

WARD REPORT - OLD HASTINGS - OCTOBER 2014

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General Issues

Well ! Hastings Week has come and gone with enough activities, spectacles and events to take up a thirty two page glossy magazine, and all in the month of October.....surely unrivalled in the United Kingdom. As usual this fantastic autumnal week culminated in a spectacular procession, bonfire and a magnificent firework display, once again our heartiest thanks and congratulations to the organisers. Every year this unheralded committee strive to deliver a spectacle that surpasses every previous one, and in this they surely succeed. During the month the "jack up barge" was ever present adjacent to the pier where its task of dismantling the old ballroom was successfully completed, despite a somewhat hostile reception from the stormy seas driven by autumn gales. Hopefully all future work on the pier now moves into a continual positive phase of completing the refurbishment of the substructure, and the rebuilding of the superstructure. Look out for the fine tuning of the official opening date, hopefully some time next year.

Another Classic Hastings Even

One of the events that I attended during the month was the annual Hastings Week classic car show which attracted well over a hundred vintage vehicles, and thousands of visitors. Organised by the Hastings Week committee, and Hastings Borough Council, it has become one of the most popular events of the week. The classic car show on the Stade open space has become a firm favourite at the start of Hastings Week, with vehicles ranging from the locally owned 1915 Hudson, through the whole history of British car manufacture. One stalwart makes the journey every year from Plymouth to display his Cortina, and we also had cars from as far away as Birmingham, Luton and Bedford this year. There were some fantastic vehicles from overseas as well, including some classic American 'Chevys', and a Lamborghini :- and a superb Citroën, complete with kepi. The Stade open space makes a fantastic setting for the show, and I know it brings a lot of visitors, and residents, into the old

town. It is a classic event, in every sense of the word, and we are very grateful to the volunteers on the Hastings Week committee, and colleagues at Hastings Borough Council, who work so hard to help organise this, and the many other events in Hastings Week. Hastings really is famously eventful.

Hastings, Famously Popular

Hastings is not only popular through its year long calendar of spectacular events, its popularity as a destination of choice clearly persists throughout the whole year. A recent independent survey by Tourism South East on the state of tourism in Hastings showed that the town had bucked the national trend in 2013, recording more visitors in every area compared to 2012. There was an increase of 1.3% in the number of 'domestic' (trips from within Great Britain) staying trips made to Hastings; across Great Britain there was a 2.5% fall in the number of visits. The number of staying trips to Hastings from overseas increased by 7.4%, while the national figure was up by 7.0%. Whilst the number of day trips made across the country fell by 7.2%, the number of day trippers coming to Hastings increased by 1.6%. These figures prove what many of us have thought, that Hastings is becoming more and more popular with visitors! The report also suggests that tourism is worth an incredible £253m to the local economy, and supports around 5280 jobs. We've had a great year this year too, and a super September, with the weather really helping the town to shine. As we look forward to the pier reopening, the BMX and skateboard venue opening at the White Rock, and, of course, the 950th anniversary of the Battle of Hastings in 2016, I am sure that the visitor economy will continue to grow here.

Jobs Fund Helps Businesses Find SUCCESS

Businesses in Hastings and Rother could benefit from a growth fund worth up to £150,000 if they are adding or safeguarding creative jobs in their workplace. The SUCCESS fund can provide up to 50% match funding to help the growth plans of businesses looking to develop their in house creative functions such as design, web development, programming, software and printing or for providing creative services or using sporting activities to help build a cultural legacy. Applicants can also access a package of wraparound business support

as part of the programme. Supported by the Government's Regional Growth Fund, awards from the SUCCESS fund have already helped a number of local businesses kick start their plans for growth and achieve their goals, including leather crafter Ackby Workshops, music industry leaders Immersive Album and STL Recording Studios.

Sonny Symes, of STL Studios, credited the SUCCESS fund with helping him realise a lifelong dream. Sonny provided this wonderful accolade for the programme and its managing team, this is a strong message to others who may be hoping to realise their dreams.

"SUCCESS is amazing. I couldn't believe it was real when I first heard about it, as I had been searching for something like it last year. It is a dream come true to be involved with people that can and most importantly want to help you achieve, and genuinely wish you every success. You have to be willing to put in the hard work, but if you are then the SUCCESS team will help you every step of the way. Every time I have needed advice or help on anything someone has been there straight away, it has made a huge difference to me growing my business, and to put it simply it has changed my life. Thank you SUCCESS."

Hastings and Rother has a thriving creative sector and SUCCESS gives us an opportunity to support it financially as well as strategically. Being able to help growing businesses with an award of up to 50% of their total investment is a fantastic opportunity for both the businesses themselves and the Hastings area. The fund is only available for a short time, so don't leave it too late to get in touch. To kick-start your own plans for growth, contact the SUCCESS team today on success@hastings.gov.uk or 01424 451014.

Multiculturalism, Britishness and Community Cohesion

A cohesive Hastings is important for everyone, and is central to the vision and objectives of the Hastings and St Leonards Sustainable Community Strategy. Over the last five years, a lot has been achieved in creating a cohesive community; however, current world and UK events could potentially undermine peoples' perception of social cohesion and have a negative impact at a local level. There is still work to be done in order to ensure that Hastings is perceived by all as a welcoming, safe and inclusive town.

The annual Afrikaba Debate provided a safe space for asking challenging questions and addressing issues that are important to all of us. This year Afrikaba brought together two respected speakers with wide experience and national and international perspectives. Professor Gus John is an expert on matters relating to equality, diversity and social mobility and Professor Ted Cantle established the former Institute of Community Cohesion (iCoCo) in 2005, which became the UK's leading authority on community cohesion and inter-cultural relations. These eminent speakers led the local debate at SCCH during the month as part HBC's contribution towards the Black History Programme.

Community Partnership Funding

Hastings Borough Council (in partnership with Department of Work & Pensions who have added £50k to our pot) invites non-profit making voluntary and community groups that work for the benefit of residents in Hastings and St. Leonards to apply for funding. The funding will be for two years subject to the Council's budget decisions in 2015 and 2016, and DWP grant for 2016-17 subject to final approval.

There are five themes and outcomes:

Thematic area	Priority outcomes	Partnership Priority
Job creation / Employment	Services that result in business start-up and job creation.	HBC priority
Advice services	Services delivering financial, debt, welfare, legal, housing and general advice in response to demand.	HBC and DWP priority
Safer communities	Support for victims of domestic violence, and support for rough sleepers.	HBC priority
Active involvement of residents	Services that result in residents, particularly those who are most vulnerable and disadvantaged, being able to access services	HBC priority

	and improve their quality of life.	
Digital Inclusion	Services providing free access to computers across targeted areas of the town, provision of basic computer skills and making online benefit claims, training of local online volunteers, and provision of free online Wi-Fi facility.	HBC and DWP priority

Allocation of the funding will recommended to Cabinet in December following interviews.

Pledge Signing – White Ribbon Campaign

Hastings Borough Council is seeking to gain the White Ribbon Campaign Town Award for Hastings and St Leonards, in order to raise awareness, and take action against Domestic Abuse/Violence. We are holding a White Ribbon Day event on the 25th November 2014 which will involve stands in the town centre, Priory Meadow and Morrisons Supermarket, public speeches from the Mayor, Members, and the Police. This will give the public the opportunity to sign a pledge against Domestic Abuse/Violence and to obtain leaflets and further information to gain help and support.

As part of our accreditation process, we would like to ask all HBC staff to sign the White Ribbon Campaign Pledge to take an action to prevent Domestic Abuse/Violence and to help raise awareness. Please click on the following link to make your pledge:

<http://www.whiteribboncampaign.co.uk/makepledge>

Please note, as an organisation, we are adopting the gender neutral approach and will be raising awareness of Domestic Abuse/Violence against men and women. We are also looking to recruit Ambassadors as part of our Accreditation process. Ambassadors take an active stand to support the principles of the White Ribbon Campaign, and are positive role models who convey these principles and important messages to others in the community. Ambassador training is also available. There are lots of different ways in which

Ambassadors can be involved, depending availability and interests. For further information, please contact j.stone@hastings.gov.uk

Streets Ahead

Hastings Borough Council is a step nearer an updated street trading policy following support for the proposal by Cabinet on Monday, 06 October. Street markets can be a great attraction of urban life. Good markets add to the character of a town, attracting shoppers and visitors into the area. They can also provide valuable, low cost opportunities for local people to start a business at low risk. Indeed, local street traders here have already gone on to open up shops, creating thriving local businesses. We already have three markets in the town, in the Old Town, the town centre, and St Leonards, and we are keen to encourage these to grow further. If adopted, our new policy will help do just that, encouraging markets and other commercial activity on the streets, enhancing and brightening the environment and adding some character and sparkle. They will attract more people into the area, benefitting other businesses in the area too, and providing yet another reason for visitors to come to Hastings.

The policy will be considered and approved by Full Council on 22 October.

Bexhill to Hastings Link Road

East Sussex County Council has a dedicated web page which supports the new Bexhill to Hastings link road that is currently under construction. The web page contains resident information and committee reports; progress photos and press releases that may be of interest to you. If you would like to read more, please visit:

<http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/bexhillhastingslinkroad/default.htm>

Flying The FLAG For Hastings

A major conference on the importance of the fishing industry has just taken place at Sussex Coast College, Hastings. Held on Friday 10th October, the event

attracted over 50 delegates, from as far away as Newcastle. The Hastings FLAG (Fisheries Local Action Group), which organised the conference, in partnership with the council, Hastings Fishermen's Protection Society, Hastings Voluntary Action, Sussex Coast College and the University of Brighton. The Hastings fishing industry is vital to our heritage, and plays an invaluable role in helping us promote the town, but it faces major challenges, and the local FLAG, working with the Marine Management Organisation, is responsible for helping to manage the distribution of nearly £1m of European Union money to help the industry develop, and deal with these challenges. Projects have been wide ranging, from more bulldozers and on-board equipment for the fishermen through to the fitting out of the Classroom on the Coast in Stade Hall, and the new information screen on the Stade.

This conference was intended to raise awareness of the Hastings fishing industry, and help provide stronger links between the industry and the schools, colleges and university, the environment, culture and tourism. We were very pleased to have Peter Jones CBE, the chair of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership as a speaker, who helped explain the importance of coastal regeneration, and the part Hastings can play in that. Paul Joy, the Chair of the Hastings Fishermen's Protection Society emphasised how the town's fishing heritage had a vital role to play in its future regeneration, and he was able to explain first-hand about the challenges the fishing industry faces.

There were some expert panellists too, including Joe Hallgarten, the Director of Education at the RSA, Matt Sowery, head of Defra's Marine Finance Reform Team, and Jeremy Percy, executive director of LIFE, the Low Impact Fishers of Europe. We all learnt a lot, and will now develop an action plan to help take us forward into the future.

Key Events & Promotions in Hastings and St Leonards Town Centres

Local news –Town Centre Point. Don't forget -Every Thursday from 9amTown Centre local market in Wellington Place

Christmas is on the way. The Ice Rink and chalet market are back! Hastings's very own stunning, child friendly real ice rink will be open to the public this season from the 29th November. For ticket information go to the new look Priory Meadow website on www.priorymeadow.com The popular chalet

market which surrounds it, will open from Thursday 4th December to Christmas Eve. Food and drink stalls including The Soup Dragon, Strange Fruits, Hastings Brewery and The Foot-Long Sausage stall along with gift stall Tablet Gallery will all be returning. Several new local stalls are planned. The Christmas lights switch-on and wonderful free fireworks display will take place on Thursday 20th November with the very popular arrival of Father Christmas event taking place on the evening of 27th November. In addition, a local market will take place on the 3 Saturdays before Christmas in Wellington Place. The Town Centre Market company and Costa Coffee have joined forces to organise several events in Wellington Place in December.

Hastings Herring Fair Returns

Now in its third year, Hastings Herring Fair will take place over the weekend of 01 – 02 November, 11am – 4pm at the Stade Open Space, Hastings. Run by Hastings Borough Council on behalf of the Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG) the fair aims to promote the undervalued but versatile fish herring and the fact that the Hastings fishing fleet have been recognised by the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) for their sustainable fishing methods. Locally herring, Dover sole and mackerel have all been awarded MSC certification. Hastings Borough Council on behalf of FLAG, are very pleased to be able to fund the third annual Hastings Herring Fair. The purpose of the fair is to promote the local herring industry and showcase the herring which is so abundant at this time of year. The whole event will be held undercover and stalls will showcase herring filleting, cooking, pickling and smoking. There will also be a programme of cooking demonstrations, wine tasting and talks in the Classroom on the Coast.

The Fair starts with the Hastings Catch Gourmet Dinner at Webbe's Rock a Nore on Friday 31 October. During the fair fresh herring will be available to buy so that visitors can create their own dishes with Hastings' own herring recipe book. Local wine, cider and other food produce and gifts will also be on sale. There will be a host of musical entertainment including Hastings Shanty Singers, Gadzooks, Rattlebag, Jiggery Pokery, The Equatorial Group and a barn dance with the Sugar Loaf Band. Radiator Arts will also be holding children's drop in workshops. With so much on offer, this promises to be another great fish festival in Hastings.

For full programme details of this event visit www.hastingsfestivals.com

Council Welcomes Independent Reports into 'Rocklands' Planning and Licensing Issues

For those of you who have been following the considerable number of issues that have surrounded that part of Hastings Country Park that abuts Rocklands' Caravan Park, and indeed the caravan park itself, will be pleased to have access to the reports that have been produced concerning planning and licensing activities. Hastings Borough Council has itself welcomed these independent reports into the planning and licensing issues concerning Rocklands caravan park. Beyond this HBC has asked Tezel Bahcheli Ltd to now look at links between planning and the implications of the caravan site licence surrounding Rocklands. We will publish this additional information as soon as we can. HBC has also arranged for a geotechnical survey to be carried out on Ecclesbourne Glen to investigate what might be done to stabilise our land, and what this might cost. This is likely to involve further topographical work, and possibly digging boreholes, to produce a model of what had happened, and what might happen, so that we can evaluate the options. Because of this it is likely to take some time but, again, we will publish this report when received.

A landslip in February occurred at the southern end of the caravan park, which together with the development of a controversial building inside Rocklands revealed some unauthorised activities that had previously been hidden from public view. As a result, a number of local people raised concerns about the granting of planning permission and enforcement procedures. Because of these allegations, Hastings Borough Council appointed an independent expert, Tezel Bahcheli Ltd, to review and report upon the Council's planning procedures. This report has now been published, and is available in full on-line at www.hastings.gov.uk/ecclesbourneghlen The Council also appointed an independent expert in caravan site licensing issues, RH Environmental Limited, to review the arrangements at Rocklands, and this is also available at www.hastings.gov.uk/ecclesbourneghlen

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

