

WARD REPORT – OLD HASTINGS – JULY 2012

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The Team From the pier have been extremely busy finalising the bid for the second round of funding from the Heritage Lottery. The bid which must be submitted in early August, looks to raise some 80% of the estimated cost to rebuild the structure, should the application be successful the Team will be notified by mid November. As with all heritage lottery bids, local support features high on the list of prerequisites for an application for funding to be successful. Quite simply the chances of success can be influenced by the level of demonstrable support, and this is where the general public can play an important part by going to the pier's website www.hpwrts.co.uk and clicking on the support button. When you are on the web site please take the opportunity to look at the plans for the re-built pier featuring sustainable materials and twenty first century technology, but still offering all of the fun of the seaside. With the help of the Heritage Lottery the pier could be open again by Christmas 2014, but your support remains vital to a successful outcome. Whilst the pier will be owned by the Charity itself, the operation of the business venture will become a social enterprise, who will look to develop a community shareholder base in the foreseeable future.

Early in the month both Dawn and I attended an excellent presentation at the Stade Community Hall by Professor Chris Wainwright on the work of various artists who had participated in the Cape Farewell expeditions to the Arctic. This presentation was a natural follow up to the Pi Leau performance, where both performing and visual artists now play a significant and informed role in creating a cultural shift in thinking towards the ever increasing dangers posed to us all by climate change. The

message was further emphasised later in that day by the showing of the film "Burning Ice" at the Electric Palace cinema, filmed during the Disko Bay Expedition where the fragile environmental tipping points of climate change were recorded from firsthand experience. This work, predicated on the potential damage that will be caused to our environment and consequently our lives by climate change, forms part of the Future Cities Project. This is a European wide anticipatory strategy that looks pragmatically at the urban living environment in seeking ways that urban structures might be adapted to encounter the impacts of climate change. Hastings Council is committed to fighting climate change and expresses those ideals through its new Climate Change Strategy and supporting action plan. Already in Hastings eco friendly retrofit programmes have been successfully implemented in Victorian properties, whilst at the other end of the chronological scale the new Sussex Exchange in Queensway is a showcase of beneficial environmental technologies. The programme stretches much wider than just buildings, although constructions such as Jerwood and SCCH are exemplars of environmental efficiency, it also takes contributions from our transport policy. Not just the encouragement for the usage of public transport, but actively supporting the increasing usage of cycles and the introduction of the "Greenways Scheme" that will allow both cyclists and walkers to move around the Town using alternative but safe routes. All of this activity places Hastings green credentials in terms of carbon dioxide reduction, right at the top of the list of many other towns and cities in the UK, and the lowest of all the local authorities in East Sussex, a quantifiable testament to our record of significant environmental achievements, making us the "greenest council" this Town has ever had.

The arrival of "The Boat" at the Stade on July 6th was another memorable event. A good crowd including both the Mayor and Deputy Mayor welcomed "Collective Spirit" to Hastings accompanied by a group of local shanty singers. Following this

came the more traditional event of the blessing of the sea delivered by the Rev. Robert Featherstone, and supported by the Rev. Peter Shaw of the Fisherman's Mission, and Father Joseph from St. Mary Star of the Sea. The events that accompanied "Collective Spirit", which was the winning commission for the south East's part of the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad, consisted of project art works exhibition of recordings, together with a gallery spotlight tour at the Jerwood, and a presentation and talk on the Boat Project at the Stables, whilst a two day "singathon" took place around the Old Town. Another remarkable weekend of cultural activities at Hastings.

Not unnaturally the sea provides a major theme in many of the activities in Old Hastings, cultural or otherwise. And in celebration of this important link it is proposed to hold a traditional Herring Fair this year. Pelagic herring is one of the species certified as sustainable by the Marine Stewardship Council, it is taken in a drift net of prescribed mesh, and described as an oily fish with several health promoting attributes. The fair will be held on the traditional weekend nearest to St. Clement's Day, which falls on November 23rd. Another not to be missed event on the Stade.

One of the longest running episodes of annoyance to local residents in the ward has been the management of the old Clive Vale Hotel during its extended conversion into housing association properties. It has been a continual round of uncontrolled nuisance, producing dust, dirt, noise, and a general lack of consideration towards the long suffering local residents. The whole project would appear to have been mismanaged with overruns on the contractual finishing date, less than complete observance of Health and Safety requirements, and evidence of poor workmanship. The Housing Association have eventually terminated the original development contract and made a new award to a different company, who already would appear to have adopted a more understanding attitude towards the local

population. Unfortunately these shortcomings in the original development contract fall outside of the remit of the Planning Department, although of course all deviations from Health and Safety legislation can be dealt with, at least initially, at a local level. It is these consequences of a badly managed contract that we as councillors must find a way of addressing, before they can be repeated as a matter of course in future developments.

Having been instrumental in bringing the Olympic Torch and its accompanying road show to Hastings there was no one more pleased than myself that it materialised as a great success. There were huge crowds, no rain even a glimmer of sunshine, some tremendous entertainment, lots of emotion, and some brilliant organisation once again from Kevin Boorman and his Team. Behind the scenes the sheer weight of paperwork that had to be developed in support of the safety case, and the logistics of security for such an event is pure mind boggling. The whole occasion had the precision of a military operation about it, with the emergency services, LOCOG, the sponsors and our own council all operating in unison to deliver a tremendous spectacle, our thanks must go out to them all.

Under a blazing July sun (how long have we waited to write that opener) 14,231 pirates assembled on the beach at Pelham Place, and together wrenched the Guinness world record away from Penzance. As we pointed out to these good Cornish folk, our record was only ever lent. Another amazing day in Hastings supplemented with an aerobatics display from the Red Arrows, all of this entertainment orchestrated once again by Roger Crouch and his fantastic team of helpers.

Parking, or the lack of it, has always been a significant shortcoming within the Old Town's comprehensive tourism offer. Over the last couple of years we have approached a number of organisations who have potential parking space within their gift in the hope that they would be prepared to share it with the community. Now some good news has come from the Stables

Trust who have agreed to make available up to ten spaces throughout the day up until 06:00pm, Monday through to Saturday. The 06:00pm cut off will allow evening priority to be given to their own patrons attending performances at the theatre, and additionally there is a concession allowing free parking overnight from 08:00pm until 10:00am. The cost of the allocated daily parking will be £40 per month, which equates to £1:60 per day. Anyone interested in availing themselves of this scheme should contact the Stables directly at (parking@stabl.es).

As Old Town Carnival Week is now upon us with its myriad of activities for the whole community, it would be very easy for this report to extend to the proportions of "War and Peace". Therefore we will draw a line under July with the continued assurance that both Dawn and I are there to support you all in any problems that might beset you, and are within our gift to resolve.

Kind Regards, Dawn Poole & John Hodges