

Minutes of the Bexhill Heritage Committee Meeting

Monday 17th December 2018

Attendees: Raymond Konyon, Steve Johnson, Alexis Markwick, Simon Allen, David Beales.

Apologies: Emily Leach, Tony Teehan

1. The minutes of the 27th November committee meeting were confirmed as a true record as were the minutes of the December Members' Meeting. There were no matters arising from the November committee minutes.

2. Finance and Governance

SJ reported that the finances were stable with no unexpected income or expenditure since the November committee meeting. SJ reported the trustees' decision that it would be neither necessary nor advisable to apply for Charity Commission registration during the financial year 2018/19 as income for the year was anticipated to fall just short of the £5,000 application threshold.

SJ reported that he had not been able to devote the time needed to discuss the Bexhill Heritage members' privilege card with local traders but hoped to be able to do so in the new year.

ACTION SJ

More membership leaflets were needed. SJ agreed to check and amend the latest leaflet (available on the website) and make suitable amendments for AM to action. SJ then to arrange printing.

ACTION SJ, AM

3. Events

Coffee Mornings

The first coffee morning would take place on Saturday 26th Jan (10am – noon) at the Friends' Meeting House. SJ will provide a float. AM is due to meet Madeleine Gilbert on 7th Jan to discuss publicity. DB will commission a professional musician to play. It was agreed that a raffle should go ahead. Either RK or DB would assist Mike French with fire announcements.

ACTION SJ, AM, DB, RK

4. Projects

i. De La Warr Bus Shelter

It was agreed that we should write to the solicitors responsible for the disposal of the land on which the bus shelter sits. Our objectives would be to: introduce ourselves; describe what it is we hope to achieve and ask how the solicitors might suggest we proceed.

ACTION SA

ii. Sackville Road Church

SA reported that the project had been completed successfully and that the clients were happy. The project team had accepted an invitation to attend the annual carol service and were thanked at the start of the service. There had been positive coverage in the Bexhill Observer.

iii. Ravenside roundabout

It was felt that no further action could be taken by the committee currently and that the item should be removed from the agenda for the time being. Councillor Ian Hollidge was 'chasing' the issue.

iv. Local List

Nothing new to report.

v. Max Faulkner plaque

It was agreed that the original plaque be sited opposite the Angling Club on what had been the western end of the old golf links. The committee recognised that the wording on the plaque was inaccurate, but members felt that this could be overcome by attaching 'guidance' to the plaque rather than replacing what was felt to be a heritage 'object'. The guidance would refer people to further information about Max Faulkner and details about the history of golf in Bexhill.

The committee discussed the idea of installing a new putting green adjacent to the plaque but it was felt that this might be difficult to supervise and maintain. Members of the committee therefore decided not to pursue the idea currently.

SA agreed to determine the most appropriate means of securing the plaque.

ACTION SA

vi. West Parade Clock Tower

The committee remained keen to gain entry to the clock tower in order to determine the scope of repairs and to decide the feasibility of re-installing the original bell. RDC had promised to facilitate access but there had been no further news.

SJ agreed to follow up.

ACTION SJ

vii. Pages Gap

Keith Rhodes was close to completing his research, assisted by AM. It would cost around £1,000 to install an appropriate information board. It was agreed that SJ would make a bid to the Tesco 'Bags of Help' scheme to fund three information boards (Pages Gap, the West Station and the De La Warr Road Bus Shelter).

ACTION SJ

5. Planning

i. RDC's perception of Bexhill Heritage

It was felt that some RDC's officers and members might regard Bexhill Heritage as a 'serial objector' lacking 'constructive input'. It was agreed that Bexhill Heritage should find 'positives' where they exist and always be ready to work with officers to find solutions. Bexhill Heritage should, though, not be shy to object when there is good reason to do so.

ii. Establishing a good working relationship with RDC's new planning officer

Sam Batchelor is to replace Richard Wilson who retires at the end of the year. It was agreed that RK would make contact to arrange a meeting with Sam.

ACTION RK

iii. Archiving planning applications on the BH website

AM explained the current rationale for archiving. It was agreed that DB would provide AM with material in a timely manner so that AM could take photographs appropriate to applications and update the BH website.

ACTION DB / AM

iv. Local Plan

It was agreed that BH's comments on the latest Local Plan (DaSA) should be uploaded to the website in their entirety. DB would send the latest version to AM for inclusion on the website.

ACTION DB/AM

v. Cemetery Lodge

a. 'Trespass'

It was agreed that the following minute be recorded to clarify the position.

"Rother District Council's Cabinet minutes of 5th November 2018 state that Bexhill Heritage had accessed the Cemetery Lodge site without the Council's permission, and that the site should be secured to prevent damage and further trespassing. In fact, Bexhill Heritage had been invited to a meeting on 14th August 2018 by the Community Housing Trust Steering Group which included council members and officers, clearly with the expectation that the Bexhill Heritage representative attending would be able to offer the Steering Group cogent observations about the site. The relevant Bexhill Heritage committee member (David Beales) had therefore walked around the outside of the Lodge to familiarise himself with it and to form a preliminary view of its condition, suitability for conversion, and the possibility of building in its former garden. Subsequent familiarisation visits had been made, given that the Steering Group had expressed its view that Bexhill Heritage might be further called upon.

It should also be noted that officers of Bexhill Heritage had twice written to the Council between July and October 2018 suggesting that the Lodge building be better secured against trespass and the risk of damage or destruction. No response had been received".

b. Current application rr/2018/2801

The application would create a new access to the avenue of trees from St Mary's Lane for the purpose of allowing new development across the bottom of the avenue immediately to the north of the existing gates and posts fronting Turkey Road. It was agreed that David Beale's draft response be submitted with minor amendments and a comment that the Council should place a 'restriction' on such development to protect the heritage features of the site.

ACTION DB

vi. Spindlewood

No significant new developments.

vii. Replacement windows

Awaiting a decision by RDC.

viii. Di Paolos

A tolerable plan had now been submitted by developers.

ix. Conversion of shops to residential units

DB was of the view that RDC would deal with the issue but agreed to investigate further.

ACTION DB

x. 30/32 Dorset Road

Refused by RDC on the grounds of over-development of the site.

xi. Land south of Terminus Road

Pending

xii. Drill Hall

AM reported that he had attended a public consultation meeting on the redevelopment of the Drill Hall site. RDC officers seemed to hold a very strong preference for demolition of the Hall to enable a comprehensive redevelopment of the site. The proposed redevelopment would include a hotel. Committee members expressed concern that such

a significant heritage asset was at risk and felt that at least it should be possible to incorporate the Drill Hall's castellated two-storey front section into the final design. AM and DB would explore the matter further.

ACTION AM / DB

6. Draft RDC Public Realm document

It was agreed that DB should draft a response in time for the next committee meeting. This would include reference to the omission of the East Parade shelters from the RDC document.

ACTION DB

7. Community Asset Register

(RK declared an interest and left the room for this item. SJ took the chair.)

The committee had been asked to consider registering the Beaulieu Road Open Space, St Barnabas Church and the East Parade Shelters as community assets. It was agreed that all three were community assets but there was doubt about whether registration would afford them any further protection against inappropriate development. It was agreed to defer the item to allow further research on the advantages of registering these particular assets and to consider which other assets might benefit from registration.

8. IT issues

It was agreed to send an Xmas message by email to 'expired members'.

It was noted with regret that Bexhill Heritage's display material on Victoria Hall had been removed from boards at St Barnabas Church by persons unknown. It was agreed that the display would be replaced.

ACTION SJ / AM

9. Frequency of Members' Meetings

It was agreed that this should be determined at the AGM but that the committee would seek to agree a recommendation at their next meeting.

10. Committee meal

It was agreed that SJ would approach additional potential diners in RK's absence and collect deposits.

ACTION SJ

11. AOB

It was reported that Tony Lightly was considering an offer to join the committee as a co-opted member.

12. Date of next meeting

Monday 21st January, 7pm, at Traffors, Egerton Road, Bexhill.

Signed as a true and accurate record

Raymond Konyn, Chairman

Date: