

WARD REPORT - OLD HASTINGS - FEBRUARY 2011

COUNCILLOR JOHN HODGES (cllr.john.hodges@hastings.gov.uk or 445540)

Pier activity continues to be restricted to legal activity and rounds of consultation with the local authority, and others who play a part in our future. On February 23rd a very successful consultation event took place at the White Rock Hotel, where trustees and volunteers mixed with both the "great and the Good" and representatives of many of Hastings organisations. The purpose of this event was for us to listen, and to interface with the voice of Hastings and to take on board any advice and messages that came across. The next event that is happening to raise funds for the Trust and to raise the profile of the pier with the public, takes place on Saturday March 12th. This is the "Party on the Prom" where to the accompaniment of music and dancing there will be a good number of stalls and sideshows, providing something for everybody. However, the main purpose of this event will be the first public consultation, where the architects DRMM, will be available to discuss with the public their views on the design of the new pier. Our big date is still the end of April when we will learn if our application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a grant of financial support for the restoration project has been successful.

Meanwhile back in the ward, meetings continue seeking solutions to ongoing problems in Croft Road. The top hundred yards of this street is essentially rural providing excellent cover for any nefarious activity that takes place. The problem then becomes one of striking a balance between preserving the natural ecology of the area, and opening it up in such a way as to promote more effective policing. I am sure that with the support and determination of both the local Police and the Borough Council, we will find that successful compromise. The 20mph speed limit will be introduced and it may well happen in a shorter time frame than I indicated in my previous report. I have requested that ESCC re-examine the operation of the green filter light at the Rock a Nore traffic lights, it creates ambiguity of precedence with south proceeding traffic in the Bourne. In the same area I have raised the issue of gaps in the central reservation being used as points for U turns, it is hoped that the appropriate warning signs will be reinstated and prevent this dangerous practice. I have now been informed that the extraneous lamp standards in the vicinity of Winkle Island will be removed once the contractor Colas, receive the necessary materials to complete the rest of the works in the area. As previously reported, I

am attempting to secure aesthetic improvement to the paving of Winkle Island, such that it becomes a fitting back drop for the brand new Winkle that is being created by Leigh Dyer. I am very happy that my efforts are now being fully supported by the Winkle Club itself. It is hoped that an additional handrail will be fitted to the wall between Tamarisk Steps and Crown Lane, whilst a further request has been made to the community payback scheme for labour to repair the Tackleway lych gate entrance to All Saints church. I have raised the issue of the dilapidated condition of a number of properties throughout the Old Town with the "Grotbusters Team", it is important that a standard is maintained in this area as its contribution to our tourism offer cannot be overstated.

I am now assured that the traffic warning sign to be placed on Old London Road above the Sacred Heart School will be erected during March of this year. I have raised the issue of lack of progress at the Sussex Arms junction yet again, it is now coming up to six months since the site meeting with the residents and ESCC. The first step towards improvement that was agreed on that day was the introduction of a box junction at the intersection of the A259 and Mount Road, until this happens and its outcomes noted, any other improvements would be pointless. I can only ask that the Residents Association submits their petition in parallel with the activity that I continue to pursue. I am now seeking from Amicus an installation date for the promised footpath in Lodge Road, it was reported at the last Safety SIG that an elderly lady had recently fallen on this unmade piece of road. It has been requested that the fire warning signs in Rocklands Lane are renewed (from white on white to white on red), this is part of the ongoing task of deterring speeding in the area, and new bright street furniture gives a strong message that this is not a forgotten area. I have investigated the ongoing problem of the sale of plots of land in a "pseudo development" off of Barley Lane called Belmont Views (Phase 2). Some consternation has been caused to local residents by the misleading documentation that accompanies this promotion. I am quite happy to share the official view of this exercise with anyone who is concerned and cares to contact me.

The offending bottle banks at the bottom of High Street will definitely be resited to coincide with space becoming available adjacent to the new Community Hall on the Stade. Single yellow line parking will be introduced at Rock a Nore this will increase kerbside parking during the off season, and provide enhancement for the night time economy all year round. I have now written to the European

Commissioner in Brussels regarding the plight of our fishermen, and made it blatantly clear to her the consequences for this Town and its tourism offer, should this most traditional of our industries go into terminal decline. I genuinely believe that this fight needs opening on as many fronts as possible, and our unwanted sobriquet of the "most deprived town in South East England" must be used in this cause to the maximum effect. I have also written and asked for the support of all of our MEPs in readdressing an inequitable quota system that bears no relationship to available fish stocks, or to the principles of marine conservation. I now understand that the unwholesome practice of "discarding" ie. throwing undersize fish and those caught in excess of the quota limits, back in the sea is now under serious consideration by the EU Commissioner for Fisheries.

I have been looking at lighting in its many uses, one of the questions that it poses in these economically parlous times is the value of lighting up certain public structures during the off peak season. Examples that spring to mind are the East Hill lift house, the railway bridge in Queens Road, there are others and I would welcome your views on the value of this usage of expensive electricity.

With my Best Regards, John Hodges