

**WARD REPORT - OLD HASTINGS - OCTOBER 2013**  
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**or 445540)**

## **General issues**

Hastings Pier Trust has launched its community share issue, to raise additional funding for Hastings Pier. Shares will cost £100 each, and each share, or indeed block of shares, will give one vote only per person at shareholder meetings. This means that the shares will give the holder some influence in the future of the pier, although day-to-day decisions will of course still be made by the trustees and the chief executive. The shares won't be 'tradable', but the Pier Trust is hoping to pay a dividend on the shares after three years. There has been some criticism of the cost of a share, but in the end this is primarily a fund raising exercise and if you set the price of a share too low, the cost of issue and administration comes to more than the money raised. In the end though, the price is a decision for the Pier Trust. We're hoping they'll allow shares to be owned by a collective, so a group of people can get together to buy a single share. You can register an interest in the shares, and download a copy of the full share prospectus at:

<http://www.hpcharity.co.uk/share-offer-document/>

But preliminary work continues on the pier, with demolition of the ballroom still on schedule for the winter, and the visitor centre opening in the upper part of White Rock Baths in December.

I believe that it is always pleasing to let our residents know of the very active part many of the council's own employees play in helping good causes. On this occasion it involved a significant contribution to the Macmillan Cancer Support Charity, where staff from Aquila House raised a superb £477:84. This is an outstanding achievement and they outdid ourselves from last year. I believe that this calls for a massive thank you to everyone who donated, baked and helped at this year's Macmillan Coffee Morning. I know that it is their intention to carry on this fantastic support to the community during next year.

Residents in Hastings and St Leonards will be receiving their annual voter registration form through the post. Return your form as soon as possible to make sure you don't lose your right to vote ahead of Local and European elections in May next year. Forms are being sent to households across the borough, asking residents to update their details before the revised register is

published on Monday 17 February 2014.

If you don't receive your form by the end of October call 01424 451087 and ask for one to be sent to you.

Visit [www.hastings.gov.uk/elections](http://www.hastings.gov.uk/elections) for further information.

Hastings Borough Council has been working very hard to prevent homelessness and recent statistics show that Hastings has achieved the highest number of homelessness preventions per head of population in the country. The tables published by the Department for Communities & Local Government show that Hastings has achieved 47.2 preventions per 1,000 households with the rest of East Sussex achieving considerably fewer: Rother 11.57, Wealden 10.02, Eastbourne 6.90 and Lewes 6.34 It is very pleasing that the figures indicate that we are the best per head of population in the country, for preventing people from losing their homes. It really is excellent news when you consider the size of some authorities, such as Birmingham, Manchester and Nottingham which were also ranked very high. Becoming homeless has a devastating impact on people's lives which is why stopping it happening is a top priority for us. We are facing very difficult times and this government's welfare reforms are impacting negatively on our residents, many of whom are finding it hard to make ends meet and keep a roof over their heads. Our new homelessness strategy will build on the success of the previous one which helped to increase homelessness preventions year on year, significantly reduced the use of expensive temporary accommodation, and reduce youth homelessness.

The council agreed unanimously at the meeting of Cabinet on Monday 07 October to adopt a new Homelessness Strategy for the next two years. The three priorities contained in the strategy are to prevent and minimise homelessness, to improve access to good quality well managed accommodation in the private sector, and to ensure access to housing advice and information. We will continue to work together with our partners to prevent homelessness and support those facing difficulties. We are a proactive council who ensure that our limited resources are used effectively to support those in need. Although our homelessness prevention rate is excellent there will be great pressure on us over the coming years as the impact of the continuing welfare reforms are felt.

Many of you may not be aware of the recent investment made in an upgrading and refurbishment of our local leisure complex. Summerfields

Leisure Centre in Bohemia Road showed off the extensively refurbished facilities at an open day last month. Families were invited to take part in a wide range of activities and taster sessions, available free on the day, including trampolining, bouncy castle, splash fun, aerobics classes and gym orientation. Hastings Borough Council and Freedom Leisure have invested over £200,000 in improvements to the facilities on offer at the leisure centre. There are now two new dance and fitness studios, a new indoor cycling studio with my ride virtual software, and a new holistic studio. The gym has been relocated and kitted out with new equipment, air conditioning and TVs and there are also new meeting and conference facilities. I would thoroughly recommend to you all a visit to explore this splendid new facility, with so much on offer there really is something for everyone.

How do Hastings people rate Hastings; pretty well according to the results of the recent Place survey of local people commissioned by the borough council and the Local Strategic Partnership. Three quarters of us think the town offers something for everyone. And an equal percentage think there's plenty of things for families and that there's a lot of large public events. 85% of us say there are plenty of good restaurants and cafes. However, Hastings people are not so sure about the town's night life, only 53% agreeing it's good and among 16-25 year olds, just 35% agreeing. But, 54% of us feel safe outside in our local area (up from 39% four years ago) and 76% of us feel that people from different backgrounds get on well together (up from 70% four years ago). Overall 75% of Hastings residents are satisfied with their local area.

We are very encouraged by these responses. In very testing economic times when local authorities are having to cut back on spending the outlook of local people has improved. They feel safer, they feel we all get on together and they are very positive about much of what goes on. There are important areas we know we have to improve on and the survey reinforces that. We do want to improve our night-time economy for students and young people. Street cleaning is a constant challenge and only half of local people feel it's good. I hope the introduction of 7,000 seagull-proof bags can really help us do better. We are really pleased with the results on our cultural scene with increased satisfaction in arts events and exhibitions, live music and especially festivals and events, which 84% of people rate as good. Parks and open spaces win the day with an 87% satisfaction rating. Surveys like this can be very helpful in letting us know what local people think is good, and not so good about the town, and therefore directing us to where we must put in more improvement measures.

Through my responsibilities for inward investment into the Town, I have been putting together for some months an event that could provide a platform for many of the high vacuum, photo electronic, and advanced manufacturing industries that have formed what is known as a cluster. This is technically a localised sector producing similar products, for similar customers, and very often sharing the outputs of the same sub-contracting companies that have formed a value chain. Well The High Vacuum Cluster Fair has come and gone, and has been heralded by all concerned as a tremendous success, with just one question outstanding.....as to what we will do next year ! Tec 66 took place jointly at the Sussex Exchange and at SCCH where many of our local schoolchildren and students were enthralled, and hopefully attracted towards a career in science, by both Maggie Philbin and Maggie Aderin-Pocock. This pair of "ambassadors for the impact of science on the future" also presented to a more mature audience at the Sussex Exchange, and enjoyed a very similar reception because of their fascinating way of holding a room in awe of the way they would break down the wonders of the universe into simple layman's terms. Beyond the "Maggies" a number of technical speakers presented on new aspects of the high vacuum business, to an industry based audience, which was also tremendously well received. The exhibition played on in the background attracting new business from a customer base as far afield as the United States and Australia, a truly cosmopolitan response to a new concept in promoting yet another strand of the fantastic variety that exists in "famously futuristic" Hastings.

It is hoped that this concept of cluster fairs can be used in promoting other groupings of talented artisans that have their basis in Hastings. Certainly the creative's cluster that abounds in this Town and encompasses skills from the basic artist through to web site builders and animators, is a very obvious contender. Such talent is born out of the culture that fills Hastings, and emanates from every facet of that attribute. I am certain that such a platform would provide the exposure for this talented cluster to those who can provide the commercial opportunities that could turn this latent genius into a sustainable business.

## **Local Issues**

Once again the consequences of the never ending saga of the replacement wall in Harold Road have come to the fore. A combination of the closure of Harold Road, and its diversion route via Dudley Road, with the continuing practice of "rat running" down several of the north/south running

roads of Clive Vale, has made life troublesome and difficult for many local residents. I have taken the matter up on several occasions with the Highway's Director at ESCC, over both the problems caused as a direct result of diverted traffic, and the ever changing completion date. I now have a promise that Harold Road will reopen as a single carriageway under traffic light control in both directions, on November 24th. This will mean that the diversion on Dudley Road will be lifted, and a completion date for the whole exercise has been given as mid January 2014. In mitigation of ESCC's role in all of this, the real problem has been caused by delays in moving a number of power cables which are the responsibility of UK Power Network's .

During the month, together with Dawn Poole, I attended the AGM of the Clive Vale Resident's Association at Halton Baptist Church. Always a well run meeting as you would expect from such a credible and long standing organisation. There were a good number of questions put on a wide range of subjects, but probably the most concerned the current "roll out" of the new waste collection process. There have been a few difficulties with the allocation of glass receptacles in some areas, and seagull proof sacks in others. Should you believe that you have not received either the correct hardware for your particular location, or are lacking in information, in the first instance you should address your concerns to the Contact Centre at [01424 451077](tel:01424451077) or email [recyclingandwaste@hastings.gov.uk](mailto:recyclingandwaste@hastings.gov.uk) There is a specially trained team in attendance that will check your details, ascertain exactly what your household should have received, and if they have not received everything that they are entitled to, they will log it with Kier so that the missing container can be delivered.

With the passing of Hastings' Week the main events of the annual cycle of entertainment is complete.....almost !. Please do not forget the ever popular and growing Story Telling Festival and the not to be missed Herring Festival. The Story Telling Festival, or its now popular name of "Fishy Tales" , takes place between November 11th and 17th commencing with children's workshops. It moves into the world of poetry at the Horse and Groom, and then visits locations at UCH, several Old Town pubs, the Children's Library, Stade Hall, Royal Victoria Hotel and culminates in a children and families' day on The Stade. Probably the highlight of the Festival is the talk by Sir Quentin Blake which will take place at the Jerwood Gallery on the Friday of this fantastic week. This Festival is now in its third year, and its influence has migrated beyond the boundaries of our Town to the point where a "story hub" has been created as part of the web site see [info@hastingsstoryfest.org.uk](mailto:info@hastingsstoryfest.org.uk) The

Herring Fair is also scheduled for November, yet another wonderful celebration where Herrings will be cooked, smoked in pursuit of several varieties , and marinated to produce the delicious roll mops. Inevitably locally produced beer and wines will be on hand to wash all of this down to the accompaniment of sea shanties, and a celebration no doubt, of " Clemmning and Cattening" The more serious side of this wonderful fair brings home the fact that all of this harvest of the sea has a fishing community behind it that makes it possible, but still seeks the help from Brussels and Westminster that is needed to sustain our most traditional industry.

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*