

MINUTES OF THE 240th MEETING OF THE HASOCKS AMENITY ASSOCIATION

Held on Thursday, 27th January 2011

Present: Diana Goodbourn (in the Chair), Kristian Bergreen, Catherine Cassidy, Margaret Ford, Lucinda Hawkes, Juliet Poncelet, Janet Slaughter, Juliet Strange, and Heather West

1. **Apologies** were received from Chris Bere, Fred Maillardet, Jacqui Whatford, Colin Wilsdon and the Downlands School representatives.

Amanda Kennard, an HAA member, was welcomed to the meeting so that her thoughts on visually improving Hassocks could be discussed.

2. **Minutes of previous meeting.** These were agreed.

3. **Downlands School.** HAA had been asked to participate in their Open Day on 2nd April. This would be a big event which would include the opening of the new block.

It was agreed that we should have a stall in the morning. Diana would assemble it, but volunteers were needed to man it between 10 a.m. and 12.30 p.m. Janet, Juliet and Lucinda would probably be able to help.

4. **Rail Group.** Catherine's announcement of the splendid success of the Group's efforts over the last ten years for station improvement was received with delight, and the sterling work of the group, and the late Gina Field, acknowledged.

Hassocks had been one of the stations selected for inclusion under the *National Station Improvement Programme* and *Access for All*. £1.25 million was allocated for a new station and £1.6 million for the installation of lifts. An outline plan was now awaited, with a detailed design to be drawn up in the Spring of this year. Network Rail would then submit the design for local consultation – a mini exhibition was envisaged. At all stages the Rail Group would be consulted. The new station could well be in position early in 2012.

Regarding **rail services**, Catherine reported that the new Sunday service which started on 12th December and for which the Group had pressed for a considerable time was being well used. The Group was monitoring the changes in the timetable of the off-peak Southern trains. Whilst the speedier service to London was welcomed by some, others were unhappy at the elimination of the local stops.

Judith described the acute overcrowding experienced on the 7.20 a.m. train to London Bridge. It was virtually impossible for Hassocks commuters to secure a seat.

5. Car Parking in Hassocks

The lack of spaces in the long term car park alongside Age Concern was raised. It was thought that the problem was due to commuters parking there all day.

It was agreed that a letter be sent to MSDC asking for the limited parking scheme, with discs, to be extended to include this car park.

6. Planning

As a matter of interest, Janet reported that Jack windmill (a two star listed building) plus the whole plot was up for sale at £1.5 million. The windmill was in a very poor condition, and it was estimated that it would cost £100,000 to put it to rights. MSDC and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings were monitoring the situation closely.

7. Grants to other groups:

a) HPC for playground equipment. Our gift of £200 towards the cost of a spinner had been gratefully acknowledged

b) Notice Boards. Colin had submitted a written report. Diana had attended a meeting of a sub group of the Community Partnership. It was originally thought that HAA's idea for an extra notice board could be incorporated with the Partnership map boards, but this was proving to be

impossible due to the tight time schedule imposed through SEEDA, the funders of the cycle project.

It was agreed that we should delay any action on an additional notice board until after the installation of the five map boards.

c) Visit Hassocks leaflets

10,000 copies of this new leaflet *Visit Hassocks* had been printed and were being professionally distributed to outlets all over the south east. Sub-titled *A flourishing village gateway to the South Downs National Park* it was attractively designed and funded by a consortium of agencies through the HCP. Any reprint would need to be funded separately, and Colin wondered whether HAA would be able to contribute.

It was agreed that we would favourably consider an approach when more details were available.

d) Seat in wild flower field

Margaret reported that the Monday Club would be willing to make and install a seat for approximately £60. The Turner family were happy for it to be installed near the bridge.

As agreed at the last meeting, she had asked the Monday Club if they needed any special equipment for which HAA would be happy to make a donation. John Card felt that a grant towards the purchase of wood was their greater need.

It was agreed that a grant of £200 be made.

e) Bird Identification charts

Margaret felt that as the Turners had now completed their first year listing bird sightings, it might be possible to have some identification charts alongside the seat. She had in mind the type used at Wakehurst Place which resembled table tennis bats, but had a laminated picture of different species on their surface.

It was agreed that this should be followed up with all the interested parties, and it was suggested that Malcolm Le Grys was a useful source of expertise.

f) **Trees.** The new tree planting had been done, and so far the results of the tree planting over the past two years had been very encouraging. No trees had been lost, despite two very dry spells each year.

8. Making Hassocks Greener

Amanda Kennard led a discussion. That there were numerous eyesores in Hassocks was unanimously agreed. Unfortunately their removal was by no means straight forward nor likely to be accomplished quickly. However, that was no reason not to try to initiate some progress.

Two areas for improvement were identified:

a) the tubs at the end of Grand Avenue which could be greatly improved. It **was agreed** that Amanda should contact Derek Swaine to discover who was responsible for the displays. When that was clear, an approach to Mansell McTaggart and HSBC for funding for improved displays might be appropriate.

b) The state of the bank in front of the pet shop. Catherine explained difficulties regarding the ownership of the land and how previous attempts to improve matters had met with no response. To a layman's eye, the brickwork looked potentially dangerous

It was finally agreed that a three headed approach should be attempted. Kristian would discuss the matter with Bill Hatton, chairman, Hassocks Parish Council and Catherine would approach the Wilmington Close Residents Association. If a consensus for action were agreed, HAA would join in and possibly sponsor the planting of that area.

9. Treasurer's Report

Heather reported that the cost of trees for the coming season would be £120 each.

10. AGM

Diana indicated that she would be resigning as Chairman, as would Heather as Treasurer and Jacqui as Secretary. Members were asked urgently to consider nominations for these positions.

At present, no date for the AGM was fixed. Venue and subject were still to be decided. Margaret suggested that it might be possible to combine the AGM with a mini exhibition about the rail developments. If Trevor Humber could be persuaded, he would be able to give a fascinating presentation on all the research he had done on modular stations and how – we hoped – it would modify the proposed designs for Hassocks. The new pavilion in Adastra Park was likely to be open by then and be a new and attractive venue.

11. Any other business

Catherine drew members' attention to a concert at Danny on Saturday, 19th February at 7.30 p.m. in remembrance of Gina Field.

Lucinda reported that an amazing £5,000 had been raised to 'Light Up Hassock'. As a result, Hassocks had a most attractive display of lights, when a number of villages had been forced to cancel their displays owing to cost. There would be a meeting on Thursday, 24th February aiming to formulate a plan for Christmas 2011, and, vitally, recruit new volunteers.

12. Date of Next Meeting

Monday, 28th March