

BOGNOR RE-INVIGORATION GROUP

SUMMARY OF THE PRESENTATION GIVEN TO
ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL ON WED 10TH FEBRUARY 2021.

Re-Invigoration is a small, mixed group of Bognor Regis residents who came together to produce a proposal to regenerate Bognor which focused on the Regis Centre and Hothamton sites.

It was decided early on that rather than come up with our own ideas we needed to find out what the wider population of Bognor Regis wanted, and to achieve this we needed to gather those ideas from as many people as possible. We created a Facebook page, an email address, a postal address, we had a drop-in centre and several volunteers took to the streets with clipboards.

We asked open questions, and from both locals and visitors we soon had information from nearly 1,000 individuals, many of them offering multiple ideas. We could have added to this except for severe time constraints put upon us. Our research showed that we had input from a balanced cross-section of ages, and one thing that became clear was that Bognor people care passionately about their town; there is a strong feeling of ownership by all and a healthy sense of civic pride.

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Using the results a graph was created listing the things most and least wanted – see image at end - and using a framework from the 2004 Masterplan for Bognor Regis we pieced together all of the top suggestions and many of the lesser ideas into a cohesive design.

In order of preference these were...

A lido / splash pools	Cultural (art) gallery and space
A café / bar with seafront terrace	Restaurant with dance floor
Illuminated dancing fountains	Community space
Roller rink	Retail outlets
Open area with seating and grass	Surfing / water sports
Bowling alley	Pop-up seasonal concessions
Infants / soft play area with seating	Laser Quest
Open area theatre	Interactive educational themed visitor centre
Multi-use room	Climbing wall / Abseiling facility
Observation tower with restaurant / bar	

Less popular suggestions included a ‘quality hotel’, a large clothing store, ground floor parking, a trampoline park, a multiplex cinema and finally, flats.

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We worked within the scope of the masterplan remit found on page 5 of the 2014 masterplan planning policy paragraph 2: “Strengthening the physical and visual links between the promenade and town centre.”

In order to deliver this ambitious scheme the group understood that a financially viable offer is necessary. We therefore proposed a three-step pathway...

- i) Land currently known as the Hothamton site (now a car park) would be made available, purchase or leasehold, for commercial development. This is a town centre position and could accommodate ground floor parking and retail, with up to 250 flats and apartments on the first floor and above commanding views across the sunken gardens and bowling greens to the sea. These would offer a healthy return in current market conditions with the potential for council tax returns i.e.o. £480,000 p.a. based on £1,920 per unit (2014 prices). Cross-funding would

mitigate against any flats on the Regis Centre site – something that frequently came up in our consultation. An S106 agreement (for Hothamton) could fund other parts of the development such as a multi-purpose ice skating rink

- ii) A regenerative creep along the Queensway which would benefit from increased commercial opportunity. New residents would increase footfall for the businesses with obvious local authority drivers
- iii) Funds from this and other possible sites would facilitate a phased development of the seafront site as follows.

1: A re-design of the Esplanade into a one-way system using Clarence Road, Gloucester Road and the Esplanade, with chevron parking on the Esplanade between Clarence Road and Gloucester Road creating room for up to 360 vehicles, herring-bone style (the current car park has 217 spaces which include disabled and Shopmobility bays and some dedicated for Town Hall staff). This would allow visitors and local residents direct access to the beach, but also with easy access through a new Regis Centre site development, creating footfall going to and from the town for the new businesses.

2: The construction of a new promenade edge between Lennox Street and Clarence Road taking the form of waved and banked terraces down to sand level constructed in rubberised concrete / rubberised material with steps for seating and ramps to allow access for wheelchairs, buggies etc. Such a scheme has been implemented at Cleveleys, a few miles North of Blackpool as part of its sea defences – the steps are designed to progressively take the power out of the waves at high tide.

3: The construction of a seawater lido similar in size and scope to that at Bude in Cornwall, providing safe, accessible paddling and swimming with associated shower and changing facilities, and landscaping in context with the scheme.

4: The construction of integrated multi-use leisure and retail building(s), parts of which would be made available for operational lease including retail, cafes, bars, observation tower (possibly in the form of a ‘vertical pier’), restaurants, climbing wall, indoor soft-play in line with our survey.

5: Extensive landscaping to include an outdoor amphitheatre space for events and performances, fountains, splash park with planting appropriate to a seaside context, concession stands and pods, showers for bathers, beach huts, a Zip-line and public artwork in line with the town’s cultural narrative.

By keeping the front of the site open it would be welcoming for visitors with plenty to do and see while acting as a natural ‘funnel’ to direct visitors towards the town.

The main building would have roof access for walking, eating etc. with outdoor space on each level for restaurant diners. The main piazza would also retain enough space for a seasonal ice rink.

Vertical Wind turbines can be included to provide some necessary power for the attractions which would include appropriate lighting to complement the current seafront illuminations.

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This development is forward looking and flexible:

There is beach access via the new sea wall/prom

There is room to accommodate attractions from other proposals such as a William Blake exhibition or hands-on science / educational facility.

Small retail units fronting Belmont Street allow for new businesses to start and develop.

There are concessionary opportunities large and small.

There are investment opportunities for national retailers and caterers.

We have left enough space on what is now Place St Maur for seasonal attractions, such as the ice rink
The development has both indoor and outdoor space for year-round use with the obvious advantages of Bognor's summer sun.

Builds on Bognor Regis' reputation for sun and sea as a destination, whether a day trip or longer, and enhances the links between the seafront and the town. It also offers a range of attractions for the increasing number of visitors staying at Butlins and the Royal Norfolk Hotel with the related spending power.

Retains a balance between raising the quality of the seafront without losing the appeal that has always brought visitors.

Provides real and long-term employment opportunities.

Comes from a real community aspiration and affection for the town.

Top-up funding could be available as with other seafront developments from agencies such as the Arts Council and Coastal Communities of which a £29 million fund (at 2016) is available for across the board projects (such as Margate's successful bid for £1.8 million for its Dreamland development).

UPDATES:

The above proposal is broadly what was presented to the council in 2014. We have since incorporated some changes such as the retention of the Esplanade road. We were told at the time that we could start with a blank sheet but we are able to include a re-designed Alexandra Theatre, hopefully to retain some line-of-sight view of the promenade from the Arcade, and a possible hotel on the north (at the expense of some of the retail outlets) or east side of the site. Of course, visitors who can stay overnight or longer will have increased spending power and this will also suit visitors to nearby events such as the Goodwood Festival of Speed.

If the prom is moved seaward, the lido could be incorporated onto the prom and the road could remain open

There has been no updates of costs as it was not envisaged that we would still be discussing our proposal in 2017, let alone 2021! All participating groups and individuals were informed in 2014, that building work was to start in early 2016...

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This proposal is the way in which the team have envisioned the suggestions of the participants of our surveys.

From the way in which the Re-Invigoration team approached the subject, it is suggested that even if the scheme is not implemented as a whole, the 'bricks' with which to build have been offered to the council.

- IN CONCLUSION -

As a result of our research Re-Invigoration reached a number of conclusions regarding the development of the Regis Centre site, namely...

The preservation of the site, as implicit in the 2004 Masterplan, as the leisure hub of the town and the "Jewel in the Crown" of the seafront

Residential development to fund the scheme can be initiated on other sites

A viable three-fold path to genuine regeneration can be initiated to provide long-term local economic prosperity, opportunities for large and small commercial enterprises, increased council tax revenue for the

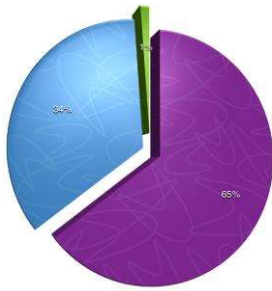
Arun district, and community involvement invested in the enhancement of the town's only central seafront location

A unique and sustainable day trip or holiday destination in the mainland UK's sunniest town.

FOR MORE DETAILED INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT www.bognor-re-invigoration.co.uk

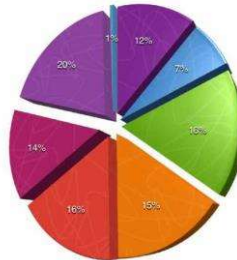
Type of regeneration:

Major Regeneration Low-level Regeneration No Regeneration



Age groups of participants:

Under 16 = 12% 19-24 = 7% 25-34 = 16% 35-44 = 15% 45-54 = 16% 55-64 = 14% 65+ = 20% Rather not say = 1%



Number of Votes

