



NEWSLETTER 306 September 2016

Welcome to the i360

What do you think of it now it's up and running?
Have you had a "flight"?

Following more than 25 years of decay, hoardings, piecemeal works and major construction, at last we have a showpiece for our area. Love it or hate it, it's here. The pod gleams. There are no hoardings. It is giving many residents and visitors a great deal of pleasure.

The two pavilions have been beautifully restored. They look good. The cafe should be popular, having with both inside and outside seating. The ticket office is busy.

What a pity, then, that the ticket office pavilion has been disfigured with a tacky gazebo. Even worse, as you approach the gazebo at promenade level, what you see are some untidy folding tables and various bags, buggies and other clutter - a sad contrast to the rest of the i360 area.

And what has happened to the "icing on the cake"? Or rather, the ornamental twiddly-bit that was promised for the top of the tower. The attraction is, sadly, still being compared to the chimney at Southwick Power Station.

Do let the Society know via our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/regencybrighton> or by contacting Society officers, details here ➔ Most "passengers" have been very impressed.

Another new kid on the block

A welcome sight (and seat) in the south garden of Regency Square is the new bench in memory of Fred Boulden who lived in the area for very many years.



Getting to grips with congestion

Two Traffic Regulation Act (TRO) proposals will shortly be discussed by the City Councillors. The proposals are:

1. to remove 13 shared (residents' permit / public pay) spaces on the garden side of the west carriage way of Regency Square. With increased i360 traffic wanting to enter the car park, this amendment is essential to curtail the blockages, blaring horns of frustrated motorists and excessive car fumes caused by the jams in the area.
2. to create two new motorcycle parking spaces, one outside Abbots, one outside 29 Regency Square. Each space is a maximum of 5 metres long, allowing at most four motorcycles to park at a time. It is hoped that this will discourage motorcyclists from parking on the south green of Regency Square.

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Motorbikes on Regency Square

This is the view from new bench. Motorcyclists are not being considerate of other users of the gardens.



These heavy machines should not share a space with sunbathers, dogs and their walkers, prams, toddlers and other vulnerable users.

What about the rest of the gardens?

You may well have been wondering what has been happening since the consultation about what local people want from the Regency Square gardens.

Behind the scenes, good progress has been made in developing the business plan required by the City Council to access the funding. A Regency Square Community Stakeholder Group has been set up. Committee members are working with Simon Bannister, Policy and Communities Officer at the City Council and landscape architect Robyn Butcher, Associate Director of the Terra Firma Consultancy, as well as with other local stakeholders.

This group's duty is to make sure firstly that local people get the garden they want, and secondly that there is a plan in place to maintain the garden to a good standard. Things will happen more slowly than we would wish, as the funding will not even come on stream until 2018. Our wish list of improvements is long so we will need to look

for other sources of money in the longer term. We will keep you updated with developments and, as always, your comments and feedback will be valued.

Thanks are due to Ms Butcher for the many hours of pro bono consultancy work she has undertaken for the group.

Planning

23 Clarence Square: Following an enforcement request by the Society, the decorative features around the windows have been restored. The building now fits in well with Number 25 which had retained its mouldings.



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Alas, a very ugly drainpipe has appeared on the facade, not even painted a sympathetic colour.

35 Russell Square: the good news is that much original late Victorian features had survived behind the board covering. Plans are well advanced to reproduce an attractive (non-commercial) shop front.

46 Preston Street: After much rather chaotic-looking building work, the premises now look to be shaping up nicely to form (yet another) cafe in the street.

2A Regency Mews: An application to create a four-bedroom house was refused by the Council on five separate grounds. The applicant has now resubmitted, this time for a smaller, three-bed house.

BUPA Building, Russell Mews: The City Council have not given full permission for the work to of conversion into flats to continue. The developers have yet to "ensure that the proposed works will not have a detrimental impact on the health of future occupiers".

The City Council has some concerns that the land may be contaminated by toxic chemicals as a result of the Mews having been a service garage for many years.

Several neighbours of the BUPA building have expressed concern about the way huge amounts of material are being thrown from the building, creating dirt and noise. The Society has brought this to the attention of the City Council via an enforcement request. Although this did not immediately abate the nuisance, work does seem to have stopped at the moment.

13A-14 Stone Street & 19A Castle Street: Work continues - slowly - on this development. Despite frequent and strenuous contacts with the City Planning Departments and with Cllr Tom Druitt by a Society Committee members, alas, much of the original fabric has "not been salvageable". The Society is objecting to retrospective planning permission for higher facades.

Meeting with City Clean

On August 13, two members of the Society's Committee met with Richard Bradley, BHCC's Interim Executive Director, Environment, Development & Housing. The following points were made:

- New communal rubbish bins had been ordered and should be in place soon. These bins will be clearly marked as BHCC bins and that they are for residential property rubbish only.
- In the last seven months, the City Council has issued 1 100 summonses against fly-tippers (mainly around communal bins) and against businesses using communal bins compared to a mere 80 summonses issued in the previous year.
- The Council will soon provide removal graffiti kits to the Society. More information in the next Newsletter
- The Committee of the Society feels that the mechanised road sweeping machine is ineffectual. It cannot clean gutters behind parked cars, it cannot clean green spaces, it cannot clean pavements. It is very noisy. The service will be suspended for an experimental period.

- Mr Bradely revealed that there are no funds for Sunday street cleaning. This seems a disastrous situation for a tourist city.
- Mr Badley encouraged community involvement in clean-up sessions (see below).

Residents urged "Reclaim your Square"

Congratulations to the residents of Clarence Square for their stance against anti-social behaviour. The residents are increasingly plagued by gangs of youths who gather in the square, intimidate residents, are extremely noisy and appear to be dealing in drugs.

Nearly 30 residents turned up in Clarence Square on a balmy August evening to meet three City Council officers and two PCSOs. The PCSOs were not able to bring good news. The police will answer all 101 (non-emergency) calls - but the delay might be up to 24 hours.

With the support of the City Community Development officer and the Parks department, the residents decided to form a rota to lock the garden gates at night. Even more impressively, a mass clean-up was held last week. Nine bags of rubbish were collected - and the disruptive element was kept at bay and saw that the residents were reasserting their "ownership" of the gardens.

Despite a suggestion that benches be removed to prevent youths gathering, this idea was rejected as the benches are much used by shoppers and workers at lunch time. Some trimming of shrubs and trees was accepted to make the area less of a hideaway for anti-social behaviour.

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