

## Hastings Old Town Residents' Association

### Open meeting to discuss High Street traffic management

20 October 2010

70 attendees (approx); County and Borough representatives; Chris Tree and Brian Banks (ESCC)

Dick Edwards, chair of HOTRA, welcomed the large turn out and made an opening statement: There is a wide range of views, some have been sent in writing, and this meeting is to collect as many ideas as possible. Key to any deliberations is to recognise the diverse needs of our community. Traders provide a valued service and, of particular importance at the moment, contribute to the local economy and employment. Access is needed for church services, weddings and funerals; cyclists too need safe passage. We need to balance the community needs, as best we can, to ensure that pedestrians are safe and to improve the ambience. No decisions will be made tonight but it should be seen as an opportunity to progress towards consensus.

General point was made that some traders felt they had not been consulted.

Issue raised on various schemes included:

- change could be very disruptive to trade: Lewes was sited. Chris (ESCC) explained that this was due to site-specific problems: culverts etc.
- Disabled parking was sometimes inappropriate: too long and in wrong place. **Jeremy Birch said that marking no loading bays could eliminate that.**
- Narrowing the carriageway could increase danger
- Speed is the problem; suggestion for installation of camera. Chris (ESCC) explained that High St does not meet the criteria: Cameras are restricted to areas with a high crash record (police reported personal injuries crashes) and high average speeds. The High St has a low crash record and an average speed of 24mph. It was noted however that it is estimated that there are 7 unreported incidents for every reported one.
- Signage. Could be bigger/bolder but have to take into account aesthetics in conservation area.
- Large vehicles using High St could be further discouraged. **Jeremy Birch said sign: Unsuitable for.. could be installed.**

- ☒ Enforcement not undertaken. It was unrealistic to expect increased police activity but some residents felt that they were subject to greater vigilance than shoppers. **Jeremy to get stats for numbers of penalty notices.**
- ☒ Paul (ESCC) explained that the aim should be to design out any opportunity to drive badly which diminishes the need for enforcement.
- ☒ Do we need any change? Mixed feelings about this.

There were specific examples of potential change, none of which were universally welcomed, and some would cause problems elsewhere in Croft Rd or Swan Terrace.

Potentially worth pursuing further is the idea of shared space.

*Shared space removes the traditional segregation of motor vehicles, pedestrians and other road users. Conventional road priority management systems and devices such as kerbs, lines, signs and signals are replaced with an integrated, people-oriented understanding of public space, such that walking, cycling, shopping and driving cars become integrated activities.*

For further information, including links to extensive research and examples from Kensington to Ashford, please see: [wikipedia.org/wiki/Shared\\_space](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shared_space)

Chris (ESCC) explained the principles: it is designed to keep speeds low via means such as road surface, raised roadway, removal of kerbs. There is no one model as the measure has to be specific to the street. The aim is to achieve a safe environment with equal rights of way for all users and a maximum vehicle speed of 10mph. This might be a possibility for the High St up to Roebuck St. There are examples of how well this can work around the world and more recently in Brighton and Lewes.

Chris also explained that they were willing to look at schemes and ideas with us. Funding is short and there is a lot of competition, but they looked favourably at schemes that have wide community support and meet their priorities: perception of safety, accessibility, social inclusion, the economy and climate change.

One point we all agreed with was our love of the Old Town; we want to retain it as a 'real' place and not turn it into a sanitised tourist trap.

## **Way forward**

These are complex issues and it was agreed that a small working group might be better placed to look at the detail and report back.