

## WARD REPORT - OLD HASTINGS - JUNE 2013

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### **General issues**

Sussex Police issue regular Community Messages directed at both residents and traders. They contain much practical information and most importantly a variety of contact points that could prove most useful. This is a message for June 2013.

Here is early June's issue from Sussex Police for your information. If you would like to subscribe to this weekly message please contact Lucy Paffett [Lucy.Paffett@sussex.pnn.police.uk](mailto:Lucy.Paffett@sussex.pnn.police.uk) at Sussex Police with your name, email address and postcode area. The postcode is used to inform you of incidents in your specific postcode area.

### **Our values**

We, the officers, staff and volunteers of Sussex Police are committed to public service, first and foremost."

We will act with compassion, personal responsibility and courage to do the right thing for the public we serve.

Our commitment to justice means we will always treat people fairly and according to their needs.

We will be innovative and keep looking for ways to improve our service.

These shared values are the foundation of everything we do. Email to report an incident [contactcentre@sussex.pnn.police.uk](mailto:contactcentre@sussex.pnn.police.uk)

Non emergency and information call 101 (15p for entire call)

In an emergency call 999

We were all aware of our Towns aspirations towards becoming the city of Culture in 2017, which were so cruelly dashed earlier this month, but another announcement has most definitely made our stock rise. The Academy of Urbanism has announced the three towns shortlisted for the Great Town section of its 2014 Urbanism awards and Hastings is one of them. The Academy is a self-funded, politically independent organisation led by over 500 leaders, thinkers and practitioners involved in the social, cultural, economic, political and physical development of villages, towns and cities. They were formed in

2006 to recognise, learn from, and promote excellence in great place making.

Cllr Jeremy Birch, Leader Hastings Borough Council commented: "We know we are a great town, in fact with 1066 the most famous town in the world. So it's great to see such a prestigious body as the Academy for Urbanism recognising the qualities Hastings has too."

"This could not have come at a more pertinent time we thought, as we had just submitted our bid for City of Culture status. To be recognised and selected as a finalist in 'The Great Town' category by the Academy can only help to support our bid for this prestigious title." Unfortunately in terms of the city of Culture this was not to be, although we still carry the torch for our hopes of being selected as a Great Town".

Those shortlisted for the Great Town as well as those shortlisted for the other category places will each be visited by a team of Academicians during the summer months to compile an assessment report. Subsequent voting by Academicians will determine this year's winners, which will be announced at the Awards Ceremony taking place at The Grand Connaught Rooms in London on 8 November 2013.

The council has agreed its programme for the coming year, in which we have managed to maintain levels of services, and avoid major cuts, in spite of big reductions in government grant. And there are some new ideas we'll be looking into, for example the council will be examining the possibility of setting up its own local lettings agency. With a large private rented sector in Hastings, and few new social rented houses being built, the private sector is likely to be increasingly significant, and this would help to make sure it's properly regulated, and that good landlords are encouraged. Coupled with our existing licensing scheme for Houses in Multiple Occupation, and a proposed scheme for other private rented properties, it would enhance the council's role in improving the quality of housing in this sector, which has in the past provided some very poor quality accommodation. Working with responsible local landlords, this could help to improve the overall quality of the sector.

There were a few delays with the original planned handover date of Hastings Pier to the Pier Trust, but these were technical, and involved getting all the right paperwork and permissions in place. This has now been done, and the actual date for the handover will be announced imminently. We will then start on the 'vesting' process, which involves giving a four-week notice period

of the council's intention to take ownership, following which the pier is immediately transferred to the Pier Trust. So the big handover (lots of TV, handshakes, giant keys, that sort of thing) will certainly be taking place this summer, and work on the pier (initially to demolish the fire damaged remains of the old ballroom) will take place straight after that. The target date for completion and opening of the renovated pier is still December 2014. For the latest newsletter on the pier click here <http://bit.ly/11qWCeJ>

Once again Hastings is to the fore in matters green this time receiving a well deserved visit from the world's foremost environmental organisation in recognition of our sustainable fishery. The Greenpeace ship Arctic Sunrise recently visited Hastings, and a number of my colleagues had the privilege of visiting it. The ship was here to promote sustainable fishing practices, and to support Hastings as a sustainable fishery. The Arctic Sunrise was built as an ice breaking supply ship and helicopter carrier, so is normally used by Greenpeace in their work in the Arctic. It's on a world tour, during which it will promote Hastings internationally as a good example of how commercial fishing can be carried out sustainably and responsibly, a tremendous accolade for our commitment to the preservation of our environment.

Very pleasingly the Hastings Academy on the old Hillcrest site and the St Leonards Academy on the site of Filsham Valley School, have both been graded "good" following their recent Ofsted inspections. This brings tremendous credit on the staff, the children, and indeed the Principals who have led these two academies through great unrest, disruption, and fundamental change. This is a long way from the very disappointing results being recorded by both schools three or four years ago. Dudley Infants along with two primaries in the town has decided to become an academy under the umbrella of the Academy Trust led by Brighton University that already manages the Hastings and the St Leonards Academies.

## **Local Issues**

Earlier this month I attended a follow up meeting with ESCC where the outcomes of last autumn's traffic census were shown and subsequently discussed. Surprisingly there has been a decrease in the number of vehicles between 2005 and 2012 statistically traversing the High Street as a means of circumventing The Bourne. This may of course be down to other factors such as a reduced usage of private cars through increased fuel and other associated

costs. However, similar statistics highlighted the continuing illegal use of Courthouse Street as another part of the "rat run". This latest information has allowed ESCC's Highways Department to put together a number of schemes aimed at reducing the level of through traffic, and increasing pedestrian safety, in the High Street. Altogether nine potential schemes were examined and a number were discounted as being impractical or creating as many problems as they solved. The final scheme which will go out to public consultation draws upon the best parts of several other ideas, and recognises within its solution the most salient of the points that formed the original citizen's petition. In keeping with all other changes that affect Old Town life, what will be put forward is almost certain to be a compromise, but first indications suggest that the benefits that it can bring will outweigh anything that might be lost. I will keep you informed as to the date of any public consultation.

One of the most innovative Saturdays on the Stade this year was created by passing the stage over to Future Talent, a Hastings based organisation run by young people for young people. "Reach for Tomorrow" was the showcase in which up and coming, and as yet unplugged, local musicians were exposed to a discerning and appreciative audience. Such an event, within a season long programme of musical production, provides a significant platform for young artists performing across a broad spectrum of musical expression. Surely for a Town so rich in such talent this sort of exposure could provide a springboard into a career of musical entertainment for any whose offerings caught the public imagination. The season on the Stade continues onwards with a superb variety of entertainment, the programme for which can be found here [http://www.hastings.gov.uk/community\\_living/2013\\_events/stade\\_saturdays/#jun](http://www.hastings.gov.uk/community_living/2013_events/stade_saturdays/#jun)

Further good news for Hastings this month has come by way of architectural achievement. Our community is celebrating after the Town's Jerwood Gallery was given a 2013 National Award by the Royal Institute of British Architects. The only other building in the South east to win an award, a music building at the University of Kent, was designed by Tim Ronalds Architects, who also designed Stade Hall, eat@The Stade and the Stade Open Space for Hastings Borough Council . This is really excellent news for Hastings, especially as we await the decision on the UK City of Culture 2017 shortlist. We

pride ourselves on our Town's appearance with the Jerwood Gallery being a major contributor, and we take a very hard line on our 'grotbusting' approach to untidy and derelict buildings. Such awards show that it's not just about our existing buildings, but about investing for the future. To have a national award winner here in Hastings is a fantastic achievement, and we all pay tribute to the Jerwood Foundation, and HAT Projects, their architects. And it would be churlish not to congratulate Tim Ronalds Architects, who designed our own buildings on the Stade, on their national award as well.

The county highways department are still progressing with the replacement of the retaining wall outside of nos 75/77 Harold Road. Orders have just been issued to BT and UKPN (electricity) to divert their cables out of the way of the works. A date is still awaited by when these companies will do this. The highways section have a completed design for the replacement but cannot yet give a date for completion beyond saying it will be this year. They are being pressed for a timescale and for it to be as speedy as they are able to make it.

A not inconsiderable amount of Traffic chaos took over the Mount Road area earlier in the month owing to the water company's contractor trying to locate the source of a leak. While we have to accept emergency work has to be carried out by public utilities, their record of liaising with the highways authority (and of properly making good the affected area of road before they leave) is not especially good. Emergency or not it shouldn't require a multi-agency approach to bring order and sanity back to what is unfortunately an everyday occurrence in one place or another. The County Council has decided to implement a permit scheme whereby instead of just informing the highway authority about its intention to carry out works in the area, a public utility will need to book time on the highway through a permit. This wouldn't necessarily cover emergency works like leaks but hopefully it will lead to a more ordered relationship between the highway authority and the public utilities and them working to an agreed standard.

One particular annoyance to many traders in the vicinity of Rock a Nore car park is the continual requests for change to feed the adjacent parking meters. Clearly this problem is not peculiar to Hastings, as ESCC are currently investigating a possible introduction of cashless parking. This innovation

coupled with a form of "pay on exit" would go a long way to reducing both the need for small change, and the headlong dash back to the car park when you fear that you have expended your time. Depending upon the outcome of the exercise, it may be possible to consider such a scheme here in Hastings.

Please do not hesitate to contact myself with any concerns that you might have with regards to the ward, and are within my gift to resolve.

*Kind Regards John Hodges*