



**Bognor Regis Regeneration Board**  
**Friday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2021, 3.45pm**  
**The\_Track, Bognor Regis Railway Station, PO21 1QF**

**Present:**

**Board Members**

Raof Daud, Dicentra Developments (Chair) [RD]  
Cllr Steve Waight, WSCC [SW]  
Sean Clarke, Covers [HG]  
Paul Hanson, Landlink [PH]  
Caroline Wood, CWSP [CW]

Cllr David Edwards, ADC (Deputy Chair) [DE]  
Jeremy Pardey, Butlins [JP]  
Johnny Key, Butlins [JK]  
Prof Mike Holley, University of Chichester [MH]  
Cllr Matt Stanley, BRTC [MST]

**Officers**

Karl Roberts, ADC [KR]  
Denise Vine, ADC [DV]  
Rebecca White, Advisor [RW]

Glenna Frost, BRTC [GF]  
Heather Allen, BID [HA]  
Anne De Sausmarez, WSCC [ADS]

**By Invitation**

Nick Gibb, MP for Bognor Regis [NG]  
Gillian Brown, former Chair of BRRB [GB]  
Georgia Alston, The\_Track [GA]

Cllr James Walsh, ADC [JW]  
Cllr Steve Goodheart, Mayor, BRTC [SGH]

**Apologies**

Jason Passingham, BID Chairman [JPA]  
Nick Laurence, Metamorph [NL]

Cllr Shaun Gunner, ADC [SG]

**MINUTES**

**1. WELCOME, APOLOGIES AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chair [RD] opened the meeting, welcomed all present and noted apologies from Nick Laurence, Cllr Shaun Gunner and Jason Passingham. As invited guests were in attendance, introductions were made by all. RD then explained that the purpose of the meeting was to summarise, for the benefit of members, partners and guests, the progress made by the Board in listening to feedback and evolving to address that feedback over the last year and to highlight the opportunities for partnership working which lay ahead.

**2. BRRB UPDATE**

Introduction: The Board's Advisor [RW] gave a presentation to members, setting the scene by referencing Bognor Regis as a town of opportunity, one that has long benefitted from its climate and location and noting that its proud heritage as a destination was originally driven by entrepreneurs with the drive and ambition to deliver future change – Sir Richard Hotham and Billy Butlin.

Incorporation & the Role of the Board: BRRB is proud of its unique approach to the private-public partnership which is at the heart of its mission to promote Bognor Regis as a great place to live, work, study, invest, visit and enjoy. Established in 2007, we have stood the test of time but not stood still, incorporating as non-profit company in 2021, evolving to meet the needs of our members, the changing needs and aspirations of the town and to develop a distinct and independent identity. RW noted that the Board is more than the sum of its parts – we work not for but with our members to focus on delivery through partnership, examining local policies, initiatives and aspirations to identify opportunities for

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strategic alignment, facilitating collaboration and solutions and where necessary, acting as a constructive disruptor to champion the vision of a sustainable, inclusive, accessible and welcoming town fit to face the challenges of the future through the promotion of local and national regeneration priorities and a 'people first' approach.

Regeneration Framework: Over the past twelve months, the Board has concentrated on a taking a measured approach to regeneration, focusing on the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, investment in placebranding and identified local needs and priorities to build a strategic corporate framework, resulting in our six principles of regeneration [sustainability, viability, inclusivity, connectivity, creativity & legacy] and informed by the Build Back Better approach and the Bognor Regis town values. This has allowed us to examine and assess projects and initiatives which come forward in an objective and systematic way, building a record of consistency, relevance and openness. Whilst we promote our principles, the Board does not regard them as being definitive, rather they work as a baseline or filter to promote discussion, ambition, innovation and commitment amongst our local partners including policy makers, landowners, developers and other key stakeholders.

Town Values (in bold type): In 2020, the Board was asked to take on the stewardship of the Bognor Regis town values, developed as a result of collaboration between the University of Chichester, West Sussex County Council and Arun District Council. Designed as an active toolkit to challenge negative perceptions of the town, the values were identified through local consultation and stakeholder engagement. They remain a work in progress as we continue to interpret and evolve each value, working with partners to ensure that they truly reflect confidence and ambition. So for example, **a beacon for a bright future** means to us – being bold and ambitious, going beyond the minimum, levelling up and maximising our strengths and advantages. **Blue sky thinking** means not just thinking outside the box but celebrating our natural assets and **ready for fun**, which was initially taken as an implication that Bognor Regis is not a serious town, is viewed by the multi-agency group as positioning us as a welcoming, accessible and enjoyable town that puts people first in its thinking and design.

Bognor Regis Strengths and Opportunities: RW highlighted that Bognor Regis is already coming from a position of strength – it has multiple selling points, not least of which is its sense of community. Some of these strengths are natural assets; the beach, the sunshine and plenty of open space. Some are well established. Bognor Regis has been a holiday destination for over 200 years, offering access not just to Butlins, local attractions and the coast but the wider area including the South Downs. Significant investment in the University of Chichester and The Regis School has contributed to a strong local offering in education and attracting families and students. Crucially, some strengths have come about through positive local policy making. The Local Plan strategic land allocations, particularly at Enterprise Bognor Regis, are delivering much needed housing and employment sites which create local jobs – although outside the town centre, both elements directly contribute to its economic health and vibrancy. Strong working relationships across the public, private sectors and third sectors have created a dynamic network of stakeholder partnerships, ready to respond to local challenges and help drive progress forward. Combined, these strengths create a compelling current offering.

There are further strengths and emerging opportunities which, if developed, will put our town centre ahead of the game, making it the destination of choice for our residents, visitors, students, businesses and tourists. These have been emerging for some time but the pandemic has created an environment in which the advantages and opportunities Bognor Regis has put it ahead of the competition. As Brighton reaches housing and opportunity saturation, so young professionals, businesses and families look along the coast. Additionally, post-Covid, people value open space, clean air and the natural environment over urban dwelling which has prompted a growing shift from London and the M3/M4 corridors to coastal and rural destinations. Bognor Regis has both the land availability and the transport links to take advantage of this shift with housing provision and a direct train link to London being key factors in destination choice. But good transport links are only part of a town's accessibility – Bognor Regis town centre is compact, easy to get round with pedestrianisation and public realm improvements supporting the development of level access routes both through the town and to the seafront – this in turn promotes inclusivity. These links can be further explored through innovative wayfinding to encourage the growth of the night time economy, creating the perception of welcome and safety for students, residents and visitors accessing the town centre in the evening – expanding the active economy beyond the 9 to 5 core. Wellbeing, wellness and lifestyle are also dominant themes across all demographics;

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currently underexploited there is considerable scope to develop activities which complement Bognor's natural environment such as watersports, walking trails and cycle hire schemes, to build on the town's varied heritage and cultural offerings through a co-ordinated programme of events and experiences. Innovative leisure offerings include esports and interactive digital trails and these in turn create opportunity for enjoyment, engagement, learning and enterprise for the town's young people. Leisure & creative crossover in the established but uncoordinated potential of the maker/creative community; a contemporary cultural sector which needs spaces in which to grow. We can further build on these opportunities by offering support to entrepreneurs, start-ups and through improving our town centre & by ensuring an ongoing employment land supply we can encourage business relocation which in turn improves our ability to retain the talent emerging from the University and local colleges. And finally, there is the potential to harness, highlight and support all these disparate but complementary opportunities through the co-ordinated and cohesive development of the key town centre sites – whether within the control of Arun District Council or privately owned strategic assets such as the pier. The list and the possibilities are endless, reflecting both Bognor Regis' further potential and ambition.

Town Centre Focus: Since 2007, over £500million has been invested in Bognor Regis with a Town Centre/Greater BR Area investment ratio of 1:4. Of the progress which has been made in the town centre to date, the private sector has delivered over 90%. To address that imbalance BRRB resolved in 2019 to focus on town centre improvements and regeneration. The pandemic has catalysed the need to adapt; Bognor Regis needs a future-facing town centre. We have all the right ingredients for success - clear strengths & opportunities, positive town values, strategic land availability, a sound evidence base for local needs and aspirations particularly in the extensive and valuable 2015 public consultation carried out by ADC, an active & committed network of town centre stakeholders and plenty of scope for local policy alignment through a partnership approach. The focus now must be on developing a clear strategic vision for the town centre that delivers measurable progress over time.

### 3. CHAIR'S SUMMARY

RD summarised by thanking RW for her presentation and emphasising the key points which the Board would continue to champion and challenge through its membership and local stakeholders: partnership, transparency, an ambitious response to opportunity, a focus on delivery and the prioritisation of a shared vision & strategic masterplan. RD then invited questions from members and guests. Questions were asked regarding the approach to wayfinding and the opportunities to address negative perceptions of the town and improve communications regarding the positive progress which has been made. Encouraging feedback was given regarding the positive impact and developing role and profile of the BRRB.

RD then invited the Deputy Chair of BRRB, Cllr David Edwards, to join him in making a presentation to Gill Brown, in recognition of her service as Chair of the BRRB from 2007 to 2019.

### 4. INFORMAL NETWORKING

Members were invited to network and explore the facilities. Nick Gibb, MP was given a tour of The\_Track, a WSCC funded initiative, by the Community Manager Georgia Alston, supported by Cllr Steve Waight, the WSCC Cabinet Member for Economic Development & Support Services and Anne De Sausmarez, Economic Development Manager for WSCC.

### 5. MEETING CLOSE & NEXT MEETING DATES

RD closed the meeting at 5.15pm, thanking all members and guests for their time and support in attending.

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