



NEWSLETTER 281 September 2013

A closed case

An energetic RSAS committee member has been making valiant attempts to ensure that all the gates in two of our Squares close properly. There have been successes: the gates into Russell Square now spring to attention when asked to close.

The double gates into Regency remain obstinately open, thus encouraging dog walking, cycling and other inappropriate use of the gardens. According to Council officers, one of these gates will be kept locked (with a key provided for two local disabled residents), the other will be put on a spring. We will look forward to this happening ... in the near future?

Society Contacts:

Chair: Trix Webber

✉ tew823@gmail.com ☎ 01273 321858

Secretary

✉ s@hinton.clara.net ☎ 01273 321794

Web site

www.regencybrighton.com

43 Russell Square

The Society has been campaigning for well over a year to protect the fragile fabric of 43 Russell Square from being turned from a family home into a house in multiple occupation. The house has already suffered much from the developer who bought it from the Ken Kennar estate. Original features were removed and other unauthorised work carried out. Thanks to the persuasive powers of the Conservation enforcement officers at the City Council, much of this damage has been repaired.

But the really good news is that, on August 29th, the Council's Planning Committee rejected the developer's application to turn this single house into 4 small flats. Thanks go to Duncan Cameron for his dogged work on following up the depredations to the house and to Julie White who spoke against the application on behalf of concerned local residents.

Are you of the right "calibre"?

Some members of the Society might have read an article in The Argus on the morning of 29th August referring to 43 Russell Square. Ambiguous reporting seemed to imply that the Society was keen to avoid change of usage of 43 Russell Square in order to control who lived in the square. The quotation referring to "the calibre of people" did not come from the objections put forward by the Society but from a individual objector in their private capacity.

Bollards

Not a rude word any more! After much discussion within the Society committee it was decided to request the Council to replace the missing bollard with a replica of the one which still exists. This should be a relatively simple and speedy process compared to the the difficult task of repairing the broken bollard and casting a new part for the missing section. Next time you pass through the twitten, pat "little brother" on the head – he might not be there much longer.

Thirty three years

That's how long it has taken for all the buildings in Regency Square to become the same colour.

It was back in 1980 that the Council issued an Article 4 Direction requiring all properties in the square to be painted pale cream, British Standard 10 C 31 to be precise. Before that the houses were all sorts of colours: white, yellow, pink, green, battle-ship grey, blue; some were even cream.

Of course the law is never simple. There was one let-out for any property owner who didn't fancy pale cream. You could repaint in the same colour as was already there. And that is what some people did.

One was the late John Keehan, owner of Keehan's Hotel at number 57. It's quite a few years now since he sold his white painted property and moved away. Unlike most of the houses in the square, Keehan's still has exposed bricks above balcony level, as required by the original covenant.

Earlier this year the scaffolding went up and the painted areas now sport a coat of 10 C 31 like all its neighbours.



- Print & Copy
- Office Services
- Stationery
- Packing & Shipping
- Packing Materials
- Post & Parcels

Tel: 01273 70 60 20 ○ www.mbebrighton.co.uk
Email: print@mbefbrighton.co.uk ○ 91 Western Road, Brighton. BN1 2NW

Security, what security?

The massive doors are there. The electronically controlled pedestrian doors are there. Are the cars there? Well, not really. Council statistics, obtained from the Society's Freedom of Information request, reveal that usage of the Regency Square car park in June 2013 was 9% lower than in July 2012.

In May, the Society received a report from a dissatisfied visitor to the city whose car, "safely" parked in the car park, had been broken into and vandalised; rough sleepers are still able to enter the car park by tail-gating or other means.

The Council has been very responsive to requests by the Society to improve door locks and to send patrols of security personnel when the gates are not closing correctly. Are they fighting a losing battle? The Society will monitor security and the usage of the car park over the next 12 months.

Inappropriate car park sign

Committee member Nigel Rose is finding the City Council untractable about the large, white (and clearly ineffectual) car park sign at the north of Regency Square. The Society wishes this sign to be removed. It is inappropriate, too prominent and too white in an area where residents are required to paint their houses in cream. However, Nigel is not one to be deterred and will continue his fight to get the sign removed.

... and other anti-social behaviour

It's summer. The grass in the gardens is a little brown, but lots of people still want to sit out in the summer sun. That includes the rough-sleepers and others the worse for drink and drugs. In Preston Street and Regency Square, possibly the worst affected areas locally, the police have responded well to the many calls from Society members worried about anti-social behaviour. If you are concerned at all by what you see, don't hesitate to **phone 101**, the police non-emergency number. You might have to wait a little

but the response will be good. The police also appreciate e-mails describing anti-social behaviour as it helps to focus their activities on "hot spots":
contactcentre@sussex.pnn.police.uk
or text 07786 208090

Committee member profile

Julie White along with her husband, a London property lawyer, her 23 year old daughter and 18 year old son moved 2 years ago from their Sevenoaks home of 19 years to Brighton to be with Julie's mother who had terminal cancer. Unfortunately Betty, Julie's mother who lived in Bedford towers, lived only two weeks after they moved into their rented house in west Brighton.

The family decided to make a dream come true: to have a Regency house. They bought the old Franklins hotel in Regency Square and are in the process of restoring the house to a family home.



Julie is an enthusiastic dog walker with Betty, her pug, and is keen to encourage other owners to "pick-up" after their pets and to discourage anyone allowing a dog to use local areas enclosed by railings.

Julie and her family are very happy living in Regency Square. They have been pleasantly surprised to find a wonderful community spirit in the centre of the city. They are proud to live in a beautiful listed square.

i-360

For six years the West Pier Trust has been telling us that the only thing preventing the i360 going ahead is a loan of about £15 million. Now the Council has offered such a loan and it comes to light that the rest of the capital is no longer on the table. Meanwhile, Brighton seafront opposite Regency Square is a wasteland. Isn't it time for the West Pier Trust to admit defeat and bow out?

Green fingers

You have green fingers but no garden? You spend so much time talking to your houseplants they are getting bored? Then join the volunteer gardeners (initially in the top garden of Regency Square) on Fridays at 2pm. Help to maintain (and some cases curb) the luxuriant growth in our squares. Plans are afoot to plant hedges to disguise the ugly low walls between the greens of Regency Square and to extend other plantings there and in the other squares. But how will our volunteer gardeners dispose of all that unwanted greenery?

Composting is the answer

Our Chair, Trix Webber, jumped at the chance of obtaining two free composting bins for the Society when they were offered on the City Council website. The bins will be mainly used to compost garden cutting and weeds from the Squares, but members are also very welcome to join in the scheme. It is free. The bins are securely locked to deter rats entering and smells exiting. Anyone subscribing to the scheme will receive a code to open the bins in order to deposit greenery and is, of course, entitled to use the lovely rich compost when it is "mature". For further details, contact Trix Webber.

Planning Update

19A Castle Street is at present derelict. However, the site comprises an historic building and a charming courtyard. At present, there is an application from developers to build a 14 bed student hostel. The design is very bland. You can comment on any aspect of this application on the Council website before 11 November. The application number is [BH2013/02798](#).

