

## WARD REPORT – OLD HASTINGS – SEPTEMBER 2012

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The really great news this month that the Minister of State has agreed to the compulsory purchase of the pier by HBC, has moved its renovation a massive stride further forward. The Hastings Pier and White Rock Trust now await November's decision by the Heritage Lottery Fund that can result in the funding being made available for the renovation works to commence . The Trust still continues with its plans to raise the matched funding that is part of the exercise, and once the total funding is in place HBC can then take up the CPO, and progress the immediate vesting of the structure into the hands of the Trust. During the month the Pier Trust, supported by the hospitality of the White Rock Hotel, hosted a Heritage Open Day as part of the Borough wide programme of sharing our history and heritage with visitors and residents alike. Several of the visitors had come from some distance to hear about the history of our pier, and to understand the proposals for its renovation. It is very encouraging to see that support for this project extends well beyond the confines of the Borough. Once again I would ask all of you to visit the pier's website ([www.hpwrtr.co.uk](http://www.hpwrtr.co.uk)) and to record your support for this mammoth task of restoration.

Earlier this month the question of Hastings' evening economy was discussed by two different groups, Town Centre Management Board, and an independent team comprising the Police, Council Officers and Members, pub and hotel proprietors, representatives of academia, and the Students Union. The objective of these groups was to seek improvement in both an evening offer, and the opportunity to increase trade. We continue to lose a significant proportion of student business through lack

of acceptable facilities, and the sort of affordable offer that would appeal to this part of society. The problem is further compounded by a virtually non-existent public transport solution that could serve any of this group who chose to spend their leisure time in Hastings after about 06:00pm. The question of a quality night club was once again raised, together with the current review of the Borough's Saturation Policy, these are not mutually exclusive ends, but before any new establishment can be created it must clearly demonstrate that it would not preclude the maintenance of the four main objectives of the Licensing Act 2003. As a holiday town it is vital that we develop an evening economy that promotes economic growth and creates increased employment opportunities, but at the same time seeks to deliver a balance between these needs and the rights of local residents to be free of consequential nuisance. It was indeed most encouraging to see that everyone present understood the necessity of this balance, and also the impact of several other factors that are now being considered that included car park opening times, evening transport issues, and a general encouragement to input into the review of the Saturation Policy. Those with responsibilities for any of these contributory issues will be invited to attend the next meeting of the independent group.

In my role as a councillor I attend the SME Commission, which meets at County Hall and is supported by ESCC, as the Hastings representative seeking ways in which barriers to business growth can be removed. We also consider how it would be possible to site a springboard to help these businesses, and the jobs they would consequently provide for the community. I am also a member of the East Sussex Economic Advisory Board which considers all forms of investment that could be brought into East Sussex, from relocating companies, potential investors attracted by the success of our cluster industries, or by promoting our business case through the LEP. I remain absolutely convinced that the key to a better future for Hastings lies in the eradication or reduction in the huge level of unemployment that

is the root cause of the many symptoms that manifest themselves as poverty and deprivation, holding back the development of our communities in their devastating wake. I have been working on a trade exhibition and seminar for one of our technical clusters, hopefully to be staged at SCCH in the Spring. This will provide a golden opportunity for this section of industry to let the world know what is being produced in Hastings despite all of the problems, from poor communications and its supporting infrastructure, that are ranged up against it. This will enable potential investors to understand why technology developed in Hastings is playing a role in the Large Hadron Collider used by CERN, and roving around Mars on the "Curiosity" probe. Attracting the sort of investment that we so desperately need to create jobs, relies heavily on creating confidence in the sustainability of our industries, and the examples provided by the role models who have driven Hastings' made product into the market places of the world. Together we can move Hastings forward, but we have to focus on what we are good at which includes several notable successes from tourism and culture, through to the development of some of the most advanced technological solutions on Earth. Despite all of this future promise we must never forget the social ills that are with us today. We must support the continuing improvements in basic education, fight for the retention of our hospital services, provide in a caring and adequate way for our elderly citizens and other vulnerable sections of the community, but above all seek to reduce the gap that still exists between the basics of life prevalent in Hastings, compared with the standards that are enjoyed in the rest of the County. We must by the application of our inherent skills and endeavours raise the standard of the socio-economic conditions that hold our communities back, and continue to reduce life expectancy in many of the more deprived wards within the Borough.

One revelation that has begun to dawn upon the community, quite possibly as a result of the recessive financial pressures that

continue to hold business expansion and development in check, is that we are all more likely to succeed if business, academia and all of the other stakeholders can come together in a symbiotic relationship for future prosperity, especially for our young people. I have attended several seminars locally where employers and teachers have come together to explore the opportunities that would be presented by this closer relationship. It has become apparent that this affinity can be further enhanced by the introduction of parental involvement which is instrumental in the formation of many of a young person's distinguishing characteristics, and independent non-related mentors who can impart that other quality of resilience that allows the disappointments of knocks and failures to be taken on as part of normal progression. For so long schools and colleges have raised the aspirations of our young people only for circumstances to conspire in the prevention of their delivery. Hopefully this new relationship that we are trying to create will provide an ever increasing supply of trained and motivated young people, complemented by the new industrial buildings that will accompany the Link Road and rise in North Queensway, and together afford an unequalled offer to those looking to invest or to relocate their businesses into such an inviting environment.

Without a doubt the social highlight of the month in the ward, and indeed the whole County, was the magnificent Seafood and Wine Festival. Not just my view, but one shared by over fifty thousand others who made their way to the Stade Community Space on a warm September weekend. This Festival just gets bigger and better by the year, not only for the stallholders and their customers but for the whole community who share in its bountiful opportunities. Once again our thanks and congratulations must go out to Kevin Boorman and his unrivalled team of organisers, now annually faced with the ultimate challenge of surpassing their previous performances. Up until this last week the weather has indeed been kind to Hastings and its traders, making up for an almost washed out Spring, and bringing

a sense of normality to what could have been a disastrous year's trading. We continue to address a number of problems associated with anti social behaviour, which in these instances manifest themselves in the Country Park as impediments to the enjoyment of our citizens in this beautiful environment. Action will be taken to ensure that this natural gem will continue to be enjoyed by all who appreciate the blessings that it bestows on our Town, for both our citizens and the all important visitors that it attracts.

Please don't hesitate to contact either Dawn or myself with any problems that might be concerning you, and are within our gift to resolve.

Kind Regards, Dawn Poole & John Hodges