

WARD REPORT OLD HASTINGS - DECEMBER 2010

Progress on Hastings Pier remains in a physical activity void. The demolition of those parts of the superstructure, that were rendered unsafe as a consequence of the fire, have now been removed. What is left, and in a state of delapidation but currently deemed to be presenting no issue of safety to the general public, will almost certainly be removed as part of the renovation process should funding be granted. The bid to the Heritage Lottery fund was duly submitted, but it is unlikely that any news will be forthcoming until later in the Spring. The application to Community Builders for funding towards the Heritage/Education Centre, to be sited initially adjacent to the White Rock Baths, has also been submitted and some news is expected towards the end of January. The main drive of the Trustees continues towards raising the necessary funding for some urgent remedial repairs to the structure around the area known as "the bridge". This problem was caused by basically some very poor repairs made to this section of the pier which was removed during the war to prevent potential facilitation of enemy landings. The concern is that with the loss of some struts, and the bracing effect of the lost decking, a storm could cause the collapse of this area and the possibility that it could take potentially reclaimable sections with it.

I continue my current round of engagements with ESCC over a number of different issues. Significant amongst them is the continuing saga of street lighting, or to be more precise where aesthetically sympathetic replacements of existing lamp standards should be considered. The current situation was born out of the County's desire, prompted by EEC regulations, to replace the existing mercury vapour lamps with high pressure sodium equivalents. To date there is very little equivalence about the replacement programme, especially in the areas of aesthetics and light pollution. I am currently working with the OHPS in an effort to prepare a list of existing lighting within the Old Town conservation area where such considerations are deemed necessary in pursuit of the offer that this area makes to our tourism portfolio. Courthouse Street also features high on my list, as we still await the outcome of the safety audit that is being undertaken prior to the erection of the adjustable barriers.

The introduction of the 20 mph speed limit is also long overdue (I actually remember campaigning on this issue prior to last May) and

unfortunately there are also a number of other improvements that are being introduced on the back of this particular TRO. I know that Jeremy has also been pushing hard to expedite the introduction of this much needed change. At last a date of January 4th has been agreed for the demolition of the redundant toilet block at the bottom of Old London Road, the scene of a recent assault. Once this eyesore has gone the site will be landscaped at low level to remove temptation from those who see such areas as a site of potential transgression. I have now been given a date of early March for the introduction of a suitable warning sign in Old London Road above the Sacred Heart School, informing drivers of the presence of children crossing the road. This has followed a long campaign that came to head with one vehicle running into the back of another, that had halted to allow the "lollipop man" to escort some children across the road. Should that second vehicle have been a heavy goods lorry, carnage could have resulted.

During the past month I joined with the residents of Barley Lane in their campaign to prevent a housing development at the rear of the row of farm cottages located at the narrowest point of this lane. There were so many good reasons as to why this was an unacceptable scheme that the application was refused by the Officers. A victory for common sense and the preservation of the environment !. A subject of much debate has been the weather, and the preparations made to counteract the inconvenience that it brings. There have been some good things such as the effective redeployment of Veolia staff from refuse collection to snow clearing and surface treatment, in the main shopping areas. There has also been criticism, mainly about gritting by ESCC, and also to the abandonment of secondary roads to the devices of those who live there. I have put forward a scheme to look for additional grit boxes to be supplied, but paid for under a sponsorship proposal involving advertising on these boxes by local businesses and employers. There is also another proposal to seek the involvement of the local RAs and AMBs in organising volunteers to assist in the clearance and surface treatment of these secondary areas. These are proposals that I believe must be seriously considered by our citizens, as the Town's available funding for such activities becomes ever more parlous over the next four years. Once again following a number of requests by myself a first class brochure has now been produced and distributed, explaining a citizen's legal position in the event of self help in snow clearance. I have received just one complaint regarding a broken car window, from the Croft Road area during the last month. Hopefully this may indicate some success for the local police and

the work that they have done in addressing this area's problems. I continue my discussions with Veolia concerning the usage of refuse collection vehicles that are dimensionally consistent with the streets of Old Hastings, and leave the hanging baskets and kerbstones of All Saints Street in the same attractive condition as our marketing brochures would declare to all of our potential visitors.

With the help of Phil Scott HBC's Lead Member for Highways related matters, I prevented George street from being dug up and virtually close off during the run up to Christmas. This would have been to effect the renewal of a collapsed sewer, which will now be repaired in mid February. During the month I wrote a long letter to Amber Rudd on behalf of our fishermen laying out further evidence of their unfair treatment by the EEC, not only in terms of the inequitable quota system, but also explaining the harassment metered out to them by the authorities on both the land, and the high seas. In a town committed to regeneration, it is unlikely that at the current rate of depletion of our local fleet, there will be a single fisherman left to share that vision when it is finally delivered. Since my letter I know that Amber has visited Brussels and returned with an apparent promise of progress. Quod Erat Demonstrandum !!

The improvements necessary to promote the effective operation of Sussex Arms Junction still remain in ESCC's pending tray. Despite repeated attempts by both Jeremy and myself, no discernable progress has been made especially in the creation of a box junction to include the Mount Road egress. The next step is for a citizen's petition to be presented, these good people can hardly be accused of impatience !. The Grotbuster's Team have taken up the case of the sadly delapidated Bourne Chapel, there is no reason to believe that they will not succeed in their quest as they have a remarkable record of success throughout the Borough. Other items that will be on the agenda for the new year include the continued pressure on Amicus for the provision of a footpath at Lodge Road, and an investigation into the potential for a toddler's play area somewhere within Old Hastings. This agenda will also include further pressure on the impediments to resolving the issues and setting up the necessary meetings, that continue to prevent any conclusions being reached in the long outstanding question regarding additional parking being made available within the Old Town. Similarly, in conjunction with VOSOP and the Chair of HOTRA, I continue to seek answers to any number of questions regarding the future plans for adult social care within the Borough, and more specifically to establishing

accurate numbers of those that would benefit from the Isabel Blackman Model. Any number of private issues of case work continue, and it would appear that their number fluctuates as a function of the levels of deprivation that are prevalent within an area.

I would like to take this opportunity of wishing you all the very best for the New Year, and if you or your friends and neighbours have any need for my help you can always contact me on :- 445540 or cllr.john.hodges@hastings.gov.uk

My Kind Regards, John Hodges