

WARD REPORT - OLD HASTINGS - AUGUST 2014
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or 445540)

General Issues



Construction update

Work is gathering pace on the Pier. Replacement steelwork and new decking is now substantially completed to the Parade Extension. The concentration is now on the central spine along the Pier to provide access to the Pier Head. Work on the Old Pavilion building has started to transform it into a restaurant. 50 new supporting deck beams have been inserted beneath the building. The building has been stripped out and the internal partitions removed. Work will now start on replacing the floor structure and altering the outside walls. The roof structure has been exposed and looks to be in a reasonable condition, particularly as it is about 100 years old. We will be recovering the main roof and the two cupolas probably with zinc. At the

beginning of September a jack-up barge may be arriving. It will moor alongside the Pier and will provide safe access for the initial demolition works and will also be used to install the new piles for the Visit.

For more information about the latest reconstruction work come to our [teatime updates](#) at The Hub on alternate Wednesday afternoons between 3pm and 4pm (20th August & 3rd September) or look on [our website](#) for more information.

Financing the work on the Pier

The work on the pier is really starting to gather pace and this means that at long last we are seeing some tangible progress. Whilst this is a good thing it does mean of course that we are spending ever larger sums of money on construction costs. In order to keep ahead of the game we have to manage our cash flows very carefully to ensure that our grant income is received in time to pay our contractors – otherwise the good rate of progress we are seeing might evaporate!

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) is providing the lion's share of the grant funding needed to reinvigorate our pier – roughly £11.4 million - and one of the key tasks we have to perform is to submit a monthly claim against that grant. This involves providing details of all the expenditure we have incurred to date.

As far as construction costs are concerned, our quantity surveyor provides a monthly assessment of the rate of progress on each of the contracts for work on the pier. The progress is then valued and the contractor is asked to provide an invoice equal to the valuation.

When each invoice is received it is entered into our accounting system and becomes 'eligible expenditure' for grant purposes. Typically the construction industry operates on a 28 day credit cycle, this means that payment for an invoice won't be due until 28 days after the date of the valuation.

By managing the timing of submission of our HLF claims and our VAT returns we are able to ensure that our cash flows are not adversely affected by payments to contractors as we are able to maintain a steady flow of cash into our coffers to meet our ongoing commitments.

Hastings Fountain Restored to Former Glory

The fountain on the roundabout at Pelham Place, Hastings was officially switched on at the end of July, to the delight of hundreds of spectators.

The event began with a procession of illuminated bicycles that made their way from the Pier to the roundabout led by Bernie Goldman and his music box. At this point the council's leader, shouted the opening speech to each side of the street and everyone cheered as the water spouted up for the first time in many years and the new lighting system came on.

Extensive refurbishment work began in April when the pipe work and dishes were restored and replaced where necessary and a modern LED lighting system was put in place. We have also installed three new pumps and a wind detector that will ensure that water and electricity are used sustainably. We are absolutely delighted with the finished result which has occurred just over 50 years after the original installation in the 1960's. Residents and visitors will now be able to enjoy the fountain in all its magnificent glory. Our thanks must go to our contractors Chris Thayre Swimming Pools and Alpha Electrics for their guidance and design of the new system and to the Landscape Group, who have offered to sponsor the maintenance of the bedding for 2014. We will work with The Landscape Group to design a more permanent landscaping feature for next year.

Assistance Pops Up In St Leonards

Sussex Police, Hastings Borough Council and other organisations including the national homelessness charity St Mungos Broadway came together for a major new initiative to link members of the street community with local services through a 'Pop-up Hub' held in St Leonards.

The pop-up hub operated at the WRVS in South Street for three days earlier this month. Fifty eight people came along and were provided with help especially about drug, alcohol and mental health services or advice on accommodation. As a result twenty people were found temporary accommodation.

Referrals to the hub came from the police and other organisations working in the area. And those referred included rough sleepers, street drinkers, people with drug abuse problems and some who have resorted to begging.

In total, 58 people attended the hub and had had plans put in place to address their housing, health and substance misuse issues. 20 people who had been sleeping rough were offered emergency accommodation and plans for longer term housing agreed. The pop up hub was a fantastic event and all key partners engaged with a significant number of our street community offering support, pathways to life style changes and tangible action plans for the future. Our thanks must go out to all who have supported this key initiative and special thanks must go to the volunteers who assisted over the three HUB days. A lot of energy is often put in to taking enforcement action against members of the street community and when their behaviour is unacceptable that is quite right. But the pop-up hub is part of an attempt to change lifestyles and turn people's behaviour around. This can only be done by organisations working together and everyone feels this was a particularly significant initiative.

Hastings Remembers World War One

Hastings Borough Council commemorated the 100th Anniversary of the First World War with two events on Monday 04 August. A service of reflection, led by Cannon Keith Pound, was held at 10:00 at the war memorial in Alexandra Park, in conjunction with the Royal British Legion which included wreath laying and a two minute silence in recognition of those affected by war.

At 22:00 Hastings took part in the national 'Lights Out' initiative. All of the decorative lights on Hastings seafront turned red, with a single white light moving continuously along them, for one hour. World War One changed the lives of so many people and it was important that we marked the occasion. These two events together with the programme of events planned in the town will help to give local residents and visitors a really good understanding of how the war affected people locally

Other events have been arranged around the town through the summer and into autumn. Detailed information about these exhibitions and talks can be obtained from Hastings Museum and Art Gallery and The Tourist Information Centre on the seafront.

Park Conservation Improvements Completed

After many months of hard work the Alexandra Park conservation improvement project in Hastings has finally been completed. A small group gathered to celebrate the completion of the project with representatives from Friends of Alexandra Park, Alexandra Park Volunteer Team and the John Muir Award. This project, funded by The Veolia Environmental Trust through the Landfill Communities Fund, has been a real success and the difference it has made to the park is very clear to see. Seven hundred and seventy five hedging plants and seven native fruit trees have been planted to start the new orchard in Shornden.

Improvements have also been made to the fencing in the Shornden area and repairs to the Buckshole railings to make them both safe. A new oak notice board and information lectern in Shornden have been installed explaining points of interest, and wildlife that can be seen in these important areas, and a new leaflet for the park has been produced. Additionally new planting areas have been created in Shornden water ways for marginal plants which benefit the parks wildlife creating feeding and nesting areas.

Over 1100 volunteer hours have gone into this project led by the council's Park Ranger, who has worked with Friends of Alexandra Park, Alexandra Park Volunteer Team, Education Futures Trust Forest School, Seaview Project, TCV, Community Payback, Sussex Autistic Society, 1066 Green Gym, Hastings Botany Group and the John Muir Award. Our thanks must

go to them all There's still more work to be done in Alexandra Park as well as other green spaces across the borough. If you would like to know more or get involved contact The Park Ranger on 01424 451066

Cycle Hire at Pelham Beach

Hastings Borough Council has opened a new bicycle hire center on the promenade at Pelham Beach. Seaside Cycle Hire offers an extensive range of bicycles for hire to explore the town and the seafront cycle route. This is a great new facility for residents and visitors to the town. Seaside Cycle Hire offers adult's bikes, children's bikes, electric bikes, helmets, locks and even cycle maps. Bikes can be hired for as little as a couple of hours to a full day or even a week if required, and discounts are available for families and group hire of four or more. The 7km beachside, traffic free cycle route is the perfect way to discover Hastings seafront and further afield where there are many places to shop and eat along the way.

For more details including hire rates visit the council's website www.hastings.gov.uk/cycle or telephone 07580 426200 or Hastings Tourist Information Centre 01424 451111

Follow the Herring at the Stade

During the month we saw two completely different events, A Coat for a Boat, and Get Up and Tie Your Fingers, both at the Stade Open Space in Hastings.

These events are part of the "Follow the Herring" touring festival which celebrates the culture of fishing towns on the coast of England and Scotland.

Funded by FLAG, the "Follow the Herring" tour in Hastings focuses on maritime heritage combining performance, song and visual arts. A Coat for a Boat knitted exhibition together with the first knitted fish and chip shop, knitted by people from Hastings and St Leonards, and was on display during the early part of the month. Local community groups and pupils from Castledown School have been involved in creating the hundreds of knitted items on display, with many people whose ages ranged from 4 to 94, learning these new skills.

Follow The Herring and the creation of the knitted fish and chip shop has been a real community project and has brought all sorts of people

together to learn new skills and enhance existing ones. Real relationships have been forged and it's a project that many have personally benefitted from. It's very inspiring to see the community come together to create something that's fun and beautiful for others to enjoy. None of this would have had any meaning if it wasn't for our treasured fishing fleet in Hastings which we hope will be maintained for many years to come.

Get up and Tie your Fingers' is a deeply moving piece of theatre about the women from fishing communities up and down the country during the 19th century. The "herring lasses" would follow the herring fleets to meet the catch in the next port of call. Our Local choir, the Herring Girls performed in what was a remarkable tale of the east coast fishing communities.

New Seafront BMX and Skate Park Gets Funding

Local business partners and brothers, Richard and Marc Moore of The Source Hastings Ltd now have the go-ahead to develop White Rock Baths into a world class BMX and skateboarding facility on Hastings seafront. The total package will be funded by Hastings Borough Council, East Sussex County Council, the Foreshore Trust, and The Source Hastings Ltd themselves, using a mixture of grants and loans to a total of £1.17m. Most of this expense is to restore the huge but near-derelect old baths under the promenade, and Hastings Borough Council will soon be carrying out works to make the building useable, following which The Source will fit it out. We are very pleased that funding has now been finalised for this very exciting proposal made by The Source. It has taken considerable time to find a productive and appropriate use for the baths, having the funding in place means that this site can be developed into a world-class facility that will greatly improve this area of our seafront, attract visitors to the town and raise the international profile of Hastings as a world-renowned BMX and skateboarding centre.

Exmoor Ponies Back at Hastings Country Park

Four Exmoor ponies have arrived at Warren Glen at Hastings Country Park to carry out conservation grazing on the Nature Reserve. Hastings Borough Council took delivery of the ponies recently from The Sussex

Pony Grazing and Conservation Trust who offer specialised grazing services to land owners. It is extremely pleasing that we have been able to provide grazing land for the ponies and as a result they will help to maintain the natural habitat at Warren Glen. We will continue to work with The Sussex Pony Grazing and Conservation Trust and hope to home a few more ponies during the summer months. The Sussex Pony Grazing and Conservation Trust need local volunteers to help keep an eye on the ponies and ensure their continued welfare, so, if you would like to be involved please contact them for more information. The Trust has expressed its delight at being back at Hastings Country Park helping to sustainably manage the rare and important wildlife habitats that occur there. Exmoor ponies are a very hardy, native breed, ideally suited to the rugged terrain and relatively rough forage. They will help improve the biodiversity of the site by hampering the growth of the more dominant species, allowing some of the rarer species a chance to thrive, accessing areas where machines would not be able to go.

For more details about the ponies and our work please visit www.sussexponygrazing.co.uk

Council Publishes 100th Anniversary Edition of The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists

The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists is often said to be one of the most influential books ever written, telling the story of how ordinary people were forced to lead lives of poverty, exploitation and misery. Written by Robert Tressell, focussing on the provincial town of Mugsborough or Hastings and St Leonards in the early 1900's, Hastings Borough Council has now published a special edition to celebrate the centenary of the book's first edition.

The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists features identifiable sites around Hastings and St Leonards and some of the characters and events can even be traced back to real people and situations that happened at the time Robert lived in Hastings. We are very proud to have published this book at the centenary and hope that new and old readers alike will enjoy this very special edition. This is a unique 100th anniversary edition which includes images of Hastings surrounding the life and times of Robert Tressell.

The book is now available at £2.99 from the Tourist Information Centre.

Some further news regarding "fracking"

Earlier this month the Government announced a new licensing round for onshore oil and gas. This is a bidding process for companies to seek licences. At the same time the Government fine tuned planning guidance in relation to unconventional hydrocarbon development in National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Where applications represent major development, planning permission should be refused in these areas except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated they are in the public interest.

Some existing licences have been relinquished including Cuadrilla's PEDL247 which covered the area to the north west of Heathfield. This means that only a small part of the County around North Chailey is covered by a current licence (Cuadrilla's PEDL244).

However, the new licensing round is offering the whole of the rest of East Sussex for bids (including the previously licensed area to the north west of Heathfield). I enclose a link to the map of blocks under offer.

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/330774/14R_Offer.pdf

I would point out the Government expects applications for new licences to cluster around areas already licensed. I would also indicate that a recent study of the Weald Basin by the British Geological Survey concluded that whilst there are optimum conditions for oil generation within the Weald, there is unlikely to be any shale gas potential.

An update on the loss of bus services' consultation

In keeping with several of my colleagues I continue to address any number of public meetings regarding ESCC's consultation on a proposal to drastically reduce a number of buses operating in the Hastings area. People from all walks of life have attended our meetings, as have many business operators and others representing various forums and interest groups. But their reaction to this proposal has been the same, one of disbelief that an approach seeking partnership with the bus companies in sharing the costs that fall on the public purse has not been explored. No company on Earth has an inalienable right to enjoy only good business, all

companies operate under a combination of profitable business, and some that is not so good. But the skill of a good businessman is to address the shortcomings in their trading pattern, analyse what it is they are offering, and attempt to reverse any downward trend by making that offer more attractive to the customer base. This is an approach that is being explored by other local authorities faced with a similar dilemma, we are asking ESCC to do likewise rather than kill at a stroke a local economy that is slowly emerging from a long period of convalescence. My task, if possible, is to quantify the projected impact of these proposals on the local economy, such that I might express in the language of the accountant the misery and deep concerns that it is proposed to visit upon Hastings and its good citizens.

LATEST NEWS

There will be a public meeting at Halton Baptist Church, Old London Road, on Friday September 5th at 10:00am. Sarah Owen and myself will be explaining the consequences of these disastrous proposals, and offering our advice on how they can be opposed. Between 04:30pm and 06:30pm at the same location and on the same day, there will be a further drop in session where you can pick up consultation forms, and discuss the implications of the proposal with local councillors. Please feel free to come along to either, or both events.

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

