

BEXHILL HERITAGE AUTUMN MEMBERS MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday 30th November 2022 7pm

At ST BARNABAS CHURCH, SEA ROAD, BEXHILL

Committee attending:

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| Steve Johnson | (SJ) | Chair/Treasurer |
| Simon Allen | (SA) | Projects Coordinator |
| Alexis Markwick | (AM) | IT Support Officer/Historian |
| Yolanda Laybourne | (YL) | East Parade |
| John Swap | (JS) | Events Management |
| Christine Madeley | (CM) | Membership Secretary |
| Natasha Hamblin | (NH) | Health & Safety Coordinator |
| David Beales | (DB) | Planning Officer |
| Lorraine Parkes | (LP) | Minutes Secretary |

- 1. APOLOGIES** - Anthony Lightly (AL), Geoff Tompkins, Judy Walker, Lyn Markwick, Alan & Hue Mead, Deirdre Williams, Anne Andersen, Philip Howard-Knight
- 2. APPROVAL OF AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE OCTOBER MEMBERS MEETING:** Proposed, Christine Madeley, Seconded, Peter Darnell. Minutes were approved. No matters arising.
- 3. CHAIR'S WELCOME AND UPDATE:** SJ welcomed members to the meeting. Discussions would include updates on the Town Hall planning application, the bandstand booking system and seeking members suggestions for visits in 2023. DB has some good news to share.
- 4. PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT UPDATES - DB**

Town Hall planning proposal. Following an application from a Bexhill resident, Historic England has awarded the Town Hall a Grade 2 listed status. The listing gives more protection to the building and may make the current application more difficult to be agreed. BH and the Chamber of Commerce agree that the design for the Town Hall and the Town Hall Square are not coherent. Concerns are also that income was going to be generated by office lettings that may not now be sustainable.

Replacement Windows. BH has a policy on replacement windows in the Town Centre conservation area. The policy states that BH will not oppose an application to change to UPVC provided that the replacement windows are of the highest quality of design, detail and finish. The Rother District Council (RDC) Conservation Officer disagrees with this and current policy requires wooden replacements only. DB & AL will be attending an RDC Task & Finish Group in January to try to find a compromise.
- 5. A NEW CONSERVATION AREA FOR BEXHILL?** SJ introduced a PowerPoint presentation regarding a possible extension to the Bexhill Conservation area for members. The suggested extension area would be to the east of the town centre, bordering north to the railway line and south to the sea. This would allow RDC to better manage and preserve the area. There are many Edwardian homes, hotels and interesting buildings in the area including the Sessions House and Victoria House. Conservation status would allow the features to be highlighted and to be recognised as valuable and could be added to a local list of heritage assets. Planning policies would need to be scrutinised to ensure any changes would be sympathetic to current buildings. Conservation areas encourage and strengthen residents pride in their area and can have a positive impact on businesses and house prices. There are a few stages to go through. Consultations would need to be carried out with the Residents Associations and then also the Town Council and District Council to gain feedback. Evidence would then be provided to formally approach RDC. This process is likely to take 3-4 years. A vote was taken and members voted to start the consultation.
- 6. (REFRESHMENTS AND RAFFLE)**

7. INTRODUCING THE BANDSTAND ONLINE BOOKING SYSTEM. AM demonstrated the online booking system for the bandstand. It is a very straightforward, accessible site. When a booking is requested an email will be sent to confirm booking received. A committee member will approve the booking and an email will be sent confirming the booking has been accepted. The test system can be used now and feedback is welcomed. The system is unique to BH. Many groups have already expressed an interest. There are 16 seats inside and an area for spectators will be marked outside. Bookings are free but donations are requested for maintenance costs. When no bookings are made the bandstand will be open for the public to sit inside. Committee members and Stella Brennan-Wright's staff will supervise and unlock/lock the bandstand. BH has a bandstand group and members are very welcome to join the group.

8. DEVELOPING A VISITS PROGRAMME FOR 2023. SJ asked members if they would be interested in a visits programme. Visits could range from short local day trips to long days and weekend visits. The cost would range from £10 upwards. Members welcomed the idea. Members completed a form to state their preferences and the results will be discussed at the BH committee meeting on 14th December. Members then made their own suggestions which included Herstmonceux Castle and gardens, the Observatory Science Centre at Herstmonceux, Rochester, Romney Marsh churches, a cricket bat factory, a truggery and a tour of local churches.

9. POLICY ADDITION & Q & A FOR COMMITTEE. YL advised that as a registered charity BH are accountable to the Charity Commission. As per their advice BH has produced a Code of Conduct. This has been approved by the Committee and added to the website. YL also advised that BH will be producing Christmas cards for 2023. These have to be ordered early so will be discussed at the next members meeting in February 2023. There were no questions for the committee.

SJ thanked everyone for attending. The meeting closed at 21.00

Date of next meeting - Thursday 9th February 2023. 7pm The Polegrove Bowling Club.