

WARD REPORT OLD HASTINGS - DECEMBER 2015

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General Issues



Construction update

The strong winds during the past three weeks have severely hampered the replacement of the steelwork at the Pier Head. Hopefully conditions will improve and the last section can be completed before too long.

There was a brief lull in the wind, which we were able to take advantage of and we had a team of divers carry out a final survey of the columns below the waterline to check the condition and see if there is the need for any further repair work.

Work on the Visitor Centre continues, with the cladding in the recycled decking nearly completed.

We have now been able to access the far end of the Pier Head and have recovered more of the old deck boards. These are being prepared and will be used to complete the cladding.

Inside the building, the services and sprinklers have been installed and the floor build up with the insulation and heating mat installed. Work to the toilets and kitchen is also underway. We will shortly start to construct the steps and arena seating on the North end of the building.

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

On the East side the new kiosks have been erected. These will be available to rent, more will be erected on the West side.

We want you to join us



The re-opening of HASTINGS PIER



In early 2016 we will be inviting young people in Hastings and St Leonards to take part in the creation of celebration bunting.

The bunting will be used to decorate Hastings Pier during the re-opening festival.

Make sure your local school, nursery or young person's group is included!

Email learning@hpcharity.co.uk to register your interest for free resources and materials.



Statement from Hastings Borough Council in Agreement with Natural England on Management at Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve

The Higher Level Stewardship scheme (HLS) is a European and Government funded scheme requiring landowners and farmers to carry out habitat management designed to provide significant environmental benefits in high priority areas.

Hastings Borough Council's HLS agreement is a 10 year partnership with Natural England, which runs until 2023. The coastal heathland across the Country Park is considered a particularly special part of the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The management across the Country Park is designed to benefit many of the bird species and other flora and fauna known to be present across the diverse range of habitats. The overgrown nature of the gorse, blackthorn and birch, in places, has the potential to reduce the variety of bird species and other fauna and flora using the area, therefore, appropriate management is required.

The Agreement clearly sets out our management objectives. These objectives are based upon sound ecological understanding of the unique habitats that occur or should occur at this coastal nature reserve. We manage the site with contractors, our own staff and the invaluable help of our local volunteers and local community, without whom we would not be able to achieve our objectives. The Council is indebted to the good work that our volunteers contribute to the management of the Reserve.

A major focus of the habitat works at the Firehills is the restoration and management of important coastal grassland and heath. The initial stage in the restoration of this cliff top habitat has now largely been completed. The next step is to seed some of the bare ground with heather to help restore a mixed coastal heath and grassland habitat. The bare ground will naturally regenerate from seeds in the soil and from plants already growing in the area. Some areas of gorse will be allowed to grow to provide new habitat.

The management of the Reserve and restoration of threatened habitats is a long term project. Our grazing animals such as Exmoor ponies and native breed cattle are increasing areas of mixed age

habitat and wildflower meadows. Sowing plants on the edge of our arable fields provides valuable winter feed for threatened farmland birds. Bruising bracken with heavy horses extends areas of wildflowers and coastal habitat.

Biodiversity in the UK is in decline. Our stewardship grant is critical in protecting threatened habitats and managing and enhancing sites that are of national and international biodiversity importance.

Hastings Borough is fully committed to managing threatened habitats at Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve through the stewardship agreement and helping reverse the decline in UK biodiversity.

1066 And All That. And This, And So Much More

New contemporary arts festival launched to commemorate one of English history's most important dates.

Marking the 950th anniversary of William the Conqueror's invasion of England and the Battle of Hastings, a new contemporary arts festival is being created. ROOT 1066 International Festival promises to bring innovative and fresh perspectives on the history and legacy of 1066 from some of the best artists working in Britain and France today.

ROOT 1066 will be composed of spectacular indoor and outdoor events across 1066 Country in East Sussex staged by internationally renowned artists and companies. Glyndebourne Opera, Chris Levine, Wildworks Theatre, Marcus Harvey and Turner Prize short-listed Fiona Banner – plus many more - will present specially-commissioned works, exhibitions and shows.

Announcing ROOT 1066, The leader of Hastings Borough Council said: "The impact of the Norman Conquest on our country cannot be underestimated; it laid down the bedrock of English language and culture. That's why we've called the festival 'ROOT' 1066. It demonstrates just how diverse we are as a nation, how our modern culture has been shaped by centuries of invasion, immigration and

settlement. The main festival period will run throughout September 2016 right up to the week of the anniversary itself, on 14th October. However, we will be running events and activities in the run up to ROOT 1066 and beyond, to build its profile and create something that lasts beyond the festival year.”

He added “We will also be hosting a series of major exhibitions in the area, courtesy of our partner venues, Jerwood Gallery, De La Warr Pavilion and Hastings Museum and Art Gallery. ROOT 1066 will not only act as a stage for works by established artists and performers, it will also create a spotlight for local community groups, schools and colleges. We hope that people from across the country, Europe and beyond will be able to visit our town and enjoy this festival, and appreciate how this corner of Sussex became the birthplace of modern English culture, in all its diverse and kaleidoscopic variations.”

Some of the highlights of the programme, curated by Hastings Borough Council’s Polly Gifford (former director of the respected Bridport Arts Centre), include a pioneering large scale sound and light event designed by the acclaimed light artist Chris Levine – famous for his 3D light portraits of The Queen, the Dalai Lama and Kate Moss and his site specific collaborations with The Eden Project and top recording artists. He will be working in collaboration with sound artists to create a spectacular immersive experience on the seafront, which will include an invitation beamed over the Channel to Normandy to signify the start of the festival.

Acknowledging William the Conqueror’s great record of his new kingdom’s wealth, the Domesday Book, Wildworks Theatre Company will compile a 21st century version. It will be an archive of origins and stories, charting how people arrived in Hastings and where they came from, in the past and in the present, becoming a record of journeys, identity and those emotions that so connect people to the historic town and surrounding area.

The Battle of Hastings was the last time that Britain was successfully invaded and the last time that there was such a sudden mixing of

cultures causing a lasting shift in our cultural identity. When *Cultures Collide: A Community Opera*, will use performance as a means for the people of '1066 country', particularly young people, to both examine their identity, cultural differences and similarities, and also create a new anthem that represents the town's culturally rich and diverse community. The project is being co-ordinated by Battle Festival and Glyndebourne Opera.

Paying cheeky homage to British Museum Director Neil MacGregor's ground-breaking series for BBC Radio 4, *A History of the World in 100 Objects*, Hastings Museum and Art Gallery aims to tell *The Story of Hastings in 66 Objects*.

This exhibition will start by identifying key themes and stories from the history of Hastings. The public will then be invited to vote for their favourite items from the museum's collection that illustrate those stories, in order to determine the final, defining 66 objects. The resultant exhibition will explore the history of Hastings, from 1066 to the present day. You can vote now at www.1066contemporary.com.

One of Hastings most popular cultural institutions, Jerwood Gallery, is putting on a major exhibition of the celebrated English artist and painter, Marcus Harvey. Part of the YBA (Young British Artists) movement, Harvey has family links with the town and his recent work reflects certain aspects of 1066 history, its naval history, heroes and villains, along with the topography of the coast and surrounding landscape. The exhibition will be the largest public exposure of his work to date.

Another leading British artist, Fiona Banner, will be the focus of the De La Warr Pavilion's exhibition of new works. Banner is best known for her conceptual approach to ideas around conflict, language and how historical events become fictionalised over time.

All these events, and many more, will work in partnership with other 1066 commemorations and celebrations, including the Battle Festival (throughout October) and a monumental re-enactment of the Battle of Hastings (15 & 16 October).

Full listings of what's on and where will be released in early 2016, for all the latest news and information go to www.1066contemporary.com, like the Facebook page 'ROOT1066' or follow 'ROOT1066' on Twitter and Instagram.

New Licensing Scheme for Private Rentals

Landlords in seven wards in Hastings need to license their properties. The licensing of all private rented property, the Selective Licensing Scheme, was approved by Hastings Borough Council earlier this year at its Cabinet meeting on 30 March 2015. The license will apply to private rented property in the following wards: Braybrooke, Castle, Gensing, Ore, Old Hastings, Tressell and Central St Leonards.

The aim of the Selective Licensing Scheme is to improve conditions, management standards and tenancy practices in the private rented sector. All landlords in the selected ward areas will be required to licence their property. Although a lot of landlords operate responsibly, some rent out properties that fail to meet acceptable standards of management and are linked to anti-social behaviour.

There is a standard fee of £460 for a five year licence, however we are offering an early bird discounted rate to landlords that apply within the first six months of the scheme of only £185. There will be further reductions for landlords if they are a member of a recognised professional body or national landlord accreditation scheme.

We value the good quality, well managed privately let housing in the town as it's key to making a community stronger and safer and this scheme will ensure that this type of housing will be increased."

To find out more about this scheme and to apply for your early bird discount, available until 26 May 2016, visit www.hastings.gov.uk/selectivelicensingscheme or contact the council's Selective Licensing team on 01424 451031.

Surviving Christmas appeal 2015

Surviving Christmas expects to receive up to 150 people each day for its Open Christmas event at the Salvation Army hall in St Andrew's Square, Hastings on Christmas and Boxing day.

They will be providing warm meals, showers, hairdressing, medical services, clothing, entertainment and friendship. A tea bar is open all day offering tea, coffee, soft drinks and fruit and snacks.

Rather than sending Christmas cards this year a number of local companies in Hastings and Bexhill, have opted to donate the entire cost of their cards to the Surviving Christmas appeal. These sort of donations will pay for:

- 10 places at St Matthews Elderly Christmas Lunch – St Matthews Church in St Leonards helps elderly people who find themselves isolated at home. On Christmas Day transport is provided to and from the church, where a Christmas meal will be laid on for a small group of around 16 all living close to each other.
- Christmas hampers for the housebound, elderly and families in need including gifts for children.
- 9 Open Christmas places – Anyone is welcome to attend for a warm meal and to spend Christmas in the company of others whilst taking advantage of the facilities and services provided.

Director at one of these generous companies said :-

"I have no doubt that our clients and contacts will support this decision 100%. Christmas can be a miserable time for people on their own and those who can't afford to make it special. The Surviving Christmas tackles the issues year on year and we are proud to be able to do our bit to help."

Funding Bids Update

In one of my earlier newsletters, I told you that two low carbon bids to Interreg 2 Seas and North West Europe(NWE) funding streams, have progressed to the 2nd stage. One of these was referred back for

further information and will be resubmitted in January. We hope to hear in February on the final decisions of both. These bids are focused on energy and resource efficiencies at neighbourhood level across the town, aiming to have the greatest impact on our most disadvantaged residents. HBC brokered two other local partners into the projects who will be delivering most of the activities, increasing the council impact. They could bring up to £2m of funding into Hastings and St Leonards.

The France Channel England (FCE) Markets bid, focusing on developing our Markets to attract more tourism, has been submitted at stage 2. If successful, it will help support market development across the town. It was one of only two 2 Seas bids to go straight through to Stage 2 in the FCE programme. We should hear in Summer 2016.

Hastings and Rother have submitted a joint bid for Community Led Local Development (CLLD) for funding to develop a CLLD Strategy. If successful, the project (working title CHART-Connecting Hastings and Rother Together) will progress to full application stage in August 2016. It could bring over £3 million to the most disadvantaged wards in Hastings and Rother to boost economic development and skills/employability for residents and businesses.

HBC has been actively working with the Voluntary and Community Sector to develop proposals for the European Social Fund (ESF)/ Big Lottery Building Better Opportunities funding round, which closed on 30 November for Stage 1 applications. HBC can support these bids in a variety of ways, from using our strategic role to facilitate access to networks and provide an overview of local needs, support for business brokerage, to helping to signpost potential project beneficiaries through our services and Community Contact Centre.

HBC was involved in 2 sustainable sea front transport policy based projects. Unfortunately the Horizon 2020 bid was unsuccessful but we should hear news of the Interreg Europe bid in January.

Despite all of the opportunities that we may bid for our real local government grant funding was once again slashed by the government. Local government grant settlement was announced today. Our Revenue Support Grant Funding for Hastings Council will be cut by 24%, amounting to a cut of £892,000. As usual, the poorest (largely Labour controlled) councils have been hit the hardest. This is largely what we were expecting, although we were being pessimistic! Cuts to district councils have been much more severe than to county councils - East Sussex County Council gets an 8% increase in its funding. So hopefully, all those planned cuts to adult social care won't now be necessary !

Project Pipeline

- A **funding sub group of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) Coastal Communities Group** has been established. Led by HBC, it will focus on common themes and challenges together to work up partnership bids to target funding opportunities. Currently 7 project ideas **around tourism economy, employability and skills, public realm and the built environment** are being discussed.
- We are progressing work on the second Fisheries Local Action Group (**FLAG 2**) as guidance becomes available.
- We are also gearing up for **ESF calls from Department of Work & Pensions (DWP)** and talking to other authorities and stakeholders about collaboration on common challenges in the SELEP area.
- HBC is part of a LEP wide group developing a **comprehensive support package for the creative sector** under the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) SME Competitiveness theme. This will now submit in spring 2016.

Hastings Aims to be Dementia Friendly

Hastings borough councillors took part in special training this week (01 December) run by Hastings Dementia Action Alliance.

Hastings Dementia Action Alliance is aiming to make Hastings a dementia friendly town and the council is very keen to support this. With the highest population of very elderly residents in the country, East Sussex has a significantly higher prevalence of people living with dementia than the England average so it's vital that we support this initiative.

The training session highlighted some of the issues for people living with dementia in our town and the need to raise awareness; it's not

only elderly people that live with dementia younger people do too. The councillors are now dementia friends in line with the council's dementia action plan."

For more information and to become a dementia friend, visit www.dementiaaction.org.uk/local_alliances

Homelessness Strategy

The current Hastings and St Leonards Homelessness Strategy 2013-2015 demonstrates the positive changes that can be brought about through a local partnership approach to homelessness. Broadly speaking, the Strategy made good progress towards achieving its aims to: prevent and minimise homelessness; improve access to good quality, well managed accommodation in the private rented sector; and to ensure access to appropriate, personalised and accurate housing advice and information.

However, the combined impact of the Localism and Welfare Reform Acts of 2011 and 2012 along with further budgetary reforms and a new Housing Bill pose fresh challenges for the housing sector locally. These are likely to result in further pressures on homelessness within Hastings over the next few years and it is important that our revised Homelessness Strategy reflects the new economic and political environment and provides a strategic approach from which to tackle the challenges moving forward.

The Council has carried out a review of homelessness in the town in consultation with a wide range of statutory, voluntary and support agencies and partners, including service users. The findings from the Homelessness Review have helped inform the new draft Homelessness Strategy.

Consultation

Both the draft Hastings and St Leonards Homelessness Strategy and the draft Hastings and St Leonards Housing Strategy are now available for public consultation until 28th January 2016.

Further information on the consultations and accompanying short surveys are available at: http://www.hastings.gov.uk/decisions_democracy/voting_petitioning_having_your_say/consultation/current_consultations/

Wildlife Corridor Created

Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve volunteers, estate rangers and the country park ranger have been working together to create a natural wildlife corridor of hedge line.

The new wildlife corridor of hedge line has been planted in what was an extremely large open field as part of the long term plan for the country park.

A mix of over 1000 native hedging 'whips' have been planted by volunteers and rangers to support threatened birds like yellow hammer and linnet and other wildlife too.

It will take a few years to fully establish but will offer shelter and an ideal habitat for wildlife in this exceptional area of countryside.

Thanks must go to the volunteers for their ongoing commitment and support of the work in the country park, without their help important work like this would not be possible.

Link Road opening will bring £1 billion boost to East Sussex

A new road which will boost the economy of East Sussex and cut congestion opens to traffic for the first time tomorrow (THU 17).

The Bexhill to Hastings Link Road, named Combe Valley Way, will bring an estimated £1 billion of economic benefits to the area and deliver up to 2,000 new homes and 3,000 new jobs.

The East Sussex County Council highway – built at a cost of £120 million, including £56 million from the Department for Transport – is also expected to reduce congestion on the A259 by up to 40 per cent.

The opening comes after Glovers House, the new 25,000 sq ft business centre developed by Sea Change Sussex on land opened up by the Link Road, welcomed its first tenant, Park Holidays UK.

Preliminary work on the road began in 2012, but the opening date was delayed by anti-road protests, extreme weather and archaeological work.

County council leader said that it had been a long journey but it was fantastic to see the new road completed and ready to welcome traffic. As with any project on this scale, there have been challenges along the way, but he would like to pay tribute to our Link Road project team, who have worked so hard to get the road open.

Combe Valley Way will help to regenerate one of the most deprived areas of the south east, providing new jobs, new homes and significant economic benefits, and cutting congestion on the A259 and other local roads. The arrival of the first tenant at Glovers House is just the beginning, and I look forward to seeing many new businesses and residents making their home here as a direct result of the new road.

Transport Minister Andrew Jones said: This new South Coast link will end years of frustration for local people, providing far quicker journeys across the region and unlocking ambitious development plans. The communities of Bexhill and Hastings have waited a long time for this day and now they have an improved road network to help them get around and get on.

The new road will host a new bus route, operated by Stagecoach, which will link Hastings and Bexhill with the new business park via the Link Road. The route and design were chosen to minimise the

impact on the environment, while new habitats for badgers, newts, dormice, bats and owls were created.

Meanwhile, a major tree and shrub planting programme is underway while new 'greenways' for walkers, cyclists and horse riders will be completed next year.

The project also saw a significant programme of archaeology which unearthed one of most important finds of prehistoric remains in the UK dating back to the last ice age.

Video showing an aerial view of the Link Road is available at <https://vimeo.com/148071117>

Wishing you all a merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

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