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Rottingdean Parish Council

Annual Village Newsletter

Invitation to the ANNUAL VILLAGE MEETING Tuesday 9th April 6.30 pm in the Main Hall at the Whiteway Centre

Chair's Address

The last 12 months have been very busy for the Rottingdean Parish Council (RPC) and, despite being three Councillors short, a lot has been achieved. In addition to resolving many individual issues raised by residents throughout the year we aimed to contribute to the Village across three main areas.

Preserving and protecting the natural environment, green spaces and character of our village

The Neighbourhood plan- The Plan has been finalised and was accepted by 89% of residents. The plan was formally adopted by BHCC on 28th March. This plan will help protect the character of the village, our community facilities, and our green spaces whilst also permitting development for the future needs of the village in a controlled way.

Promoting and enhancing the quality of village community life, services and amenities

A lot of Councillors time has been spent on putting in place the legal specifications and maintenance contracts to enable St Aubyns School Chapel, the Pavilion and 3.5 acres of the former Sports Field to be brought into use as soon as possible following the transfer to the Parish Council in May. You will find more details in the next article.

The Parish Council has also supported hard work of the many community Groups that ensures the Village continues to thrive.

Monitoring and influencing the development of the built environment, highways, and pathways

BHCC and many other Local Councils are under financial pressure leading to tough choices when it comes to services. Rottingdean Parish Councillors work closely with BHCC officers and Ward Councillors to ensure that the needs of the village are heard. High on our agenda has been the replacement of the West St Car Park wall, improvements to the High Street paving, refurbishment of the bus/ tram shelters next to the White Horses and more robust railings surrounding the Village Pond. This requires us to maximise the use of Developer funds (Section 106), find alternative funding where we can and, in some cases, contribute, where financially possible, to infrastructure projects that are key for the character, facilities, or appearance of the village. The recent Park Road toilet refurbishment is a good example of this. Our **Infrastructure Development Plan for 2024/5** on the website provides more detail.

The Experimental Traffic Order measures in Rottingdean High Street designed to improve air quality were amended with the removal of the chicane (Planter), because of pedestrian safety concerns. Further analysis of the air quality is being undertaken to ensure there is no deterioration in air quality.

The Lower High St improvement project plan to make this area more pedestrian friendly, has been adapted and simplified following consultation with residents and remains an ambition for the Parish Council. But we have decided to pause this project for the moment while we focus on the successful transfer of the St Aubyns Community Field. We have made financial provision in the budget for the project as a future contribution to the development. However, significant additional funding also needs to be found for these improvements.

Would you like to help?

Rottingdean represents 1% of Brighton and Hove population but has the only Parish Council. Parish Councillors can make a difference to Village life by representing the needs of the Village through close collaboration with Community Groups, Ward Councillors and BHCC officials. We still have Councillor vacancies so if you would like to help directly as a Councillor or with any of the topics in this Newsletter, we would be happy to talk to you or receive your application.

Finally, a big thank you to everyone who makes the Village the wonderful place it is today!

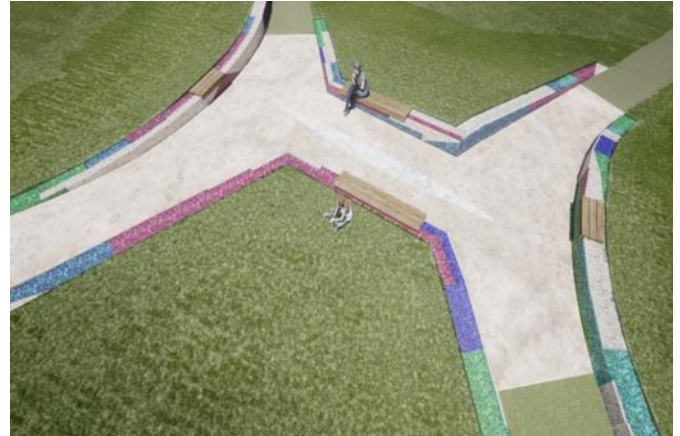
St Aubyns

The refurbished St Aubyns School Chapel and Pavilion as well as 3.5 acres of the former Sports Field will be transferred to RPC around mid-May of this year. This will give Rottingdean a large green open space right in the centre of the Village for people to meet and socialise, for recreation, and to relax and reflect. We are calling the open space The St Aubyns Community Field and it will be open after Transfer once the grass covering has stabilised.

The Community Field will include a Local Area of Play (LAP) for under six-year-olds and mown pathways meeting at the CODA Public Art Feature.

The shape of the feature is inspired by the 'Sweeps' of Rottingdean Windmill and coloured glass rocks are arranged in the retaining walls to represent the Burnes-Jones, stained glass windows in St Margaret's Church. This area provides a central meeting and seating area with stunning views of Beacon Hill. There will also be a wildflower zone situated on the Newlands Rd side of the Field

although the seeding of this will only take place in September.



Based on ideas from community consultation it is also planned to add a small community orchard in the Northeast corner in 2025 subject to funding. 2 or 3 Picnic tables will be placed near the Pavilion as provisional seating and, of course, several litter bins will be available from the beginning. Once the demand becomes clear then benches will be added at various points in the Field, which will be available for sponsorship or dedication

The Chapel and Pavilion will only become available later in the year once security and utility basics are in place. The permitted activities in these Grade II listed buildings are restricted so we need to assess how these best fit with community needs in the coming months.

RPC will be the Freeholder and operator of these assets and will pay for the maintenance from a one-off lump sum of £350K (uplifted for inflation) paid by the Developer on transfer. Finally, we will be setting up a St Aubyns Stewardship Group to help advise the Parish Council on future improvements, events etc. **Please come along to our Village meeting on April 9th to find out more.**

Planning

Rottingdean Parish Council has a planning consultative panel with members responsible for examining all local applications. Although RPC are not the final decision makers, BHCC must seek our opinion on every application submitted for planning approval within the Parish and we reviewed 50 planning applications during the last 12 months.

Councillors look at all available documentation and may visit the site where this helps to give a clearer perspective on potential impact to neighbours, such as privacy issues or blocking of light. Since the recent adoption of the Rottingdean Neighbourhood Plan, both BHCC and the South Downs National Park Planning Authorities are now required to use the guidance in the plan when considering planning applications in the Rottingdean Parish.

The policies in the Plan aim to ensure “the character and the key design features of our historic chalk downland village are maintained”. This will help to ensure that green spaces in and around Rottingdean are protected; that any new building is in sympathy with the Rottingdean Village character and will respect its heritage, and that there will be good quality, accessible and fit-for purpose community facilities.

Natural Environment

The Beacon Hill Nature Reserve continues to provide a special place for residents to enjoy whilst respecting and developing the rich biodiversity there. The Beacon Hill Stewardship Group held its AGM on 13th October and produced Annual Nature Report for 2023, that is available on the Website. The report captures the breadth and depth of what this space has to offer, and the excellent work carried out by the Ranger, Friends of Beacon Hill and associated experts.

The project to make Beacon Hill more accessible has attracted section 106 developer funding and we are waiting for news from BHCC about its deployment.

We hope to complete the installation of a new path around the pond adjacent to the Plough during 2024 and we are also planning to repair the barrier between the pond and The Green (B2123).

Cliff face safety at Rottingdean Beach remains a concern as work has been delayed until October because of rare sea heather growing on the cliff face. RPC supported the Friends of Rottingdean Coastal Environment (FORCE) with their application for bathing status for Rottingdean beach and Cllr

Turnbull has been working with Ward Councillor Earthy to review how best to improve segregation between cyclists and pedestrians and improve safety on the undercliff.

Built Environment

This year has seen a shift of focus for the Built Environment Advisory Group much has traditionally been spent reporting unlit lampposts or potholes to the city council. This will still be an important role for the group, but we are now starting to focus on longer term strategic goals which will have a wider impact across the entirety of the village. A key priority within this work will be St Aubyn’s with the initial organisation of the field, the pavilion and the chapel now falling within the BEAG remit. My colleagues and I have been involved in the procurement of items for the field such as waste bins and picnic benches, as well as contracts for grass mowing, bin emptying, security, buildings insurance and fire detection. The new art installation in the field has also been high on our agenda.

We continue to liaise with BHCC about of Section 106 monies for further sustainable transport initiatives throughout the village. Councillors are keen to explore with the City Council, the possibility of improving local footpaths and kerbs, and perhaps the introduction of more extensive real time bus information for the number 2 route.

We hope villagers approve of the new wall surrounding the car park in West Street, with additional barriers installed to reduce the risk of new damage caused by vehicles striking the wall. Prompted by a resident who reported a bus stop for the 47 service in Cranleigh Avenue which needed customers to board and alight from the bus onto a muddy strip of grass. RPC was able to arrange a new track area making access much easier



The RPC is working with Ward Councillors to repair the shelters outside the White Horse. Greene King (who own the White Horse) have kindly agreed to fund these repairs. Finally, if you spot anything around the built environment of the village you think is amiss, either please report it directly to the City Council or via the RPC.

Village and Community

Each year the Parish Council identifies a sum of money which local organisations can apply for, in recent years this has included applications from ; Rottingdean Arts for the free concerts on the Terraces etc summer, Friends of Kipling Gardens who work with the Gardener each Thursday morning on various projects such as developing the woodland space towards the rear of the gardens- see the crocuses now flowering on which some of last year's grant was spent.



We are also keen to attract applications from groups which reflect the growing diversity of the Parish so were pleased to receive an application from PARC for their summer programme of storytelling for children on the seafront. This year we also gave a grant to speed watch for new equipment to record, and hopefully deter, vehicles speeding through the village. In spring we hosted an event to thank volunteers for the contribution they make to the village that provided an opportunity for organisations to show case their work and attract others to join them.

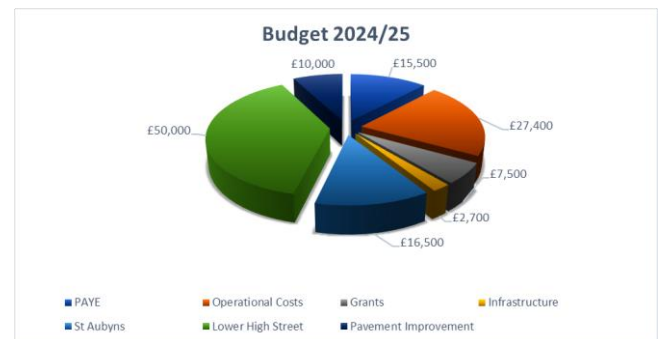
We also liaised with Tennis players at Rottingdean Recreation ground to see what we could do to protect this sports facility as funds for the maintenance of public tennis courts has reduced. We were pleased that we managed to extend the

number of football pitches for young people at the recreation ground.

Finance and Standards

The Parish Council continues to carefully manage the funding provided by council tax in line with its statutory duty. Expenditure for 2023/24 was within the agreed operational budgets 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.

At the February meeting the Parish Council approved a 3% increase in the income from the precept for 2024/25. As more households will pay the precept in this year, the increase equates to 0.5% increase for Band D households which will mean an extra 15 pence per year. 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 budget allocation for 2024/25 is shown below



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

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Mike Nixon (Chair), Julie Lawrence (Vice Chair), Mark Cherrie, Phil Evans, Kerry Levins, Chris Poole and Bernard Turnbull.

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

