



NEWSLETTER 305 May 2016

OUR AGM - THE BUSINESS

The Committee elected at the AGM:

Chair: Trix Webber (Regency Square)
Treasurer: Nicola Floyd (Queensbury Mews)
Secretary: Suzanne Hinton (Kings Road)
Paula Brookes (Stone Street)
Jerome Lloyd (Russell Square)
Nigel Rose (Regency Square)
Julie White (Regency Square)

Margaret Brisley and Angelo Martinoli did not stand for re-election. They were warmly thanked for their contributions to the Society over several years.

The Committee of the Society is now very small, at a time when it is active on many fronts (see below). If you are interested in being co-opted onto the Committee, please contact any of the officers (contact details in box below). You would be very much welcomed.

OUR AGM - THE PLEASURE

On 18 April, 25 members and friends of the Society gathered in the Osborne Room of the Metropole Hotel. The evening started with a short talk by Cllr Gill Mitchell, Deputy Leader of Brighton and Hove City Council.

Cllr Mitchell stressed that, in this period of major investment and development, it was of vital importance to keep the city moving. Developments around the i360 and

the works on the Shelter Hall (West Street) would be causing considerable traffic movement difficulties.

In a time of cuts to council funding from central government, the City Council was looking at ways of raising funds and making savings. These included increasing on-street parking charges in order to keep down the cost of residents' parking permits, as well as working with the i360 to ensure that the attraction was a success.

Cllr Mitchell announced that a new bus service, the i7, would start in June 2016. It would run from the Marina to the i360. This was welcomed by the audience who hoped that the service could be extended to the King Alfred area.

The City Council was also bidding for funding from central government and other fund holders for specific projects such as a public on-street bike rental scheme and the development of the Queens Road / West Street entry into the city from Brighton Station.

Finally, Cllr Mitchell outlined the City's open spaces strategy. This was investigating ways in which local people could be involved in managing open spaces in the City. She was adamant that the Council wished to benefit from the ideas and expertise of volunteers. The Council did not see volunteers as merely a cheap workforce. The strategy would put local groups at the heart of decision-making and would allow the City Council to bid for government funding.

In answer to a question from the floor, Cllr Mitchell reported that the City Council was investigating park and ride options as well as encouraging use of car parks other than Churchill Square car parks. It was noted that there were often queues when the Churchill car park was not full. This seemed to be indicative of poor traffic-flow management which was to be investigated by the City Council.

One members pointed out that queues were causing severe inconvenience to residents in the Cannon Place / Russell Square / Clarence Square area.

Cllr Mitchell undertook to investigate the sign at the south end of Regency Square. This sign funnelled traffic to the Churchill car park rather than to the Regency Square car park. This involved a large loss of revenue to the City Council. Nigel Rose reminded members that the Society's Committee is campaigning to have pay-spaces removed from the west side of Regency Square in order to improve traffic flow around the Square.

Paula Brookes reported that several residents in new properties were obtaining residents parking permits despite the properties being designated "car free". Cllr Mitchell undertook to investigate this error on the part of the parking department.

Nigel Rose, acting Chair in the unavoidable absence of Trix Webber, closed the first part of the evening with a very warm vote of thanks to Cllr Mitchell.

THE RAFFLE

Our business members continued their tradition of great generosity to the Society by providing prizes for the raffle. Many thanks to: The Artists' Residence; Casalingo Restaurant; Cherubs Kitchen at the Regency Tavern; Pelirocco Hotel, Hotel Una.

PLANNING

2a Regency Mews: The Society had written to the City Council to express concerns that the property might become a "party house" and cause excessive noise.

BUPA building, Russell Mews: The Society is continuing to investigate whether the conditions imposed on the property in 1986 will continue to be enforced if the building becomes residential.

67 Preston Street: the appearance of the property has improved but is still poor. Julie White's weekly letter to the City Council complaining of the huge bag of builders' rubbish on the pavement finally was rewarded, after 13 weeks, by the removal of the bag in mid-April.

46 Russell Square: the committee welcomed the proposed repairs to the property.

35 Russell Square / 9 St Margaret's Place: the application to convert a sauna parlour into a self-contained flat had been approved. This was welcomed by the Society. The Committee will monitor carefully the design of the former shop window of the property. This window could become the gem of Russell Square.

i360: two members of the Committee had looked at the application in detail. It was very complex. The Committee had no objection to the change of usage for the east tollbooth from ticket office to café. They considered the proposed spire on the top of the tower bland, but better than no ornamentation at all.

The Society would object to the plans to set down visitors to the i360 next to the war memorial in Regency Square. This does not seem logical, as the pick-up point will be opposite the Brighton Centre, some 300 yards away.

14a Stone Street / 19 Castle Street: Work has begun on the demolition of the property in Castle Street prior to the erection of a student residence. The property in Stone Street is a listed building. Partial demolition may have to take place but the Society will do everything possible to ensure that the fly stables are retained in an original state.

Society Contacts

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AN EMPTY DIARY

Over the last year, the Committee has organised theatre trips, a quiz and group visits to restaurants. Take up has been very limited - often limited to just a few committee members. This makes our activities seem rather cliquish. The Committee would welcome your suggestions of social activities that we can organise for all members.

SQUATTERS IN THE GARDEN?



Society Committee members Julie White and Nigel Rose brave the wind in Regency Square

On the cold and blowy weekend of 23/24 April, six members of the Society's Committee staffed a stall to explain the current thinking about the plans for the updating of the Regency Square gardens.

The story so far: Many moons ago, Nigel Rose ferreted out the information that Regency Square was included in the area entitled to share 1% of ticket revenue from the i360. The other areas are those immediately to the east and west of the i360. The sum of money to accrue to the Regency Square gardens could amount to some £30 000.00 per year

The Society then started to liaise with the City Council. At the request of the Council, the Society sent out a questionnaire to 1,100 local households and businesses. The results of the Questionnaire can be seen on the Society's website: www.regencybrighton.com

Overall, the questionnaire revealed that local preference is for a well-tended garden with facilities for picnics, children, dog-walkers and general relaxation. Any commercial activity on the gardens was generally rejected, although respondents were not against occasionally theatrical productions or displays of sculpture.

The designs generously provided by Dairmuir Gavin were much admired, but considered inappropriate. The need to maintain them was perceived as a disadvantage.

Opinions about the parking of motorbikes on the hard standing in the south garden were mixed. The Society is actively in discussion with the City Council to find adequate free parking for motorbikes either on street or in the underground car park.

GREAT RESTORATIONS

April 23 was a busy day for Regency Square. The Mayor of Brighton and Hove attended the dedication of a restored bench funded by Robert Feld. More details next month.

Thanks to Mail Boxes Etc. for their continued support.



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