

## **WARD REPORT - OLD HASTINGS - MAY 2011**

### **COUNCILLOR JOHN HODGES**

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We got the money ! well at least some of it. The trust has been awarded an initial grant of £357,000 to allow us to move on to the next stage of our plan, the successful completion of which will release the full £8.7m. With all announcements of stupendous news the resultant is usually more questions than answers that can be provided, below the Trust has tried to answer some of the inevitable questions that will arise.

**Q – Have you got all the money?**

**A –** We have been granted £ 357,000 to develop detailed plans. The rest of the £ 8.7 million lottery grant is ring-fenced for Hastings Pier. We can't go back for it until we own the pier. The money only comes in as it is spent, invoice by invoice. We need at least 10% match-funding, some of which has been pledged by the council and the rest we will raise ourselves, including £ 250,000 through our community share issue and a further £ 300,000 through members, donations, private sponsorship, events and other local fundraising.

**Q – What is happening about the ownership?**

**A –** The council is ready to go ahead with the compulsory purchase of the pier from Ravenclaw. We hope to achieve the transfer to the trust next spring

**Q – What about the risk of storm damage?**

**A –** Giffords engineers suggested £ 500,000 of stabilisation works. English Heritage has given the council a grant of £ 100,000 which will be used to put scaffolding on the weakest part (known as the access bridge). The council needs to issue various notices first but hopes to begin this work in the next few weeks.

**Q - What happens next?**

**A -** The next steps: The next public consultation on the Hastings Pier will be held on 4th June at St Mary in the Castle,

**10:00 - 12:30**

On the morning of 4 Jun, stakeholders (Not open to the public) from the local community are invited to St. Mary in the

Castle for an update from the HPWRT and the Pier's architects, dRMM. This will include an update on the CPO process and necessary Planning Applications in relation to the repairs notice, and an update on the HLF grant. This funding is to support the Trust in safeguarding the Pier structure below deck, and developing a sustainable brief for above deck. The design team will provide feedback on the outcomes of public consultation activities to date, and how this may inform the future vision for Hastings Pier. Stakeholders will spend time in groups reflecting on specific outcomes of the consultation.

**1:00-4:00**

Drop in session open to the public. This is an opportunity to learn about the status of the project, find out the results of the public consultations undertaken to date, and leave further comment on emerging ideas for the redevelopment.

A schools art project, using recycled materials to design a vision for the pier is being held at Ore Valley Adventure Playground on 18th June.

HPWRT's AGM and initial launch of the Community Share offer will be held, at 6pm on 9th June 2011 venue to be advised.

We will begin the process of recruiting a CEO to take us through to the next stage.

As other questions continue to arise we will do our very best to answer them and share with you each development as it happens, please always remember that this is not our pier, it is your pier.

The other exciting news that has broken during the month concerns the Olympic Torch, its journey through Hastings and St.Leonards, and the fact that we have been selected to host the Torch over night on July 17th of next year. This will indeed be a celebration, but the real purpose for bringing the Torch to Hastings is to deflect just a little of the light , that will inevitably fall upon the United Kingdom during this period, towards our Town. And within that reflected light respond to the gaze of the world by showing them what Hastings has to offer as a place to do business, a place to live, and a place just to take a holiday. We must extol the virtues and opportunities that our Town has to offer and convince the world that we have a future, and one that we would like to share with them. Much of the celebration will inevitably take place in our ward, and as such I

would love to hear your views about the shape it should take, and the direction it should follow.

Back in the real world work continues on the problems of Croft Road, with a plan for planting and works to the top end. This will include the filling of several dangerous gullies that have been cut into the verge by the action of storm water, and hopefully creating a more substantial surface for the parked cars. We will also create an impenetrable blackthorn hedge supported by fencing to reduce the likelihood of incidents occurring under the cover of the current soft verges. Lighting has also been improved and the overhanging vegetation has been cut back. I cannot speak highly enough of the support that this project has received from our local Police Officer, the Police Community Support Officer, our own council Officers, and the residents themselves. This project deserves to succeed, and hopefully it will ensure that the quality of life that this locality is entitled to enjoy, will be sustained.

Another topic that continues to blight our ward, along with the rest of the Town, is dog fouling. If the guilty owners adopted the same social accountability as do the vast majority of responsible dog owners who understand the need to exercise hygienic practices, then this problem would be eradicated. We intend to launch a new initiative in the interests of both public hygiene, and improving the image of our Town. But, we are by no means certain that this is the long sought panacea, and I would be really pleased to hear from anyone who has a potential solution, or just a good idea.

I have received no further reports of racially directed graffiti this month, but we must never drop our vigilance in defence of all people to co-exist in peace, and free from abuse. Unfortunately there has been several incidents of trade waste being abandoned in the Old Town, once again creating issues of hygiene for the those whose properties abut the incidents. The Borough Council has acted to remove the immediate threat posed by such insanitary practices, and I am now seeking a longer term strategy to deal with these incidents and other unsocial practices that seem to accompany trade waste removal. Over the holiday period excessive noise emanating from a few establishments

has caused distress to a number of residents. Once again the Licensing Officer and the Noise Pollution Officer have acted promptly to resolve the situation, and the message here is that no one has to suffer the excesses of noise, these people are here to ensure that the conditions that attach themselves to music licenses are observed to the letter.

During this period the new cafe on the Stade has opened, the first public event a storytelling festival has featured in the Community Hall, and the Jerwood remains on course to open later in the year. It is extremely pleasing to see all of these wonderful additions to the Old Town are beginning to become integrated into the community. Jeremy and myself attended the recent HOTRA AGM and spent a pleasant hour in a well attended gathering culminating in an excellent presentation by Elizabeth Gilmore the newly appointed Jerwood Gallery Director. It seems a little bit obvious to report that Hastings enjoyed the company of 20,000 bikers over the May Day weekend, together with the fantastic spectacle once again provided through the Jack in the Green celebrations. It is also important to report that despite a Royal Wedding going off in London, Hastings was not to be outshone as it supported its own Royal Pageant, "Merrie England" to be precise. Under the guiding hand of Roger "Pirate Day" Crouch, the company entertained the crowds in Priory Meadow and then invaded the Old Town with further deliveries of medieval magic. Hastings is second to none in being blessed with the talent to express a "joie de vivre" in as many guises as the imagination can reach out to. Long may it continue.

During the month the petition for a box junction at the Sussex Arms was delivered, let's hope that common sense prevails before a serious accident occurs. The provision of an improved play area at Boyne Road progresses with the Chair of the CVRA continuing to seek out and approach various sources of funding that will support a solution similar to what was demonstrated at Watermill Close in Hollington. During June there is also another exercise taking place in an attempt to locate a site for a younger children's play area somewhere in the vicinity of the Old Town. Amazingly there is no play area for toddlers in perhaps the most entertainment orientated part of the Town, hopefully this will soon change.

A number of traffic related and parking issues remain outstanding and I continue to pursue solutions with the relevant authorities. A very useful meeting took place during the month between the residents of Dudley Road and the student organisations. It soon became obvious that the vast majority of these operators are already working within a self regulated code of conduct that allows for a harmonious relationship to exist between themselves and the residents of Hastings. A meeting is awaited with the remaining operators who were unable to attend this particular gathering such that assurances can be sought that they too will operate in a similarly acceptable manner to the vast majority of their peer group. I cannot stress how important the maintenance of this symbiotic relationship is between Hastings and the student organisations, it represents a significant source of income to a broad spectrum of our population.

I continue to support the groups that fight for improved and extended social care for the elderly. I attended a lively meeting on that subject at the Isobel Blackman Centre, where once again we attempted to elicit the answers to the questions that concern themselves with the available capacity of social care compared with the identified need. An acceptable solution that recognises the rights of all vulnerable and elderly people to be included, is still being sought.

Hopefully by next month I will be able to report significant progress on a number of highway related improvements throughout Old Hastings.

My Kind Regards, John Hodges