

BEXHILL HERITAGE AUTUMN MEMBERS MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday 12th October 2022 7pm

At ST BARNABAS CHURCH, SEA ROAD, BEXHILL

Committee attending:

Steve Johnson	(SJ)	Chair/Treasurer
Simon Allen	(SA)	Projects Coordinator
Alexis Markwick	(AM)	IT Support Officer/Historian
Geoff Tompkins	(GT)	Bandstand Coordinator
Yolanda Laybourne	(YL)	East Parade
John Swap	(JS)	Events Management
Christine Madeley	(CM)	Membership Secretary
Natasha Hamblin	(NH)	Health & Safety Coordinator
Lorraine Parkes	(LP)	Committee Clerk

- 1. APOLOGIES** - David Beales, Anthony Lightly, Paul Dyer, Alec Workman, Hazel Hanley, Brian Comber, Rachel Hills, Samantha Barber, Christine Foley, Karen Manson, Val Hunnisett, Dave Ransley, Judy Walker, Lyn Markwick, Lesley Hicken, Natasha Hamblin
- 2. MATTERS ARISING FROM APRIL MEETING:** None
- 3. APPROVAL OF APRIL MEETING MINUTES:** Proposed, Paul Lendon. Seconded, Christine Madeley. Minutes were approved.
- 4. CHAIR'S WELCOME AND UPDATE:** SJ welcomed members to the meeting. Discussions would include updates on the bandstand restoration, other planned projects and the importance of BH putting members views forward.
- 5. PRESENTATION BY SIMON ALLEN - THE BANDSTAND'S SECRETS AND WHAT WE'VE LEARNED DURING THE RESTORATION.** SA showed some slides detailing how the bandstand looked in 1895. There was a piano inside and seating outside. It fell into disrepair as bands started to use the Kursaal for performing. It eventually became a shelter that was gas-lit. BH started negotiations with Rother District Council (RDC) to restore the bandstand which was in poor condition. As the bandstand is Grade 2 listed three planning applications had to be approved. One for the overall design and two for the replacement of the missing ridge crest. During restoration lots of rubbish was removed from the roof space. After removing 15 layers of paint the wood was generally found to be in good condition. New ventilation panels were made by the volunteers. It was decided to paint the bandstand in the Bexhill flag colours. The bandstand will be locked when not in use. SA passed around some items of interest found in the bandstand including a gas pipe and an old cigarette packet.
- 6. PRESENTATION BY GEOFF TOMPKINS - BANDSTAND BOOKINGS AND SCHEDULE** - GT thanked the Events Committee members who had worked hard to construct and develop the bandstand schedule and AM who developed the computerised booking system. It was important to be sensitive to local residents and those having drinks at the Bathing Station. It is hoped that a local resident will join the events committee. The schedule is designed to encourage a diversity of interests, games, clubs & charities, puppeteers, poets, dancers, choirs, music groups and quiet times. Groups registered so far include, ukulele bands, reggae bands, Girlguiding Bexhill, Jesus loves Bexhill and many more. GT advised that BH is looking for a volunteer Games Master to support with board games for two sessions a week. A name is also being sought for the bandstand. One suggestion so far is the Jubilee bandstand. Please let BH know of any suggestions at info@bexhillheritage.org.uk

7. PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT UPDATES

Planning Officer. DB is sadly experiencing ill health and will be resigning as Planning Officer. BH are seeking a volunteer to replace him. The role involves advising the committee when there are any planning applications with a heritage implication. The committee will then decide what action should be taken. Please let SJ know if you are interested in finding out what is involved.

Town Hall application. There is an RDC planning committee meeting tomorrow morning (13/10). BH oppose the application as two Edwardian villas will be demolished and, in their place, a four storey office block will be built. This will be slab-like rather than curved and will completely overwhelm the current Town Hall. AL will be speaking at the meeting to put forward BH's views. If you feel it is appropriate, then it would be helpful if members could stand outside the Town Hall in support. JS has produced some small posters that could be held up.

Replacement Windows. Both BH and the Chamber of Commerce are agreed that it should be possible for residents to change their wooden sash windows to wood or high quality PVC as long as they are in keeping. RDC are insisting on wooden replacement. BH has made representations on behalf of residents. The matter has now been delegated to an RDC Task & Finish Group. BH has been invited to address the group. Hopefully, a decision will be made soon.

8. PROJECTS UPDATE

Sainsbury's Mural. In 2019 it was recognised that this is an important mural by Pallot and Collins. It is a sand and cement mural depicting Anglo-Saxon links, including coins. RDC owns the building and Sainsbury's are the tenants. Contact has now been made with Sainsbury's management and BH will restore the mural if Sainsbury's are not prepared to do so. There is some minor damage, and some bricks need re-pointing. BH will ask RDC to erect an interpretation board as part of the Town Hall Square redevelopment.

K6 Phone Box. The Normans Bay Residents Association are keen to keep the phone box. It is the only one of its type left in Bexhill. Starting next summer BH will do some initial restoration and support residents to complete it. It will be used as a book stall.

9. POSSIBLE VISITS PROGRAMME FOR 2023 - SJ asked whether members would be interested in group visits to local areas of interest e.g. Aldershaws tiles at Sedlescombe and Robertsbridge railway. BH could look at transport arrangements and visits would be open to non-members/friends. Members were enthusiastic about the idea, and it was decided to discuss further at the November meeting in small groups. It is hoped that a small sub-committee can be formed, supported by a committee member. **ACTION: SJ to add visits programme to November meeting agenda**

10. PROPOSAL TO CHANGE MEMBERS MEETINGS TO THURSDAY - PAUL LENDON. PL said that Bexhill Town Councillors would like to attend the members meetings. This could be a good way to find out what the Town Council plans are and whether we may be able to help with any initiatives that might fit with our own objectives. After a show of hands it was agreed that from 2023 meetings would be held on Thursday evenings.

11. OPPORTUNITIES FOR MEMBERS - BH is looking for a volunteer fund-raiser, please let SJ know if you would like to discuss further. As previously mentioned, a games coordinator and volunteers to help with member visits are also needed. Please speak to SJ, GT or any committee member for further information.

12. Q&A Session – A member said she had really enjoyed the History Day at Manor Barn held in conjunction with the Old Town Preservation Society. Would it be possible to arrange a similar day? This could be discussed for 2023.

Jeanette Eason asked whether Down Cottage has remained after the recent demolition. (Yes, it was only the Barn that was demolished.)

The meeting closed at 20.50

Dates of next meeting - Wednesday 30th November 2022. 7pm St Barnabas Church