

FAIRLIGHT PRESERVATION TRUST

(Registered Charity Number 1107169)

The Annual General Meeting of the Fairlight Preservation Trust held on Sunday 13 November 2022 in Fairlight Village Hall.

Present were 34 Members of the trust
Apologies for absence Andrew Mier, Denise Lamb, Steve Stewart, Ruth Kosmin, Jennifer Annettes and Jill Lewing,

1. David Shortman , Chair of the trust welcomed everyone to the first in person AGM for two years.
2. The minutes of the last AGM held on 21 November via zoom were approved.
3. The chairman gave his report on the activities over the last year and gave his thanks to those who have helped the trust in the last year (full report attached).
4. A report on the maintenance programme and related matters written by Dr Ruth Kosmin was read by Leslie Kosmin (see Attached).
5. A PowerPoint presentation was given by Issy Horsley summarising the Fairlight cliff defences with photos and showing some graphs of the data collected each month.
6. Nick Booker, treasurer presented his report. (see attached)
7. The following were nominated and unanimously elected as officers and members of the executive committee.

Chair	David Shortman
Vice Chair	Issy Horsley
Treasurer	Nick Booker
Secretary	Paul Capps

The following were nominated and elected as members of the executive committee: Jill Lewing, Keith Sommerville, Alastair Mitchell, and Lyn Cooke.

8. Any other business.

A question was asked about the possibility of powering the compressor house with solar energy. This is impractical due to the high electrical load used by the compressors.

Paul Capps invited anyone interested in taking over the secretary position on the committee to consider it seriously.

Minutes taken by Issy Horsley

Chairman's Report AGM13 November 2020

This year has been another year of sustained progress in all areas of the work of the Trust. During the year we have held two committee meetings by Zoom. In addition, the committee has also continued to keep in contact with each other on a regular basis by email as the needs arose.

The Trust has continued to place pressure on Rother District Council to ensure that the cliff defences are properly maintained and expenditure is monitored. During the year further repairs and maintenance have been made to the Rockmead Road wells and the Rockmead slopes, and the berms are being maintained.

Our Secretary Dr Ruth Kosmin and Issy Horsley have been mainly responsible for dealing with all the continued negotiations with Rother District Council and East Kent Engineering Partnership.

The Trust had good news during the year in that Rother District Council, after representations from Councillor Andrew Mier, the Parish Council, and the trust, agreed to introduce an Article 4 Directive in respect of Planning applications for the cliff top properties. I do not propose to give any more details of the matters I have mentioned, there will be a report from Dr Kosmin and a separate report from Issy Horsley.

In that regard I would like to thank Issy Horsley for all the continued work that she has done on behalf of the Trust including monitoring the wells on a voluntary basis and keeping Rother District Council and the Trust informed. I would also like to thank Laurie Beetham for the continued help that he has given to Issy in the monitoring of the wells.

I must again, as mentioned in my previous reports, stress that although we are very fortunate to live in such a beautiful village, being a coastal village, there is always a risk of coastal erosion.

Although the Trust has been very successful in the past, in obtaining the three berms and ensuring that they are properly maintained, there is no room for complacency and constant vigilance is needed if we are going to continue to protect the village from the ravages of the sea.

In order for the Trust to continue carrying out its works membership is very important. The more members we have the more influence we can have in making representations to Rother

District Council. In addition we will need members who are prepared to take on membership of the committee. I will again ask all residents of the village who have yet to join the Trust to strongly consider doing so. Our membership secretary Jill Lewing is to be thanked for all her hard work including chasing up membership subscriptions, maintaining membership records, and canvassing and encouraging residents to become members of the Trust.

I would also like to thank Nick Booker for the excellent work that he has done as our Treasurer over the last year.

Thanks must also be given to Paul Capps for his continued valuable work as a committee member and for his hard work in helping to resolve the drainage problem on Rockmead Road. His knowledge and experience continue to be a considerable benefit to the committee.

Thanks must also be given to Keith Summerville for his work as a committee member and for his continued considerable contribution

in ensuring that the circulars and notices reach the membership. I would also like to thank our district councillors Andrew Mier and Roger Bird for their support of the Trust over the last year.

Finally, I am sorry to say that, both our secretary Dr Ruth Kosmin and our Vice Chairman Leslie Kosmin are standing down from the Committee this year.

I would like to thank Ruth for all her continued hard work and time she has spent as secretary of the Trust over the last years.

I would also like to thank Leslie for all his hard work as Vice-Chairman and as a committee member

More importantly I would like to thank both Ruth and Leslie for all the work that they have done on behalf of the Trust over the years. They were both actively involved in the 1980's in obtaining the first berm. Ruth was responsible for drawing up the cost benefit analysis which showed the economic viability of the Coast Protection Scheme, in order to obtain Government Grants and Leslie did a lot of work in connection with drafting the Section 29 Complaint document which enabled an appeal to be made to the then Minister of Agriculture, for an enquiry to be held into the Rother District Council's initiated decision to take no action to stem the erosion of the cliffs.

The appeal, as we now know, was successful and resulted in the first berm being built.

Both Ruth and Leslie were also involved in preparing the application for Government Grant for the third berm.

For a number of years as secretary, Ruth was mainly responsible for dealing with all the continued negotiations with both Rother District Council and East Kent Engineering Partnership, in relation to repairs, maintenance and monitoring of the expenditure on the Rockmead Wells, the Rockmead slopes and the berms. She was supported in this by Leslie who advised and assisted her work.

Both the village of Fairlight and the Trust owe a deep debt of gratitude to both Ruth and Leslie for all their time, hard work and expertise that they have given over the years. They will certainly be missed by the committee.

I will now hand over to Leslie who will read a written report from Ruth who sadly is not able to be with us today.

The Secretary Ruth Kosmin's remarks to FPT AGM - Sunday 13 November 2022

I wish to start by apologising for my absence this afternoon. Unfortunately, I have had to travel to the US to assist with family matters which, notwithstanding the importance of the FPT's work, the role of grandmother must on this occasion take priority.

I have been involved with the FPT as a Committee Member since early in 2014 and have been Secretary for the past 6 and a half years. As those of you who follow our affairs will be aware this has been a busy and successful period in the life of the Trust. I would like to list some of our achievements over this period:

- 1) In March 2014 we formulated an application to the Environment Agency for government funding for a scoping report on the state of the cliffs in the light of the increasingly rapid rate of erosion in the area of the cliffs located between the 1990 Sea Road berm and the 2008 Rockmead Road berm.
- 2) That application, which was filed with the assistance of the East Kent Engineering Partnership based in Canterbury, turned out to be a success. The work had to be done in a 3 week time frame to meet the government's deadline for applications for funding. This meant a huge effort to prepare a detailed spreadsheet which ran to no less than 365

columns of data and analysis. A previous application to the Environment Agency lodged by Rother District Council on our behalf had been a complete failure – They could not even spell the name of the village correctly and completed only 12 columns!

- 3) The scoping study carried out in 2015 led directly to the approval given for the construction of the 3rd stage berm in the summer of 2016. Many of you will recall the work carried out that summer as the materials were landed on the beach and the berm was put together using the latest computer design techniques. (A video of the construction is to be found on the Trust's website.) The cost of £1.5 million was in part paid for by villagers and members of this Trust to the extent of £150,000 – half of which came from personal donations and fund-raising and half from the Fairlight Parish Council which borrowed their share from government funds.
- 4) Amazingly, the construction of the 3rd stage berm was carried out so efficiently that it came under budget. We then persuaded the Environment Agency to allow us to retain the surplus funds for maintenance and repair work on the 3 berms for the longer term. The money had to be paid to Rother District Council as our Coast Protection Authority and held by them.
- 5) Our next battle was to get Rother to ring-fence these funds so that, despite their wish to use them generally within Rother, they were retained exclusively for Fairlight. As we all know, local authorities are desperately short of funds and the sum retained from the Fairlight berm was a great temptation for Rother's finance department. We have tried to obtain regular reports from Rother on the use of the funds and instigated an arrangement that they would consult with the Trust before spending any of what we call "The Fairlight Maintenance Fund". This system has not always worked but a great effort has been made to try to hold Rother to their commitment.
- 6) The last few years have also seen an increase in the membership of the Trust with a heightened profile in the village. Jill Lewing has taken the lead on this as our Membership Secretary, working alongside our Treasurer Nick Booker. We now have over 250 members.
- 7) In view of the importance of the Trust's work it is essential that newcomers to the village are encouraged to join. The larger the membership the greater the impact and sway we have with Rother District Council and other authorities.

- 8) As part of this effort, I have been largely responsible for writing a regular column in The Fairlight News, the quarterly magazine of the FRA, which has highlighted the work of the Trust and the previous history of the efforts made to defend and protect the Fairlight cliffs. In this task I have recently been assisted by Paul Capps.
- 9) Much of the current work of the Trust has been to monitor the Rockmead Road wells and pumping scheme for which Laurie Beetham and Issy Horsley have been responsible, collecting regular monthly data on the operations of the Compressor House in Rockmead Road. As a result of their sterling efforts, we now have a much better - but by no means perfect- understanding of how the system works.
- 10) The contractors for the maintenance of the wells and Compressor House were changed some 4 years ago after a great deal of effort in order to improve the standard of maintenance and to reduce the annual cost - a cost which should be met directly by Rother District Council under its agreement with the Environment Agency when the Rockmead Road scheme was approved in 2008.
- 11) I now come to the thorny issue of planning. From time to time the work of the Secretary has involved writing to the Council on behalf of the Trust in relation to various applications for planning permission to build new houses or extensions near to the edge of the cliffs. Such developments have been in each case considered by the Trust Committee and, where appropriate, objections have been lodged with the Rother Planning department. Such objections have been taken where the development might involve extensive digging into the cliff top, the possible tapping of groundwater below the surface and potential danger to that area of the cliff and neighbouring properties. Too much effort and too much money has been spent for us to sit back and ignore the risks to the cliffs by new developments which might undermine the work of the last 30 years.
- 12) To avoid unnecessary errors of this type, the Trust has also produced a Planning Protocol which summarises the professional advice, engineering reports and precautions that should be required in the event of any proposed development near to the cliffs. Fortunately, the Protocol has been adopted by the Planning Committee of Fairlight Parish Council, when it was under the chairmanship of the late and much respected Stephen Leadbetter. Regrettably, the planners at Rother have not been so helpful, apparently believing that they do not need any such assistance or guidelines to help local residents who apply for planning consent.

- 13) I am very pleased to report that this year, very largely as the result of the significant efforts on our behalf of our active District Councillor, Cllr Andrew Mier, and the campaign work of the Trust, Rother District Council has been persuaded to make an Article 4 direction under the Town and Country Planning Act which has the effect of removing automatic rights to planning consent for properties in what is known as the coastal buffer zone within 50 metres of the cliff edge. This in itself will not stop all development but will require owners to seek planning permission if their home lies within that critical zone. This is a major achievement for the village.
- 14) A recent practical project embarked on by the Trust this year, as the result of the efforts of Committee member Paul Capps, has been the construction of new drainage pipes along the side of the top section of Rockmead Road. The work is intended to improve the drainage of surface water from the road and ensure its removal from the vital cliff edge. Whether further works in Rockmead Road will be required to be carried out in the future will be decided in due course.
- 15) Members should know that there were 3 separate formal meetings of the Committee during the last year - in December 2021, June and September 2022. However, much of the work of the Committee was carried out on an informal basis and communicated by email.
- 16) Finally, as I am standing down as Secretary this year I would like to thank my fellow Committee members for all their support for me and their tremendous efforts over the last 8 and a half years on behalf of the Trust. I wish them well in their tasks which lie ahead.

Treasurers Report

Good afternoon

I would like to take you through the changes that have taken place during this accounting period for the year ending 31st of March 2022.

I would like to thank MNP Accounting Solutions Ltd for once again auditing these accounts.

Our total funds stand at £35,284. Once again there was no trustees numeration or other benefits for the year ending 31st of March 2022.

Our restricted funds held in an HSBC account stand at £11,800 and our general funds across our Barclays and Nationwide accounts is £23,484 giving us the total of £35,284

Now turning to our income and expenditure fund for this year. Total income was £ 1,077, and our expenditure was £549. Should anyone wish to see a full copy of our accounts please contact me . Our current membership stands at 251 and I would like to thank Jill and Trevor Lewing for their hard work on the membership administration.

This concludes my summary of our accounts and unless there any further questions, I request for the accounts to be approved.

Nick Booker