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Rottingdean Parish Council

Annual Village Newsletter March 2023

Invitation to the ANNUAL VILLAGE MEETING
Thursday 16 March 6.30 pm in the Main Hall at the
Whiteway Centre

Chair's Address

The final year of our four-year term has been an extremely busy one for the Parish Council. In this newsletter you will find information about our Major Projects as well as a more general update on our activities and how the Precept you pay has been used to bring about improvements to village life in Rottingdean and your ideas on how to do this are very welcome.

By the time you read this, we will have begun the formal process for the transfer of St Aubyns Field and associated assets to the Parish for use by the community. Park Road toilets are being refurbished to provide disabled access and baby changing facilities. You can read more about the St Aubyns development and plans to make Lower High Street a more accessible, welcoming space on the following pages.

We are also in the midst of formal consultation on our Neighbourhood Plan led by Brighton and Hove City Council (BHCC) which ends on 16 March. This plan is important. It will help shape the future of Rottingdean, influence new



development in the Parish and protect our green space. See the Parish Council and BHCC websites and **have your say!**

The Experimental Traffic Order in Rottingdean High Street has now ended and we have asked for the chicane (Planter) to be removed so that we can monitor the effect on air pollution levels and traffic management before deciding if further measures are needed. Pedestrian safety remains a key concern.

This has been a difficult year for many with rising energy costs and we are engaged in a dialogue about what support the village can provide to those in need.

I want to extend a big thank you to all who volunteer in Rottingdean, giving up their time to make this an attractive place to live where we celebrate our rich heritage and have a broad range of activities to engage in. Especial thanks to the Friends of Beacon Hill Nature Reserve who tend our beautiful green space, nurturing the wild grasses and flowers while providing a tranquil environment for animals, birdlife and people to enjoy.

You will find the Annual Wildlife Report on the Parish Council website.

St Aubyns

Following the approval in February 2022 of the acquisition of the former St Aubyns Playing Field, Sports Pavilion and Chapel for community use, contract documents to effect the transfer were approved for signature on 6th February 2023. Transfer is expected in March 2024 when the building work has been completed. A one-off lump sum payment of £350,000 (adjusted for inflation from February 2019) will be provided to RPC at the date of Final Transfer to cover future maintenance. Work has also started on ideas for an Artistic Component to be integrated into the site funded by Fairfax as part of their developer contribution.

The refurbishment of the Chapel has already been completed by Fairfax, and that of the Sports Pavilion is well underway. Just before final transfer of the assets to RPC in Spring 2024, Fairfax will landscape the Field to the specification agreed with the Parish Council to include a play area for under 6s.



Between April and September 2022, we carried out a first phase of consultation with community groups and, more broadly, with all residents at events such as the 2022 Annual Village Meeting, exhibitions, and a stall at the Village Fair. We would like to thank everyone who attended these meetings and shared their ideas with us. A list of the ideas can be found on the RPC website.

After careful consideration, the Council propose to take a cautious approach to the first year of RPC ownership, giving priority to the Freeholder responsibilities for basic maintenance while assuring community use of the assets. This approach will involve some investments in basics such as power and lighting for the buildings, benches and waste bins for the Field plus ongoing maintenance such as grass and hedge cutting. Any

significant enhancements beyond this and involving additional expenditure will then be evaluated based on estimated community benefit and subject to availability of funds.

We continue to work in 2023 to bring this exciting project to life for the benefit of the community from 2024.

Lower High Street

The urban design company Urban Movement have been commissioned to provide a new design that responds to feedback from residents and businesses without compromising the long term plan set out in the original report. The design will include proposals to extend the kerb on the east side, a differentiated surface at the entrance to create a sense of entering a different space, disabled parking and a space for unloading. There will be suggestions for street furniture and green infrastructure. We may be able to take a seasonal approach to creating a pedestrian priority area that would be accessed differently at times during the year.

The work is expected to conclude in March/April and the Parish Council will be communicating the proposed design as soon as we have received advice from Brighton and Hove City on the feasibility of the plan and the potential costs.

Planning

There are normally three Parish Councillors on the planning consultative panel but, with a current vacancy on the council, there are presently two. We are not the decision makers, but BHCC must seek our opinion on every application submitted for planning approval within the Parish. To arrive at our decision, the panel examines all the submitted documentation on the BHCC website. If a site visit helps to give a clearer perspective on a particular application, we look at the property from the outside to consider the potential impact on neighbours, such as privacy issues or blocking of light. We also consider whether the proposal will have an adverse effect on the overall street scene, of particular importance within the Conservation Area of the village.

In the period 1 April 2022 to 31 January 2023, the panel considered a total of ninety applications, eighty-three of which we approved. When BHCC publish their decision, we always compare it with the view that we submitted. Of the seven applications that we objected to, two were approved by BHCC.

Local residents are also able to express their views on any planning approval application. They can meet with panel members in the Round Room at the Whiteway Centre at 7 pm on the first Monday of each month. Alternatively, they can submit their views via the BHCC website.

Natural Environment

The Group advises the Parish Council on matters that would enhance the natural environment or identifies natural features that are of concern. The Beacon Hill Nature Reserve is an outstanding asset for the village and our group is mindful of its role in village life. There will not be a beacon to support the Coronation this year so our colleagues in the Village Advisory Group are considering how we can support the Coronation in other ways. Also, a proposal is being developed to open the Beacon Hub car park and to create easier access to the Reserve for people with limited mobility. Nearby we are considering placing large stones on the verge at Sheep Walk to deter parking.

In the village centre, further quotes have been obtained to complete paths around the pond to provide smooth surfaces for wheelchairs to be able to access the pond. Residents are concerned about the condition of the cliff face and we are in discussion with BHCC on how this might be managed.



Village Community

In early summer we welcomed the opportunity the Queen's Platinum Jubilee provided to gather together again as a village helping to organise celebrations on the Green and in Kipling Gardens, with local musicians, singers, a school choir from St Margaret's. We then welcomed the return of the Village Fair, put up a tent and talked to all comers about the assets (the field, sports pavilion and school chapel) being transferred by the developers of the St Aubyns site to Rottingdean village.

Working with the City Ranger from Beacon Hill we celebrated the 150th Anniversary of former St Aubyns pupil Vaughan Williams' birth and helped fund a children's concert and parade; our many thanks go to Artpod who produced the wonderful lanterns and made the concert at the church happen.



In November we held a meeting at St Margaret's Church to discuss the cost of living crisis and consider what could be done by individuals and communities to mitigate rising fuel costs.

Buildings & Environment

This year has been mainly concerned with maintaining a safe environment for all residents and visitors to the village.

To this end, the Built Environment Group has been in close contact with the City Council with matters ranging from defective street lighting, potholes on the Falmer Road and ensuring bus shelters are fit for purpose. We have also responded to individual complaints from residents, on issues such as blocked drains and the siting of street signs.

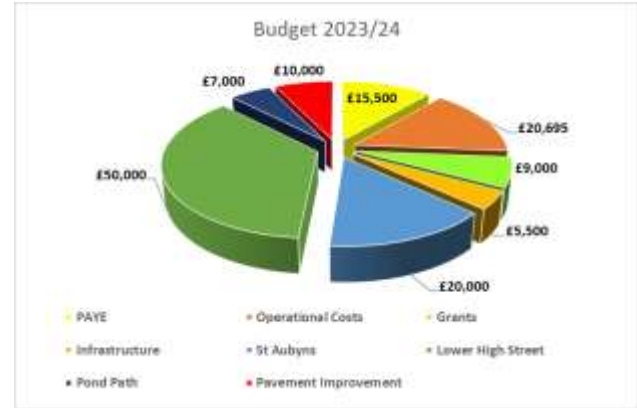
The group also coordinated with the City Council in relation to dedicated memorial benches in different sites across the village.

This is an ongoing process, so if you spot something you think the Parish Council can assist with, please let us know, and we will see what we can do.

Finance and Standards

The Parish Council continues to carefully manage the funding provided by ratepayers in line with its statutory duty. Expenditure for 2022/23 will be within the agreed operational budget with some of the reserves built up in previous years used on major projects for the benefit of Rottingdean residents. This included the refurbishment of Park Road Public Toilets, preparing for the transfer of St Aubyns Field and refining plans for new public open space in the Lower High Street. In addition, your Parish Council has provided grant funding and donations to several village activities including for Queen Elizabeth's Platinum Jubilee celebrations, Rottingdean in Bloom, Kipling Gardens and Rottingdean Heritage.

At the meeting in February, the Council agreed not to increase the precept payment for 2023/24. The annual amount paid by residents will remain at £32.66 per year. The annual income from the precept income will nevertheless increase by £2280 because of the new housing developments. The precept income and reserves will enable the Parish Council to continue to improve services and amenities, progress projects set out in our [Infrastructure Development Plan](#) (IDP) and support local charities and good causes through grants and donations. The IDP includes plans for the new public open space in the Lower High Street, pavement improvements and preparation work for the transfer of St Aubyns Field, the Chapel, Pavilion, Water Fountain and War Memorial expected to take place in early 2024. The budget allocation for 2023/24 is shown below



Please contact us at enquiries@rottingdean-pc.gov.uk if you feel something needs our attention.

Parish Clerk: Chris Hayes chris.hayes@rottingdean-pc.gov.uk

Sue John (Chair), Mike Nixon (Vice Chair), Julie Lawrence, Kerry Levins, Bernard Turnbull, Mark Cherrie, Nadine Fox, and Chris Poole.

Details of Advisory Group Members are on our website www.rottingdean-pc.gov.uk

