

**WARD REPORT - OLD HASTINGS - FEBRUARY 2014**  
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**or 445540)**

## **General issues**

The renovation work on the pier has commenced and all is going well, in spite of the storms, the rains, and the generally inclement weather. The Pier Trust's programme of works actually allowed for storms at this time of the year, so that with this compensating allowance built into the programme there are no real delays as yet. Steel for rebuilding the substructure has now been delivered, and will soon be welded into place by workers operating from the decking above, obviously when weather permits. The visitor centre in the upper part of White Rock baths is now open, and providing that essential information link between the Pier Trust and the general public. The Trust's other task involves the continual process of fund raising through the share issue.



In a celebration of the golden age of the British seaside pier, the BBC follow the local campaign to save Britain's first purpose-built pleasure pier. This very positive film about the history and future of Hastings Pier was shown on BBC 1 Friday 07 February. It's now available to view on iPlayer for a few more days.

Some really great information concerning our Town emerged this month. This came from a report prepared by the new Centre for Cities into the 64 largest towns and cities in the UK, and placed Hastings as the ninth best place to live and work. In the report cities and towns were evaluated on everything from life satisfaction, inequality, carbon dioxide emissions, house price growth, education, jobs, patents, businesses, population growth and even broadband speed. Probably one of the most important statistics to emerge, and based upon the most recent data available, placed our historic town as the greenest in the UK. We produce less carbon dioxide per person than anywhere else that was studied. This is excellent news for our residents and visitors alike, and reflects true commitment to maintaining the very best carbon footprint as our contribution towards the maintenance of a truly green planet. We were also ranked in the top 10 in the UK for the number of patents registered per 100,000 residents. Patent data is widely used to measure the innovative skills that exist in a town. Therefore receiving a listing within the top 10 in the UK demonstrates that our vacuum cluster, and other high tech industries are obviously having a very positive impact on our Town. The report also looks at population flows into and out of London. It shows how nearly everywhere is exporting people to London as the capital enjoys faster economic growth. But Hastings is one of only five places where there is a net inflow of people from London. All of this is a tremendous boost to our reputation, and a great inducement to those who are looking for investment opportunities.

East Sussex county Council has produced a draft domestic abuse strategy with the aim of ensuring that there is a co-ordinated and joint response from agencies and organisations who have all committed to ending any form of domestic abuse, and its impact

on communities and people in East Sussex. It will inform a five year programme of activity for the Safer Communities Partnership Steering Group which includes ESCC and all five Districts and Boroughs. Like all County strategies, it is very long but I have included here an extract from the work of the Safer Hastings Partnership who have campaigned tremendously hard in the cause of those who have suffered such abuse.

***Domestic Abuse is the highest priority of the Safer Hastings partnership, and key partners like Hastings Borough Council play an important role in encouraging victims to report domestic violence, and in supporting victims themselves.. Despite the Authority being amongst those hardest hit by reductions in central government funding the council continues to provide over £30,000 matched funding to the East Sussex Independent Domestic Violence Adviser Service to provide additional domestic violence casework in Hastings and St Leonards. The housing team also run a Sanctuary Scheme; coordinating referrals from partners and allocating funding for things like changing locks and other security improvements to help victims of domestic violence to stay in their homes and feel safe. Hastings Council provides resources to support and administer the Hastings & Rother Domestic Violence Forum who provide a platform for statutory and community organisations to meet and discuss priorities, and share information. The Council led "Hastings White Ribbon Day" event has been growing in stature in recent years. Matched funding is provided to complement that from the Safer Hastings Partnership, to purchase Domestic Violence and Abuse awareness raising and advice material, and to ensure that the aims of the event are met. For the future, consideration is being given to Hastings Borough Council seeking to become an accredited "White Ribbon" organisation.***

The two priorities that are currently being worked on are, firstly to investigate whether we can initiate pilot work with male perpetrators of domestic violence, and secondly to work towards becoming a "White Ribbon Town". An initial meeting with officers on this objective, indicated by consensus, that this could be achieved with a lead in time to this year's "White Ribbon Day" on November 25th. It would involve submitting an action plan, and we will be asking partners to sign up to this at the next Safer Hastings Partnership Meeting. Last year's White Ribbon Day was very successful with over 2,000 people pledging "never to commit, condone or stay silent about domestic violence."

You may remember that I have previously informed you of our intentions to provide some intelligent signage regarding the status of our off street car parks. The purpose of this information is to direct incoming motorists to the most appropriate and available car park, and to prevent abortive journeys to some of the busiest car parks, in pursuit of spaces that do not exist. In our attempts to determine the optimum solution to the usage of intelligent signage in off street parking management, a group of us visited Hove Town Hall which is the control centre for the City of Brighton operation. The thoughts behind this visit came from the understanding that for well in excess of three hundred days of the year, fine tuning of off street parking will be unnecessary. Therefore we felt that it would be beneficial to interrogate a similar system for alternative uses that could be of benefit to the Town, and the travelling public in general. All notices displayed electronically have to conform to published guidelines, be generally approved by the DfT, and be subject to risk assessment. However on the basis of Brighton's portfolio of information signage the range of uses can be wide, from directing motorists attending some of their biggest festivals such as the "London

to Brighton Car Run" or "Gay Pride" , to minor directions warning of road works and diversions. Our projected directional usage during the Town's major festivals like "Jack in the Green" and "Sea Food and Wine" would appear to be a legitimate and practical use of the system, as would such things as its potential usage in displaying diversion information in events such as the very recent White Rock landslide. We continue to explore the appropriate control system, and the exact siting locations, but any questions regarding effective utilisation are now beginning to be answered.

You may remember that back in October of last year we launched the "Reduce the Strength" alcohol campaign here in Hastings, it is now extremely pleasing to report on the way that it has taken off and continues to grow. The project, a joint initiative between Hastings Borough Council, Sussex Police, Action for Change and Safer Hastings Partnership is aimed at restricting the supply of beer, lager and cider with an alcohol by volume of over 6.5%. It's one of several measures being implemented across the borough to help reduce problems associated with the street drinking community and persons responsible for alcohol related anti social behaviour. The project went live on 01 January 2014 with 19 'off licence' premises signing up in the three wards of Central St Leonards, Castle and Old Hastings. Since then licensing staff from both Sussex Police and Hastings Borough Council have continued to visit other premises in the area and have obtained further commitment to the project from retailers. We now have 31 premises signed up with more joining all the time. All the major supermarkets are supporting the project and already have internal policies in place to restrict the supply of high strength products to problematic drinkers. All of this is excellent news for our town and residents, and we are absolutely determined to continue our robust stand on dealing with street drinking and alcohol-related crime, and to make Hastings an even better place to live, work and visit. the scheme is fully supported by the Police who have expressed both their pleasure with the level of support that has been given by the licensed trade, and their confidence that this initiative will reduce anti social behaviour and the impact of street drinking in the community.

Contractors have now started work to improve the damaged roundabout on Hastings seafront outside of the Italian Way restaurant. Unfortunately this roundabout, although innovative when built with its distinctive wall, has suffered over the years, and regularly attracts damage to the wall by vehicles. It now looks shabby, and really adds no value to a seafront that continues to receive other marked improvements to its general appearance as what is effectively the shop window of Hastings. The contractors have removed the damaged wall, and smartened up the roundabout, and later, we hope to refurbish and illuminate the fountain in the middle. Despite periods of inclement weather a really good start has been made with the old wall being removed in less than a day, and a projection that all of the building and landscaping work should be finished within the next few days. New planting will take place around the perimeter of the grassed area, adding another attractive feature to this well known Hastings' landmark. In the meantime we do apologise for any disruption caused to traffic using the seafront while the work is being completed

## Local Issues

### Hastings Fat Tuesday – Mardi Gras on the south coast



I should be remiss if I failed to mention this fantastic event, what other town can boast a full blown festival in February and early March. Once again in the world of entertainment and festivals our Town leads where others would love to follow. Hastings Fat Tuesday events take place from Friday 28 February to Tuesday 04 March 2014 with performances and celebrations at several different venues throughout the town. Full programme information can be found on the Hastings Fat Tuesday website or Hastings Fat Tuesday Facebook page

Also running during the first week of March is the Hastings International Piano Concerto Competition, the "jewel in the crown" of the Hastings Musical Festival. This year celebrates the tenth anniversary of this internationally prestigious event, being held at the White Rock Theatre, no doubt in front of once again packed audiences showing their appreciation of world class musicians performing in their own Town. This competition offers performance opportunities for the winner to appear as a soloist with the world famous Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. This wonderful festival is a classic example of cultural led regeneration that is bringing so much benefit to this Town through the talent and abilities of young musicians.

One problem that appears to be on the increase throughout the Borough is dog fouling. Parts of Old Hastings appear to be particularly susceptible to this problem, especially the streets that lie on the route to the Country park. As a council our biggest problem is that we can only address the symptoms of the problem. The root cause would appear to lie with a minority of dog owners, who fail to understand that it is both socially and hygienically unacceptable to allow their dog to foul a public place without "picking up" after the event. I would ask any resident who is subjected to this problem to report it to HBC's Environmental Health Team either by phoning [451077](tel:451077), or emailing [streetwardens@hastings.gov.uk](mailto:streetwardens@hastings.gov.uk) . All such reports will be entered into a table of "grotspots" where the worst affected streets will attract additional warden cover. Additionally our wardens can issue fixed penalty notices for dog fouling of £75 which may drive home the message of unacceptability.

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*