

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

Minutes of the 2024 Annual General Meeting held at Shambles, Ringstead Bay on Sunday 25 August 2023 at 10.30am

1. The Chairman, Nigel Williams (NW), welcomed members to the meeting and reminded them of the RPS objectives.

An attendance register was circulated.

NW recorded with sadness the loss of long-standing member Liz Arkell, who with her late husband Ray and children Steve, Caroline & Tom spent many happy times at their family holiday house, Faraway.

2. **Apologies:** Marete Bates, Sue Blane, Phillipa Bomford, Bruce & Tina Duncan, Jillie & Rupert Edwards, Will Edwards, Tim Elliott, Jane Grant, Caroline Jackson, Ros & Michael Langford, Simon & Lydia Lebus, Jenny & Eric Serjeant, Nick Walker, Toby Walker, Tim & Jane Williams.

3. **Minutes of the 2023 AGM**

The draft minutes of last year's meeting had been posted on the website and members were asked to accept them as a record of what took place. This was proposed by Neville Grant & seconded by Nick Willis and all agreed.

4. **Matters Arising**

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

5. **Chairman's & Trustees' Report**

Vicky Banham (VB) gave an update on the proposed Portland Waste Incinerator. Powerfuel Portland had appealed Dorset Council's (DC) refusal of permission for an Energy Recovery Facility at Portland Port. A report had been passed to the Secretary of State and a decision was expected soon. Since an environmental permit would also be needed, the Environment Agency had consulted the public and was considering the matter.

VB also gave an update on the asylum accommodation provided by the government on the Bibby Stockholm moored in Portland Port, saying that it would be shut down when the contract ended in January 2025.

There had been a discussion about the possible need to modify the Society's objectives. Simon Walker (SW) reported that the General Committee decided that the objectives had been helpful during the last year in deciding what the RPS wanted to achieve and no one had raised any objection so they would remain as they were. He added the committee would welcome more help and support for its work.

The complaint by Tim Wallis had run its course via the Complaints Procedure and the matter was now closed.

NW & VB met landowner Johnnie Russell (JR) on August 16 to discuss various matters:

1. The sign at the top of the hill down to the bay had been tidied up and Reef Café advertised
2. JR had put up a sign at the top of the slipway indicating access to the beach

3. A Land Drain had been proposed near the old footbridge by The White House and approved by DC. JR was content for this to be installed at the RPS's expense
4. JR said he would carry out remedial work to the Ringstead road edges in the next six months after construction traffic to his bunker had ceased
5. JR asked homeowners to remember to close the new gate near the café
6. NW asked for a sign on the gate discouraging fossil-hunters from digging into the cliffs but JR said he disliked signs and felt one would be counterproductive
7. JR said he managed the Café and wanted it to be more upmarket but had no intention of rebuilding it to cover the increased footprint. He is considering an alcohol licence to serve people eating-in. He would need to apply to DC and the public would be consulted. Any plans for a mobile sauna near the slipway would also need permission and consultation
8. JR agreed to notify NW when he made any new applications.

The Trustees' Report had been posted on the website and NW had nothing to add. The draft minutes of this meeting would be uploaded no later than September 30.

NW gave a vote of thanks to Tim Williams for updating the website. He said Tim asked that members contact him on the address under the photos if they had any they wished to add.

www.ringsteadprotectionsociety.org.uk

6. Treasurer's Report

The RPS is in a sound financial position and NW expressed thanks to Rupert Edwards for auditing the accounts and to Tim Pratelli (TP) the treasurer. TP gave a summary saying that at year end (June 30, 2024) the Society had £14,411 in the bank with income from subscriptions, bank interest and gift aid and expenditure from minimal running costs.

7. Election of Trustees and Officers

The current Trustees are NW, VB, TP, SW, Lucy Kirkpatrick (LK) and Louise Scott. VB had been secretary for eight years and decided to make way for someone else. NW thanked VB and said he had asked her to remain a Trustee as she had been holidaying annually at Ringstead all her life and was passionate about it. He had asked LK to take on the role and she had agreed.

In accordance with the Society's Constitution, VB and TP retired as Trustees by rotation but being eligible, offered themselves for re-election. NW asked if members were content to vote for them en-bloc. This was proposed by Mike Carter and seconded by Katie Scott and their election was proposed by Mike Carter and seconded by Derek Thomas. *

The current Officers are NW (Chairman), LK (Secretary) and TP (Treasurer). In accordance with the Constitution, all retired but offered themselves for reappointment. NW asked for a proposer and seconder for them to be voted in en-bloc. Paul Thomas proposed and Michael Howard-Tripp seconded. Their election was proposed by Al Thorpe and seconded by Neville Grant. *

*Michael Young pointed out under AOB that while proposers and seconders had been found for the motions on the appointment of Trustees and officers, no votes had been taken. NW asked for a show of hands in favour of the elections and these were unanimous.

The General Committee (GC) comprises Liz Carter, Deb Peele, Will Edwards, Tim Elliott, and the six Trustees.

The role of Watchdog had been important over the years, particularly to protect the flora & fauna. It had been undertaken for another year by Merete Bates to whom NW gave a vote of thanks.

8. Wooden steps (east of the caravans)

The steps are impassable – they barely exist. The National Trust who built them has maintained them in the past with DC. They will do this one more time, possibly in the Autumn, and after that they want no more to do with them, preferring to let nature take its course. DC hopes to have some funding for this work.

9. Planning matters

This year the GC looked at:

- Two different locations for pop-up camp sites were proposed by JR under Permitted Development (PD). The first, in the field just west of the White House, was for up to 50 tents for 60 days a year with loos, showers, etc. It was close to a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and an Ancient Monument, so DC refused it and JR has been told to restore the southern access he had created to its original state. A similar plan for the field to the west and north of the first one accessed near Spinney Brook was also refused on the grounds of potential damage to the local habitat without sufficient mitigation. Under PD there is little the public can do in terms of registering support or objections, but a number of RPS members had contacted bodies such as Natural England, the Forestry Commission and DC with concerns.
- JR has permission to convert the Standby Generator Bunker by Spinney Brook and it is close to completion.
- An amended S192 Application was lodged with DC by Ringstead Caravan Company seeking planning permission for a holiday site with removal of the two conditions restricting length of season and requirement to remove caravans each year having also removed the part seeking residential use. This was approved on May 4, 2024.

On behalf of the RCC, Hilary Fisher gave an update on the Creek Caravan Park saying that the focus had been mainly on landscaping with 54 native trees planted along its north boundary. A hedge of 400 plants had been planted on the eastern boundary and a hedge at Gully Cottage. There was a desire to attract more wildlife with the planting and RCC had committed to the David Bellamy Blooming Marvellous Pledge for Nature initiative for Holiday Parks. The park would close on January 2, 2025, for four to six weeks for maintenance. The RCC was actively discouraging the use of BBQs on the beach and the driving of vehicles onto the National Trust land next to it. It was discussing the installation of an electronic gate and will consult on it locally. It was celebrating 100 years since the site had been bought as a campsite.

10. Upton update

DT said the main concern was always traffic and anything that happened in Ringstead that increased traffic was a concern.

11. Reef Café Update

NW gave a vote of thanks to the Charles' family who had run the shop for more than 60 years. The Eastlake family now has a ten-year lease to operate the Reef Café, having run a café in Weymouth for ten years. This being their busiest weekend they were unable to attend but JR had given NW an update. Reef Café had opened just before Easter after a refurbishment and re-wiring. The aim was to provide a high quality, good value, simple café with an emphasis on locally sourced produce. The business is receptive to ideas and feedback.

12. Osmington Mills Protection Group (OMPG) Update

OMPG which is led by Jill Dunning has ceased to hold meetings for the foreseeable future until a new Chairman steps forward. Christof Merkle, Chairman of the Osmington Society, spoke about the Society's aims and objectives and suggested a closer working relationship with the RPS. The Society was set up in the 70s and has a wide remit. Its last major project was to restore The White Horse on the hill.

It had looked at the implications of Dorset becoming a National Park. A 2019 report had recognised Dorset as an outstanding candidate for National Park status and recommended that Natural England and government ministers consider the case alongside proposals for the Cotswolds and the Chilterns. No decision has been made.

<https://www.dorsetnationalpark.com>

The Society is a member of the Dorset Coast Forum, an independent coastal partnership that brings together individuals and organisations, to consider a whole range of social, environmental and economic opportunities. NW said the RPS would look into it.

<https://www.dorsetcoast.com>

13. AOB

Alfie Kirkpatrick raised the issue of fossil hunting and conceded JR did not want to do anything about it, so he asked everyone to consider telling people they saw digging into the cliff for fossils that it is a criminal offence. Sue Kirkpatrick asked whether there was still a dedicated police officer for Ringstead who could be asked to visit. NW asked LK to check and report back.

Sue Kirkpatrick said she was aware of the huge amount of work that had been involved in dealing with the proposed pop-up campsites and wanted to thank all those involved.

Tim Wallis asked why the RPS had not formally opposed or supported the campsite proposals. LK and VB explained that the process for PDs was different from regular applications and that a lot of work had gone on instead behind the scenes with relevant authorities who had decided to block the moves. Jane Wallis said JR was determined to have a campsite somewhere, the question was where. She said a lot of residents were concerned about the commercialisation of Ringstead. LK said many members, not just residents, shared the concerns.

Tim Wallis mentioned Owermoigne PC was looking into whether to seek an Article 4 Direction for the area which would limit the developments that can be carried out without needing planning permission i.e. permitted development. He said barns could be converted to houses under PD. SW asked him to supply more information on Article 4 so the RPS could consider it.

Neville Grant said he found it hard to understand how RPS could be prevented from objecting to developments and suggested approaching the local councillor for support. NW said the RPS's hands were tied in terms of a formal response to PDs which are looked at by DC against a fixed set of criteria but a lot had been achieved by the RPS talking to key players. David Arkell added that there would be plenty of support from members if and when required.

The meeting was closed by the chairman at 11.35 and refreshments were served.