

HASSOCKS AMENITY ASSOCIATION

Minutes of meeting held on Wednesday 30th January 2013 (Re-arranged from 22nd because of snow)

- 1. Present.** Janet Slaughter (in the chair) Juliet Strange (Secretary) Heather West, Bob Kenhard (Treasurer), Diana Goodbourn, Judith Poncelet, Fred Maillardet and Penny Wadsworth (Parish Council)
- 2. Apologies for absence:** Margaret Ford, Frances Guadencio, Catherine Cassidy, Chris Bere, Colin Wilsdon and Peter Gibbons
- 3. Minutes of last meeting and matters arising:**
The minutes of 6th December were signed as a correct record of the meeting. There were no matters arising.
- 4. Youth Slot.** There were no representatives from Downlands School present at the meeting.
- 5. Forming a ‘Green group’ .** The committee were given notes from Margaret Ford: *The suggestion is for a ‘green group’ in the simplest meaning of the phrase – the provision and/or maintenance of extra planters, beds, improving unkempt areas, etc. For the past two years HAA has increased its input – supporting the clearing of the Herring stream and organising the first planting of the raised beds outside the Pet Shop. A more ambitious planting programme in conjunction with the Guides and the Wolstonbury scrub clearers, is planned for the spring. We are in contact with the Turners of Lodge Farm: their ‘wild bird field’ has been a great success (despite flooding?). Our bird identification chart is now well in hand and Lindsay hopes soon to have something to show us. We are in friendly contact with the new owners of Lag Wood and their last email indicated they intended to contact Tom Turner regarding cutting the pheasant field as the first step in it becoming a wild bird field. (Again, this is on hold due to the weather). In addition, the new station will need our input as the Conways would prefer to do less rather than more. I guess we have about half a dozen volunteers (apart from the Guides and Wolstonbury group). The tea rooms at Spitalford Bridge are closing down, but Amanda wants to be actively involved and has useful contacts through her husband with the men at Silverthorne garage. Is there anyone who could be persuaded to take over these green issues as a project? My only suggestion is Roy Ticehurst who has moved to Lagwood Close from Burgess Hill where he was much involved with the ‘green circle’. He is a retired teacher, very knowledgeable, and has worked on similar projects such as restoring a wild flower meadow. I’ve introduced him to the Milnthorpes. He has seen a dormouse in Lag wood and they plan to do a dormouse survey.*
The meeting felt the next step would be for Margaret to send a formal letter to Roy Ticehurst asking him to lead the group. Both Fred and Bob said they would be happy to be involved but not to lead such a group.
- 6. The village lottery.** A progress paper has been circulated to all members and is recorded with the minutes. Bob was to put an advertisement in ‘Talk About’ asking for volunteers from other organisations within the village to join a committee to oversee this project. If this did not generate volunteers then a letter would be sent to key organisations asking for representatives. It was stressed that this would be to benefit Hassocks as a whole and not just the interest of HAA. Details are on the Hassocks web site; www.hassocksamenity.org.uk (Following the meeting Diana and Heather offered to be involved with this project.)
- 7. Membership.** Membership and Accounts data integration – some progress with email, around 90 functioning email addresses that have been tested. We will probably maintain our simple Excel system with one master file on Drop Box for managing membership. Judith and Bob are looking at other ideas to simplify the membership renewals including issuing a computerised membership ‘card’ instead of printed ones. Judith will e.mail the committee with her proposed pro-forma, together with up to date membership numbers. Fred pointed out that it would be a pity if we were not able pass on Tate’s discount offer to the membership, this might be difficult without individual membership cards.
- 8. Spitalford Bridge. Bob Kenhard gave the following report;**
We have, at long last, had a response from WSCC. They have considered the two aspects of the task and responded (my précis) thus:
For the refurbishment and clean of the bridge parapets, they require a Highway Improvement Agreement (HIA) – that contains details of the required works and confirmation that the work will comply with the

County Council's(CC) standards and specifications. The party carrying out the work must indemnify the Council in respect of third party claims.

For the Viewing Platform, whilst the CC accept that the area is not part of the highway, concerns exist about the method of guarding the public against the drop and also the method of securing the guard rail to the bridge structure. WSCC are also insisting on a rigorous maintenance program. These elements would need to be addressed within the HIA document, similar indemnity would be required. The CC legal team leader is prepared to discuss the detail with us. Mid Sussex have determined that we need to make a planning application to undertake this work in addition to the CC paperwork. A Works Order to rectify the cracks in the southern bridge parapet was issued by WSCC to the contractor Balfour Beatty, back in September, so far nothing has happened. Clearly, we are unable to do anything until WSCC complete this work. I am chasing constantly for an update as to when this work will start.

Funding. With a current total of £2,205 we are still a long way from where we need to be – even to do the relatively minor work involved in the refurbishment element. We therefore need significant effort on the fundraising side if this project is to progress.

Penny suggested we write to Hassocks Parish Council asking for funds from next year's precept. Fred suggested that Balfour Beatty be approached with a view to their co-operation with sharing of documentation. He felt the paper work involved for the repair of the southern bridge would be similar to that of the northern bridge. The committee were asked if they knew of a recently retired civil engineer to help with the project.

TREASURERS REPORT 30-01-13

Cash situation:

HSBC Savings account. £4,450, HSBC Current account: £598.43 **Total : £5,048.43**

Forecast spends/Invoices due 2013/14 : circa £1200

- Insurance: estimated £270-£300
- Printing & stationery: £650
- Membership Fees other bodies: £120
- Misc' expenses: £130

Income & Reserves

- Total subs income ytd stands at £1554.00. If members pay as expected the annual income in 2013 should be closer to £1800
- Spitalford Bridge project sits at £1,205 with an additional reserve from our own funds of £1000.
- Rail Group Reserves = £1,454

Financial Outlook

Forecast 2013-14	dr	cr
Cash at Bank		£5,048.43
Income subs etc		£1,800.00
Gift Aid		£300.00
Outstanding chq	-£300.00	
Estimated Expenditure	-£1,200.00	
Rail Group Reserve	-£1,454.00	
Spitalford Bridge	-£2,205.65	
sub totals	-£5,159.65	£7,148.43
Estimated cash surplus		£1,988.78

9. Rail Update (Submitted by Catherine Cassidy)

The Rail Group with local stakeholders (County, District and Parish Councillors and representatives from the former local Access group) had a meeting with the Project Managers from Southern and Network Rail and their team and Southern Rail's Stakeholder Relations Manager and Brighton Area Manager on 25 January 2013.

Southern's Project Manager reported on progress with the station building works, that the foundations were started last week, the steel structure for the new station will be erected the middle of February, and the station will be built and weather tight by the end of March with the new station to open May 2013 followed by a handover to Network Rail for commencement of the Access for All works.

Network Rail's Project Manager reported that the holm oak tree would be removed by the end of February before the nesting season prior to the works for the installation of lifts. During the meeting, Colin telephoned Jonathan Tate of SouthDowns Nurseries who has kindly agreed to take delivery of a section of the tree to store with the view to assisting with having it made into a bench for the station, possibly to go in the new garden area at the southern end of the platform. A contractor has just been appointed for the lift works and a lot of planning is presently being done, particularly to take into account the high water level at Hassocks. Consideration is also being given to how best to clean and refurbish the underpass. Discussions followed about using the underpass for possibly exhibiting artwork from the local schools. When the lift works are completed new waiting shelters will be erected on the down side to Brighton.

Discussions and feed back then took place with the two Southern Managers about poor train performance and unreliability recently, also the problems with recent changes to the stopping patterns of evening commuter trains and we were assured these would be reported back. The Brighton Area Manager explained the recent staffing problems Southern had had, which is why Hassocks ticket office has so often been closed over the past months, particularly in the afternoons. The Stakeholder Relations Manager then advised that the new Keycard (a smart card like the oyster card) for ticket purchases will soon be rolled out at Hassocks, which she has since confirmed will be by Easter.

11. Any other business

- Website – trial site live. www.hassocksamenity.org.uk

12. Date of next meeting Tuesday 30th April at Adastral Hall 7.30 pm