

BEXHILL HERITAGE MEMBERS MEETING MINUTES
Thursday 12th October 2023 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
Yolanda Laybourne	(YL)	East Parade
Lorraine Parkes	(LP)	Minutes Secretary

- 1. APOLOGIES** - Natasha Hamblin (NH), Paul Lendon, Val Hunnisett, Hazel Hanley, Jeff Webb, Brenda Webb, Jeannie Oakes, Philip Howard-Knight, Jane Minter, Steve Hall.
- 2. CHAIR'S WELCOME AND UPDATE:** SJ welcomed members and guests to the meeting.
- 3. APPROVAL OF AND MATTERS ARISING FROM THE APRIL MEMBERS MEETING:** No matters arising. Minutes were approved -Proposed, Jeanette Eason, Seconded, Rita Wright.

4. PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT UPDATES - SJ - TEMPORARY PLANNING OFFICER

BH does not currently have a permanent Planning Officer. SJ is very grateful to Val Hunnisett who checks through all the planning applications. She advises the committee which applications need scrutinising and then the committee make comments to Rother District Council (RDC). Another application has been made to demolish Beulah Baptist Church. It has a very fine Victorian tower and the replacement building suggested is not in keeping with that part of the town. The design should incorporate the best of the old with the new. A committee member will attend the RDC planning meeting to make objections.

A recent planning application was made for solar panels on the roof of a listed building. BH do not object to solar panels as such but ask home owners to consider the siting of the panels. Installers do not advise customers but panels can be sited to face east and west and placed in a south facing garden. BH will be asking if RDC can talk to applicants beforehand and advise that these options will not detract from listed buildings.

The Co-op store in Devonshire Road applied to replace the windows above the store with cheap UPVC windows. Their consultant advised RDC that neighbours had the similar windows installed. This was an error. BH pointed this out to RDC and the application was withdrawn. BH are hoping the re-application will be more reasonable.

BH is still seeking a Planning Officer. Training will be available and the applicant just needs some experience of writing letters to organisations. Please see SJ if you want to discuss further.

5. BEXHILL HERITAGE FUTURE PROJECTS - SA

SA has been working with SJ to refurbish the RNLI collection box on the seafront. Rust initially came through the primer coat due to damp that had penetrated the iron but this has now been remedied and the painting is almost complete. The door has not been opened since the 1980s and SA managed to drill it out and replace some of the hinges so now the door shuts properly.

Q. Is there any money in there?

A. Yes, 7kg of coins most of which are pre-decimal.

Q. Will it be used as a collecting box again?

A. No, it will be street furniture only but a plaque will be erected giving information about the box.

Q. How can we protect it in the future?

A. The current application of primer, undercoat and top coat should be sufficient to protect it.

Sainsbury's Mural - In 2019 BH started discussions with Sainsbury's about refurbishing the mural on the side of their building in Town Hall Square. They asked endless questions and then refused to supply water and electricity for the work. BH then agreed to supply everything needed and just

wanted permission to go ahead with the work. SA and Tony Lightly are having an on-line meeting with Sainsbury's to discuss contracts and permissions and it is hoped that the project can then move forward.

Comment - it is such an interesting mural made by Pallot and Collins and inspired by the Festival of Britain. It is of national importance.

East Parade restoration update - SJ. Since the bandstand opened on the 1st April bookings have been very healthy. Among the regular users are Bexhill 100, Bexhill Museum, Jesus Loves Bexhill and a children's bookshop. There are a number of community group users including a group for women who lack confidence. There will be a games club from 19th November. There is heating and lighting so it can be used throughout the winter. The next musical event will be for the "Bexhill After Dark" event on 27th January.

Shelter 3 opened after restoration in August 2020. It is now having its three year repaint by BH volunteers every Monday and Friday mornings. It has been kept open during the repaint. The public have been very complimentary about the work being done and have also given donations.

RDC started to restore Shelter 4 which was shot-blasted but then left open to the elements as the plastic sheeting did not protect it sufficiently. The wood is now dry and so BH volunteers will begin restoring the shelter next month. Some of the candy twist columns have beautiful knots on so these will be protected with marine quality varnish, rather than paint, to highlight the quality of the wood.

SJ and SA met recently with the RDC Head of Community and Site Manager to discuss the restoration of Shelter 2. RDC is currently £3m in debt so are unlikely to be able to fund the restoration. The metal frame is cast iron. The roof brackets are badly corroded. Some areas will need sandblasting and others will need to be replaced. It was repainted five years ago, but the inadequate paint system used at the time has failed to protect ironwork or woodwork. It will need at least £70k to complete the work. BH will need to apply for grant funding from heritage organisations such as Heritage England and The Lottery Fund. There will be a lot of local fund-raising events planned as well. If funds are forthcoming work could start in 2024.

6. REFRESHMENTS and RAFFLE

7. MAIN ITEM

Guest speaker: Dave Hatherell - Bexhill Museum.

Emily Wilding Davidson and her Bexhill connections

Dave gave a talk about Emily Wilding Davidson which included the times that she was imprisoned for various acts of civil disobedience during the campaign for votes for women. Many of these times she was force-fed along with her fellow Suffragettes. Her tragic death at the Epsom race course led to widespread publicity about the campaign. We then learnt about Emily's two brothers who settled in Bexhill.

There were no questions asked.

8. Questions for the committee and any other business

There were no questions asked or any other business.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING - THURSDAY 30TH NOVEMBER - 3.30PM - ST BARNABAS CHURCH

SJ thanked everyone for attending. The meeting closed at 20.45