

WARD REPORT - OLD HASTINGS - MARCH 2013

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General Issues

Well finally the long awaited words that moves mere aspiration into real action have come from the Heritage Lottery Fund. Acknowledgement that sufficient funds are in place for a start to be made on the redevelopment of Hastings Pier, with the keys now officially handed over to the Trust. But this is not the end of the story, it is more like a new beginning. Further funding still needs to be raised through the community share offer and the "sponsor a plank" scheme such that the final gap in the capital funding can be bridged, and some working funds made available for the project. In parallel with the fund raising exercise the Borough Council needs to apply for the vesting order, so that ownership following the compulsory purchase order, can be seamlessly transferred to the pier trust. The next month or so will be an intense period of paperwork, and the final dotting of all of the "Is" and the crossing of all of the "Ts" that will complete what is effectively Phase One of this huge project to restore its pier to the citizens of Hastings. In parallel with the start of Phase Two of this project which could well commence in June of this year, maintenance and reconstruction, the Community showroom should begin to take shape and provide an interface between the public and the Pier Trust providing information on progress of both fund raising and restoration.

Ward Issues

Earlier this month I attended a meeting of the Old Town Traders at the Jenny Lind where officially the new trader's association was formed. HOTTA which is its acronym, comes into being at a time of financially straitened circumstances where the current state of the market place makes trading a most parlous occupation. Hopefully the strength of a trading organisation covering the whole of the Old Town will provide a loud voice and a big stick when changes to the Old Town's infrastructure are planned, that could adversely affect commercial opportunities in what is still an economy in

convalescence. This is a very sensible move by the Traders as I am sure that there will be future commercial opportunities that will provide benefits through the economies of scale presented by a larger organisation. During the month the Fairlight Art's Trust presented the designs of the two finalists for the Pelham roundabout project. The choice lay between "Helter Skelter" by Henry Krokatsis, and "Standing Wave" by Saint Clair Cemin around five hundred people visited the display and gave feedback on their preferred choice. This is yet another example of the cultural regeneration that is sweeping through Hastings and placing it firmly at the top end of the list of cultural destinations to visit. It is this long list of improvements over a wide spectrum of human interests, that includes our cultural heritage and the many new additions that have moved Hastings into the "premiership" of artistic sophistication, and made possible our bid to become the UK City of Culture for 2017. Hastings together with its partner Bexhill will join ten other notable destinations in vying for this accolade. This alone is indicative of the cultural fraternity that Hastings has now become part of, and with its yearly cycle of festivals it can rival anywhere in the United Kingdom as a destination of discerning choice.

Old Hastings has long been home to any number of excellent inns and taverns, all serving a wide choice of both good food and drink. It is therefore extremely gratifying to report that the ultimate local accolade has been awarded to Mark Little and his family at the Dolphin Inn. This of course is CAMRA's award for being judged as the South East Sussex pub of the year, and moves the Dolphin on into competition for a regional award. The judgement is made under a number of criteria which includes the staff, and the general ambience prevalent in the establishment, but perhaps the most significant factor is the quality and range of beers on offer. In this Mark has used the same model that sets the very best restaurant apart from the others by offering a range of high quality products, varying in taste and gravity and in doing so has created a liquid menu with an appeal to the widest possible discerning audience. The wider benefits that come out of such an award is that for the many local brewers who now have their products on sale at the Dolphin they will enjoy the benefits of knowing that they are being presented to the public under the very highest standards of inn-keeping and hospitality.

Once again I am in discussion with Amicus, our main social housing provider, in a further attempt to convince them of the need to provide a simple footpath along the side of the un-adopted Lodge Road, that runs alongside the Clive Vale Reservoirs. Amicus have made several abortive attempts to repair the surface of the road, but as I pointed out on several occasions an un-kerbed road will not retain centrally placed material, it will merely migrate back to the sides. Hopefully they will see sense and make the necessary improvements to this track that is used by many of the local residents to access the bus routes, shops, doctors, and several schools. During the month I once again attended a green focussed event this time concentrating on renewable energies, energy conservation, and recycling. The conference was run under the ACE banner (Answers to the Carbon Economy) to which both HBC and ESEID are participating partners, and it took place at the Sussex Exchange itself being an example of an energy efficient building. ACE is a European cooperation project which was set up to deliver the answers to a deteriorating environment brought about by the effects of climate change. The subjects under discussion ranged from the basic principles of recycling, to which we can all contribute, through concepts of voltage optimisation where the incoming UK voltage is reduced to the level where all of the energy is useful and you pay for it as this figure, through to several sources of alternative energy. Particularly interesting, especially to Hastings with its position by the sea, was the work being done in the generation of wave energy through its application to a turbine principle. Whilst the wind may not blow, water may freeze over, and sources of carbon fuel will become depleted the one certainty is that the tide will come in and go out twice a day, I watch this particular concept with growing interest.

For your interest I append to this report a brief explanation of how the new management of on-street parking will operate throughout Hastings with effect from Tuesday April 2nd. I should be please to take up any concerns that you might hold, and attempt to find the assurances that will effect a smooth transition of ownership.

Please do not hesitate to contact either Dawn or myself with any concerns that you might have, and are within our gift to resolve.

Kind Regards Dawn Poole and John Hodges

Dear Councillor,

Just a reminder that on Easter Monday the Parking Management Agreement between the County Council and Hastings Borough Council comes to an end and responsibility for on-street parking reverts to the County Council. We have worked closely with Borough Council colleagues over many months to ensure a smooth transition; on-street Parking Enforcement Officers will transfer from the Borough Council to our contractor NSL and back-office staff will transfer to the County Council Parking Team.

David Weeks is the County Council Parking Manager, who oversees parking enforcement in Lewes District, Eastbourne and Hastings. David and his team are largely based in Eastbourne, but those back-office (notice processing) staff transferring from HBC will be based in Ocean House. Both David Weeks and the NSL Regional Manager, James Graydon, will be present in Hastings next week to welcome new staff and ensure a smooth hand-over from HBC.

There will be a couple of noticeable differences from Tuesday 2nd April; enforcement staff will wear blue NSL uniforms; and there will be a new Parking Shop. Parking permits and general advice including payment of parking tickets will switch from Aquila House to a new parking shop. The address for the Parking Shop is 32e Kings Road, St. Leonards-on-Sea, TN37 6DX.

HBC has traditionally employed 'coach stackers' to manage the drop off and collection of passengers at various coach points along the seafront, and NSL will continue this function from May until the end of August 2013. The Borough Council will continue to manage off-street car parks.

Further information is available in the following press release:

<http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/yourcouncil/pressoffice/pressreleases/2013/03/3808.htm>
and also on the County Council website.

If you have any immediate concerns please do not hesitate to contact me or my Head of Service Nick Skelton. Alternatively contact David Weeks direct. Would you be good enough to forward this to your respective group Borough Councillors.

Kind regards,

Karl Taylor
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East Sussex County Council
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