

RINGSTEAD PROTECTION SOCIETY (RPS)
www.ringsteadprotectionsociety.org.uk

**Minutes of the 2022 Annual General Meeting held at Shambles
Ringstead Bay on Sunday 28 August 2022 at 10.30am**

The Chairman, Nigel Williams (NW), welcomed members to the meeting – our sixth as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). He reminded members of the RPS objectives.

The Treasurer's Report and an attendance register were circulated.

NW recorded with sadness the loss of two long-standing members, Sue Burden and Paul Cuss. Sue, with her husband David, lived at Ringstead for 20 years in Glebe Cottage which his parents had owned since before the last war. Paul and his wife Frances had been coming to the Bay since the early 1970s, first renting several houses for holidays and then buying Ringstave. Our condolences go to their families – they will be sadly missed.

Apologies: Julian Arkell, Terry & Jo Alldridge, Tess Banham, Mitch Charles, Julie and Johnny Gibbs, Neville and Jane Grant, Sally and Mike Howard-Tripp, Jenny and Eric Serjeant, Ann Thomas and Tim & Jane Williams.

Minutes of the 2021 AGM

The minutes are on the website and NW asked if they could be signed as a true record of what took place. David Young proposed and Sue Kirkpatrick seconded a motion to do so and this was carried.

Matters Arising

These would be dealt with in the Chairman's Report.

Chairman's Report

NM said that certain planning matters, which would be covered later, had taken an inordinate amount of time since the last AGM.

1. Portland Waste Incinerator

Vicky Banham (VB) said the scheme, details of which are on the planning pages of the Dorset Council website, is supported by the Council. It had been met with opposition locally; the latest comment being in relation to fire safety and posted on July 25. The date for a determination is September 23.

2. Meeting with Ringstead landowner Johnnie Russell (JR) on August 9

NW and John Young (JY) had met JR to discuss various matters. These included the proposal for a sign near the top of the slipway saying 'To the Beach' to encourage its use and save some of the damaging foot traffic up and down in front of Over the Hills (OTH). JR said that he has made a sign which will go up this winter.

Last year JR had suggested he would fence off the grass area in front of OTH to encourage natural growth and save the cliff from further damage but he now feels it provides a welcome place for the elderly to sit and enjoy the views. It will not be fenced and he will let nature take its course.

The RPS has proposed a Land Drainpipe be placed out of sight beyond footbridge by The White House. It would lead to the beach and stop water leaching into the lateral crevices which can cause cliff slip to the east. JR did not oppose this in principle, so NW agreed to check with Dorset Council if it was permitted.

Last year JR said that the roadside fences on the Ringstead access road would be replaced with single strand electric fencing so the road would be wider. This has been done and the surface re-tarmaced. It is a marked improvement. RPS mentioned the pot-holes that still needed attention and JR said they would be part of a winter work programme with the exception of those on the track running east which he has no plans to fix or tarmac. Verge cutting by one metre along the front of the houses to the west was discussed. JR said this would continue to be done at the appropriate time.

On the subject of car parking, it was felt that Mitch and his team were doing well and that the new card reader had speeded things up. Bottle necks remain an issue at Upton. JR asked home-owners to close the new wooden gate by the shop as a means of traffic control since the shop attendants were often too busy.

A sign had been proposed near the gate by an RPS member to discourage digging fossils from the cliff as it is illegal but JR felt it might have the opposite effect and he is against a plethora of signs.

The provision of dog poo bins was discussed as a member had reported an increase of poo bags left lying around. JR said he would not provide a specific bin as the commercial waste bin by the shop could be used. He did not want a sign and does not pay for the commercial collection during winter months.

3. The Osmington Mills Protection Group

The Group did not meet last year due to Covid but their Secretary, Jill Dunning (JD), kept in touch with members via email and has been keeping an eye on local issues (such as Eweleaze). There will be a meeting on September 19. Lucy Kirkpatrick (LK) read a note from JD. It reported that Osmington Holiday Park run by Waterside Holiday Group had permission to reduce the height of some trees and had been asked to wait until after the nesting season. The Park had sought planning for all year use and been refused but this decision had been overturned on appeal by the planning inspector. Eweleaze campsite had applied for an extension to its season to 42 weeks which Dorset Council was considering provided certain conditions are met. A decision on this is awaited.

4. Beach Erosion

JY said that new data suggested sea levels would rise by about 35cm within the next 30 years which could put some 200,000 coastal properties in England at risk. In light of this, it was felt the RPS should re-engage with Dorset Council about its beach management plan and find out what it intended to do in response to the latest predictions.

5. Access

New tarmac has been laid as mentioned earlier and the new gate is in use with members asked to help by closing it.

Report of Society's Trustees.

The report was posted on the RPS website earlier in the month. The address is www.ringsteadprotectionsociety.org.uk where members can also find this year's Accounts and Treasurer's Report. The Minutes of this AGM will be posted there no later than September 30. NW invited members to get in touch if they wished to propose new features or take on the management of the website.

Treasurer's Report

The RPS is in a sound financial position and NW expressed thanks to Rupert Edwards for auditing the accounts and to Alastair Fisher (AF), our treasurer until his recent resignation. The General Committee completely understood the reasons for AF's decision and wished to record a huge debt of gratitude to him for all he had done particularly his role in converting the Society to a CIO which leaves the Trustees in a much safer position. He was working with Ian Scott (IS) and Lawyers Reid Smith (thanks to Michael Young for his involvement). As acting treasurer, NW invited questions on the accounts. Sue Kirkpatrick asked whether the RPS might consider raising its annual subscription, perhaps doubling it from £5 to £10. VB said that the Society had relatively few outgoings at present and a healthy bank balance but if this changed and there were suddenly a need for more funds, members could be asked to make a bigger contribution.

Election of Trustees and Officers

The Trustees are VB, LK, IS, JY and NW. In accordance with the Society's Constitution, IS and JY retire from office by rotation but, being eligible, offer themselves for re-election. NW asked if members were content to re-elect all the Trustees en-bloc. Simon Walker proposed this and Lydia Lebus seconded. The members voted in favour with none against. David Burden proposed the Trustees be re-elected and Louise Young seconded. The vote was carried.

The current officers are NW (chairman) and VB (secretary). In accordance with the Constitution, they retire from office but being eligible have agreed to offer themselves for re-election. NW asked the meeting if the officers could be elected en-bloc. David Young proposed this and Alfie Kirkpatrick seconded. The meeting voted in favour with a show of hands. David Young proposed the two officers' re-election and Clare Young seconded. The meeting voted in favour.

NW reported that General Committee member Tim Pratelli had agreed to take on the role of treasurer and become a Trustee. NW said TP was local and aware of the issues exercising the RPS. He was delighted TP was prepared to stand. Will Edwards proposed his election and Liz Carter seconded. He was elected.

NW reminded the meeting that the General Committee comprised Liz Carter, Mitch Charles, Will Edwards, Louise Scott, Paul Thomas, Simon Walker and the six Trustees and said he believed it gave a broad representation and a wide base for discussion. In addition, Ginny Rolls had agreed to act as a watchdog to keep the RPS informed of local issues.

Planning Matters

Planning matters had taken a great deal of the Trustees' time. IS, who had been instrumental in devising a policy for dealing with them, including a General Committee (GC) to assist with deliberations, said he thought the GC input had been very useful. The Trustees had found it particularly valuable in the last year to have another set of views after they had looked at the issues raised. He added that as those involved gained more experience, it might be necessary to tweak the policy so it better addressed future demands.

1. Orchard

This is a S192 Application made by JR to regularise the use for storage by precedent of the land he purchased from Sue Charles. It is on the eastern side of the car park facing the Fisher's Place track. As this is a S192 application decided on evidence of past use, members of the public are not able to object or approve, merely provide evidence if they have any. It is with DC for a decision.

2. WWII Bunkers.

JR has permission to convert the one up by Pitt Cottage into a holiday let. JY and NW have visited and were impressed by how sympathetically he is doing this. He has another application with DC to do the same to the bunker near Spinney Brook and is awaiting a decision.

3. Ringstead Caravan Company

This one is complicated. The RCC has decided to improve the infrastructure and Health & Safety position of the site. This coincided with the ending of the leases of the 30 caravans on the site. *A Planning Application was made in 2020 for a change to the conditions under which permission had been granted to the site in 1962. The proposal was: Station 40 caravans - Variation of conditions 1 and 2 and removal of conditions 3 and 4 of planning permission 207358 (extending the season). RCC wished to change this to: Not more than 30 caravans shall be stationed on the site at any one time and the caravans on the site shall be occupied during the period 1st March in any year to 31st January in the following year only. DC granted permission for ten months occupancy and agreed to alter the title from 40 to 30. The RCC was content with this and so was the RPS GC as it represented a viable financial base for the RCC to modernise and remain as a family run concern. However, the decision was Judicially Reviewed by a neighbour on the basis that DC did not have the legal power to change the title. This action succeeded so the use of the site reverted to the original consent.* The RCC's subsequent legal advice was to make an S192 application for a longer period of use. A consequence of removing planning conditions via an S192 Application is that it could have year-round holiday and residential use. An S192 Lawful Use Application differs from a standard Planning Application in that members of the public cannot write to DC in order to support or oppose on the usual planning criteria; they can only submit legal argument and evidence to support or disprove the statements and evidence submitted. The GC's position is that it supports a thriving caravan site for holiday use as it has been here for several generations run by the Fisher family but we could not let pass the spectre of year-round residential use if, for example, the site were ever sold. The RCC has maintained it does not intend to run a residential site and the leases being issued for the next 15 years are for a holiday site. The Trustees took legal advice, which we shared with the RCC. It was that their S192 application would not succeed. We submitted that advice to DC at the end of July. Sadly, but understandably, our Treasurer, Alastair Fisher, then resigned on a point of principle. We should have a determination from DC in 3-6 weeks.

NW asked for any questions.

Tim Wallis (TW) asked whether a S192 was the only option available to the RCC and why it did not seek a new planning permission instead. NW said he thought the RCC feared another Judicial Review. TW asked why the GC was concerned about the viable financial base of the caravan site. VB said she had looked into holiday occupancy of caravan sites across the country and most were allowed ten months or more. We had just heard that Osmington Holiday Park had been granted year-round use, she said. This is no doubt because of the economic benefit such parks bring to local communities. Sue Kirkpatrick said the RPS had not objected to ten months holiday occupancy but was concerned about residential use. NW said the RPS was trying to do its best to support the enjoyment of Ringstead by residents and the general public and a thriving caravan site was in line with that aim. Hilary Fisher (HF) said many wider family members and friends of the caravan owners had stayed there since the 30s and 40s - people who came because they really loved Ringstead. HF made it clear there were strict rules preventing holiday sites being used as residential without the necessary permission. NW drew discussions to a close by saying we would see whether the S192 succeeded or failed in a few weeks' time. Clare Young thanked the Trustees and GC for all the work they had done on the application.

Upton update

Col Derek Thomas (DT) reported that West Down Views, a small campsite for tents, was proving popular and had 28 days use permitted. Lodges had arrived to replace the old caravans on the late Miss Diment's land and were all legal. At Middle Acre Eastlakes there are several shepherd's huts on agricultural land said to be used for courses but DT has seen no evidence of such use. He said most vehicles using Upton were law abiding but a small proportion approached too quickly and aggressively. Gill Walker asked if speed bumps had been considered and was told the Highways Authority had veto'd them. David Burden asked if a speed limit of 20 mph could be applied and DT said this was also turned down. There were chalets at Springbottom Hill that had been there since before the war and had recently been cleared so DT was keeping an eye on the situation.

Any Other Business

No AOB items had been raised with VB before the meeting. Sue Kirkpatrick said the names of the Trustees were out of date on the constitution (*This has been checked and the names are there as the Trustees in place when the constitution was written. The current Trustees are listed under Trustees and Officers on the web page menu*).

Nigel Hensman said he had walked up White Nothe and found the path narrow and overgrown. He asked if the RPS could make representations for it to be improved and even moved further inland. NW said the issue could be reported via the Dorset for You website. VB believed the path was part of the England Coast Path and South West Coast Path and so should be properly maintained. She offered to send Nigel useful links and NW asked him to come back to us if he was unsuccessful.

Amanda Young said she wanted to thank the RPS for everything it did which meant people could continue to enjoy Ringstead.

Alfie Kirkpatrick mentioned jet skis and said people could email the maritime police if such craft were being used irresponsibly.

Louise Young asked if the RPS could sponsor a defibrillator and NW agreed to investigate.

The meeting was closed by the chairman at 11.50 and refreshments were served.