

## **Bexhill Heritage Members Online Meeting Notes 17 September 2020 7 p.m.**

Committee Members attending : Raymond Konyon, Alex Markwick, Simon Allen, Steve Johnson, Jeanette Eason

RK opened Bexhill Heritage's first online members meeting and welcomed all attending.

There was a brief run through of the event:

- agenda
- online procedures
- introduction to our speaker for the evening – Simon Allen (Projects)
- need to mute personal microphones until the open Q & A sessions
- the 'chat' facility was explained for anyone wishing to ask questions during the meeting, which is visible on a side screen throughout if wished
- open forum at the end of the meeting

### **1. Simon Allen - Projects**

Simon provided a comprehensive over view of the East Parade Shelter No.3 project, with photo illustrations from the first inspections of the building and its state of repair.

Initial expectations of RDC was to "just rub down the woodwork and repaint". It could be seen from the photos and what was found on inspecting the roof space, debris from broken tiles, accumulation of sand blown in through gaps in the tiling over many decades, plus the discarded tins of paint etc., from contractors undertaking previous works.

SA explained that as a result of what was found BH had a meeting with RDC to advise of the many problems found and reason why a quick rub down and repaint would not be satisfactory.

SA took the meeting through the next stages of the work to completion, despite the best efforts of Covid and various members needing to isolate, and its effect of the working practices at the Shelter.

SA also explained how the idea and decision to include music in one cubicle of the shelter came about and how BH went about sourcing suitable equipment. The supplier was quite intrigued when contacted by BH because their equipment had not been used like that before. It was especially important that there were no outwardly visual signs of speakers due to the shelter being a Grade II listed building. Also that the music has been especially chosen from the 1920s/30s to reflect the age of the building.

SA finished his presentation by thanking the many and various volunteers who have worked on the shelter.

RK then went through the questions submitted prior to the meeting on a range of subjects including :

1. Shelters funding – *RDC have agreed to support. Should be starting soon if RDC agreeable.*
2. Music/ lights Shelter 3 – *Confirmation of the music, when changed and times of operation for both music and lights.*
3. Refurbishments of other shelters/bandstand – *projects in progress with RDC. There is a suggestion that BH lease the bandstand and control its use and the refurbishment.*
4. Public art projects in Bexhill – *Survey to BH Members of Graffiti Art and Bexhill Gets Creative seen in Bexhill recently. Currently being collated for publication to the members. Quite a nuanced response from members with a split of views both in favour and against. There was general concern amongst the members that they didn't know what was coming next, and that there was no input from residents. The initial findings have been shared with relevant councillors and organisers to persuade them that the residents will be more supportive if they are involved in decisions. The positive aspect is that the arts project is motivated to improving Bexhill.*
5. Potential closure of the Methodist Church – *Although it could be a potential community hub, the church would like to realise the value of the asset from the sale of the building. A recent meeting of interested community groups have indicated it could be very useful, but would have to find quite a lot of money. Plus as a Victorian building with no particular architectural merit, and porous fabric it would take substantial sums to maintain it long term.*
6. Dedication of public art to Key Workers during the pandemic – *a plaque was placed on Shelter 3 during the formal reopening by Cllr Lynn Langlands.*
7. No external plaque with the names of the Freemen of Bexhill – *there are currently only 15 people named for work for the town and community. It was suggested that a place be found where the public can view those nominated and recognised for their work.*
8. Has BH learnt any lessons from the Shelter No.3 refurbishment – *SA explained that starting Shelter 3 in September was not ideal and the weather up to Christmas and the new year was pretty awful, wet, windy and very cold causing serious problems. The bandstand with present similar challenges with the weather, and being a smaller building. Hopefully if the RDC erect scaffolding around the building as with the shelter, the fencing and polythene sheeting with provide some protection from the elements to those working on the project.*
9. Did BH have any involvement with Shelter No.2 – *No it was a commercial project by RDC. All they did was sand down the woodwork and repaint. It*

*would have been too costly for the contractors to have completed the work to the same standard as BH volunteers.*

10. Update on Charity Commission application – *The changes to the Constitution were agreed, but Covid has delayed their processing with the commission. BH is also needing to get their accounts audited and hoping RVA will be able to complete. Hoping to have all the paperwork for the submission copied and ready to post off by the end of October.*
11. Query about removal of the new parking meter placed too close to the refurbished Shelter No.3 and blocking of the view along the promenade – *It can be moved as it is not mains electricity operated. It is not even in the place indicated on the original plan.*
12. Any plans for BH to have any online talks or presentations for members re history of area or buildings, people – *SA and a couple of members indicated they would be happy to provide online talks.*
13. Will BH be interested in the celebrations of the Charter from King Offa – *SA understood that BH was already involved with the project via Dr Roger Elias. Covid has yet again interrupted. Perhaps those interested could arrange a get together to take plans forward.*
14. Query re compilation of the Local List – *It is an ambition of BH to create a Local List and it was started 2 years ago. Sadly, it faltered when a couple of the members working on the survey of properties against the guidelines, left. There is information available for self-training and a nearby parish has completed theirs to the satisfaction of RDC. It will need help to move the project forward. Suggest this item be placed back on to the Committee and Members Meeting Agendas to take forward. Conservation officers in RDC should be able to advise but it will need some members to volunteer. AM is also working on a project Mapping Bexhill. It includes panoramic views, for Bexhill's own use, not commercial. DB said that the project team will need to be able to evaluate buildings before submission to be included on the list. AM confirmed that some work and data had already been set up on the website. It will need help*
15. East Sussex CC Place Scrutiny Committee – *queried whether or not Bexhill Town Centre is a conservation area or not. DB explained that the document and its proposals got caught up earlier in the year due to Covid. It is known that Highways Managers are aware of respecting special areas of historical importance e.g Rye town centre and there is extra funding available for more sympathetic treatments street lighting, paving to ensure proper maintenance. BH has not yet been contacted by RDC Conservation Officers on the matter. Suggest this matter should be put on the next Committee Meeting agenda.*
16. If BH had to choose one aspect of the Shelter No.3 renovation, what would you be most proud of – *SA felt that he was most pleased with the sound system. SJ had the idea about some music in the shelter, but they had no idea as to how to achieve it. Tracking down and sourcing something so*

*effective and fitting was interesting and the supply company were intrigued at its use. To date BH have only been made aware of one negative comment, but many more positive ones. BH are considering trying to put different themed music into the various shelters.*

17. What community assets are now on the Asset Register e.g St Barnabas – *Not listed. The council officers are not accepting any further additions at present. Project is currently on the back burner.*

There followed a few minutes of more general questions from the online members.

RK provided an update and run through of the various project teams and areas requiring volunteers to assist.

RK thanked all of those attending the first online BH Members Meeting and wished everyone goodnight.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 8.40 p.m.