

**Minutes of the Annual Village Meeting on Wednesday 16 March 2023**

**Present:** Cllr Lawrence (Chair), Cllr Levins, Cllr Turnbull, Cllr Poole, Cllr Cherrie.

Chris Hayes, Parish Clerk (Minutes)

72 Residents

1. Overview – **Cllr Lawrence** thanked people for coming to the meeting. She said it had been a busy year for the Council with the contracts to transfer St Aubyns Field and assets to the Council signed, the submission of the Neighbourhood Plan to Brighton and Hove City Council and the refurbishment of Park Road Toilets.
2. Each Councillor then introduced themselves and gave a brief description of their role within the Council and areas of work they were involved in.
3. Questions from the public:

**Don Goodchild** asked if the project on the Lower High Street (LHS) would address the difficulty people with mobility issues had with the slipway slope and if a lift down to the undercliff had been considered. **Cllr Turnbull** said that the longer-term vision had included a proposal to reduce the gradient to make it more accessible. He also said that a lift had been considered but had met with a number of objections and would be very costly both to install and maintain.

**Pam Thompson** asked if the provision of shade had been considered in the LHS proposals. **Cllr Turnbull** said that the Parish Council were working with the White Horse Hotel who had plans to remodel it into a boutique hotel and provide an entrance from the LHS that would have shaded areas adjacent to it.

**Cynthia Howe** asked if the temporary rubber surface proposed to extend the kerb on the east side of LHS would be made of recycled material. **Cllr Turnbull** confirmed that it would.

**Roger Levy** asked if the LHS project had plans to develop the north end of the High Street. **Cllr Turnbull** said that this wasn’t in the current plans.

**Helen Aston** asked for more information about the plans to place stones on the grass verge on sheep walk to prevent parking and wanted to discuss precisely what was planned. **Cllr Turnbull** said that the plan was to replace existing stones on the west side of sheep walk, that had been moved by people wanting to park their cars, with more substantial ones to protect the verge. He agreed to talk to Helen about the proposals.

A resident asked if the proposed inspection by BHCC engineers of the cliff face from the Marina to the Deans would extend to Saltdean. **Cllr Turnbull** said he was not aware that they would. **Cllr Poole** added that he had seen engineers at work on the cliff face between Rottingdean and Saltdean beach.

**Rowena Bennett** said the parking on the road opposite the disabled space at the side of the pond had now been limited to 2 hours which could cause additional parking problems. **Cllr Turnbull** said he was not aware of this and had not seen the traffic order that should have been issued for comment but would look into the matter.

**Mike Haggar** asked if plans by BHCC to convert all parking meters to app based payment would extend to Rottingdean. He said that given weak phone signal in this area signal boosters would need to be installed. **Cllr Turnbull** said that parking provision was a matter for BHCC, and Ward Councillors were best placed to take up the matter.

**Erica Partridge** asked if the current Neighbourhood Plan that she had seen remained in force pending the acceptance of the new plan. The Clerk said that there was no current Neighbourhood Plan, but a number of drafts of the current plan and other associated documents had been circulated for consultation that she had probably seen. **Chris Hawkes** asked what would happen if the village did not vote to adopt the plan. The Clerk said that a revised application to make a Neighbourhood Plan would need to be made should the Council decide to do so.

**Rowena Bennett** asked for an update on the refurbishment of Park Road public toilets where work seemed to have stopped. The Clerk advised that at his request BHCC engineers had visited the site on 15 March and reported that work was underway to complete the refurbishment. The Clerk added that a number of building defects had been discovered during the internal works which had required more structural work and that he had been advised that the refurbishment was now expected to be completed by 28 April.

**Don Goodchild** said that the St Aubyns development seemed to have gone well beyond the original plans with many more houses being built and those on Newlands Road now obscured the view of the houses opposite. Mr Goodchild also said that the Twitten was very dark and needed to be lit. The Clerk said that the development was in line with the planning consent originally granted in 2019. **Cllr Lawrence** said that the Parish Council were discussing plans to light the Twitten with BHCC.

**Patsy Dixon** asked if the ‘Smugglers’ event was to be resurrected and if the Parish Council had any plans to support it. **Cllr Lawrence** said that she was aware of discussions to re-introduce the Smugglers event and that the Parish Council would be open to a grant application.

**Cynthia Howe** asked why a beacon was not being considered for the coronation celebrations. **Cllr Turnbull** said that central guidance had indicated that beacons were not appropriate for the coronation celebrations.

**Christa Cook** said that at the Queen’s Jubilee the village had been decorated throughout with floating crowns on the pond and wondered what the Parish Council had planned. **Cllr Lawrence** said that the Council had talked to local voluntary groups and were developing ideas for volunteering events on the Bank Holiday of the Coronation, for example, a village clean up. This was in line with the commemorative activity suggested by the Palace. In addition, community groups would be encouraged to come together, probably on the village green, to promote their work and seek volunteers.

**Cynthia Howe** asked if the Parish Council could influence the types of businesses present in the village to ensure they were what residents wanted. **Cllr Poole** said the Parish Council had no power to influence types of business coming to the village unless it involved changes to a building that required planning permission on which the Parish Council would be consulted.

**Robin Crowther** asked if there were plans to charge for parking in the village and said that further parking was needed to attract tourists. **Cllr Turnbull** said that the plans to charge for parking at the Recreation Ground put forward by BHCC had been dropped and the Parish Council were focusing on making the most of the existing parking spaces by, for example, working with Beacon Hub to open the Beacon Hill car park.

**Elizabeth Blackwell** said she recalled plans to provide more parking in Steyning Road and to have parking in St Aubyns Field that had not been realised. **Cllr Turnbull** said that earlier plans to include parking in St Aubyns Field site had been rejected by BHCC.

**Gary Fitzgerald** asked how much of the Parish Council’s budget went towards promoting the village to visitors. **Cllr Lawrence** said this activity had been previously undertaken by a voluntary group ‘Visit Rottingdean’ but was now mainly done via the Parish Council website, Rottingdean Village News and social media but that it was something that the Parish Council could consider.

**Kim Turnbull?** said that Rottingdean Heritage were looking at enhancing the Village Trail to add interest for visitors to the village which would include St Aubyns when it was open to the public. The aim was to help promote the village as a tourist attraction that would in turn help local businesses**.**

**Josie Jacob** from Neighbourhood Watch said that her members were very concerned about the number of recent car thefts and burglaries in the village and asked if the Parish Council would to support them in reminding residents to be vigilant and secure premises and outbuildings. **Cllr Poole** said that the Parish Council would be happy to work together with the Neighbourhood Watch team. **Cllr Lawrence** added that the Parish Council were also working with the Local Action Team whose remit was to tackle local crime and anti-social behaviour**.**

**Don Goodchild** asked what BHCC were doing about the poor condition of the High Street road surface and the pavements that was causing severe problems for people with mobility difficulties. **Cllr Cherrie** said that he, Cllr Poole and Ward Councillor Fishleigh had recently inspected parts of the red brick footpaths and taken photographs to highlight the areas of most concern to BHCC. **Cllr Lawrence** added that the Parish Council had set aside £10,000 in the budget for 2023/24 to contribute towards pavement repair.

**Mike Sexton** asked if the Parish Council had been involved in the locking of the tennis courts at the Recreation Ground, that now had signs indicating that they were to be run by the Lawn Tennis Association. **Cllr Lawrence** said the Council were not aware of this but were aware that BHCC wanted to divest themselves of tennis courts. She said the Parish Council were in discussion with the local cricket and football club, nearby tennis courts groups and local users about possible options to maintain the courts.

**Jeff Rodrigues** said that heavy traffic, often mounting the kerb, had caused the pavement to sink to the level of the road surface that was compromising pedestrian safety. He said that the yellow hatching at the south end of the High Street was effective but to ensure it was observed it needed repainting. **Nicky Boys** asked if the pavement could be widened to restrict the traffic flow. **Andrew Clark** added that the no right-turn out of West Street worked well but needed policing. **Denise Hopper** added that the same conversation about traffic in the village had gone on for the last 40 years and asked what had happened to the idea of a one-way system and asked if BHCC could be asked to install more 20 mph signs and introduce marked parking bays around the Green to stop people parking long term. **Cynthia Howe** asked if BHCC could provide mobile 30 mph signs in the village to deter speeding that had worked in Ovingdean. **Vicky Funnell** said she and a number of other residents wanted the planter to stay as it controlled the traffic flow and provided a safe place to cross the road. **Erica Partridge** asked if the owner of the garage at the bottom of Nevill Road could be asked not to use this area to park cars at the garage for repair. **Mike Haggar** asked if speed bumps could be placed in the High Street when the planter was removed.

In response Cllrs made the following points:

**Cllr Poole** said that the Parish Council had asked for the planter to be removed temporarily as the data from the diffusion tubes indicated it was not as effective as the other measures in reducing pollution and a number of residents had reported safety concerns.

**Cllr Lawrence** acknowledged that there were differing views about the planter with a number of residents supporting its retention and others wanting it removed. At Cllr Lawrence’s request, the Clerk reminded the meeting that in its letter to BHCC about the planter the Parish Council had concluded that ‘*should BHCC agree to the removal of the planter the Parish Council would consider what steps needed to be taken to prevent vehicles mounting the pavement and to monitor traffic speeds through the village to further address pedestrian safety concerns’*.

**Cllr Poole** said that a number of options had been looked at to manage traffic through the village, including pedestrianisation, but that the High Street provided a key access road to the A259. **Cllr Levins** added that a one-way system had been considered but would displace traffic, putting pressure in other roads in the village.

**Cllr Poole** added that the Parish Council could apply to BHCC to have mobile speed signs and could also pay to have mobile speed signs attached to lampposts at a cost of £3000 each, but the evidence suggested that such signs were largely ignored.

**Cynthia Howe** asked when the bus shelter outside the White Horse was to be repaired. **Cllr Cherrie** said BHCC had this in hand, but that repair would not be undertaken until the next financial year because of budget constraints. He also added that the bus shelter at the bottom of Cranleigh Avenue was to be replaced and at the area where people alighted at the bus stop at the top of Cranleigh Avenue was to be paved to avoid passengers stepping onto a muddy area.

**Maureen Dunn** asked if the Parish Council could ask property owners in the High Street to better maintain their properties some of which were in a poor state of repair. **Cllr Lawrence** said that this was something the Parish Council could consider.

The meeting closed at 20.05.

**Parish Clerk March 2023**