

Minutes Bexhill Heritage Members Meeting 5th February 2020

**Bexhill Heritage Extraordinary Members Meeting and Members Meeting,
Friends Meeting House, Albert Road, Bexhill on Sea TH40 1DG**

Committee:

Raymond Konyn (RK) : Chair
Steve Johnson (SJ) : Vice Chair /Treasurer
Alexis Markwick (AM) : IT Support Officer
Simon Allen (SA) : Projects Coordinator
David Beales (DB) : Planning officer
Anthony Lightly (AL) : Chartered Building Surveyor
Jeanette Eason : Committee Clerk
John Swap : Membership Secretary

RK Welcomed members and guests to the meeting. The fire precautions procedures for the premises were explained.

Apologies for Absence - received from C Taylor, J Harris, K Griffiths, P Stapleton, E Liversedge, D Collett, N Hollington, J Harding, L Goubert, C Madeley.

Extraordinary Members Meeting

- (i) SJ provided a brief history of Bexhill Heritage and explained the reason for the Extraordinary Meeting. In order to continue, BH will need to either change the way it currently works to remain under the threshold of £5k of annual income, or register with the Charities Commission. The CC is a regulator which monitors charities, and organisations have to submit accounts to it annually.
- (ii) SJ then read out Resolution A: "That an application be made for Bexhill Heritage to register with the Charity Commission". The proposal was agreed unanimously by the meeting.
- (iii) SJ then read out Resolution B: "That in order to retain its current organisational structure, as a membership-controlled association, Bexhill Heritage should register as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (Association Model).

Members were given the opportunity to know what alternatives were available to still register as a charity.

The resolution was carried with the members clearly indicating they were in favour of retaining the current set up. No one voted against.

There was discussion about the use of proxy votes. As there is no current provision in BH constitution covering the use of proxy voting, it was agreed that on this occasion the votes would be accepted. However, it was recognised that the Trustees will need to consider the subject of proxy votes in future and ensure that a specific mechanism is in place going forward.

The business of the Extraordinary Members Meeting being concluded, the meeting continued with the main agenda items.

Reports from Chair and Committee

1. Projects – Simon Allen

- (i) Shelter No. 3 - SA provided a brief recap of the biggest BH project to date. So far volunteers have given 1500 hours to the project. Initially it was thought the roof could be repaired, but it has been found that in disturbing one tile, it dislodges about another 20. RDC decided to purchase new tiles from a local supplier in Battle. Roofers have been on site recently, and the roof has now been felted which should keep out water if there is any subsequent damage. Nearly all the wood surfaces have been undercoated. The top coats will be applied after the roofers have finished. SA explained that it is hoped the shelter will be completed by spring, depending on the weather, volunteers available (although more are always welcome), and if any other issues come to light during the work.
- (ii) De La Warr Road Bus Stop - There has been a useful meeting with Bexhill College who are keen to come on board with the renovation, including providing a useful media project for the students. It is planned to install an Interpretation Board so that people know it was built as a memorial to a previous town mayor. It was one of three commissioned at the time.
- (iii) Sainsbury's Mural – Nothing further to report. Still awaiting contact/follow up from Sainsburys management.
- (iv) Band Stand – RDC have indicated they could renovate it themselves. There is a desire for it to go back to its original use for music/dance/live performances under cover. Alex is to research some old photos of the band stand. It was a very busy hub. There is due to be a meeting about the project soon.
- (v) Workshop Offer of Use – BH has been offered a very useful work space and place to store tools, which have also been donated for our various renovation works. There will need to be some volunteer work to make a safe access to the unit.
- (vi) Heritage Hub, Sackville Road – RK provided an update on the new venue at the Methodist Church. It is now kitted out with an array of racks, leaflets for various organisations and events, both in and around Bexhill. Footfall and feedback have been very positive so far. Opening times can be found on the BH web site, but there is an official opening planned for Sat 22nd February. There has been a donation of a copier, from Rother Voluntary Action on permanent loan which has been installed. Also, RDC found a small fund which has been earmarked to purchase necessities for use at the Hub. It is now bringing in other groups, societies and Tourist Information. The Hub still needs more volunteers for a couple of hours per session, to ensure it can stay open.

A member asked about the current situation re the Seafront Clock Tower. SA provided a recap of the project to date, and that if consultations with nearby residents are positive, it is hoped to replace/reinstall a bell this year. However, before anything can be done

there will need to be a check of the structure. Vents that were closed have been opened up, allowing the heat and humidity to drop substantially and RDC have vented the door. It is planned to check the state of the clock and tower in spring, and agree next steps.

Another member asked if the BH constitution should now include 'Cultural Heritage'? SJ stated that there will need to be a review of BH objectives.

2. Planning & Development Updates (DB)

It was explained that nothing very notable had occurred over Dec/Jan period. The RDC Planning Committee did not have any reports from the officers, although on that day (of the meeting) there had been 37 applications shown on the website across the district.

- (i) BH put in an objection in respect of the design of the extension planned for The Sea Angling Club, but not to the principal. RDC was in mind to approve, but the application has since been withdrawn.
- (ii) The Weekly List has an interesting application from the train operators. It is applying to convert the pharmacy near the station ticket office into a secure area for bicycle storage, for up to 62 more units. It is planning to install stacking equipment for owners to repair their bikes, have a changing room, hand basin and lockers. There will be no need for BH input or comment as there will be no heritage impact.
- (iii) Drill Hall application was amended to exclude the MOD land. Therefore, the Drill Hall is safe for the time being. A member asked about BH refurbishing the replica of the Royal Sussex Regimental Badge. It was accepted as a suggested future project.
- (iv) Clavering Walk – currently waiting on the Inspectors Report and outcome. There is likely to be damage to heritage if it goes ahead.
- (v) Western Road Market – it was confirmed that BH have not commented on the density of flats/dwellings planned for the site and on improving the external view of the shops (windows) but have proposed that a careful restoration of the facade, including replacement shopfronts should take place.

3. Calendar of future meetings and events (RK)

RK advised that a calendar of events is available on the BH website. If members are unable to access the website, there is a leaflet that can be obtained either from the Heritage Hub or Member Meetings. Other events will be added as and when notified.

RK also explained there were opportunities for members to take more active roles with a list of teams who are needing volunteers e.g. Committee; East Parade Shelter Monitoring – (to keep an eye on and report back on any negative activity/litter/vandalism. Damage will be reported to the Police. Any accumulation of beer cans or nitrous oxide canisters will be reported as litter to RDC who may be willing to advise contractors to increase clearance of the seafront & shelter areas if feedback history is provided). There is also need for volunteers for Events Team, Fundraising, Heritage Hub, Local List collation, Planning Team, Project Team, Publicity & Marketing, Refreshments and Research & History Teams.

RK also asked members that if they shop at the Co-op to please sign up to nominate BH as their main charity. So far BH has received more than £300 from this scheme, which applies to the store's own brand purchases.

Refreshment Break

4. A Flag for Bexhill – A talk by Keith Rhodes

KR gave a brief overview into the history and uses of flags throughout the ages. He also explained about the current standards and guidelines for flying flags, e.g. if a person wishes to fly a flag on or attached to their property, they have to apply for planning permission.

KR then provided details of the Bexhill Flag and efforts to get it reinstated as the town flag. If and when there is agreement from all the organisations concerned, it is planned to have a proper launch date.

KR then answered a variety of questions from the members related to Charter Trustees; Bexhill Day; Bexhill cultural heritage and 1000 years since King Offa Charter. It was also mentioned that a Town Flag needs a Town Council, and members were reminded that the RDC consultation starts from 21 February 2020. One member asked about where to buy a Bexhill flag. It is hoped that BH will be able to get preferential prices for bulk orders. KR confirmed he was currently looking into getting costings and quotes.

4. AOB, Open Forum, Q & A s, members comments, suggestions & ideas

Q. What is happening to Cemetery Lodge? The Community Housing Trust has been formed and is the body that will create dwellings that will NOT be for sale. They will be held in trust, so that they can be allocated and rented to local people only, and can only be reallocated when the tenant vacates the property. It is slow progress on Cemetery Lodge. They have appointed architects to submit plans for the 5 schemes, 3 of which will retain the Lodge, 2 will include demolition. BH are still awaiting sight of the plans. Sadly, the property is still at risk and needs to be made more secure.

Comment. It was mentioned that there is a “Democracy for Bexhill” meeting taking place soon. Members were referred to the various posters around the town for details as to time, date and venue.

Comment. A vote of thanks was offered to Bexhill Probus which has opened its Easter time coach trip to tour the Historical Dockyard, Chatham, to members of Bexhill Heritage. The application list is currently available at the Heritage Hub, with details of date and price.

Q. Is the Town Hall on the Community Asset Register? The building is not at present, but anyone can nominate under the CAR guidelines in the Localism Act.

Comment. It was mentioned to the general meeting that there are calls for volunteers to seek nominations as Town Councillors, especially from certain age groups.

Comment - Cinema in Western Road – It was mentioned that this building was the first registered in the town under the Localism Act.

Comment. A member said that a letter in the local paper indicated that it is hoped to open a new Skills Centre in Bexhill this autumn.

Announcement. AM advised that in an effort to encourage young members to become involved in the historical and built environment locally, that Bexhill Heritage is introducing a reduced membership fee of £5 for those aged 16 – 25.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 21.00

Next BH Members Meeting will be held on Wednesday 4th March 2020 at 7 p.m. at Friends Meeting House, 15 Albert Road, Bexhill on Sea TN40 1DG.