

Hastings Old Town Residents Association

December 2012 Parish News

Quentin Blake

Patron of our Storytelling Festival has kindly produced a 100 special posters for 2012 and signed and donated them. They are on sale at Nelson House Antiques, High Street for £10. An exceptional Christmas gift. Thank you Quentin. [Nearly 300 people attended his book signing].

Courthouse Street

It is now over 4 years since a packed meeting at the Jenny Lind agreed to ask East Sussex to pedestrianize the street. There have been many tedious delays and reasons for its failure – most especially the unwillingness of Sussex Police to enforce. Both residents and traders want the street to be safer. Now a lockable gate is proposed with all affected having a key. Once approved it should meet peoples wishes. Thanks to Cllr John Hodges who has worked hard behind the scenes to get this to happen.

Festivals with many facets

The Old Town lends itself to events for all of us to enjoy. The calendar used to comprise Jack in the Green, Old Town Week with Carnival, and the Bonfire parade at the end of Hastings Week. With the new Open Space and Stade Hall there is now the structure to do so much more. 2012 has seen events – big and small– drawing many people to the Old Town. This means that local businesses now have a steady stream of people spending money. Elsewhere in the country, especially at seaside towns, the impact of the recession is visible in the empty shops. Yet here both George Street and the High Street have been enjoying a continuing boost through these events.

The Arts Council and Hastings Council have supported these by specific grants. That means that most events are free. The huge cuts from next April will have an impact on the Arts groups. But soon after the reduction will affect retail activity. Local traders will have to find ways

to help support these events. The Hastings Storytelling Festival reaches many people, especially children and has provided some first class moments for the Spoken Word to happen.

Of course the most celebrated festival for 2,000 years takes place in the darkest month. However you choose to celebrate – **enjoy Yuletide.**