

**WARD REPORT - OLD HASTINGS - JULY 2011**  
**COUNCILLOR JOHN HODGES (cllr.john.hodges@hastings.gov.uk or 445540)**

Activity on the pier continues, in terms of developing the design, establishing the legal procedures, and raising the profile of the campaign whilst continuing to raise our part of the contribution in support of the HLF Grant. Legally the Borough Council has served an emergency repairs notice on Ravenclaw which basically informs them that unless they appear from over the horizon within the next seven days, brandishing their cheque book, the Council will commence works in default. This actually means that the £100,000 of stabilisation works, involving a scaffolding support around the area of the bridge, and funded by English Heritage will be put in place. An "away day" where all of the interested parties met to discuss the proposed design and the way forward was held at the White Rock Hotel on July 15th, much interesting discussion ensued which is currently under review by the design group.

Fund raising and profile raising continue unabated, with the launch of a "seaside character board" competition, with opportunities for the winners to have their works exhibited at Coastal Current's Spotlight Event. The Trust also appeared at Tesco's Community Fair on Sunday July 24th and at ASDA in Silverhill the preceding week. Over the months since the HLF announcement, the Trust has been contacted by a wide range of people throughout the UK, all willing to help and offer their expertise to what is proving to be anything but a merely parochial project. Even the BBC have offered us the opportunity to appear on their TV series of "Britain at Risk", which would inevitably bring even greater publicity to our efforts here in Hastings to preserve what is part of our national heritage. But in all of this activity our overriding aims remain to secure through our business case the HLF grant, and to raise our contribution as part of the agreement.

### **SOME FUTURE EVENTS**

#### **06 august Priory Meadow Pier Benefit Day**

**Live entertainment from 11 to 4pm with Andy Knight and guests in aid of Hastings Pier**

#### **13 & 14 August Pestalozzi Village**

**27 august - coastal currents** Decorating the pier gates with magnets as part of the Coastal Currents program. This is a free event around the town from 4pm.

**10 september 2pm Walk & talk about the Pier** Its history, why it is listed & how it will be saved.

#### **11 September 4pm Ukulele Stroll**

**29 September Let's do business** Volunteers always wanted to help on stalls and events throughout the summer. Please contact [lesley@hpwrt.co.uk](mailto:lesley@hpwrt.co.uk) for more details or fill out the volunteer form at [www.hpwrt.co.uk](http://www.hpwrt.co.uk)

Activity continues in support of the Olympic Torch with a further local meeting with LOCOG and the Sussex Police, and a meeting with the representatives of the organisations that will provide the marshals and advice on the evening celebration. Whilst much of the activity that surrounds the passage of the torch around the country is highly prescribed, we have made the strongest possible case for the exposure of the torch to as many parts of Hastings that are possible within the bounds of security, and LOCOG'S own exacting schedule. We will know considerably more about local routes, and other towns through which the torch will pass on the way during November.

I have attended several meetings during this period where the issue of High Speed Broadband has been a major topic of discussion. I will be one of the team representing Hastings on the East Sussex Operational Group who have the responsibility for introducing the package into their respective areas. I am also working very close with the Chamber of Commerce, the Federation of Small Businesses, and the local ISPs (internet service providers), as it is vitally important that we deliver the optimum package for both the needs of business and residents alike. It is important that investment made into this project not only makes broadband available, but also affordable and accompanied by an education package that clearly explains the advantages that this technology can deliver to a business. I would be very pleased to hear the views of anyone who feels that they would benefit from this project, or conversely would like to understand a bit more about its potential.

By now most of you will have heard of the demise of the bid for grant funding to develop St. Mary in the Castle as a youth hub. Unfortunately this is not the only local church with an uncertain future. I attended a meeting with the Church Commissioners, the local Planning Officer and the Conservation Officer amongst others to discuss the future of All Souls Church in Clive Vale. The church has already been offered to other denominations in an effort to maintain its status as a place of worship, but no offers were forthcoming. The next moves involve advertising the building for other suitable and acceptable purposes of a more secular nature, but I suspect that this may prove equally abortive. The church is a grade 2 listed building, constructed in 1890 by Sir Arthur Blomfield in a red brick style in keeping with the late Victorian villas that surround it. Whilst the internal features boast a marble and mosaic reredos, and roof carpentry of the highest quality, it really does not suggest any other practical purpose than that of a place of worship. I have asked that the Church Commissioners provide the local residents with any relevant information regarding the future of the building.

In early July I accompanied Cllr Webb and the Ranger on a tour of Pebsham Countryside Park. The purpose of this visit was to consider a future strategy for this unique combination of original and reclaimed land owned by the Borough but encompassing part of Rother District. This area represents a tremendous opportunity to develop a combination of both leisure and sporting activities, and once completed would allow Hastings to boast country parks, with completely diverse ecologies, at both ends of the Borough. I attended a working dinner with Sir Dexter Hutt and others, who have been involved in the emerging new approach to education in Hastings, such that all of our ideas and observations many very controversial, would be part of the consideration of the way forward. Other meetings that I have attended outside of ward related activity are the East Sussex Strategic Partnership, Hastings & St.Leonards Strategic Partnership, East Sussex Economic Advisory Board, and the advisory group who have revisited the final bid for funding for the Link Road. I appeared before the Quality Bus Partnership to put the case for decreasing the amount of potential parking space given over to bus lay bys in the area of The Bourne and Harold Road Junction. It was agreed that a site meeting would look at the practicality of using a single lay by for south bound journeys on both routes. The net increase here would more than compensate for the single parking place lost in the traffic flow changes at the top of High Street.

I have lodged a complaint with the Highways Department regarding the potential closure of Courthouse Street East in support of building works that are due to take place at the Bourne Chapel. Such a closure would severely hamper the progress of the emergency services, and any large trade vehicles needed in areas east of The Bourne. I continue my efforts for a consultation phase to begin in Rock a Nore as a precursor to the introduction of a no loading ban between say, 10:00am and 4:00pm. This is probably the only way that an unimpeded throughput of traffic can be effected in an area that must be considered as part of the supporting infrastructure for the Jerwood Gallery. In a similar vein I continue to push for a new

TRO that will permit the erection of signs, worded in the strongest permissible language, that coaches are not permitted in Rock a Nore for any normal purpose. It is absolutely essential that the infra structure that supports the Jerwood Gallery is treated as part of the same strategy that brought this piece of cultural capital to Hastings in the first place. As a Town we have just one opportunity to ensure that first impressions count, these must be favourable, or the consequences of any adverse views could count heavily against the contribution that we expect culture to make to our programme of regeneration.

I also attended an excellent Regeneration Symposium held at the Stade Community Hall. All aspects of regeneration were discussed and it gave us the opportunity to reconfirm the buy in by all sections of the community to a refreshed rather than a rewritten, five point plan. July has been an extremely busy month with numerous meetings, one of the more lively ones concerned speeding in Rocklands Lane. I met with both the owner of Rocklands' Caravan Park and the residents of the Lane in an attempt to find a compromise that allows the park to operate, whilst the safety of residents and walkers is maintained. A number of potential solutions were discussed and it is the intention to verify these and to report back to the group at a subsequent meeting. I attended a meeting with Amicus Horizon and the doctors at the Harold Road surgery to discuss the legal implications of a footpath in Lodge Road. Basically it was agreed that with the creation of a new play facility in Boyne Road, that would be shared with children from other housing associations, then a safe route should be part of that facility. A footpath along the north side of Lodge Road, as a continuation of the one that currently terminates at the pharmacy, would represent the ideal solution for both children and residents alike. Amicus have now moved this on a stage and will be going out to tender, and also seeking financial support from other interested parties. I have suggested that both Tesco's and ASDA be approached via their community fund. I have found myself part of the team that under the "Marketing Hastings Strategy", seeks to understand what appears in the gap between Hastings' offer to companies who are seeking to relocate, and the visionary best in class locations that may represent the offers of other towns who also seek inward investment. I would be very appreciative of any inputs. I have supported the Dudley Road residents in their petition to effect more positive controls against the unacceptable situation that has resulted through uncontrolled parking and student behaviour during parts of this year. Hopefully the resolution passed by the Highways and Traffic Management Committee will bring the normality of urban life back to the residents of Dudley Road. Towards the end of the month I undertook what was probably the least onerous of my civic duties when I attended the opening of the "new" Old Town Brewery. It was particularly pleasing to note that the first commemorative brew has revived the old tradition of "church ales" with a donation being made to the Two Towers Trust for every pint sold. This is not only a project of restoration, but it has provided much needed jobs within the Old Town, and without doubt will add to our tourism offer.

Please accept my kindest regards, and should my help be required, I am always on hand.

John Hodges