

Bexhill Heritage Trustees. Minutes for the meeting held on Monday 10th January 2022

In attendance: Raymond Konyn, Steve Johnson, Simon Allen Alexis Mark wick

1. Apologies and declarations of interest

No apologies received. RK declared that he is a trustee of the Bexhill Old Town Preservation Society.

2. Minutes for the October 2021 meeting.

These were approved.

3. Matters arising

Vulnerabilities and agreed actions (Item 3b)

AM agreed to send some membership tasks to CM so that she can work through them and report any difficulties.

AM reported that our website should be secure in his absence. RK has access to everything as Chair. Wordpress is well-supported and easy to navigate.

4. Organisational Plan Review

RK submitted an update for discussion. It was agreed that Covid could not be used as a reason for delayed projects. Delays were more to do with lack of available time or resources. Active members had prioritised the Bandstand restoration project. Other projects were pending. Some work had taken place to move them forward but much of this had been conducted 'behind the scenes'. It was agreed that RK would amend the document to ease timescales and remove projects as appropriate. Shelter 4 would be added to the chart. SJ would offer up the offer of sponsorship for an information board adjacent to the RNLI collection box. RK agreed to circulate the new document to trustees for further amendment / approval.

5. Evaluation

a. Membership including transfer of the Membership Secretary's responsibilities

Trustees noted that membership numbers were dipping. It was agreed that SJ would move forward on the transfer of responsibilities as this had stalled. (He would check the 'process documents' and liaise with John Seop as appropriate, especially over payments and IT which appeared to be possible sticking points.) It was also agreed that a donation / subscription point be established outside the bandstand while work was taking place. RK volunteered to do this.

b. Overall strategy

It was agreed to defer discussion to the April meeting when the situation with Covid was likely to be clearer.

c. Responsibilities

RK reported that the Minutes Secretary had overcome some recent challenges and was ready to produce minutes on time.

d. Finance

It was agreed that the charity was 'comfortable' financially and that funds were likely to be available for Bandstand-related expenses subject to grants and sponsorship being realised.

6. AOB

None

7. Date of next Trustee's meeting

Monday 11th April 2022

8. Resources

It was agreed that the charity had sufficient resources and equipment for current needs. It was further agreed that SA and SJ would identify surplus woodworking equipment for disposal.

AM agreed to produce more business cards personalised for trustees and GT.

AM further agreed to update our membership leaflet and SJ would arrange printing.

9. Accommodation

Nothing further had been heard about the possibility of sharing the West Station. SJ agreed to explore prospects at the De La Warr Mews Garage.

Our application had been submitted on 11th July, but the Charity Commission were now reporting a 5 month waiting time for applications that go beyond the provisions of the Charity Commission's own template as ours does. On that basis our application would be determined in November or December.

a. Vulnerabilities and agreed actions

Trustees discussed the points raised and progress on actions agreed at the April meeting

- Trustees and committee members do not always reply to messages in a timely fashion and are sometimes unavailable without reasonable notice. This places undue pressure on the Chair and hampers organisational efficiency.
- RK reported that this had improved. Trustees were letting RK know when they were unavailable.
- Actions agreed at meetings are sometimes not completed.
Circulating action points with minutes had helped to address this problem. RK was reminding the minutes secretary to circulate minutes within seven days.
- Data protection requires attention so that our members can be reassured that the charity is compliant with all relevant legislation.
A revised policy had been written and issued.
- There is an over-dependence on one person for the efficient use of IT in the support of the charity's work.

Ways of mitigating this risk had been agreed.

- We should try to achieve a more balanced group of trustees that reflects the gender composition of members.

Approaches had been made to female members but without success so far. Other names were mentioned. All committee members agreed to 'sound out' potential trustees to determine whether they might be interested if approached formally.

- More effective email and communication protocols should be introduced that allow colleagues reasonable time to respond, especially in relation to important decisions. (Such decisions should, in any case, be discussed in committee or by trustees rather than decided by email.) There was also concern about the risk of officers becoming overwhelmed by emails.

Trustees agreed that the situation had improved and that the new email protocols were being followed. Committee members and trustees were being encouraged to upload documents to the shared drive if something needs to be shared. A document folder had been created for website items and another would be created for agenda items. A higher proportion of emails were being targeted rather than being copied to everyone.

5. Matters arising

July Meeting

Trustees discussed actions arising from the extraordinary meeting in July that had been called to resolve issues connected with workload and morale.

Actions agreed in July were noted and it was felt that significant progress had been made.

Four further points were agreed to operationalise those actions:

- There would be a 'holiday' for officers from 20th December to 3rd January (inclusive). Out of office messages would be posted on the website and members notified. The agreed Christmas pop-ups would still go ahead as would any agreed project work.
- Members' meetings would be 'triggered' by the Vice Chair two weeks before the meeting date. Members would receive minutes, an agenda and details of venue and time and/or a Zoom link. AM would send this out and follow this up with a reminder three days before the meeting date.
- We would continue to encourage officers to send 'papers' out with agendas to enable meetings to be more informed and more focused.
- Agendas would prioritise the most urgent or important items and be shorter.

6. Nominating additional trustees

See item 3 above.

7. A base for the charity

It was agreed that the search for a base had been frustrating. None of the 'solutions' had proved ideal for one reason or another.

It was agreed that the West Station had the potential to provide space for a store, workshop, meetings and administration. We would investigate with a site visit in November. At the same time 'Bow Ties' could offer a good venue for our information point if we moved to Mondays. RK agreed to investigate further. Combined with Bandstand pop-ups, we would be in a much better position than currently.

8. Review of Project Development Plan

Trustees focused on the Royal Sovereign Light Lantern Tower. Concern had been expressed over Bexhill Heritage becoming legal owners of the tower. After careful consideration and

debate, trustees agreed unanimously that Bexhill Heritage should not become legal owners of the tower but that other potential owners be approached. Owners would have responsibility for siting the tower as well as for maintenance and insurance. Trustees also agreed that the idea of establishing a linked trust for the stewardship of the light tower be considered in the future should that be appropriate. It was noted that the Lantern Tower Working Group would continue to meet.

9. Any other business

It was agreed that the East Parade Interpretation Board be opened on Saturday 18th December. SJ would check this date with the sponsor and RDC representatives.

10. Date of next meeting

The provisional date for the next meeting is Monday 10th January.