

# Hove Civic Society

## Oct 2021 Newsletter



# ANNUAL REPORT

## Dear Members,

Dear Members, The last year has seemed incredibly busy. Not least because we have sought to explore where the Society should go after having become a CIO. We were looking at how we might focus our activities to assist the city-wide objectives of carbon neutrality and how we could use our energies most effectively. Following our review, which resulted in our new strap line Space for People we identified a number of actions that would make for real change. The outcomes are challenging for the Society and will need great powers of persuasion to succeed. More of this below.

We have also sought to work more closely with other, like minded, organisations to create a stronger impetus for improving our city to make it more sustainable and attractive.

We have had extensive discussions on many matters with politicians of all colours in the city during the year and if there is one thing I would hope for is that the positive vibes we receive from discussing matters with them could also be reflected in the decisions by the administration.

After one live session at our AGM all our lectures during the year were on-line as were our committee meetings. We learnt a lot from this way of communication which of course could not beat the garden party we had in July for the committee.

## Space for People

This strap line illustrates what we are seeking to achieve with our work. Helping to improve the public realm in Hove, creating space for pedestrians and cyclists and supporting a transformation towards a 20 min city. This in turn will make the city more sustainable and help achieve carbon neutrality objectives. We have picked three actions which we would like to pursue. Firstly, a firm commitment by the city council to plant one street tree for each new dwelling built in the city. Secondly, to achieve a shift of highway resources of the City Council towards pedestrian and cycling infrastructure to reflect the fact the 40% of households in the City do not run a car. Thirdly to create Hove Boulevard (Church Road), which will demonstrate how a major thoroughfare can be adapted for a climate neutral city. We are very grateful for the amount of support we are getting for these suggestions.

## Partnerships

During the year we have joined Brighton Active Travel, West Hove Forum and the West Hove Seafront Action Group and continued our work with CPRE Sussex and the Plant Your Postcode project. We have also refreshed our MoU with the new Royal Pavilion and Museums Trust and look forward to opportunities for working together. We



sought to frame our annual Forum in a way that reflects our vision of partnership working. The Forum focussed on the many physical improvements that are being proposed and implemented by the Society and our many colleagues across Hove. We believe working together in this way will generate a powerful voice to help improve the public realm in Hove and the wider city.

## Development Proposals

The work of the Forum with Regency Society has continued, online. Again, we have made a range of representations including support and objections to new developments. Some of the most significant ones during the year included the Hippodrome restoration (support), Palmer and Harvey House along Davigdor Road (objection) and the Bus Garage proposals in Conway Street (comments). All the minutes of the Forum are posted on our website.

## City Planning

Our objections to the city plan have not encouraged the planning department to consider modifications and we will therefore set out our concerns at the public hearing later on in the autumn. The Hove Station Neighbourhood Plan has moved through its council led final consultation stage and an independent assessor will consider the representations made together with the plan, probably early next year.

## Restoring our Victorian Street Tree Heritage

I am afraid our scheme has come to a screeching halt. In what I consider a completely unjustifiable increase in costs for street tree planting (not least because of new and higher planting standards, with much larger pits) the authority is seeking to increase costs for street trees to up to £5000 per tree. In times of austerity and with strongly declared ambitions to become a carbon neutral city this is an unbelievably regrettable approach by the City Council. We will spend a considerable time in the coming year demonstrating how damaging the proposals are and how much they undermine the council's own ambitions to become a carbon neutral city.

## Hove Plinth and Second Sculpture

During the year we have given the green light to create silicon moulds for the sculptured figures of Flight of the Langoustine. They are now ready for the bronze casting stage. We have been in discussion with MODA, the developer of Sackville Road Trading Estate who expressed an interest in

## Annual Report - cont'd

funding this stage and we are currently seeking a way where the developer's interest is acceptable to the local authority. Once this funding is in place, we will need to raise additional funds for the holding structure, maintenance, artists fees etc, but we are quietly confident that this will follow quite easily. Our next challenge will be to find a place for the next sculpture and we will be discussing options during the autumn.

### **Improving neglected parts of Hove**

We have finally received service information and estimates for repaving the north-eastern corner St Aubyns / Kingsway. We have also received information about the final placement of recycling etc bins on the site. This has allowed us to explore a more permanent and less maintenance intensive design for the site, which will be completed this autumn. Many thanks to LCE architects for their continued support.

Many thanks also to Stickland and Wright for helping us illustrate our ideas for Church Road – our own Hove Boulevard. We will put our suggestions in the public realm and encourage Hove Councillors to lobby with us for our ideas to be implemented. We firmly believe it is time for Hove to get some of the City's public realm improvement resources.

### **Lecture Programme and Forum**

After the AGM all lectures were held on Zoom. This was a very interesting shift with the added bonus that lectures were recorded and could be called up for up to 30 days after the event. We had good attendance and a very high quality of delivery and images. We are considering how

to take advantage of such benefits in future years. The Forum contained a number of presentations also by other organisations including Friends of Hove Lagoon, George Street and West Hove Junior and we were delighted by the large attendance and interesting engagement by participants. This has given us a blueprint for future Fora.

### **Media**

The year has seen revisions to our website and continued postings on social media. We have noticed a large number of images of the Constellation on Instagram, some of which we have reproduced on our front cover. To attract new members we have produced a new flyer for the Society, which succinctly summarises our ambitions for Hove.

### **Governance and Finance**

We are now operating under the CIO rules, which among other things affects duration of office (3 years) and rotation of committee members (1/3 each year to be re-elected). The year has seen all committee meetings on-line, which has proven to be very effective and something we might wish to retain for some meetings in future.

Our fund raising has been largely dormant during the pandemic. It is hoped that we can start bidding for funds and raise additional funds during the coming year.

Many thanks to all committee members for the large amount of work they have carried out during the year and thanks to all members for their continued support.

*With best wishes, Helmut Lusser*



## Church Road - Our Own Hove Boulevard

We have tried for many years now to get the City Council to revamp Church Road, which was almost done several years ago, but money ran out at the end of Western Road. We believe Church Road presents major opportunities to demonstrate how a major thoroughfare can be adapted to the vision of a sustainable and people focussed urban area that responds to the climate change challenge. There is a real opportunity here to create a new sense of place by integrating pavement, loading and parking spaces into high quality usable spaces encompassing new street furniture, planting and outdoor seating for the many restaurants, bars and coffee houses. Our proposals would make our town centre much more live-able.



The Society is very grateful to Stickland Wright for their pro bono work and their sketches which highlight some of the opportunities along the Road, making much better use of many small areas of land, including the northern side of the Road, the entrances to the Avenues and of course that major opportunity crying out to be done up – the acreage outside Hove Town Hall. All to be encased in intensive tree planting.

The Society is now launching a campaign to urge the City Council to upgrade the environment along Church Road – it is time that major improvement resources flow to Hove. Let us count on your support!

## One new Street Tree for each new dwelling in the City.

In our last issue we announced our campaign for one new street tree for each new dwelling built in the city. The campaign arises from our objection to City Plan Part 2, where, in the interest of progressing climate change and carbon neutral objectives we highlight the need to create a firm linkage between new development and long-term climate mitigating measures.

We maintain that so far we have not seen any zero carbon developments and they are unlikely to come soon. Even the smallest development will generate traffic, add heating requirements etc and to absorb that CO2 generated in addition to that of the embedded CO2 of the new buildings is a big task indeed.

Our suggestion is to let nature work with us and create a firm link between new development and a long-term CO2 mitigating measure: Trees. We deliberately propose street trees because these have a number of additional, climate related benefits, such as providing shading, cooling and in addition add tremendously to our townscape.

In addition such a measure will help to reforest our city, which has lost trees badly over the last few years.

We have so far received support for this policy from Regency Society, West Hove Forum, CPRE Sussex, Hove Station Neighbourhood Forum and Brighton Active Travel. In addition our approach is supported by our MP and a number of City Councillors.

Alas our suggestions are met with the usual array of reasons why this can't be done, which we are trying to knock down one by one. We are representing the case for the proposed policy at the public hearing into the city plan part 2 and urge the City Council to adopt our suggestion. This is a truly green policy which will do all of us and our local environment no end of good!

*Helmut Lusser*



*A vision of the future of Hove's tree lined streets?*

## Poets Corner & The Great War

*Listen to the wraiths of morning in Flanders fields of grey,  
Can you hear The Royal Sussex who came and went away?  
And linger still in graves unknown amidst the furrow and the thorn.  
But never flinched, duty done, these sons of Sussex bred and born (Anon).*



Barely a family or community across Great Britain escaped the First World War untouched by terrible loss. The Hove Roll of Honour lists 631 names; many hailing from a tiny working-class community in Hove these days popularly dubbed 'Poets' Corner'.

Poets' Corner was unique in some ways: bordered by three hospitals for injured soldiers, locals were confronted with the horrific personal consequences of war on a daily basis; it was home to Brighton & Hove Albion footballers who joined the Footballers' Battalions; what the poet W. H. Auden called 'The greatest book about the first world war' was written less than a mile away by David Jones (who is remembered along with 15 other Great War poets at Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey); and, with a prisoner of war camp just around the corner, German soldiers marching along to work on the local farms and at the gas works would have been a familiar sight. But, in other ways, it provided a microcosm of the tragedy that was happening all over Sussex and the rest of the country. Its soldiers fought in all the branches of the armed forces and are buried in Flanders Fields and as far away as Macedonia, Palestine, Mesopotamia, Egypt and the North Atlantic. In Sussex, many men joined the Southdowns Battalions of the Royal Sussex - the Pals battalions in which friends, brothers, teammates and colleagues all joined up together. Within a few short hours of going over the top at the Battle of Boars' Head on 30th June 1916, the casualties were so severe that it came to be known as 'The Day that Sussex Died'.

Reading the words of a veteran, "When we are gone, no-one will remember us or what we did", moved me to write a historical guided walking tour to honour these men and the community they left behind. The tour conveys the pride, bravery and enthusiasm as well as the horror and sadness. It tells the story of these men and their community in Hove during the years 1914-18, includes poetry and art, as well as lighter aspects such as Jelly Babies! To join the mailing list, email [hoveactuallywalks@gmail.com](mailto:hoveactuallywalks@gmail.com)

*By Rachel Bridgeman (tour guide & local historian)*  [Hove Actually Walking Tours](https://www.facebook.com/HoveActuallyWalkingTours)

## A year in the life of Brighton & Hove Seafront Team

As we settle into Autumn, Brighton & Hove City Council's Seafront team have said goodbye to the summer season lifeguards who worked alongside them all summer to keep the city beaches safe.

As the distinctive yellow and red lifeguard stations are packed away and the bathing buoys removed, it would be easy to assume that a quiet few months lie ahead – but winter brings a whole new workload for the city's seafront officers. Autumn is maintenance season when shingle is replenished, and tonnes of pebbles are re-located from Black Rock to Shoreham Port. Seafront buildings, structures and assets are inspected, ready to submit a bid for funds and paddling pools and water-features are drained before being closed for the winter. Winter sees tenders submitted for maintenance works to start in the Spring, while scheduled work on public toilet facilities, project development and major building work begins. Spring usually brings calmer weather to the city and a chance to clear shingle from the promenade following the winter storms. It's also the time of year when re-painting of the seafront railings and shelters can begin, and other maintenance work is undertaken.

As the Seafront Office gears up for the summer season and more people begin to gather on the beaches, lifeguard recruitment gets underway. Paddling pools, water features and play equipment is checked over and any maintenance carried out. Toilet opening hours are extended and staff are recruited to support Cityclean's beach cleaning team. Outdoor events increase and the lawns and bowling greens are made ready for use. By Summer, the team is ready to welcome the thousands of visitors who flock to the beach each year. A team of lifeguards have all been trained and begin patrolling the beaches, and bathing buoys are put out to keep swimmers safe. Signs are installed to remind visitors of summer byelaws, covering cycling, dog friendly beaches and barbecues, and extra bins are installed to cope with the huge amounts of litter left behind.

The Seafront Officers are on patrol from 6am – 7pm, engaging with the public and supporting the lifeguards with emergency response, while the beach cleaners begin their shifts from 5am, to prepare for the day ahead. Of course, many tasks are carried out all year round, including daily monitoring to ensure the seafront and beaches are safe, identify hazards and carry out urgent reactive repairs. Enforcement of the byelaws by Seafront Officers, Field Officers and Environmental Enforcement Officers is also continuous, along with clearing rubbish, emptying bins and cleaning graffiti from council land and property. And add to that lost children, emergency first aid, Christmas swimmers and the constant monitoring as sea conditions change, the team are primed and ready for anything – 365 days a year.

*Toni Manuel, Seafront Development Manager*



## Hove Lagoon, Planting



A riot of colour – the result of many hours of voluntary work, planting, watering, weeding.

*Thanks Friends of Hove Lagoon for helping improve our environment!*



## BIG ART is back - but what about Brighton & Hove

Big Public Art is alive and kicking. It is popping up in lots of places, often with the expressed intention of revitalising public space, attract and engage residents and visitors and give local economies a boost. And what could be more welcome after all the hankering down at home during Covid.

Take the most recent addition, Kingston-upon-Thames Sculpture Trail, a collaboration between Kingston's Business Improvement District, Borough Council and University featuring seven new artworks to enhance the town centre and the Thames riverside. Says one of the partners: " ..the sculptures will engage visitors through storytelling, creativity and playfulness to encourage participation in their environment and offer a moment of reflection." The trail was launch in August and art works will stay for three months. A public vote will select one of the works to become a permanent feature.

In another 2021 initiative seven towns on the south coast, Southend-on-Sea, Gravesend, Margate, Folkestone, Hastings, Bexhill and Eastbourne, have come together to form England's Creative Coast in a project called Waterfronts. The collaboration, led by Turner Contemporary and Visit Kent, involves seven museums and art organisations across Kent, Essex and East Sussex, along with local councils and the South East Local Enterprise Partnership and principal funding from Arts Council England and Visit England. The seven works commissioned span a wide range of materials and approaches but are all designed to bring a spark to the locations. The artworks take the border between land and water as their inspiration with artists focusing on issues, stories and questions – social, natural, geological, political - to offer fresh perspectives on each place. The promotion is packaged up as itineraries offering cultural activities and adventures and signposts to accommodation and food and drink. The artworks are on display until mid November.

Folkestone of course already has a fantastic track record of public art displays from its Triennials which started in 2008. The Triennial is the UK's largest exhibition of newly commissioned work, the majority of which are placed outside within the setting of the town and its seafront. The fifth edition of Creative Folkestone Triennial which runs until 2 November 2021, presents around 27 newly commissioned site-specific artworks by internationally acclaimed artists, and invites you to explore the town and its urban tales. Some works from every Triennial are kept permanently and by now Folkestone has built an impressive year-round display of artworks around the town.

And that is just nearby. Across UK there have been monumental installations by famous artists that have caught people's imagination and, it has to be said, in some cases ruffled feathers. The Fourth Plinth in London brought contemporary sculpture to the public's attention with its hugely varied displays. Among permanent installations Anthony Gormley's Angel of the North is arguably the most well known and recognisable landmark. This homage to the industrial north towers over the landscape and can be seen from a long way off. And so can the amazing Kelpies on the Forth and Clyde canal in Falkirk. These thirty meter high metal horse heads are apparently the world's biggest equine sculpture. But not all out of scale artworks are universally loved. Anish Kapoor's Orbit, the red "lolloping colossus" he created for 2012 London Olympics raised many eyebrows and Damien Hirst's statue Verity in Ilfracombe, depicting a pregnant woman, provoked extreme reactions by locals and was panned by the art world for bringing public art to a new low. All the same, it appears to have had considerable local impact on tourism and economic investment.



Pilar Quinteros, Janus Fortress, Folkestone.

*Photo credit Thierry Bal*



Jasleen Kaur, The first thing I did was kiss the ground, Gravesend



Andy Scott, The Kelpies, Falkirk



## BIG ART is back - cont'd

Examples of inspiring sculpture trails overseas are far too many to mention here, though it is worth singling out our namesake, Brighton Beach in Adelaide, Australia, for showing a riot of eye-popping sculptures along its beach every year. Maybe we could link up with them.

Even if it is the case that public art may range from the sublime to the ridiculous, there is no doubt that it has the capacity to redefine and revitalise a place. And size does seem to matter - we want to step out of ordinary, be overwhelmed and have that WOW experience.

So where is Brighton & Hove in this? Why are we not part of initiatives like the Creative Coast? Sad to say, but the city council has not shown any appetite for promoting major public art works since the 1990's. We at Hove Civic Society are proud to have created Hove Plinth as a new focal point for contemporary sculpture and delighted at the great public response. We are keen to work in partnership with the council but are frustrated by a lack lustre response and an overriding focus on process rather than tangible results. Come on Brighton & Hove, don't procrastinate, you can do better! Be positive, be brave, work creatively with us to achieve great things for the city.

*Karin Janzon*



Brighton Jetty sculptures 2021,  
Adelaide

## West Hove Seafront coming in from the cold?



For many years West Hove residents have been all too aware of the gradual and not very graceful decline of the Western Lawns and the Esplanade. The Council's apparent policy of benign neglect has stood in sharp contrast to the imagination, initiative and energy which has delivered the community-led major improvement of the Hove Lagoon area. However, events over the summer offer the prospect of a community inspired regeneration of the West Hove Seafront, initiated by the West Hove Seafront Action Group (WHSAG).

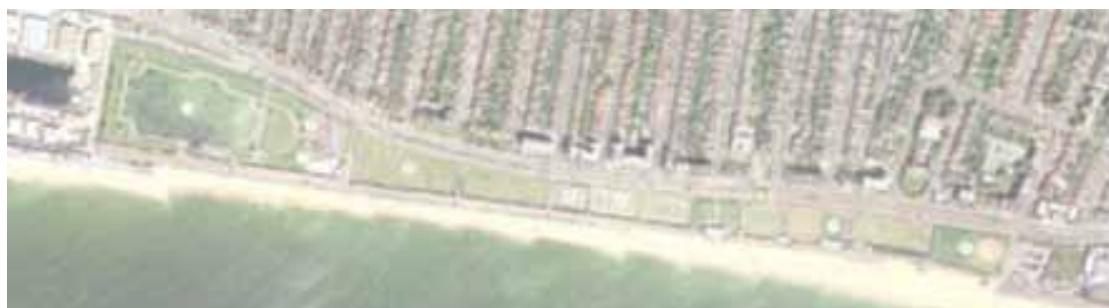
At the July meeting of the West Hove Forum, Donna Chisholm, Assistant Director Culture, Tourism and Sport, revealed that the Council had submitted a bid for £10.8m to the government's Levelling Up Fund to deliver what it has called the Kingsway to the Sea Project - but gave no details. However, whilst she was not optimistic about the result of the bid (which will be known in October) she said that if unsuccessful they would bid again in the future - not least because major council resources had been committed to prepare the bid. This is a step change in the Council's approach to the West Hove Seafront. Also at the meeting consultants already working on a Council-funded landscape design project for the Lawns shared some of their initial ideas for a phased programme of landscape improvements. At the beginning of September the Council launched an online questionnaire 'Kingsway to the Sea; Landscape and public realm improvement - West Hove Seafront' which is designed to find

out how the seafront is currently used and what improvements the community would like to see in the next few years.

The backstory to this turn of events is very important. It is the outcome of three years of local community action. In 2018 the West Hove Forum produced a report highlighting the urgent need to improve the local seafront. This was the basis for the formation of WHSAG in 2019- comprising seafront businesses, residents' associations and ward councillors - to promote the development of a West Hove Seafront Improvement Plan. Partnership working with council officers in 2019 brought about agreement that a landscape design scheme for the Lawns would be the first stage in the collaborative development of the Improvement Plan. But COVID delayed the commissioning of the necessary landscape consultancy work until early this year.

In addition to maximising community influence on the emerging landscape design proposals, WHSAG will engage more widely with the Council on the Kingsway to the Sea Project, which we see as the basis of an emerging West Hove Seafront Improvement Plan. Our committee includes a representative of Hove Civic and we welcome the prospect of working together to ensure that the West Hove Seafront does not slip back down the Council's list of priorities.

*Mike Gibson, Community Planning Advisor, WHSAG.*



An earlier proposal  
for the West Hove  
seafront from 2017 by  
Nick Dexter

## Winter Lecture Programme 2021 / 22

### AGM 27th October 2021, 7pm, Ralli Hall

After the AGM, Councillor Hannah Clare, deputy leader of Brighton and Hove City Council will be giving a presentation on the City Council's green agenda

### Our First Lecture 24th November 2021, 7pm, Ralli Hall

#### *"Brighton and Hove Heritage Assets in the Public Domain"*

Roger Amerena, founder of Brighton and Hove Heritage Commission and Heritage Commissioner will talk about the city's heritage assets.

### Our Second Lecture 26th January 2022, 7pm, Ralli Hall

#### *"Portslade Old Village- Lost Jewel in the Crown"*

Trevor Povey will piece together the events that shaped one of our more important villages. Little appreciated, almost invisible, and next to one of our earliest super highways.

### Our Third Lecture 23rd February 2022, 7pm, Ralli Hall

#### *"Close up on Film: Behind the scenes at Hove Museum"*

Alexia Lazou from the Hove Museum will be going into some depth about film making with their RPMT Collection. A large part stems from the Barnes Brothers, twin film historians, a cine camera owned by Hove resident Ernest Wimble pioneer of the Workers' Travel Association and other delights of film making.

### Our Final Lecture 23rd March 2022, 7pm, Ralli Hall

#### *"An Artists perspective on rewilding at Knepp Wildland"*

Hazel Reeves, Hove Plinth's sculpture adviser, is artist-in-residence at Knepp Wildland and has been documenting the ecological value and sculptural beauty of the Knepp scrubland.

Hazel will talk about her time at Knepp.

### Our Annual Forum 27th April 2022, 7pm, Ralli Hall

Taking our cue from the success of the 2021 Forum, we will again focus on how local communities in Hove are improving our public realm and what more we can do.



### Keep in touch...

Join our mailing list: [info@hovecivicsociety.org](mailto:info@hovecivicsociety.org)  
Visit our website: [www.hovecivicsociety.org](http://www.hovecivicsociety.org)  
Like us on Facebook: [facebook.com/HovePlinth](https://facebook.com/HovePlinth)  
Follow us on Twitter: [twitter.com/hoveplinth](https://twitter.com/hoveplinth)  
Follow us on Instagram: [instagram.com/hoveplinth/](https://instagram.com/hoveplinth/)

### Printed by:

The Printhouse,  
26-28 St John's Road  
Hove, East Sussex  
BN3 2FB

Tel: 01273 325667