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## What is 2018 going to bring to the Old Town ?

- 1] A major campaign to improve Residents parking provision. This is a most pressing issue.
- 2] The new Old Town Surgery will be opened in Rock a Nore Road following a petition organised by HOTRA with 1,723 signatures.
- 3] Gus Cummins is an Old Town Royal Academician who has lived and worked at the top of Coburg Place for over 40 years. At long last the Jerwood Gallery will be holding his 'Off the Wall' exhibition. It opens on 27<sup>th</sup> January - the day Gus celebrates his 75<sup>th</sup> birthday. He has created a vast range of Art. Well worth seeing.
- 4] East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service will be introducing a new smaller size fire appliance. This is long overdue but recent sad events have reminded us all that Fire prevention and containment are at the top of the Nation's agenda.
- 5] East Sussex County Council will be opening the refurbished Hastings Library in March. The work has cost a bucket load of money. Sadly elsewhere libraries are closing, as at Ore, and even the Mobile Library service may disappear.
- 6] West Street will have a year long series of happenings. These will include free Oral History training for volunteers; a call for any old photos or images that can be published; a summer street party and much more.
- 7] An expansion of the work of the Hastings Opportunity area will be announced. This complex issue is considered in more detail on page 3.

### **SUBSCRIPTIONS**

***This remains just £10 per individual. A membership form is enclosed. Please make your cheque payable to HOTRA and drop into our Treasurer's letter box - Phil White Eight and a Half Exmouth Place, TN34 3JA or leave at Nelson House Antiques 80 High Street TN34 3EL - opposite the Electric Palace.***

Parking in the Old Town - a new campaign for 2018

### Background

When parking controls were introduced by Hastings Council over 10 years ago HOTRA gave full support. A Residents Parking Permit was required for On street parking and the system was managed through the Town Hall. About 230 on street

parking spaces were identified. There have been several minor revisions / additions since then but now clearly there is a major issue for residents who want to park in the Old Town. For the past 2/3 years the excess of demand over supply has become a daily challenge.

A major change happened when East Sussex County Council took over control about 6 years ago. Fortunately any surplus income can only be invested in public transport or road safety improvements.

The key players in parking provision are Hastings Council, the Foreshore Trust -for the seafront car parks - East Sussex County Council and Southern Water + the Stables Theatre potentially.

## The Problem

Those who need to use their cars on a daily basis, especially for travel to work, have difficulty when returning to the Old Town. A growing reluctance to move a car for up to a week is adding to the pressure. This has now spread up to parts of Clive Vale with further displaced parking.

## Some answers

1] Land at the top of Croft Road, just below Torfield School - currently this is used by desperate people. This needs to be levelled and formalised. CCTV cameras are also needed here due to Fly tipping. Potential gain up to 20 spaces.

2] The bus lay byes at the bottom of Harold Road and opposite Old Hastings House - repeated requests for these to be used between 6.00 pm and 8.00 am have been dismissed out of hand. Potential gain up to 25 spaces.

3] Land at the rear of the Stables Theatre, opposite Torfield Close - currently unused this could help to generate income for the theatre by being offered to their members living in the Old Town. Potential gain up to 18 spaces.

4] Land owned by Southern Water around the pumping station in Rock a Nore Road - some of this area needs to be reserved for use by their engineers but much could be made available. The needs of staff at the new Old Town surgery could be met here. Potential gain up to 30 spaces.

5] Rock a Nore car park - 2/3rds of this is poorly surfaced and inadequately marked out, although a commitment was made 5 years ago in the Foreshore Trust Business Plan. Potential gain up to 50 spaces.

HOTRA calls upon all organisations to investigate joint working so that residents parking permit holders do not have to pay twice to park in the Old Town. A mobile phone app would be very welcome.

## Social Mobility - the never ending challenge

Despite all that is claimed about schools and the National Curriculum it continues to fail repeatedly one group of young people. Poverty and those labelled 'poor white boys' suffer for all of their lives from reduced opportunities.

Figures published on December 14th show that just 41% of pupils who are

recorded as 'disadvantaged' in the Key Stage 2 tests taken in May 2017 achieved the expected standard. Yet 64% of pupils not recorded as 'disadvantaged' did achieve the expected standard. This is a 23 percentage point difference. Totally unacceptable.

If the number of pupils receiving Free School Meals is used as a measure of deprivation then the picture in East Sussex is even sadder. Out of 701 pupils -35%- achieved the expected standard. Whereas the 4,542 pupils who do not receive F.S.M. who achieved the standard was 61%. Results across East Sussex as a whole show that 57% achieved the expected standard when 61% was the National average. This is 4% below the National average in one of the richest counties in England. Again this is not acceptable.

In Hastings the best performing schools were Sacred Heart RC 69%, St Pauls CE on 68% and All Saints Juniors at 67%. This picture has changed little in over 20 years.

Go back to the days of National Service in the 50's and 60's when the Army faced similar Literacy and Numeracy problems. If a soldier cannot read a label that says EXPLOSIVES they found problems would arise!

So the Government has announced a national campaign on Social Mobility. This has been allocated over £70m across 3 years to create 12 Action areas around the country. Hastings is one of the areas, as are other coastal towns like Blackpool.

A plan for Hastings will be published shortly. One obvious focus will be those labelled as Not in Education or Employment, or NEET's as they are called. This is not new but some new thinking has happened.

a new T-level style of apprenticeship will be introduced from September 2019.

This is intended to have the same status as A levels.

Mental Health support provision will be a high priority, especially work with parents and families. Many have complex problems that cross generations.

More Maths teachers will be recruited to work with 10 - 18 year olds and newly recruited teachers will be allocated to Hastings.

Work to broaden horizons will be developed.

Work with employers and those offering career advice will be refreshed.

There will be a new Literacy campaign.

The full time coordinator for Hastings is Emily Westley. It is hoped that Emily will be able to speak at the HOTRA agm in May.

## H.OT.R.A.'s Work Record

This Association was set up in the 1960's and has been active ever since. No funding is received from Hastings Council so apart from the £10 subscriptions any project has to identify a source of funds or other resources to deliver outcomes.

Chronological list of significant projects where HOTRA has been closely involved.

3 pedestrian crossings in the Bourne, on the A259. Long overdue provision for a] visitors by Rock a Nore; b] residents by Courthouse Street; c] Old London Road for families going to and from school.

Chess square in Butlers Gap - starting with a project involving pupils at Torfield School who produced designs overseen by local artist Sarah Evans together with stunning sculptures by Leigh Dyer.

Sports and Play facilities on the seafront - initially a Multi Use Games Area on Pelham beach together with exercise equipment right along the promenade to the Marina. The M.U.G.A. Cost £130,000. This was funded by the newly formed Foreshore Trust. Now each year the Trust distributes £90,000 of surplus income to Hastings voluntary groups.

Children's playground, next to the Crazy Golf. This was the second stage of FREE provision for residents and visitors. It is the most popular attraction along the seafront. A wet play facility is now desperately needed.

Stade Open Space, Stade Hall and Jerwood Gallery. This development was very controversial. The space had been a coach and lorry park that gave serious pollution. There is now a year round programme of festivals, fairs and events that have boosted visitor numbers.

Winkle Island- this most neglected feature was upgraded to provide a focus for the historic Winkle Club together with pleasant seating + noticeboards.

High Street pavement improvements - these took over 6 years to achieve. ESCC eventually installed good quality paving opposite the Flower Museum.

Hastings Storytelling Festival was established by HOTRA in 2011 and is now an independent charity. Thanks to the generous support of our Patron Sir Quentin Blake, this is now the largest story festival in the South East. In 2017 there were 26 events, many in local schools.

Old Town surgery was a major challenge for 2017. Our petition with 1,723 signatures eventually secured Change of Use Planning permission. The commitment of Dr Craig Namvar ensured that this will happen in 2018.

Croft Road traffic survey - This on- going piece of work shows widespread concern about the dangers to pedestrians especially. ESCC will bring forward Road Safety ideas and present them for consultation.

Fortunately lack of space precludes any comment on the Harbour proposals.

Readers may like to know that the need for a crossing was demonstrated by a 9 year old boy who lived in the High Street. He had to take his dog Trixie for a walk on the East Hill every evening. That boy is now at uni in London !