

WARD REPORT OLD HASTINGS - NOVEMBER 2015
COUNCILLOR JOHN HODGES (cllr.john.hodges@hastings.gov.uk or 445540)

General Issues



Construction update

The replacement of the steelwork at the Pier Head is progressing well, and is now 85% complete.

On the West side there was one Column which had severely deteriorated and needed to be replaced. To achieve this we had to drive in two new small diameter piles which were then filled with reinforcement and concrete. This operation needed to be carried out at low water so we were working very early in the

morning and late at night to get the piles driven.

Work on the Visitor Centre continues, with the cladding nearly complete on the West Side. On the East side, we need to wait until we can lift the remaining deck boards from the far end of the Pier Head so that they can be prepared and used.

The zinc trim around the windows and entrances is being fitted.

Inside the building, the services and sprinklers have been installed and the floor and fitting out is now well underway.

We will shortly start to construct the steps and arena seating on the North end of the building.

Re-instatement of the old cast iron balustrade at the front of the Pier is now complete, exactly 100 years after it was originally installed.

Under the Pier we are now bringing in the main services, gas, water, electric and drainage. These pipes and wires are fixed to the structure with access being gained via the crawl way that we have built.

Community Theatre Project partners announced

Great news for a local project !



Hastings Pier Charity is thrilled to let you know that 'Inside Out', a street theatre company based in St. Leonards, and Christchurch CE Primary School will be working together and exploring the history of entertainment on Hastings Pier to create a brand new piece of theatre to be performed on the pier next summer.

'The Eggtooth Project', a local education provider and 'Nunah', a Hastings based physical theatre company will be working in partnership with GCSE Drama students from Hastings Academy to learn about Hastings Pier's heritage in order to devise an original theatrical production also to be performed on the pier in 2016.

Watch this space for updates as these exciting projects progress!

<http://insideouttheatrecompany.co.uk/>

<http://nunahtheatre.tumblr.com/whowear>

<http://eggtooth.org.uk/>

<http://www.christchurch.e-sussex.sch.uk/>

<http://www.thehastingsacademy.org.uk/>

Celebrate the Herring – Hastings Herring Festival this Weekend

Celebrating 10 years since the Hastings fishing fleet were awarded MSC (Marine Stewardship Council) status for sustainable methods of fishing for herring; the Hastings Herring Fair took place the weekend of 31 Oct / 01 Nov.

The Herring Fair was set up 4 years ago to promote the herring which is in our seas at this time of year. The Hastings fishing fleet use traditional, sustainable fishing methods which ensure that the fish are always plentiful. The drift nets used for mackerel and herring have a weighted bottom line that only occasionally brushes the seabed so inflicts little damage there too.

This year the Fisheries Local Action Group (FLAG) had an interesting display at the fair. It showed how all the FLAG funded projects have benefitted the local fishing industry including the boat building project, the Classroom on the Coast and fishing pathways. Our thanks must go to FLAG for funding the Herring Fair once again this year.

There were lots of free demonstrations on offer including the Essential Wine School, Paul Webbe and food forager, Sarah Watson. Flag making with Radiator Arts for the younger audience and of course as it was a festival in Hastings musical entertainment from local favourites such as the Hastings Shanty Singers, RX Shantymen, The Salts and a traditional ceilidh dance which ended the festival.

It was all undercover so there was no need to worry about the weather, and it was all free. We were worried if we would have herring because the sea has been so warm, and we were lucky that our fishing boats were able to land some just in time. Indeed one boat went off Saturday night and its herring catch was being sold literally hours later, and just yards from where it was landed.

This helped illustrate the need for the fair. As local former fishmonger 'Tush' Hamilton explained at the event, a herring ban in the 1970s meant that the fish fell out of fashion. They are now

plentiful, but the fishermen struggle to sell them. By raising awareness of the herring, and its versatility, we help to sustain our 1000 year old fishing industry, a vital part of our heritage.”

Engineering works affect Christmas travel

I have written previously on rail travel problems this Christmas here is some further information that has become available.

There will be major changes to Southern and Gatwick Express services this Christmas and New Year due to engineering works taking place.

Southern has urged passengers to check before they travel over the Christmas period and also to allow extra time for their journey because of the disruption.

The Network Rail project at Purley will sever the main line, which means that there will be changes to trains to Gatwick Airport from London and coastal services to London from 11pm on Christmas Eve until 4am on Monday 4th January.

As a result, there will be no trains between South Croydon and Redhill and no Thameslink services between East Croydon and Three Bridges. Travelling by train between London and the coast will still be viable however, the journeys will be diverted and take longer and be busier.

There will be bus replacements to make sure that passengers can complete their journeys during this busy time.

“This is a major piece of engineering work by Network Rail and when finished, will provide a more reliable infrastructure at a critical point on our network,” said a Southern and Gatwick Express spokesperson. “We’re putting arrangements in place to keep passengers moving while these essential works are being done.”

Although the Gatwick Express service will not run over Christmas, travelling by train to Gatwick Airport from Brighton or coastal stations will not be affected.

Details of Christmas service routes and frequencies can be found *here*.

Details of journeys and train times are now available *here*.

Project helps protect Hastings' bathing water quality

Bathing water quality in Hastings has been protected thanks to a collaborative project.

Southern Water, the Environment Agency, the Hastings and Rother Voluntary Action Groups and Hastings Borough Council joined forces to tackle various sources of contamination which were putting the town at risk of failing tough new water quality standards.

Together they have found and fixed a variety of problems that have meant the town's bathing water has passed the tightened standards contained in the revised European Bathing Water Directive – which are twice as tough as previous years.

The successful project means the bathing water, which had been predicted to be classed as poor, now passes the new standard and is classed as good.

A major source of contamination was found to be misconnections – when foul sewers carrying wastewater from homes to the town's treatment works are wrongly connected into surface water pipes through which rainwater is released into the sea.

Finding these was a priority for Southern Water's contractors MWH and WERM who lifted more than 2,000 manholes and checked more than 1,200 properties in the town.

At the same time the teams also identified and upgraded manholes shared by wastewater and surface water pipes which can be a source of contamination during heavy rain.

Surveys found misconnections at 98 properties – these included dishwashers, washing machines and sinks and 22 toilets.

More than 2,000 surface water manholes were surveyed – 16 required concrete caps to prevent wastewater and surface water from mixing during storms.

Southern Water has so far invested more than £3 million in the work and further surveys are now being carried out in north east Hastings.

Details of all the misconnections found were passed to the council so they could contact homeowners to arrange for them to be put right.

At the same time, the Environment Agency and the council set about cleaning the Alexandra Park stream. The work included the installation of floating vegetated islands in ponds linked to the stream to help clean the water that flows out to sea.

Helping communicate this wide-ranging project to the people of Hastings was Clean Seas Please – a community led campaign managed by Hastings Voluntary Action and Rother Voluntary Action.

With support from the Environment Agency and Southern Water, volunteers from Clean Seas Please held a series of high profile events across the town. The wide-ranging and successful campaign focused on encouraging people to check their domestic plumbing for

misconnections and to only flush the three Ps – pee, poo and paper – everything else should go in the bin.

Amber Rudd MP said: “When I heard in August 2013 that Hastings may fail the higher bathing water quality standards, I was determined to ensure that the town would not be required to put up warning notices along the beach as this would severely damage the town’s economy, which relies heavily on tourism.

“I convened the first of many regular multi-agency meetings in October that year, emphasising the absolute necessity of meeting the more stringent standards in time. I am therefore delighted to hear that the combined and sustained efforts of all concerned have been so successful in ensuring that the bathing water quality in Hastings is now classified as good under the new more stringent standards.”

Hastings Borough Council’s lead member for environment, Cllr Warren Davies said:

“Having clean, safe bathing water is vital to us as a seaside town so this is very good news indeed. It demonstrates what can be achieved when partners work together and we will continue to do this so that our bathing water quality can be further protected.

“A major source of polluted water was a stream which runs through Alexandra Park out onto the beach. To address this we introduced reed beds and floating vegetated islands that naturally filter contaminants out of the water before it leaves the park and reaches the beach.”

Richard O’Callaghan, Coastal Environment Manager for the Environment Agency, said: “It is great news for Hastings but it’s crucial that we continue to work in partnership to address the effect that pollution is having on bathing water quality. Having quality

beaches and bathing water is not only good for the water environment, but also for tourism and local economies too.”

John Spence, Head of Water Quality and Environment from Southern Water, said: “This is fantastic news for Hastings and demonstrates just how successful this collaborative way of working can be. We were fortunate to have the support of the town’s MP Amber Rudd who helped drive the collaboration.

“We are really pleased to have played our part in helping the town protect its bathing water and meet the new standards for water quality.”

Jan Cutting, Head of Services and Projects at Rother Voluntary Action, said: “It has been a great pleasure to work with our partners on this project.

“We believe that the great news today shows the benefit of good teamwork and the will and enthusiasm of the whole community in Hastings to make a change in what we do that will benefit us all.”

To find out how to check your own property for misconnections, visit www.connectright.org

Contact: Samuel Underwood, 01903 272343
www.southernwater.co.uk

New Street Naming and Numbering - Former Wishing Tree Nursery Site, Redgeland Rise, St Leonards-on-Sea

A new street being developed off Redgeland Rise has now been officially named 'Murdock Mews'.

The name was chosen from a list published by the Council of Servicemen who died and received honours in World War One.

Sergeant Archibald James MURDOCK M.M. (c1881-12/09/1917 – aged 36) was killed in action whilst serving in the 1st Battalion The Buffs (East Kent Regiment) of the British Army on duty in France and Flanders. He was awarded the Military Medal for acts of gallantry and devotion to duty under fire or for individual or associated acts of bravery. He was born in St Leonards-on-Sea and is remembered with honour at the Philosophe British Cemetery, Marzingarbe.

(Source: WW1 memorial at Hastings Town Hall, Commonwealth War Graves Commission, Forces War Records and Hastings Museum research).

For further information, please contact Sarah Stapley, LLPG & Local Land Charges Manager (sstapley@hastings.gov.uk) 01424 783260.

Medium Term Financial Strategy

The Cabinet meeting also discussed the Medium Term Financial Strategy, which is a report on the council's budget, and how we'll raise the money needed to cover our spending. The council's total net budget is around £15.6m. About £3.7m of this comes from government grant, £5.8m from Council Tax, £3m from business rates, and £1m from New Homes Bonus (an annual payment of each new housing completion in Hastings which lasts for six years). The rest comes from various other grants. However, this 'net' budget is rather misleading, as it underestimates the amount the council actually spends, as this is 'netted off' against income from fees, charges, investments and so on. The actual total budget for the council is nearer £100m, although about half of this is housing benefit payments, entirely covered by a government grant. But this still leaves a total gross budget of around £50m. Since 2010-11, the amount of grant the council receives from the government has halved. By 2018-19, it's predicted to have dropped by 70% since 2010-11. So far, the gap has been covered partly by reducing services, partly through increased efficiency (primarily through the

use of IT and developing online services), and partly by using reserves. However, our reserves won't last forever, and if we keep spending at the same level as we are now, a gap soon opens up in our budget, with a £2.2m shortfall by 2018-19. It is, however, very hard to know how true that estimate will be. The council never knows exactly how much grant it's going to get for the coming financial year until it's announced towards the end of the calendar year (often on Christmas Eve!). And there are uncertainties about how business rates are to be treated in future - the government has said that councils will be able to retain 100% of business rates locally, but that will have to be balanced out by a system of tariffs and rebates, otherwise some councils would have far more money than they could ever spend (Westminster collects £2bn a year in business rates, for example). But it seems pretty clear that there is going to be a big gap. So how will that gap be covered? Well, there are more efficiency savings we can work on, by channelling most service applications and enquiries through the council's website, and automating these processes wherever possible. We can also follow our path to 'entrepreneurial socialism', investing and trading more to raise income. And of course, we can cut services, but that will always be the last option. So times are tough, and they're going to get tougher. But we'll do all we can to protect, and indeed enhance, the services we provide.

Index of Multiple Deprivation

Every five years, the government produces what's called the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). The IMD 2015 has just been released. This is a complex measure, comprised of different 'domains', each representing different aspects of deprivation: crime, health, poverty, unemployment, environment, and so on. These measures are calculated at the level of small neighbourhoods called Lower Super 5 Output Areas (LSOAs). There are 52 such LSOAs in Hastings, and 33,000 in England. The IMD ranks each of these LSOAs against all the other English LSOAs, for each of

the domains, and for the overall IMD. For Hastings, there are mixed messages in the IMD. Generally, the picture is good. Most parts of Hastings score well in some domains - for example, crime is relatively low, particularly in residential areas, and environmental quality is good. Some parts of Hastings (Conquest ward, for example) are in the least deprived 25% across England. Two-thirds of the LSOAs in Hastings have improved, in terms of their rank against everywhere else. And the average improvement per LSOA across Hastings is around 1,000 rank places. The 'most improved' areas are Old Hastings and the 'outer fringes' of town, but with significant improvements in parts of urban St Leonards, too. These improvements are mostly due to increasing incomes, lower unemployment, and better housing conditions. Hastings has, in general, become more prosperous, has become more attractive as a place for new businesses to relocate to, and for Londoners in particular, looking for a better quality of life. And local people have benefited, with more jobs and lower unemployment. However, within this picture of improvement, there are some underlying problems. In LSOAs with a lot of private rented housing, poor housing conditions are depressing the overall score. This is especially true for areas around Hastings and St Leonards town centres, and the West Hill. The council's selective licensing scheme will help here, bringing up poor quality properties to a legal standard through associated inspections, although the supply of good, affordable housing remains woefully inadequate. But for employment and income deprivation, a few areas stand out. Parts of St Leonards, and social housing estates in Hollington, Tressell, Baird and Ore all rank in the most deprived 3% nationally. Some of these (in Baird, Ore and Tressell in particular) also show significant deprivation in education and training skills. Before 2010, the government provided special 'Area Based Grants' to tackle deprivation in these areas, but these were cut after the 2010 general election. Since then, there has been an assortment of government and other initiatives aimed at improving training and

access to employment across the town, but levels of deprivation remain stubbornly high in these poorer areas. We'll be doing more analysis of the IMD data (there's a lot of it), and will then set up a 'think tank' to consider what we should do to tackle these underlying problems in the poorest areas. It's difficult when council funding has been cut so much to start entirely new initiatives, but we do need to look at what specific, targeted actions we can undertake, in partnership with other agencies, in these very poorest areas. There's a very useful interactive map here that allows you to look at every SOA in the country, for results across all domains in the IMD: <http://apps.opendatacommunities.org/showcase/deprivationCouncilTaxSupportScheme>

A lot's happening on the seafront at the moment. The pier is due to open next Easter, White Rock Baths will be opening as an international standard indoor BMX and skateboard arena early next year, and Bottle Alley will be undergoing extensive refurbishment this winter. There are other works planned too, to improve the look of the area around the pier and White Rock Baths. The whole area will be resurfaced, there will be at least one new kiosk (above Bottle Alley, by the weather station), some rather splendid big palm trees will be planted, and there will be other improvements to the area around the 'water feature'.

Sadly, it won't be possible to restore the fountains as they were - the pumps have long since been removed, and the room they were housed in has gone, too. However, some sort of animated water feature and lighting might be possible - more details in due course. We are also intending to light Bottle Alley with colour-changing LED lighting. It might be possible to co-ordinate these effects with similar LED lighting that will run around the pier. It could look pretty spectacular - if we can make it happen!

Project to Regenerate Run Down Homes in St Leonards Enters Phase Two!

An award winning housing project which is helping to regenerate the St Leonards area is due to enter its second phase.

The Coastal Space project, a partnership between housing association Amicus Horizon and Hastings Borough Council, is improving and converting run down homes in St Leonards.

Coastal Space has already delivered 38 fully refurbished homes for local people since the programme launched in 2013. This includes a former nursing home in Carisbrooke Road that had stood unused for nearly seven years.

The project is now set to enter phase two, refurbishing a further 30 properties over the next three years in the Central St Leonards area.

Neill Tickle, Amicus Horizon's Development Director, said: "Our CoastalSpace project has dramatically improved property standards in the Central St Leonards area – delivering quality homes for local people. So we're delighted to be launching phase two in partnership with Hastings Borough Council and continuing this vital regeneration work. The Coastal Space project is more than just bricks and mortar. We've a keen focus on training and employment support, working with communities and residents in the area."

Hastings Borough Council are fully committed to providing affordable, good quality homes for local people so the 38 properties that have undergone development and completion through our joint partnership is very good news indeed. But, we want more.

Phase two will transform another 30 run down properties over the next three years into more high quality homes for families in St Leonards.

We are very proud to be working with Amicus Horizon on these projects and look forward to the completion of this next phase.

Since Coastal Space launched, 724 properties have been inspected by Hastings Borough Council. 116 of those properties have been improved, raising the standards of housing in the area. The project also joined forces with Hastings Works to set up an employment support service, St Leonards Works in London Road. From April to December 2014 the service received nearly 1,400 visits by over 300 local people with many residents being supported into employment, apprenticeships and work experience.

Coastal Space also won the accolade of 'Best Regeneration' at this year's national Place making Awards. Judges whittled the project down from over 200 entries, praising the scheme for making a real difference at a local level and tackling issues of worklessness and housing needs faced by the coastal community.

Game Cookery at Classroom on the Coast

Just a stone's throw from the boats on the beach, Classroom on the Coast at The Stade is a stunning, purpose built, fully equipped cookery school in the heart of Hastings' famous fishing community.

As we approach the festive season, the Classroom will be taking a short break from fish to hold a series of game cookery classes just in time for Christmas. The Classroom on the Coast, supported by the council, is well known locally for its fish cookery classes and events, but over the next three weeks game is going to be on the menu.

Under the guidance of our chef Toby, learn how easy it is to cook delicious pheasant, rabbit and venison in a series of themed classes where you will cook restaurant standard recipes, and eat what you have made.

The classes run for approximately two hours with two dates for each; pheasant cookery 24th or 25 November ,rabbit cookery 1st or 2nd December and venison cookery on 8th or 9th December.”

Fish cookery classes will return in the New Year, so be sure to look out for the new dates coming soon.

Each game cookery class costs £30 and must be booked in advance.

To book your place or for more information please contact the chef, Toby Welfare on 07955244874 or email info@classroomonthecoast.org

Serving Sussex 2015 Update

Sussex Police has been on a journey of considerable change for some time. Since 2010, financial and operational savings amounting to more than £50m have been identified and delivered through our comprehensive modernisation programme entitled ‘Serving Sussex 2015’. Further significant change, to meet future financial constraints, will see Sussex collaborate with Surrey Police and other regional and national partners; however, core aspects of our service will continue to be provided locally.

Our model recognises our role in working with a range of partners so that we can maximise the time our officers and staff can focus on protecting the vulnerable by catching criminals and preventing crime.

Moving forward we are now starting to see some of these changes emerge, more specifically in regard to the district structures. As part of the modernisation programme a decision has been taken to have one District Commander leading Hastings and Rother. Chief Inspector Paul Phelps, currently the Hastings Commander, will take on this new role

Chief Inspector Phelps said: “While I can appreciate there may be concerns I can reassure the public that it will be business as usual, there will be no loss of resources in either area and wards will still have an allocated point of contact. This combining of resources is purely operational, so there are no immediate plans to alter the way the public get in touch with us. We will continue to serve and protect the public.”

Green Matters

The Country Park Management Team in partnership with The Landscape Group our horticultural contractors have now set up an excellent recycling scheme at the farm. All green waste generated in our parks and gardens now ends up at our own recycling centre at Fairlight Place farm yard, where it is composted and subsequently used as fertiliser within our own areas of responsibility. We are in fact producing enough compost to service all of our own needs with some left over, the usage of which we will be considering. As you are aware part of our higher level stewardship commitments was the removal of areas of gorse, and the encouragement of other species such as heather to become established on the Fire Hills. The reason being was the influence that such a different habitat would have in increasing the number of other species of birds, insects etc. which in turn adds further interest to the park in terms of natural additionality. However, one method of removing gorse has been to burn it, and it was proposed to allow the Fire Brigade to set up a training exercise in dealing with burning gorse simulating the conditions that have previously occurred over on the East Hill. Following representation from Fairlight Parish Council, who were extremely anxious over the issue of burning gorse, we have listened to their concerns and decided against such an exercise. It is important in all matters that we respect the concerns of our

neighbours, therefore the exercise has been cancelled and the remaining gorse will be removed mechanically.

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

