



Minutes of the meeting of Rottingdean Parish Council Monday 3 April 2023

Present; Cllr John (Chair), Cllr Nixon, Cllr Levins, Cllr Poole, Cllr Lawrence, Cllr Turnbull, Cllr Poole
C Hayes, Parish Clerk (Minutes)

Public Gallery. Ken Bodfish, Nigel Smith

Public Questions. None

At the Chair's request the meeting observed a minutes silence in memory of recently elected Ward Cllr Robert MacIntosh and long-term resident and local artist Mick Bensley, both of whom had recently passed away

The Chair advised the meeting of her decision to stand down ahead of elections next month, having served 10 years on the Parish Council. She thanked Cllrs for their commitment, work and enthusiasm and said that each of them had brought differing skills, expertise and experience to their role, and had helped to shape a cohesive whole with a can-do attitude and a shared wish to sustain community life and bring about improvements to the village. The Chair said it was a Council of all the talents – finance and business acumen, negotiating skills, legal knowledge, systems management, community safety expertise and landscaping expertise, to name but a few. She added a special thanks to the clerk, Chris Hayes, for being the oil that kept the wheels turning and ensuring the Council delivered value for money for the modest Precept that Parishioners pay each year. She said all Councillors knew and appreciated how hard Chris worked. Finally, the Cllr John (Chair) wished all of the Councillors success in the future, whether they continued to serve with the Parish Council or not.

Cllr John (Chair) said she was also grateful to former councillors Bob Webzell, Heather Butler and John Bryant who had volunteered to carry on after their term of office to complete the Neighbourhood Plan and ready it for the coming examination and Referendum. She also thanked Cllr Bridget Fishleigh who had been a regular attender of Council meetings, updating it on issues she was working on and alerting it to things the Council should be involved with or at least consulted on.

Cllr John (Chair) said she was really pleased that over the past few years, the Council had, with the support of Rottingdean Heritage, improved the street scene in the Conservation Area by installing heritage streetlamps. And that, despite the heavy dependency on the City Council to commission and oversee the works, the village would shortly have fit-for-purpose refurbished toilets.

Cllr John (Chair) said that what had kept her on the Council so long had been the St Aubyns project from the dark days when the Cothill Trust abruptly announced the closure of the school after over 100 years of operation through putting together the Development Brief for the site and lengthy negotiations with two different sets of developers to ensure a development in keeping with its location adjacent to the Conservation area and at the heart of the lovely village and the transfer of a number of assets but most notably half the playing field for public use.

Cllr John (Chair) said that one of the delights of her role had been to Chair the Beacon Hill Stewardship Group, set up to manage the Nature Reserve in partnership with Brighton & Hove City Council. This had brought her into direct contact with some of the fantastic volunteers in the village who work at the coalface, keeping the Reserve healthy and accessible, as well as assisting Nick the Ranger with moving the sheep around. She said a special thanks to Peter Whitcomb who for many years had carried out the regular counts of birds, bees, insects and wild flowers on Beacon Hill providing the majority of the content for the Annual Nature Report. He had recently retired from the role but was training up a couple of apprentices to carry on the work.

Cllr John (Chair) added that the Parish Council had been regular attendees of the Village Fair as well as sponsors of Rottingdean Arts and have facilitated a number of community events, such as the Lark Ascending celebration of Vaughan Williams 150th Anniversary last year.

On a personal note, Cllr John added that fifteen years ago, she and Ken were newcomers to Rottingdean. This weekend they had been celebrating his 80th birthday here. Through the Parish Council and other voluntary organisations in the village they have put down roots and made some lifelong friends, as well as learning how the village ticks and discovering what a wealth of talent we have on our doorstep - connections they will continue to enjoy.

Finally, Cllr John (Chair) said she thoroughly recommended a term or two on the Parish Council as a way of making a local contribution and reaping the rewards of an active village life.

On behalf of the Council **Cllr Turnbull** said Cllr John had had a profound influence on RPC. In joining the Parish Council 10 years ago along with Heather Butler, she, with Heather, had been the first women in recent history to be serve on Rottingdean Parish Council Councillors and in doing so had made the Council much more representative of the community. Cllr Turnbull said that Cllr John had led the move to restructure the

Council to the current working groups with Councillors working in focussed teams, with common goals and, as a result, in harmony.

Cllr Turnbull added that throughout her service to the Rottingdean community Cllr John had led the development of the Neighbourhood Plan, a mighty task that had needed determination and focus, qualities that she had in abundance and now with the end in sight the Council would remember her when celebrating the conclusion. Cllr Turnbull said that the planter had been a contentious issue that had perhaps overshadowed the hard work Cllr John had put into the roads plan and the air quality management project which had resulted in the new road layout and a focus on improving the quality of the environment.

In conclusion, Cllr Turnbull said that Cllr John had changed the Parish Council into a functioning, effective group of people who took responsibility for their part in serving the community, creating the legacy of a collegiate, effective system that the Council would strive to retain for the future because it worked! Cllr Turnbull then invited the meeting to join with him in thanking Cllr John and wishing her well for the future.

1. Apologies for absence

None received

2. Declarations of interest

None declared

3. Agreement of the minutes of the Parish Council meeting on 6 March 2023.

The minutes were agreed and signed by the Chair

Matters arising

4. Action Log. The Clerk report two actions outstanding

1. Cllr Turnbull to write to Nick Lane to ensure he was aware of the offer by City Parks to fund replacement whips for removed Ash Trees. **Cllr Turnbull** Said this had been done.
2. BEAG to send a letter to the freeholders of all lower Marine Drive premises seeking repair of the pavement. **Cllr Cherrie** said this was in hand.

2. Matters Arising

a. Annual Village Meeting. The following points were made in discussion:

- Cllr Nixon noted the point made by a resident at the meeting that the tennis courts had been padlocked and a note posted stating that they were now being managed by the Lawn Tennis Association.
- Cllr Lawrence said she had visited the courts which had been fitted with an access mechanism fitted following repairs to the nets funded by LTA. She added that she had a meeting with Brighton and Hove City officers and others on 12 April to discuss options for the future of the Courts.

3. **May Council Meeting.** The Clerk advised that the next meeting would be on the 15th April and be the Annual General meeting where a Chair and Vice Chair would be elected, policies and standing orders reviewed and membership of advisory and working groups agreed,

Finance Update

4. **Payments and invoices.** The Clerk sought approval for the following payments

VAT

HMRC March	£571.62	
C Hayes Salary March	£ 753.87	
C Hayes Comms (zoom)	£11.99	£2.40
C Hayes (phone and stationery)	£59.46	
BHCC (Park Road Toilets – 2 nd part payment)	£16,815.80	£3363.16
Room Hire	£36.00	
Clamp Boxall Payroll	£185.00	£37.00
Kipling Gardens Grant Application	£600.00	
Well Being (Coronation Refreshments and Ribbons)	£316.00	
Total	<u>£19,349.74</u>	

Cllr Lawrence said that the grant application from the Friends of Kipling Gardens was for gardening equipment which was recommended for approval in principle by the Village Community Group pending banking arrangements being organised by the 'Friends.

Payment of the invoices was proposed by **Cllr Turnbull**, seconded by **Cllr Levins** and agreed unanimously.

a. Bank balances

The Clerk advised that the NatWest accounts were now closed with the funds transferred to the Unity Trust Account remaining balances at the end of March as shown below.

Unity Trust Bank Current Account	£	102.10
Unity Trust Bank Instant Access	£	56,327.32
C&C savings account	£	83,925.13
Cash at Bank	£	140,354.55

b. March Accounts and Quarterly Reconciliation

The accounts for March were presented and approved, and the quarterly reconciliation checked and signed by the Chair.

c. Annual Governance and Accounting Return (AGAR) 2022/23

The Clerk advised that he had received notification of the AGAR return for 2022/23 from the external auditor PKF Littlejohn. The return was due by 23 July 2023. A provisional timetable had been proposed which would mean sign off by the Council at the June meeting.

Major Projects

5. **St Aubyns. Cllr Nixon** gave the following update.

- The Twitten lighting design study report had been issued. The Parish Council (RPC) were to meet the BHCC lighting design team on April 14th to discuss the next steps to develop a feasible and costed solution. BHCC had reminded RPC that there are currently no funds available in the next year for such a project. BHCC had been asked to consider Heritage lighting as an option during the feasibility study.
- A meeting had taken place on 27th March between RPC and Denes Mews residents to review the security and privacy issues from pedestrian traffic at the boundary wall with the St Aubyns Development now that the footpath was open to the public. As agreed in November 2022, the residents were now summarising the issues experienced as a basis for a meeting with Fairfax in the near future.

- All remaining points on the transfer of St Aubyns field and assets to RPC had been closed, contracts had been signed and exchange was imminent.
 - As soon as contracts had been exchanged the Chancel Repair Indemnity would be taken out at the quoted one-off cost of £392 as approved by the Council.
 - Final Completion was subject to a Third Deed of Variation being issued to include RPC in the list of parties exempt from certain Developer obligations. The first draft had been presented and it was hoped that the Third Deed of Variation can be concluded shortly.
 - The Project Plan had been updated to reflect the revised Final Completion timetable of 31st March 2023.
 - BHCC had notified RPC of a delay of a few months before proposals for the last round of the Urban Tree Challenge fund could be submitted. This gave RPC a bit more time to prepare a concept for tree planting on part of the St Aubyns Field.
 - The revised brief for the Artistic Component had been circulated to Councillors for comment. The brief proposed that the Artistic Component, should, if possible, be integrated into the broader landscaping of the St Aubyns Field to have maximum impact.
6. Lower High Street Cllr Turnbull advised the meeting that RPC were waiting for BHCC to cost the revised proposal provided by the urban design company, Urban Movement
7. Park Road Toilets. The Clerk said that he had been advised by BHCC that the refurbishment was still on course to be completed by 28th April

Planning

8. Applications Considered in March. **Cllr Poole** took the meeting through the following planning applications considered in March.

BH2023/00486 114 High Street Rottingdean Brighton BN2 7HF. Removal of rear balcony and insertion of rooflights.

Rottingdean Parish Council considered the planning documentation for this property which is situated in the Rottingdean Conservation Area. It was noted that pre planning advice had previously been sought.

This proposal had taken account of the advice and the rear dormer was now planned with a flat roof to reduce its visual prominence. Also, the original plan for side dormers had been amended to conservation style roof windows and these would again reduce visual dominance.

RPC considered that the proposed changes would not be detrimental to the overall street scene and did not object to this application.

BH2023/00584 1 Cranleigh Avenue Rottingdean Brighton BN2 7GT
Extension to existing side dormer

RPC considered the planning documentation for this property. The proposal is to increase the size of an existing dormer on the south facing side of the roof. The extension would match the existing dormer in size and construction materials, and it is considered that it would look proportionate both in terms of overall size and positioning on the property. There were no privacy or shadowing issues for neighbouring properties.

Rottingdean Parish Council did not object to this application.

SDNP/23/01226/TPO. New Barn Road Falmer Road Rottingdean Brighton BN2 7FN. Pruning of trees around an electricity substation. Holme Oak: Reduce the side lateral branches on the south side of the canopy by 5-6m, Reduce the side lateral branches growing west over site entrance and road by 4-5m. Raise lower canopy to 5-6m from ground level. T2 - Holme Oak: Reduce the side lateral branches on the south side of the canopy by 5-6m, reduce height of tree overhanging the site by 2-3m, Raise lower canopy to 5-6m from ground level. G1 - Group of Sycamore trees: Reduce side lateral branches overhanging site by 3m, Raise lower canopy to 5-6m from ground level. T3 - Ivy Clad Oak tree: Reduce side lateral branches overhanging site by 3m.

RPC considered this application. The trees are on the northern boundary of the Sub Station, growing on land belonging to Rottingdean Place. As such, they are covered by a generic Tree Preservation Order that applies to the whole of the gardens. The overhanging branches from the trees were physically interfering with the passage of the large vehicles and machinery that need to access the site, hence the need to lop branches off the trees as detailed. Having inspected the site, it was clear that the work needs to take place to maintain access to the Sub Station. As it was side and lower canopy branches that would be cut off, the crowns of the trees would not be touched, so there should be no long-term impact on the health of the trees.

Rottingdean Parish Council did not object to this application.

Cllr Poole added that he application for the development of the White Horse Hotel had received approval.

Advisory Group Meeting Updates

9. Strategy and Communications. **Cllr John (Chair)** provided the following update

- The group had met and discussed training for new Councillors that the Clerk would deliver once the new Council was formed and before the AGM in May.
- The group had considered that RPC should be represented in the LAT as an observer,

10. Village Community. **Cllr Lawrence** provided the following update:

- The Meeting with BHCC on the future of the tennis courts would also include the Football and Cricket Club, the Lawn Tennis Association, local players and Cathy Taylor representing PARC.
- **Cllr Turnbull** said that he had seen in correspondence that BHCC were no longer to provide dedicated benches. **Cllr Lawrence** said that the group were considering what advice should be provided to the Council about RPC's future involvement in dedicated benches.

11. Natural Environment **Cllr Turnbull** provided the following update.

- A team were now working on the cliff face testing its structural integrity and making it safe where necessary.
- The proposal to open the Beacon Hub car park had met with some opposition from residents who were concerned that it could provide vehicular access to the reserve itself. Preventive measures were being considered.
- Acting on an issue raised by a resident the group were to consider if signs banning dogs from certain beaches in the summer were adequate.
- Given the decision by BHCC to remove lifeguard services from Rottingdean beach because of low visitor numbers, the group were to consider how best to gather data on the number of people using the beach.

12. Built Environment. **Cllr Cherrie** gave the following update.

- A suggestion was received from a resident who asked if it would be possible for BHCC to paint the "bells" on the junction of Vicarage Lane and Neville Road and the High Street white, so as to improve visibility. It was agreed that this was a matter to be passed on to BHCC.
- A report was received about a number of lamps being out round the pond area. A list would be compiled and those found to be defective reported to BHCC.
- A report was received of the state of the footpath/bridleway at Hogg Platt and potentially dangerous barbed wire along the path to the recreation ground. Cllr Cherrie was to investigate.

- A report was received of a broken and illegible fire hydrant sign on Marine Drive previously report to Southern Water. Cllr Cherrie had checked and found that the work had been completed.
- **Cllr Nixon** asked when the West Street car park wall and bus stop at the White Horse were to be repaired as both gave a poor impression of the village to visitors. **Cllr Cherrie** said that both these matters had been reported to BHCC and were in hand but that he had been informed that work would not begin until the new financial year,

The public meeting closed at 20.24 The next meeting is 15 May 2023.

Chris Hayes, Parish Clerk

April 2023