

## April 2019 Parish News

### Isabel Blackman Centre

Sadly the lights have gone out.

Despite a huge effort by a group of charities and community bodies the IBC closed on 29<sup>th</sup> March. There has been charitable work on this site for over 120 years. In November East Sussex County Council indicated that they would allow an indefinite 'tenancy at will'. So we met and met and had advanced plans to keep the lights on.

All this changed on 13<sup>th</sup> March. *Beware the Ides of March for they are active at County Hall.* On 13<sup>th</sup> they told Sussex Community Development Association, who have been managing the contract, that everything had to be cleared out by 31<sup>st</sup> March - just 12 working days after a 4 year contract.

E.S.C.C. Estates department want the building empty so that they could sell or lease the building on the open market. This is despite HOTRA applying to register the building as a Community Asset. This will give us just 6 months to come up with the money to buy the building or take out a lease.

Remember

1] the IBC was transferred to ESCC from HBC. They never paid a penny for it.  
2] ESCC have sold both Moreton and Pinehill - 2 former Adult Services buildings in Hastings. That money has ended up in Lewes.

What about the 60+ users ?

Some have been places at Marlborough House, St Leonards. Despite 'having no money' ESCC are going to pay 30% more per day than the cost at IBC. How can this be a long term saving ?

Many of the users are very upset. Some live alone, feel isolated. The plan was to open a Friendship lunch club on 3 days each week. This is now CANCELLED.

In the longer term future plans included a mix of use by community groups and a return to Adult Day Care. This is all on hold. It may happen because there is such a strong commitment within the Old Town and across all of Hastings.

HOTRA have written to Becky Shaw, chief executive at ESCC, to express the anger and disappointment that is so widely felt. If ESCC do get their way how can they take the money from the sale away from Hastings ?

***HOTRA agm Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> May 6.30 for 7.00 in Stade Hall. Do please come.***