



Minutes of the Agenda for the Meeting of Rottingdean Parish Council on Monday 6 February 2023

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

Chris Hayes, Parish Clerk (minutes)

Public Gallery: Ward Cllr Fishleigh, Nigel Smith, Haggar, John Bustard, Jill Lloyd, Susan Hayes.

Questions from the Public:

Nigel Smith updated the meeting on efforts to find out from Brighton and Hove City Council (BHCC) about progress on their Carbon Neutral Programme. He said he has asked for an independent stocktake of progress so that the contribution of each individual element of the programme could be identified. **Cllr John (Chair)** thanked Mr Smith for his update.

Jill Lloyd said that she had written to the Council about placing paving stones on the grass verge outside 35 Cranleigh Avenue by the bus stop to help people with mobility problems disembark safely from the bus. **Cllr Cherrie** said he would raise the matter with BHCC.

Sue Hayes asked about BHCC's proposals to charge for parking at the Recreation Ground. She also asked if more parking could be made available at the northern end of the village given the proximity of the Recreation Ground and Cricket Club. **Cllr Turnbull** advised that the proposal to charge for parking at the Recreation Ground had been dropped and the provision of public parking was the responsibility of BHCC. However, **Cllr Turnbull** said that the Cricket Club had plans to extend their facilities and the Parish Council would expect more parking to be available as part of that development. He suggested Sue Hayes write to the Cricket Club.

Cllr Fishleigh advised the meeting that she had asked BHCC when the undercliff path would re-open following the recent rock fall but had not yet had a reply.

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1. Apologies for absence
Cllr Fox.
2. Declarations of interest
None
3. Agreement of the minutes of the Parish Council meeting on 9 January 2023. The minutes were agreed with one amendment at page 1, question from Collette Williams, line 3 where 'Cranleigh' was amended to 'Chailey.'

Matters arising

4. Action Log.
5. The Clerk reported two actions were outstanding.
 - a 0101. BEAG to consider writing to BHCC to request repair of the pavement on Marine Drive – **Cllr Cherrie** confirmed that a letter had been sent.
 - b 0102. Social Media Posts about reporting potholes to be considered. **Cllr Lawrence** said this would be dealt with.
6. Matters Arising
None

Finance Update

7. Payments and invoices.
 - a Payments for authorisation. The Clerk requested authorisation for the following payments

VAT

HMRC January	£501.28	
C Hayes Salary January	£ 676.27	
C Hayes Comms (zoom)	£11.99	£2.40
Room Hire (2023/24)	£975.00	
Kipling Gardens Grant	150.32	
Urban Movement LHS	£4425.00	£885.00
Total	<u>£6739.86</u>	

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Authorisation was proposed by **Cllr Turnbull** seconded by **Cllr Levins** and agreed unanimously.

- b **January Accounts.** The accounts were presented and agreed.
- c **Bank Balances** The clerk advised the meeting that the bank balances at the end of January were:

NatWest Current Account	£	100.00
NatWest Reserve Account	£	67,869.84
Unity Bank Current Account	£	101.62
Unity Bank Instant Access	£	16,179.28
C&C savings account	£	86,519.37
Cash at Bank	£	170,770.11

- d **Park Road Toilets** – The Clerk advised Councillors that he had received the latest summary of the costs of refurbishment of Park Road toilets. The total cost of the refurbishment now amounted to £87,486, an increase on the original 2019 quote of £39,023 of which BHCC would pay £22,038 or 56.9% and the Parish Council were being asked to contribute £65,448. The Clerk said that following earlier cost estimates £67,000 had been earmarked for the refurbishment and now sought approval for the Parish Council to agree to the £65,448 requested. The following points were made in discussion:

- There was concern that the proposals for other toilet closures put forward by BHCC but later dropped may re-emerge in the next budget round and could include Park Road.
- Many of the increased costs had arisen because of the design changes and structural weaknesses that should have been picked up on the initial structural engineers report in 2019.
- BHCC should be asked for a guarantee that the toilets would remain open for the next ten years given the level of investment.
- Having got this far it would be difficult for the Parish Council to halt the work.

It was agreed that that the Clerk should advise BHCC that the Parish Council agreed to fund the £65,448, but wanted reassurance that the toilets would remain open and maintained by BHCC.

Action: The Clerk to advise BHCC of the Parish Council's decision and seek assurances about the future of the toilets.

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8. The Precept for 2023/24 – paper circulated. The Clerk summarised the key points in the paper circulated:
- On projected expenditure at the end of March 2023 and with the same level of precept income, the funds available to the Council in 2023/24 would be sufficient to meet the budget requirements and provide a project reserve of around £10,000.
 - In setting the precept for 2023/24, Councillors would wish to bear in mind inflation forecasts that suggest continued pressure on household incomes; an expectation from central Government that council tax increases should be below 3%; and future project funding shortfalls.
 - As there were more households paying the precept, if the Council decided to keep the precept income the same as in 2022/23 (£54,472) each household would pay **less** per year.
 - If the Council wished to keep the amount paid by each household the same this would raise an extra £2228.
 - If the Council wanted to increase the precept income further, a small increase for each household would be needed. For example, a small increase in the Band D rate of 0.9% (or 28 pence per annum) would provide an extra £496 giving overall increase on the 2022/23 precept income of £2724.

The following points were made in discussion

- **Cllr Turnbull** said given the economic climate he felt on balance that the precept payments for residents should remain the same as last year which, because the number of households paying had increased would still provide additional precept income of £2228.
- **Cllr Nixon** drew attention to the fact that there were significant project funding gaps for future years and that the project reserve was steadily falling as projects had been completed and commenced. He said the opportunity should be taken to start to build up reserves in order to deliver the Council's Infrastructure Development Plan.
- To increase the precept income and reserve by even a modest amount would require a precept increase of 7% that would be difficult to justify in the current economic climate.
- **Cllr Levins** said that the Council could do little to help lower income households but holding the precept at the same level was something the Parish Council could do.
- **Cllr John (Chair)** asked for a proposal. **Cllr Turnbull** proposed that the precept paid by households was kept at the same level as 2022/23, raising an additional income of £2228. This was seconded by **Cllr Levins**. **Cllr Nixon** proposed that the precept for Band D households should be increased by 28 Pence a year or 0.9% which would increase the precept income by £2,724. This was seconded by **Cllr Lawrence**. The Chair called

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for a vote on the first proposal for which four councillors voted in favour and three abstained.

- **Cllr John (Chair)** then called for vote in the second proposals for which two councillors in favour and five abstained. **Cllr John (Chair)** declared that the first motion to retain the precept paid by household at the same level as 2022/23 was carried.

Action. The Clerk to notify BHCC that the precept requirement for 2023/24 would be £56,700 providing no change in the average Band D precept payment of £32.66 per year.

Major Projects

9. St Aubyns - paper circulated. Cllr Nixon provided the update:
 - The Twitten lighting design study report had been issued and will be discussed with the Working Group on 13th February.
 - Fairfax would be cutting back the perimeter hedges surrounding the St Aubyns site that were encroaching on the pavement over the next few days. This would ensure that the Twitten path was 1.5 metres wide.
 - The height of the hedge would not be reduced until next Autumn. The hedge on the border with St Aubyns Mead had however been cut back significantly to allow a path to be installed. Reassurance would be sought from Fairfax that the hedge would grow back
 - A site meeting took place on 26th February on the Artistic Component with Paula Murray (ex-Assistant CEO at BHCC) who had been previously involved in BHCC public art projects. **Cllr John (Chair)** added that some very helpful suggestions had been made which would be discussed by the Working Group.
 - The Chapel refurbishment had been completed and Practical Completion Certificate issued.
 - The Pavilion refurbishment had started, and it was hoped to be completed by April 2023. Fairfax had been informed that RPC did not wish to keep the Scoreboard.
 - A site visit with BHCC City Parks took place on 24th January to discuss options for the funding of mature trees for St Aubyns Field using the Urban Challenge Fund. RPC could submit a proposal for a community orchard but would need to do this within the next few months for planting in 2024. The Working Group would discuss the options and revert with a recommendation to the Council.
 - The Working Group would review the project plan and priorities with the revised 31st March 2024 completion date in mind, once the transfer contract had been signed
 - Councillors had been provided with a summary of the contracts and supporting documents to enable them to make an informed decision on authorisation to sign the contracts.

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- Cllrs Nixon and John (Chair) asked that the minutes should record the Parish Council's thanks to Mike Bennett who had provided invaluable legal advice during the contract negotiations to Cllr Turnbull for his help on the Field specification.

Cllr Nixon then proposed the following motion be agreed which was seconded by **Cllr John (Chair)**

That the Parish Council authorise the signing and subsequent exchange of the Transfer deed, Contract and Schedule of Works that provide for the transfer of St Aubyns Playing Field land, along with the Pavilion, War Memorial, Water Fountain and the Chapel

The motion was agreed unanimously.

10. Lower High Street. **Cllr Turnbull** provided the following update:

- The support for the creation of a pedestrian priority area in the Lower High Street had been overwhelmingly positive. There were, however, concerns by some residents about a lack of 'drop off' facilities and, by a wider group, about the lack of disabled parking.
- RPC had recently agreed to appoint Urban Movement (UM) to undertake further development of the design and to address these concerns. Meetings and discussion between the LHS Working Group and UM had agreed that the aim of the work would be to provide a design that would attract wide support and that could be costed by BHCC and would focus on a relatively low cost Phase 1 to test the efficacy of the design without compromising the long term plan set out in the original report.
- The stage would include.
 - A widened pavement on the east side created by, possibly, low cost temporary materials that could become permanent if successful
 - A loading bay that would also be a dropping off point
 - 2 disabled bays
 - An entrance to the Lower High Street that signalled to drivers that they were entering a different space
 - Signage to indicate the traffic restrictions that would create a pedestrian priority space that could be adapted to incorporate a seasonal regime to support local business
 - Soft landscaping
- The LHS Working Group hoped to be able to bring the updated design to the March Council meeting. After incorporating changes arising from feedback, Urban Movement would work with BHCC to cost the Phase 1 for discussion by the Council.
- Phase 1 would require significantly more funding than the £50,000 agreed for 23/24 so Urban Movement had been asked to assist in seeking alternative funding sources.

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Advisory Group Meeting Updates

11. Strategy and Communications

- a AQMA. BHCC had been asked for an update on the legal advice they agreed to obtain on whether or not the planter could be removed for a temporary period without referral to the Environment Transport and Sustainability Committee.
- b Public Toilets in Rottingdean. Proposals put forward by BHCC in the 2023/24 budget discussions to charge and/or close public toilets at the Recreation Ground and undercliff had been dropped
- c Annual Village Newsletter and Meeting. The Annual Village Meeting would be held on 16 March to avoid the pre-election period that would begin on 17th March. The Newsletter reporting on the Council's work in 2022 and inviting residents to the village meeting would be published in mid-February.
- d Section 106 Recreational Funds. Cllr Nixon took the meeting through the paper previously circulated (Annex A) setting out the proposed RPC response to BHCC on the S106 recreational projects put forward and provided the following update.
 - RPC had reviewed the feedback received from BHCC in November 2022 following the Local Action Team (LAT) Section 106 Recreation and Play submission for Ovingdean, Rottingdean and Saltdean.
 - The final decision on the feasibility of two projects had been deferred until end 2024.
 - The investment of 40% of the total Section 106 Recreation and Play funds to provide adult football at Happy Valley was dependent on a new pavilion at an additional cost of £1 million.
 - The implementation of this Section 106 obligation facilitated the use of Rottingdean Recreation ground for Junior Football and other projects but the decision had been delayed until 2024 as had the allocation of £30,000 to improve play equipment at Ovingdean. It was not certain what would happen to the funds if this project was not feasible.
 - There was a balance of £18,290 for indoor sport for which Rottingdean Recreation Ground was considered eligible.

The following points were made in discussion:

- The LAT had now ceased their involvement in S106
- The proposed delay on a decision about Junior Football at the Recreation Ground until 2024 was a concern given that funds needed to be spent within 5 years of the S106 agreement signed in 2019.

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- The deadline for detailed plans on individual projects was March 2023. The Parish should express their disappointment that the consultation process had been cut short by BHCC.
- **Cllr Nixon** suggested that any communication might be better focused on seeking clarification on the Kipling Garden projects.
- Councillor John (Chair) thanked Cllrs Nixon, Lawrence and Turnbull for their work on the S106 recreational allocation.

The Council agreed that the proposed response should go forward to BHCC.

Action Cllr Nixon to send a letter to Debra May BHCC listing the Kipling Garden projects being assessed by community groups and requesting the retention of the proposed £7500 additional funds for KG until project costs are clear.

- e Neighbourhood Plan. The Clerk advised the meeting that the next stage of consultation (Regulation 16) on the Neighbourhood Plan had been launched on the Brighton and Hove City Council website and publicised on the Parish Council website and local social media. The consultation would run until 16 March 2023, following which the Plan would be considered by a BHCC appointed Independent Examiner to ensure compliance with national and local planning guidance and plans. If the plan was deemed compliant and fit for purpose the final stage would be a local referendum on its adoption.

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

- The group had been consulting local groups about fundraising for to maintain the Rottingdean Tennis Courts including the Saltdean Tennis Club who provided advice on their fundraising strategy and business model. Monies were available from the Lawn Tennis Association if RPC were able to raise enough money annually to make the courts sustainable.
- A King's Coronation event **had** been raised at the Rottingdean Forum. The Coronation will take place on Saturday 7th of May and the Monday will be a Bank Holiday. People are asked to volunteer on that day in their local community. Cllr Fox had offered to help organise a picnic. Other suggestions included a volunteers promotion event and a village clean up.
- The BHCC Emergency Response Team had offered to run a session for Rottingdean to help local groups and residents consider how they might best respond to incidents and emergencies to aid the development of contingency plans. A date for the session was being sought.
- The grant application made last year for notices and locks (attached) had yet to be claimed as the Friends of Kipling Gardens had only recently established a constitution which made them eligible to set up a bank account. A further grant application would come forward to enable the grant to be paid over to the organiser of the Friends of Kipling Gardens – Trish Ellis

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13. **Natural Environment. Cllr Turnbull** provided the following update:

- The Group reported that the proposal for a permanent solution to the lighting of beacons on Beacon Hill was not being pursued further at the current time. There were no known plans for a beacon to celebrate the Coronation and guidance from the Palace was not encouraging this.
- Disability access to Beacon Hill had been discussed by Beacon Hub and a plan has been agreed that is now with a drafting engineer. The project had been included in the S106 proposals and if accepted proposals would be firmed up.
- PARC had forwarded tentative proposals to spend a further £11,000 on the storytelling area by installing more large pebbles and seating. A grant application to VCAG for support would be forthcoming
- The issue of the cliff face had been discussed on site with the Seafront Officer from BHCC. A letter had been drafted to be discussed with the Clerk recording our concerns. Discussion is now underway regarding the response to the 2021 report. The latest email to BHCC offered information and support but only pointed to the damage in 2022.
- Beacon Hub had agreed that the car park should be opened 24/7 and were currently seeking a parking machine that would allow the first hour free. Ongoing discussions were taking place regarding opening the café more frequently and opening the car park.
- A quotation for stones, from an alternative supplier, for Sheep Walk has been received. £1029.65 plus VAT for supply and installation. NEAG are proposing to RPC that we buy these stones. Members expressed in principle support.
- Repair of the damage to the Terraces had not been progressed pending the appointment of a contractor by BHCC. Rottingdean Arts had painted the wall and floor surfaces and repaired the storeroom door. Mrs Wales had complained about the dangerous steps leading to the stage, but no response had been received.
- The pond pathway project to improve access required a new contractor and further requests were being made. An alternative supplier has been found and a meeting arranged. The original contractor had renewed interest but had been informed RPC cannot proceed yet.
- A meeting with BHCC to consider additional cycle stands by the Undercliff had been proposed by PARC had been positively considered.

14. **Built Environment. Cllr Cherrie** provided the following update.

- A complaint about a muddy area on Whiteway Lane near the junction of Chailey Avenue had been reported to the BHCC
- A question from the floor in January's meeting from Collette about a lack of windows in the bus shelter outside the White Horse had been passed onto the BHCC . A reply had been received stating they were aware of this issue, but as

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funding for the 2022-23 financial year had already been allocated, they did not envisage replacing the windows until the spring.

- A further question about potholes on Falmer Road had prompted a similar reply. The potholes had had a temporary fix and there was a plan to resurface the road, but this would not be before the start of the financial year 2023-24.
 - Two residents in Beacon Close had complained about flooding following the recent spell of torrential rain. The root cause of the problem had been traced to some drains in the vicinity becoming blocked due to compacted leaves. Cityclean had advised that they were dealing with any issues which are sub-surface. BHCC had been advised and the drains had been unblocked but the flooding had returned after the next downpour, Ward Councillor Fishleigh had agreed to take the matter further.
 - The streetlamp on the island on the A259 opposite the Nevill Rd junction was defective again. This had been reported to BHCC.
 - A resident reported tripping over an uneven brick on the High Street which resulted in them requiring remedial dental work. This had been reported to BHCC.
 - BHCC had been contacted about the condition of the pavement on the south side of Marine Drive near the vet's premises. This was essentially to confirm the ownership of this stretch of footpath, i.e., BHCC or the leaseholders of those properties. BHCC had responded that the damage had not reached the intervention level and that the issues were partly the responsibility of adjacent properties.
 - Further evidence of people riding / walking horses on the pavements around the village had been observed. Steps would be taken to remind local stables of the Highway Code section which stated horses should only be ridden on the highway.
 - A complaint had been received about pedestrian safety on the path outside the White Horse because of cyclists and a bin placed on the path. As there were already signs prohibiting cycling, the Group would seek the removal of the bin.
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The meeting closed at 21.40. The next meeting is on 6th March 2023

Parish Clerk

February 20

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Date

Project Name	Description	BHCC strategy and Section 106 fit and their comments	Recommended next step	Project lead
Beacon Hill Access	Disabled Access Point at Beacon Hub Entrance	Possibly: This would enable wheelchair users to reach the Beacon Hub, windmill, and the rest of the nature reserve. This would need to be stock proof. The gates at the end of the bridleway between Sheepwalk and Beacon Hill Rd were disabled access points, not sure if they have been maintained as such but a similar design could be used by Beacon Hub.	Progress to a detailed Project proposal by end April 2023	Beacon Hub
Beacon Hill Trees	Replacement trees after North and South Wood felling of 50-75 trees due to Ash Dieback.	Yes: Planting of Whips at £2 to £5 each. Can be funded by applying to Forestry Commission. Council also has other funding including dealing with Ash Dieback process	City Parks (Ben Galley/Mark Syrett) have agreed in principle to fund the replacement of these trees with whips in 2023	BHCC Ranger. RPC (NEAG) to follow-up
Beacon Hill Permanent Beacon	Erection of a Permanent Beacon at the spot where British Legion had occasional fires.	No/unlikely: Any solution would need to avoid damage to the nature reserve and may need planning permission. It is very unlikely that any such structure would be funded by section 106.	No further action planned by RPC at present.	NA

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Project Name	Description	BHCC strategy and Section 106 fit and their comments	Recommended next step	Project lead
Recreation Ground Tennis Courts refurbishment	Refurbishment of Rottingdean Recreation Ground Tennis Courts	Possibly: Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) can be approached for funding if demonstrating a financially suitable management plan.	RPC is liaising with relevant community Groups regarding the feasibility of a bid to the LTA as suggested by BHCC	Julie Lawrence/ VCAG
Project Name	Description	BHCC strategy and Section 106 fit and comments	Recommended next steps	Project Lead
Rottingdean Bowling Club Access		Possibly: BHCC may be able to commit small element funding (not just section 106) where clubs demonstrate increase in membership and/or commitment to improved accessibility.	Bowling Club have been informed of BHCC feedback and will follow up directly regarding source of funding	Bob Markham RBC
Kipling Gardens enhancements	Enhance gardens and facilities in Kipling Gardens	Agreed fit: Amenities £9,600 agreed for Kipling Gardens. Note potential to use unallocated £7505 parks balance for KG or contingency for play.	<p>Friends of Kipling Gardens, Rottingdean in Bloom and Rottingdean Heritage will work with the BHCC gardener on a range of proposals to upgrade the visitor experience and facilities such as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A naming and labelling project of the specimen trees, herbs and shrubs in the garden making the gardens a horticultural learning destination 2. Complete landscaping of the rear courts of the gardens into a proper woodland garden and a wildflower meadow removing the 	Friends of Kipling Gardens

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Project Name	Description	BHCC strategy and Section 106 fit and their comments	Recommended next step	Project lead
			<p>sycamore trees and replacing with more unusual attractive trees.</p> <p>3. Reworking the gazebo as a larger possible exhibition space.</p> <p>It is proposed to revert with an agreed list by end April 2023. The final cost is not yet known but is likely to exceed the £9600 dedicated to KG. Hence, we ask that the £7500 balance stated in the Section 106 report is retained until the detailed submission is assessed by BHCC.</p>	

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Rottingdean Allotments	Sustainable watering system	Possibly: The Allotments Service in partnership with BHCC and Southern Water are already looking at provision of improved pipework infrastructure with a wider feasibility study that establishes water table levels under every allotment site. Only those above a higher water table will be eligible for a sink hole well and larger sites where the greatest number of plot holders would benefit will be prioritized.	Rottingdean Allotments to be assessed as part of the BHCC / Southern Water feasibility study and irrigation solution to be defined based on this.	BHCC /Allotments
Rottingdean Allotments	Reinstatement of disused plots	Unlikely: Beacon Hill Stewardship Group would regard this as a retrograde step. It would also be prohibitively expensive considering the funds available.	Not proposed to progress this.	NA
Recreation Ground Junior Football	To dedicate Rottingdean Recreation ground to Junior Football with adult football at Happy Valley	Possibly: Football Needs review Citywide. Youth Football at Rottingdean can be achieved at little cost. Question for LAT- What was outcome of bid for FA?	This depends on Happy Valley being adapted for adult football using the funds allocated for this. However, a decision has been deferred until 2024 for this.	Clarification requested from BHCC

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Date