



NEWSLETTER 287 MARCH 2014

Annual General Meeting

The Society's 35th AGM will be held at 7.30pm on Monday March 24th in the Osborne Room at the Hilton Metropole Hotel. Our speaker will be Richard Lindfield, the former Chair of Brighton Little Theatre in Clarence Gardens. He will talk about the history of the building and of the theatre company. The talk (and questions) will be followed by refreshments and raffle. The evening will end with the formal business of the AGM, the agenda for which is set out below.

Agenda

- 1 Minutes of the previous AGM
- 2 Committee report for the year
- 3 Treasurer's report and annual accounts
- 4 Subscription rates for 2014/15
- 5 Election of officers and committee
- 6 Members' questions and comments

The Committee's Annual Report

Improving the area

As always, the year has seen some improvements achieved and others planned but not achieved. The bench in memory of long term resident Ken Kennar was installed in Russell Square and is being well used. The Regency Square Heritage Board is finally in place at the north end of the top garden and looks very impressive. There has been successful liaison with the Council to improve street lighting in the area over the year.

Work in progress includes having the large, superfluous sign above the car park removed and finding a way for the gates into

Regency Square's top garden to be opened easily by everyone including wheelchair users, yet close behind people to shut dogs out. You may rest assured that we will pursue both to successful conclusions. Thanks particularly to Nigel Rose for liaising with the Council on these and many other environmental issues.

Communal recycling bins

We have had a number of meetings with the Council about how the scheme to replace individual collection of recycling with communal bins would work and the location of bins. Our understanding is that the scheme will definitely go ahead, but no start date has been given. The Council has been amenable to our suggestions for lessening the visual impact of the bins in our area.

Gardens

Hedges at the north ends of the middle and lower gardens in Regency Square will be planted in April to hide the concrete car park walls. Angelo Martinoli has very generously offered to sponsor this new planting. A composting scheme for private households, organised with Brighton and Hove Food Partnership and the Council is due to start in March. Also planned is the re-turfing of the south east area of Regency Square, which is still rather bald from the car park Portacabins.

The West Pier Site and the i360

The last few months have seen a dramatic development in this sorry tale. A proposal has been made for the Council to draw down a government loan of £36 million, which would enable the i360 project to go ahead. The decision to approve the loan was made at a meeting of the Council's Policy and Resources Committee on March 6th. Opinions vary on this decision. Some think that public money should not be risked in this way. Others believe that the potential benefits of the i360 to the city, and to our area in particular, are worth the risk involved. There are of course varying views on the i360 itself. These range from believing it to be a monstrosity to regarding it as an elegant contemporary design.

In the meantime Nigel Rose's efforts to persuade the West Pier Trust to tidy up the ever more derelict site have met with some success, as the Portacabin has been removed.

Planning, Housing and Conservation

Duncan Cameron has monitored planning applications throughout the year and has continued to represent us on the Conservation Advisory Council. Paula Brookes has taken a particular interest in Stone Street and Castle Street.

The year has been characterised by problematic planning issues which remain unresolved in spite of a great deal of work on the part of our local activists. The exterior of 67 Preston Street looks ever more decrepit and steps are underway to persuade the Council to issue an enforcement notice to the owner. An application to turn part of the building into a house of multiple occupation was rejected by the Council Planning Committee.

An application to turn 43 Russell Square from a family house into four small flats was also refused by the Planning Committee at a meeting at which Julie White put forward arguments on our behalf against the application. This decision is, however currently being challenged.

The application to build a 14 unit student hostel in Castle Street, which is opposed by 25 residents in the immediate area, is due to be considered shortly.

The lease for the properties occupied by the West Pier Project are due for renewal in 2015 and we have written to the Council arguing that Regency Square is not a suitable location for a hostel of this size and type..

The Campaign Against Antisocial Behaviour

Antisocial behaviour associated with alcohol and drug use has long been an issue in Regency Square, but the wonderful summer of 2013 meant that it became even more of a problem. The police responded really well to our frequent reports of groups of drinkers and rough sleepers. We believe that zero tolerance is the only way to disabuse those concerned of the idea that Regency Square is a place to come and get drunk, pick up drugs or camp.

We plan to put notices up for the summer around the Square stating that it is a no drinking zone and we are meeting shortly with the police to discuss future action. They have asked us all to report every incident of antisocial behaviour and we would urge you to do so (Phone 101 for non-emergency reports). Even if the perpetrators have gone before the police arrive, the call or email is logged, and collectively our reports make the case for more police resources to be directed towards the problem. We will publish further police contact details in future newsletters.

Newsletters and Social Events

Thanks to Suzanne Hinton and Julie White for producing the 10 newsletters which we have sent out this year. We have generally received good feedback about them and members seem to feel that they are an effective means of keeping in touch with what is going on.

A number of social events were organised throughout the year

- Roast lunch at the Regency Tavern in March
- A Pinter double bill, *The Lover* and *Celebration* at the New Venture Theatre in June.
- Dinner at Casalingo in August.
- A meeting with Caroline Lucas at the Metropole Hotel in November
- Our usual pre Christmas drinks in the Regency Tavern and breakfast in the Regency Restaurant on New Year's day
- Terence Rattigan's *The Winslow Boy* at the New Venture Theatre in February

Subscriptions

The committee is not proposing any increase in membership subscriptions rates for 2015.

Thanks

To everyone who has helped and supported the Society over the past year. The Committee would particularly like to thank Trix Webber for her skilful guidance throughout the year and her hard work on many of the above projects.

Elections

The following committee members are standing for re-election

Chair	Trix Webber	(Regency Square)
Treasurer	Vacant	
Secretary	Suzanne Hinton	(Regency Square)
Committee members		
Margaret Brisley		(Sussex Heights)
Paula Brookes		(Stone Street)
Duncan Cameron		(Regency Square)
Angelo Martinoli		(Preston Street)
Nigel Rose		(Regency Square)
Julie White		(Regency Square)

Our thanks to Paul Smith who served on the committee for most of the year until pressure of work forced his resignation

Further nominations are invited for the committee and all three officers. Nominations must be made in advance of the AGM. You may nominate any members of the Society or you may nominate yourself. Please contact Trix Webber tew823@gmail.com / 01273 321858 if you wish to make a nomination.

Treasurer's Report

It was a pleasure to hand over cheques for £935.11 for the Russell Square bench and £2424 for the Regency Square

Heritage Board and to see these two enhancements to our area installed. We had to top up the £2200 heritage board grant with £224 from the Regency Square Improvement Fund as we opted for a more expensive (and hopefully more durable) material than was originally envisaged. The £100 donation from M&M Tours towards period street signs was returned once we realised that such signs would be far beyond our budget.

The Regency Square hoteliers generously agreed to leave the £170 they had donated for a Christmas tree in 2013 in a fund for the coming Christmas.

In spite of increases in some of our routine expenditure, particularly postage and insurance, we ended the year with an increase of £532 in our General Fund. Members agreeing to receive newsletters by email rather than post have helped to keep costs down. The fantastic prizes donated by local businesses at the 2013 AGM really boosted income from the raffle.

Many thanks for your subscriptions and donations, which have enabled us to carry on with the work of the RSAS over the year.

Annual Accounts

Income & expenditure for the year ended 28 February 2014

	£	£
Income		
Subscriptions		542
Donations		439
Functions		117
Interest		<u>6</u>
Total General Fund income		1104
Russell Square Seat Fund		470
Regency Square Improvement Fund		20
Christmas Tree Fund		<u>170</u>
Total income for the year		1764
Expenditure		
Postage, printing etc	142	
Insurance	197	
AGM/Functions	78	
Web site expenses	<u>140</u>	
Total general expenses	557	
Russell Square Seat	935	
Heritage Board	2424	
Regency Square Improvement Fund	76	
Signage Fund	100	
Total expenditure for the year		<u>(4092)</u>

Overall deficit for the year (2328)

Balance sheet as at 28 February 2014

General Fund at start of year	3139
Increase for the year	532
General Fund at end of year	<u>3671</u>
Russell Square Seat Fund at start of year	450
Decrease for the year	<u>450</u>
Fund at end of year	<u>00</u>
Regency Square Improvement Fund at start of year	1155
Decrease (includes £224 transf to Heritage Board)	<u>280</u>
Fund at end of year	<u>875</u>
Heritage Board Fund at start of year	2200
Transfer from Regency Square Improvement Fund	224
Decrease	<u>2424</u>
Fund at end of year	<u>00</u>
Signage Fund at start of year	100
Decrease	<u>100</u>
Fund at end of year	<u>00</u>
Christmas tree Fund at start of year	00
Increase	<u>170</u>
Christmas Tree Fund at end of year	<u>170</u>
Total funds at 28.2.2014	<u>4716</u>
Cash at bank	4571
Cash in hand	<u>145</u>
Total assets	<u>4716</u>

Dates for your diary

A great offer! Dinner at Casalingo 7pm on Friday 25th April. RSAS members enjoy a 50% saving on food. Hope to see you there.



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