

HASTINGS OLD TOWN RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

Minutes of Management Committee Meeting Held on Tuesday 8 June 2021 in the Clive Morris Room, St Clement's Church

Attendance: Dick Edwards, Jill Bradley, Shirley Hawley, Tim McEwan, John Reynolds, Cllr. James Bacon, Ann Novotny, Hazel Lloyd, Mary Phillips, Ady Maylam from Old Town Traders (observer).

Apologies: Phil White, Raquel Lebron

The Minutes of the 8 December 2020 meeting were accepted.

Reports

Temporary Acting Chair's Report (Jill)

1. Continuing vacancy for Chair after over one year – does HOTRA have a future? Good news from Dick: a possible candidate has been in touch asking for more information. Fingers crossed!
2. Other vacancies: volunteers please to manage the website, investigate appropriate social media platforms to further HOTRA's presence in the Old Town, and someone to take Committee Meeting minutes/organise and distribute agendas as Jill is standing down at the 10 August meeting.
3. "A hoe is for life, not just Christmas". Great anger and consternation amongst residents at ESCC's spraying of glyphosate weedkiller on pavements. James reported HBC tried unsuccessfully to persuade them otherwise and want to "take over weeds" in future and not spray. Concerns are it can cause cancer and affects the health of bees. Some streets successfully persuaded ESCC against this, others failed. Traders asked for High Street and George Street to be left alone, they would do any necessary weeding manually. This was ignored and both streets sprayed very early one morning. Some residents reported their garden plants dying and one dog has died. Supplying a hoe to street cleaners is cheap, environmentally-friendly, and effective. This is disgraceful. All agreed Jill to write letter of complaint to HSBC Council Leader Kim Forward, copying Cllrs. James Bacon, Julia Hilton and Maya Evans. (Dick to approve letter). **Action: Jill**

Vice President's Report: Isabel Blackman Centre (Dick)

Although £650,000 was raised to buy the Centre, getting keys means paying bills, insurance etc. Friends of the Old People Charity had assets including property which was sold. HVA can access assets to continue their work and fund the IBC. An estimate for repairs is £100,000. Break-even should come in year three. The IBC will open for lunch Monday to Friday and have links to Central Hall (entrance next to the Body Shop in Hastings town centre). Users will be asked to pay subscription of 50p per day which covers subsidised meals. Also, incomewill come from room hire and rent from two-bed flat above (YMCA could take that on and pay rent with a 10 year lease).

Jill mentioned comments from OT community about lack of information on what's happening and requested Dick write an update which she will arrange to be emailed to HOTRA members, and put on noticeboards including two IBC ones. **Action: Dick**

Treasurer's Report (Phil)

Jill read this out in Phil's absence. Bank balance is £751.89 including a £135 cheque to be paid in. Only 57 members have paid their subscriptions to date compared to 144 on 8 December 2020. Payments by BACS has increased. The pandemic may account for low renewals but this is not good.

Is the community saying HOTRA is no longer relevant? Phil will email members with subscriptions reminder. **Action: Phil**

Planning Matters (John)

Revived proposal for 3-bed dwelling at 29/31 Courthouse Street. This affects residents in All Saints Street, drainage, loss of light, etc. John has sent objections to HBC on their behalf and HOTRA's and will email his letter to Jill to go out with these minutes.

Roebuck House. HOTRA's support of objections to revised colour scheme etc. were over-ruled by HBC Planning on 26 May 2021 meeting.

Old De Luxe Amusements site in George Street. James reported Planning Applications yet to go through. One option is demolition but there are others. Traders prefer demolition. Safety concerns as scaffolding virtually holding the building up, condition and stability of the rear worse than the front. Building owners very slow to act. Ady suggested joint Traders/HOTRA meeting inviting Ian Miller (Head of Property at Luxury Leisure) to give an update. James to invite him and Ady to arrange venue. All praised photos of George Street business owners outside their premises which are displayed on hoardings, very good advertisement! **Action: James and Ady**

Other Matters

Pharmacy in Rock-a-Nore Road. NHS Tribunal looking at this, Dick has made written submission in support. This was part of plan for new multi "health centre" which would also help recruit GPs. Huge protest when High Street pharmacy closed. Nearest now is Karmsons, long way to go for elderly people (although they deliver that can be problematic). With doctors appointments at a premium "ask your pharmacist" MUST be an option. **The Old Town must have a pharmacy.**

Possible AGM. This was deferred until the July meeting and Government updates on Covid-19 restrictions. Jill strongly urged this should be an AGM (members only) to present the accounts and either the new Chair or asking whether HOTRA should continue. No refreshments, no guest speaker.

Members Concerns

- Permanent scaffolding outside 136 All Saints Street (not Alistair Hendy's property as previously thought) with no work done for over 18 months. Pavement remains blocked. **Action: James to chase.**
- Access to boats on boating lake has been moved. Apparently it is losing money (big insurance bills etc), owner may want it closed and tarmacked over. Little chance of preventing that.

Future Programme

Next Management Committee Meeting will be **Tuesday 13 July in the Clive Morris Room, St Clement's Church** chaired again by Jill as no-one else offered. **Future meetings: Tuesday 10 August.** Jill made a very direct appeal for the committee to be more proactive and take on the vacant roles otherwise HOTRA will fold. Any new Chair and new members will need help from ALL the committee.

Meeting finished at 18.15