

HASSOCKS AMENITY ASSOCIATION

**The 44th Annual General Meeting will be held at the Hassocks Hotel on
Thursday June 28th 2012 at 7.30 pm**

Present. Margaret Ford in the Chair and about 70 attendees.

The meeting began with a presentation on the chalk streams in our area by **Fran Southgate, Wetlands Landscape Officer for the Sussex Wildlife Trust.**

This was followed by the launch of the appeal to restore **Spitalford Bridge**. Bob Kenhard gave a presentation.

Professor Fred Maillardet and Bob Kenhard gave an update on the **Sussex Lantern Trust.**

1. **Apologies for absence.** None were recorded.
2. **Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising.** The minutes were signed as a correct record of the Annual Meeting on 7th June 2011. There were no matters arising.

3. Chairman's report.

It really has been one of the busiest years in our 40 year's history. It has also seen – not a U turn, but a change in our emphasis. Once we were the only residents' association dealing with community affairs, and much of our time was spent on things like planning applications. Now some of those functions have become part of the Parish Council's remit, and other groups such as the Community Partnership and the Transition Group have sprung up. People ask 'What does HAA do?' What is an 'Amenity'? We don't want to hamper these other groups – let a thousand flowers bloom – but we felt it important to identify our focus for the future.

We are living in a time of such rapid social change – what with Localism Act, neighbourhood plans, the South Downs National Park – that we feel we should focus very obviously on the environment and our aim should be quite simple: 'To ensure that Hassocks maintains an attractive rural environment in keeping with the times.' That is the essence of the Spitalford Bridge project. It won't stop us casting a critical eye over developments that threaten to harm the environment either now or in the future, nor restrain us from presenting a reasoned case to the appropriate authorities when necessary – our recent car parking surveys are an example of that, our pressure on improved rail services is another.

Let me move quickly on to some of the issues which have come between me and my sleep this year! Spitalford Bridge and Southdowns Farm you have already heard about. The raised beds outside the pet shop – progress nil, despite endless letters and phone calls to the landlords and their agents and the efforts of the Parish Council and MSDC. Tree planting has continued. We've now paid for about 15 trees through Phil Mead and his 'Trees for Hassocks' scheme. And finally – one clear triumph! A seat in the Turner's wild bird field – designed by us, built by the Monday Club, and easy both to sit down on and, more important, get up from. We have not lived in vain!

4. **Treasurer's report.** This is recorded in the minute book. The chairman expressed her thanks to Keymer Parish Church for printing the newsletters. Volunteers were asked to come forward after the meeting to hand deliver these bi-annual newsletters. Proposed by Janet Slaughter and seconded by Judith Poncelet the accounts were adopted.

5. Election of Officers:

- a. Chairman – Margaret Ford proposed by Juliet Strange and seconded by Bob Kenhard.
- b. Secretary – Juliet strange proposed by Margaret Ford and seconded by Janet Slaughter
- c. Treasurer – Bob Kenhard proposed by Margaret Ford and seconded by Judith Poncelet
- d. Membership – Judith Poncelet proposed by Godon Marples and seconded by J. Strange
- e. Members of the committee. There were three vacancies for three year terms and one vacancy for two year. Frances Guadencio, Peter Gibbons was proposed by Margaret Ford and seconded by Catherine Cassidy and Diana Goodbourne, proposed by Margaret Ford and seconded by Bob Kenhard for the two year vacancy.

All of the above were duly elected and there remains one three year vacancy on the committee. The Chairman commented that we were lucky to have so many professional people on the committee.

- 6. Membership Secretary's Report.** At the end of 2011 there were 286 members of the HAA. Two thirds of these paid by standing order. There had been an encouraging response to a suggestion that they might wish to increase their orders to £10 p.a.
- 7. Rail Group Chairman's Report .** There are now two late night trains from London Victoria on Saturday evenings, 23.45 and 00.12. The franchise is up for review soon. It is expected that by the year 2015 there will be just one company running trains to Hassocks. London Bridge Station is being refurbished and it is expected trains will not stop there for two years during this work. Since the installation of barriers at Hassocks station there has been improved security and increased revenue. It is hoped to have reduced car parking charges on Saturdays and after 4 pm on all days. Thanks were expressed to the Friends of Hassocks Station for maintaining the plants. We are awaiting the start date for the new station. The contractors are to be Raymond Brown Construction.
- 8. AOB** There was none and the meeting closed at 9 pm