer to a question from our chairman. The real news is, as it has been for some time now, that the credit crunch is preventing serious work from starting.

Another Trust member asked the chairman what plan B was. He replied that if the i360 could not go ahead, the Trust would try to find a developer to build a modern pier out into the sea.

The main problem for the Trust has always been that a pier is unlikely to generate enough cash to maintain itself. So the Trust's plan B is even less likely to work than plan A (the i360). Plan B should be something that you know you will be able to do if plan A fails.

Looking at the sorry state of the seafront opposite Regency Square, perhaps we need a plan B that avoids grandiose ideas like an observation tower or a pier, and just makes our bit of seafront as tidy as the rest.

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