

## **Bexhill Heritage Members' Meeting Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

**Bexhill Heritage Members' Meeting held at the Friends' Meeting House, Albert Road, Bexhill on Sea**

### **Committee:**

Raymond Konyn (RK) Chair  
Steve Johnson (SJ) Vice Chair/Treasurer  
Alexis Markwick (AM) iT Support Officer  
Simon Allen (SA) Projects Coordinator  
John Swap (JS) Membership Officer  
David Beals (DB) Planning Officer  
Jeanette Eason (JE) Committee Clerk

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2020 were made available to all those attending.

- 1. Welcome, Fire Precautions and apologies (RK) :** Members, guests and new members welcomed. The fire precautions instructions and emergency exits pointed out to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were received from T Lightly, A Crotty, M & L Sterling, J Harding, K Rhodes, C Cook, D Tramaseur

- 2. Minutes from February Meeting**

RK explained that copies of the minutes are always posted to the web site for members to view.

- 3. Matters Arising**

There being no matters arising, there were no amendments to be made.

- 4. Reports from Chair and Committee**

Current Projects (SA)

- Shelter No. 3 – BH started this project in September 2019 and volunteers have attended most days except for Christmas. It was decided in the end to strip off the paint, especially given that it has not been done since 1921 and simply overpainted on each occasion. RDC invited BH to help and also take a look at the roof. On investigation it was clear the roof was in a worse condition than originally thought. A company from Battle will be providing new tiles to replace those too damaged to be retained. A roofing company will be used to do the work and replacement of the two finials. The examination also found that the ceiling panels were about to fall down because the nails had rusted away. Currently BH are making good and replacing the nails. After this work, BH will concentrate on painting, but at present it is too wet to complete.
- De La Warr Bus Shelter – Hope that the college will get involved once Shelter No. 3 has been completed.
- West Parade Clock Tower – Needs to be visited in near future to clean and check the current state. An inspection report will be completed and forwarded to RDC with any recommendations.

No further questions or queries.

## 5. The Bexhill Heritage Hub and TIP (RK)

The new Heritage Hub has been nicely organized by Clair Baldry. There is a good range of TI information which is proving popular. Footfall has been better than expected. Our partner is RDC who are arranging a weekly drop of leaflets. Also Rother Voluntary Action have provided a copier. Some iT set up with a monitor to view the BH web site, views of Bexhill and can register BH membership online.

Members were reminded that Clair is always looking for volunteers to assist at the Hub for a few hours at a time.

## 6. Planning & Development Updates (DB)

- i) Information Point & Hub – important to remember it is promoting the whole of Rother district not just Bexhill.
- ii) Clavering Walk – The inspector has allowed the appeal in favour of developer. It is not known what the opposition group will do now. Also there is a problem caused by RDC not having enough land banked to meet local housing needs. The main issue was the preservation of Cooden Mount, which has medieval heritage. There is a prediction that there will be severe damage by the development and trespass. Unfortunately RDC is not in a position to challenge.
- iii) Request to RDC Planning – that where major applications are left on the 'table', that some information should be put on their website as to why the application or project has not been progressed or what was/is happening. E.g. Spindlewood residential development. Often there are inadequate explanations. RDC has instructed officers to ensure notes are more fulsome in future.
- iv) Q & As – Drill Hall (DB): BH opposed demolition of fine frontage and was aware of the continued military activity in the Bexhill area. It was suggested that any new building incorporate the Drill Hall. Instead the MOD changed its mind and are not going to sell it to RDC for development. At the last meeting there was a suggestion regarding the refurbishment of the Insignia/Regimental Crest. There was a favourable response and BH will now look at how practical it would be to undertake and repaint using the original colours.

## 7. Committee Updates

iT/Web Site/Calendar – (AM) Rother Voluntary Action donated a printer for use at the Heritage Hub. A tablet has been purchased courtesy of RDC monies, to access the internet. It has enabled card payments to be taken for new membership sign ups. 1000 historic images of Bexhill are available to view at the Hub on the separate screen. Calendars (paper) of BH events are also available at the Hub (also as inserts in the BH membership forms). Extra events and link ups being added all the time, so worth checking the web site regularly.

Membership (JS) – The membership is looking healthy at present from a total of 285 in March 2019 to 372 in March 2020. Events have clearly helped, plus the Hub is proving popular. Many thanks to Alex, Clair and the

team of volunteers that helped to get it set up and opening to the public. BH is always looking to grow, and our numbers provide strength when dealing with other organizations.

**Co-oP Community Fund** (RK) – Anyone who shops at the Co-oP can register and nominate BH as their preferred charity. A percentage of the value of Co-oP own brand goods purchased is given to their nominated charity. To date over £400 has been raised through the scheme, which runs for a limited time only.

**Civic Pride Awards** (SJ) – It is hoped the Bexhill Observer will feature the award and be interested that Rother DC won the vote with the Shelter refurbishment. However, all the other category winners and runners up made a good representation for our first event. Kathryn Baker, manager at Wetherspoons was delighted with the award. She was very pleased at the recognition from BH for the reinstatement of the Picture Playhouse and interior décor reflecting that history.

**Shelter No.1 Bandstand** (SJ) – There was a meeting with RDC where BH was asked to put together a project to work with other groups to bring the bandstand back into use. This would probably mean contractors doing the work, with BH giving direction as to how it can be restored and brought back into general public use.

**Charity Status** (SJ) – At the AGM in May BH members will be asked to agree a new constitution and amendments, after which a formal application can be made for Charity Status. BH already meets most of the requirements and therefore any amendments should be minimal.

**Opportunities for members** (RK) – If members are looking to be more active in the group there are lots of volunteer roles available:

- i) East Parade Monitoring – any regular walkers or residents to report back to BH, RDC or Police on any damage, litter or anti-social behavior.
- ii) Events Team – to be ready for the spring and summer activities
- iii) Fundraising – volunteers and ideas required
- iv) Heritage Hub – more volunteers to do a few hours either regularly, weekly or ad hoc to enable it to open on more days.
- v) Planning – to review and monitor applications and projects
- vi) Projects – more ideas and projects are in the pipeline and will need both practical skills and admin to assist.
- vii) Publicity & marketing – BH stickers have now arrived
- viii) Refreshment team – help always required for members meetings
- ix) Research – Alex could always use assistance.
- x) Secretary to the Chair – admin assistance required

Refreshment Break

## **March Talk      Speaker– Ian Jarman**

Subject : Edith & Harold statue in West Marina Gardens, St Leonards

Ian presented a very interesting session covering the story behind Edith and Harold, which is based on old texts of real events. It relates how King Harold Godwinson was slain on the battle field and his wife, Edith Swanneck was taken to identify his body after the Battle of Hastings in 1066.

There are apparently contemporaneous scripts from the times explaining how Harold was killed and dismembered after the battle. Also there is a link to the church at Bosham (West Sussex) and shown on the Bayeaux Tapestry, which is interesting because bones from a left leg excavated there are believed to belong to Harold, plus other bones believed to be a daughter of King Cnut.

Ian gave a back ground to when and why the statue was commissioned by Thomas Brassey at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, who was at one time the mayor of Bexhill and MP for Hastings. He explained it was originally housed in the library/museum and later moved to its current location on the seafront. Due to the weather and the type of materials used, it is eroding the statue significantly.

Ian also provided an explanation of the history behind the statue, the sculptor and link to a poem in its creation.

Ian Jarman is a member of the Friends of Edith – an organization which is raising funds and awareness for the preservation and future protection of the statue.

### **Q & A session**

1. Would it be an idea that some collection boxes are deployed at the start line for the Hastings Half Marathon, which is near the Edith & Harold Statue?
2. What is stopping a roof being put over it? Hastings Borough Council own the land and there are some strong views in favour of allowing it to wear away.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.10 p.m.

### **DATE OF NEXT MEMBERS MEETING: AGM:**

Date and venue to be advised due to Corona Virus restrictions