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Rottingdean Parish Council

Annual Village Newsletter

Invitation to the ANNUAL VILLAGE MEETING at 6.00 pm on Tuesday the 28th of April 2026 in the Main Hall at the Whiteway Centre

Chair's Message

The Parish Council is adapting to new challenges

Rottingdean Parish Council (RPC) is a relatively small Parish Council and operates with one of the lowest costs per household (precept) in the region.

However, the environment we are operating within is changing.

Under devolution plans, BHCC, our unitary Council, is expanding, increasing the number and geographical diversity of the communities it serves.

BHCC funds are under severe pressure due to growing statutory obligations, requiring constant review of their priorities, services and amenities.

The Planning environment is evolving with ambitious building targets for Councils creating a trend more in favour of development.

The Parish Council must adapt to these realities to ensure that the needs of the village are effectively represented and that residents' priorities are promoted.

RPC carried out a Village survey in 2025 which highlights what is important to residents. Councillors have built their 2026-7 project plan and activities around these priorities and have given careful thought about how they can be funded.

Retaining and developing village amenities: In 2025 RPC strongly supported the successful Save Our Library campaign. This campaign demonstrated that the voice of the community can shape the future. RPC is currently facilitating exploratory discussions between BHCC and Rottingdean Heritage on the potential transfer of the Grange to the Community to see if an acceptable solution can be found. Plans are currently being developed to bring the recently acquired St Aubyns Chapel, Pavilion and Field fully into Community use.

Unlocking funds to retain and improve village infrastructure: In the current financial climate it is increasingly important to explore alternative or multi source funding options. The retention and refurbishment of the Park Rd toilets in 2024 was achieved with a financial contribution from RPC. Without this, the toilets would have been closed. In 2025 the village pond safety rails were upgraded using developer funds, the White Horses paid for the refurbishment of the Bus shelters in front of the hotel, Friends of Kipling Gardens will use Developer funds to improve amenities in the Gardens and the current plans for a major High St upgrade will be funded by BHCC, Developer funds and with an RPC contribution.

Defending both the letter and the spirit of the Neighbourhood Plan. RPC is a statutory consultee and a guardian of the Neighbourhood Plan to protect Village green spaces, ensure responsible

development and retain the special character of the village.

Delivering through collaboration with stakeholders:

- With Ward Councillors on solutions such as the A259 Bus shelter revamp, the West Street carpark wall rebuild or the Marine Drive pavement resurfacing.
- With BHCC leaders and CEO to develop the High St Upgrade plan, repair the Kipling Garden wall or find solutions for the retention of community amenities.
- With Rottingdean Volunteer Organisations to support our thriving community involvement through provision of grants or involvement in specific projects or events.

There is always more we want to do and more we can do. For example, working closer with the business community, developing and funding the Lower High St project or improving aspects of the seafront experience.

It has never been more important to have a strong and diverse Parish Council, but we have struggled to fill all the Parish Councillor positions during this 4 year term. We know residents are passionate about the village and have relevant skills and knowledge so please contact us if you would like to know more about being a Parish Councillor. There is a lot to do!

Please read on to hear the latest achievements and priorities from the Lead Councillors of each Advisory Group and the Parish Clerk. Please also join us on the 28th of April at the Whiteways Centre where Councillors will be happy to take your questions.

Planning

The Planning Consultative Group receives details of Rottingdean planning applications from BHCC. We look at the plans and documents and, if necessary, will visit the site to better assess the size of the proposed development and its potential impact on neighbours, such as loss of privacy or blocking of light. We also consider if the proposed development

complies with the requirements of the [Rottingdean Neighbourhood Plan \(RNP\)](#).

If it would be contrary to the RNP, such as reducing green gaps or having a negative impact on the character of our historic village, and / or visual amenity or privacy issues for neighbours, the planning group will draft an objection. Details are circulated to all Councillors, and the application will be discussed at the monthly Council meeting.

The objection is submitted to the BHCC Planning Office where it is considered, along with all other comments from other Statutory Consultees and members of the public. Planning Officers will normally then make the decision to refuse or grant permission but, for more complex applications, it will go before the BHCC Planning Committee where Councillors make the decision.

RPC objections are sometimes overruled. BHCC Planning Officers provide feedback when this happens. Pressure on BHCC to meet Government building targets for new housing is often the reason. Despite these occasional setbacks, RPC will continue to strongly represent resident's views concerning every proposed over-development in the village.

Natural Environment

St Aubyn's Community Field was handed over to the Parish Council in May last year and officially opened to the public at the end of June. The handover from the developers was accompanied by a sizeable bequest to support the long-term maintenance of the field and buildings.

Since then, the focus has been on developing and bedding in a management framework and action plans to ensure the field and accompanying buildings are kept in good repair and further developed in response to community needs and demands.

Contracts have been let for field maintenance and regular emptying of the litter bins; low level fencing is to be the wildflower meadow along with a lockable post to protect the entrance at the northeast corner. The trees that were planted last

year have survived a stormy winter very well, with only one loss. Both Brighton Permaculture Trust and Brighton and Hove City Council have helped maintain the trees, with a field visit by the former being of great help in understanding how to keep our orchard trees healthy and how our tree guardian volunteers can play their part in this. The children's play area and "The Sweeps" seating area are in use, and we will be seeking public views on how to make the best of these facilities.

The year ahead will be focused on testing out ideas for making the best of the field and buildings and further strengthening the very promising partnerships that are forming with local organisations and community groups in the village.

The Beacon Hill Stewardship Group, chaired by the Parish Council, held its annual meeting in November. Volunteer effort in supporting the work of the BHCC Ranger is critical to the success of the nature reserve, and it was good to hear from the Friends of Beacon Hill (FoBH), the Beacon Hub, and Rottingdean Heritage at the meeting. The hill continues to flourish and provides a popular amenity to the local community and visitors alike.

Keeping the reserve in good order is not without its challenges, and current concerns include a shortage of specialist volunteers to monitor the flora and fauna on the hill, and to ensure that the nesting sites of the skylarks that are a defining feature of the reserve continue to be protected. Encouraging users to keep their dogs under proper control and ensuring that the shared use of the hill by pedestrians and horse riders is well managed, are ongoing issues. A subgroup was formed at the annual meeting to look into the protection of the skylark nesting sites and will report back with its proposals.

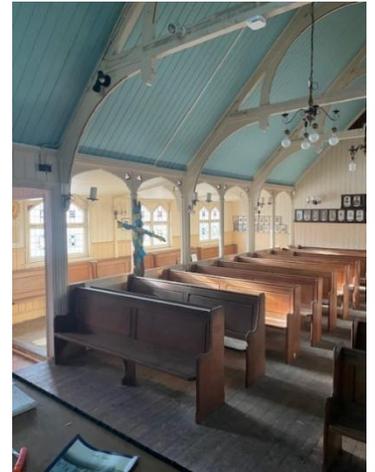
Thanks to the efforts of a local volunteer carpenter, the picnic tables near the Windmill have been repaired. The Parish Council has also funded the updating and replacement of the public information boards around the entrances to



the hill with the help of FoBH and the Ranger.

Built Environment

The Built Environment Advisory Group has been heavily involved in the development of the two buildings attached to The St Aubyn's Community Field. During the winter, we arranged for the stained-glass windows on the chapel to have suitable protection fitted. This should ensure the wellbeing of these irreplaceable pieces of local history for years to come and will allow natural



daylight into the chapel. The chapel also needs artificial lighting to be installed before the building can be properly used which we will look at once the clean is complete. We will also consider internal repainting.

We have now installed both fire and intruder alarms in both the Chapel and Pavilion to be compliant with the terms of our insurance provider. Looking forward, at the time of writing, we are waiting to agree a date with a professional cleaning company to give both buildings a deep clean. Abandoned for over a decade and following the renovation work, they are both in need of a spruce up.

The refurbishment of the pond barrier was successfully completed with new steelwork and repairs made to the concrete posts. This has greatly enhanced the pond's visual appeal. Also, as a result, safety around the pond has been improved, and the area now offers a more attractive environment for residents and visitors alike. Elsewhere, the Built Environment Advisory Group will be taking a lead



role on the High Street work, and our attention will then focus on finding sources of funding to start to transform the lower High Street into a pedestrian priority area. There's a lot to be getting on with!

Village and Community

Engagement with the village of Rottingdean continues to bring its own fascinations and rewards. This past year we held a village event to open St Aubyns Field and introduce people to the old school chapel and the sports pavilion. It was fun to hear Father Martins return the school colours to the chapel. Both the Pavilion and the Chapel have huge potential as community spaces, but we will be working with all local organisations on possible uses before we embark on further upgrades such as heating lighting kitchen facilities and toilets.

We celebrated the considerable contribution made by volunteers to village life on an afternoon in February at St Margaret's Church. We also took the opportunity to get feedback on what they felt were priorities for the village...and noted that sorting out the high street traffic/and vacant shops rated highly along with increasing the stock of volunteers and tackling loneliness.

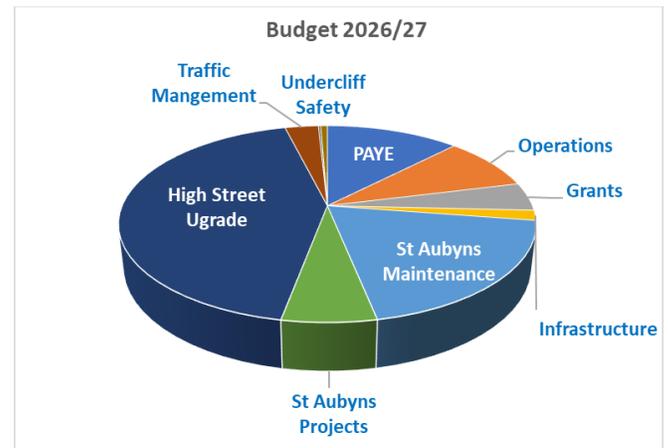
Working with the library campaigners was a great experience and demonstrated the energy of local people. A vocal packed meeting at St Margaret's school did much to overturn the proposal to close the library. It was also lovely to see events for children like Easter Egg hunt and the Halloween party at the Grange.

Most recently we have been talking to Friends of Kipling Gardens and the allotments reps about how the 106 monies from the development at St Aubyns should be spent. In Kipling Gardens, we are looking at a system for collecting rain water off the tool shed, repair of the small stage, seating for children in the woodland area, and new planting schemes for different parts of the garden. The talent, knowledge and skills of local people is impressive.

Finance and Standards

The Parish Council continues to carefully manage the funding provided by the council tax precept in line with its statutory duty. At the February Council meeting Councillors agreed a budget of £162,330 for 2026/27 (see below) and to increase the amount of the precept for Band D households by £5 per year bringing to total annual amount payable to £38.79. This increase will allow the Parish Council to contribute to a fundamental upgrade to the High Street, continue to deliver key improvements to local amenities and services, and build our reserves for future projects such as transforming the Lower High Street into a pedestrian priority area.

The Parish Council plans also include investment in the St Aubyns Field, Chapel and Pavilion assets for the whole community to enjoy and to continue to support the excellent work of the many volunteer groups that make the village a special place to live and work.



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

Councillors: Mike Nixon (Chair), Julie Lawrence (Vice Chair), Mark Cherrie, Phil Evans, Kerry Levins, Chris Poole, and Sarah-Helen Snow

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

