

Regency Square Area Society

NEWSLETTER 250
April 2010

A New Committee

Following a successful AGM at the Metropole Hotel last month we now have a new committee to run the Society:

Chairman:	Roger Hinton	Regency Square
Treasurer:	Sue Paskins	Marlborough Street
Members:	Michel Boucher	Clarence Gardens
	Ros Boulden	Abbotts
	Margaret Brisley	Sussex Heights
	Duncan Cameron	Regency Square
	Diana Dunn	Clarence Gardens
	Rhidian Hughes	Regency Square
	Tom Mackillop	Russell Square

Unfortunately no one was nominated as secretary. At present other committee members are sharing the secretary's work. However, this is not an ideal arrangement and we are keen to find someone to take on the role. If you might be interested or you know someone who may be willing, please contact Roger Hinton (☎ 01273 321794 ✉ hinton@clara.net).

Society Contacts:

Chairman: Roger Hinton,
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Treasurer, Sue Paskins
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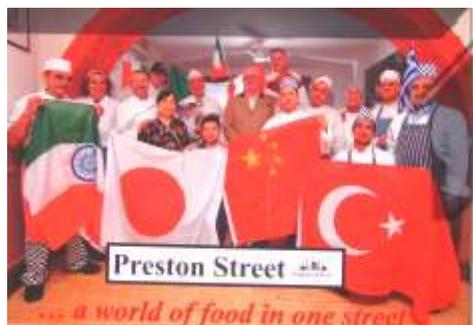
Web site: www.regencybrighton.com

Cycle Stands at Last!

We were assured a couple of months ago that cycle stands would be installed in Regency Square by the end of the Council's financial year. So, as March 31st came and went and no stands appeared, we were worried that perhaps the funding for them had been lost.

However, Tracy Davison, the Council's cycling officer, assured us the money was still available, and lo and behold, work on installing the stands is now underway.

Facelift for Preston Street



Congratulations to the Preston St. Traders' Assoc. and the Council who have joined forces to give the street a boost.

One achievement is very visible, namely the illustrations that have appeared on the windows of empty properties. If you eat at any of the restaurants in the street you may recognise some of the faces in this picture, which is displayed at the north end of the street.

It's not all cosmetic improvements. The Council is also trying to contact the owners of empty properties to encourage them to think about possible changes of use. For example, there is currently a lot of demand for office space in central Brighton from new, small businesses in the information and media industries.

The Council can offer help with getting the necessary planning permission, and, of course there are plenty of opportunities nearby for business lunches.

Meanwhile in the Underpass

We have had a reply from the Council to our complaint about the conditions in the underpass to the beach:

“There have been ongoing problems with severe acts of vandalism in the underpass which, as you say, have damaged the lighting and deter people from using it. However, I am pleased to let you know that we are currently drawing up design options for upgrading or replacing the lighting.

These improvements are dependent on £10,000 of Section 106 funding, secured as part of the i360 development, which we are hoping will come available in June.”

This £10,000 sounds like good news, but does it depend on a start to construction of the i360, or even a start to it actually operating and generating some revenue? We have asked for clarification.

Is the doughnut in the sky just pie?

At the AGM quite a few people expressed frustration at the delay in a start to work on the i360. They wanted to know what is happening.

The answer depends on who you talk to. At a meeting of Preston Street Traders some weeks ago, Councillor Ted Kemble suggested that the deal to secure finance for the scheme was just days away from being signed.

The latest newsletter from the West Pier Trust is not quite so gung ho:

“Although we are still not able to announce the start of the i360 construction, the atmosphere is more upbeat than last year and we are hopeful that there will be more good news before long.”

Meanwhile our local section of the seafront is a mess. The West Pier Trust has been trying to find a feasible plan for the site for over thirty years; who remembers the Hawes plan of 1980 for a huge Ferris wheel on the landward end of the pier? It came to nothing of course. When is enough enough?

That is the question we want to ask the Council. The time is rapidly approaching when action should be taken to tidy up the root end of the pier and the area around. The West Pier Trust is unwilling to contemplate such a plan because it has pinned all its hopes on the i360. So it is time for the Council to recognise that the i360 may never happen and start planning accordingly.

What about the metal bit out in the sea?

The Trust's latest newsletter announces that "The Pavilion island presents no hazard; it will remain in situ, an essential part of the Brighton seafront."

This is an interesting idea that some people like and others do not. Is it right for an important decision like this is to be made by a private charity? Is it not a decision for the publicly accountable local authority, after proper consultation with the people of Brighton and Hove?

"Beautiful Thing" at the Little Theatre

The next production at the Little Theatre in Clarence Gardens is Jonathan Harvey's "Beautiful Thing", a gay love story set on a south London housing estate in the 1990s. It was a West End hit in 1993 and was filmed in 1995.

We are planning a group to go and see it on Wednesday 19th May. It starts at 7:45pm. If you would like to come please send £8.50 (concessions £7.50) per ticket to Ros Boulden, Flat 8, 129 Kings Road, Brighton BN1 2FA by May 3rd.

Congratulations ...

... to PCSO Siobhan Salihi, our local police contact. She is expecting a baby, so she will not be pounding the beat for a while. In her absence our area will be covered by PCSOs Alena Martauzova and Bobbi King who can be contacted on 0845 60 70 999.

History Boards?

An interesting idea was raised at the AGM: can we put up some display boards around our area explaining a bit of its history? We are investigating the idea.

£2 million in Churchill Sq. Car Park

Standard Life, the owner of Churchill Square is planning to spend £2m refurbishing and repairing the Churchill 2 car park. The work will start in late April and should be finished by mid November.

There will never be more than 12% of the total parking spaces out of use at any one time and the work will be subject to "stringent noise restrictions".

If you have any queries you can contact carparkenquiries@churchillsquare.com.

Comments on the Core Strategy

The Council is putting together its "Core Strategy", which will help shape plans for Brighton and Hove through to 2026. The Society has submitted comments on those parts of the document which relate to our area.

- We support the Council's objectives of securing improvements and maintenance to the promenade.
- The future vision and landscaping plans for the area around the former West Pier are linked specifically to the development of the i360. We suggested they should refer more generally to "development on the West Pier site" in case the i360 fails to materialise.

- The documents talks of a "solution for the West Pier" and "working with the West Pier Trust". We suggested that the West Pier as such no longer exists and that it may be unwise to include the West Pier Trust in a document with a 15 year life span.
- The Council hopes that there will be developments on and around the site of the Brighton Centre, including a new conference centre, a four-star hotel, an expansion of the Churchill Square shopping mall and a pedestrian link from the mall to the seafront. We commented that any new development should try to improve the unattractive and threatening nature of Russell Road and avoid closing off any more parts of the town centre in the way that the existing mall has done.
- We support the Council's aim to encourage a wider range of activities in night-life areas such as West Street. We asked for a commitment not to allow any new night-life developments to the west of West Street.

A Visit to Embassy Court

After many years of neglect, Embassy Court is now returned to its former glory. Here is a chance to have a look inside this fine example of Art Deco architecture.

We have organised a guided visit at 11 am on Saturday 5th June. The cost will be £6 per person (£5 for concessions). If you would like to come please send your money, together with your name and contact details to Sue Paskins, c/o 39 Regency Square, Brighton BN1 2FJ. Places are limited.

The visit will last between 1 and 1½ hours. There are lifts but there will be some steps to negotiate. There are no toilet facilities available during the tour.

M and M Tours

The next coach trip will be on Sunday 13th June to the Red House (Bexley Heath) and Eltham Palace (Greenwich). For full details contact Roger Hinton.

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