

HASSOCKS AMENITY ASSOCIATION

Minutes of meeting held on 21st November 2013 at 7.30 pm

Present. Margaret Ford (Chair) Juliet Strange, Bob Kenhard, Heather West, Diana Goodbourn, Fred Maillardet, Judith Poncelet, Roy Ticehurst, Janet Slaughter, Catherine Cassidy, Peter Gibbons, Louise Castleton, Frances Guadencio, and Jacqui whatford.

1. **Apologies for absence:** Colin Wilsdon, and Phoebe and Jake from Downlands School.

2. **Minutes of last meeting and matters arising:**

The minutes of 26th September 2013 were signed as a correct record of the meeting with one correction. Andy Petch is a County Councillor not a District Councillor.

- a. K12 footpath. West Sussex C.C. has accepted responsibility for the re-surfacing of the footpath which will probably be done in the Spring. Mr Sullivan, who owns the land the path passes over, has approached Margaret Ford for support in trying to get the path re-routed to exit opposite the entrance to Park Avenue where there is a gate at present. Although the meeting felt this might make an excellent access to the Community Field, we could not support this idea.
- b. The railway clock. We have had a quote from a clock specialist in Evesham to repair the clock, including fitting a new glass face and bezel. Southern Rail are willing to provide £100 if we can match this. The meeting agreed that we should pay the other £100 out of funds still earmarked for the station project. Peter Gibbon will be able to take the clock to the repairer in due course. It is still unclear where the clock can be hung once it is in working order again. We would prefer it to be in the station, perhaps in the station ticket office. Other ideas were the Hassocks Hotel, Age Concern or as part of a Railway memorabilia collection at Tates. Catherine will talk to Southern rail to see if they have any other ideas which will be secure.
- c. Spitalford Bridge. Work has started on replacing the parapet on the Southern side of the bridge. The meeting was shown photos of the progress, including some very large roots. It is hoped the temporary traffic lights can be removed before the 'Light Up Hassocks' event on 29th November. Bob commented that Lydia Shilbach, a community architect, had done a huge amount of invaluable work on this project for a small remuneration.

3. Village Lottery

280 numbers have **been sold** to date with more coming in each day. There had been a few adverse comments about the recipients of any profit in particular why did the Scouts get involved and not the Guides. It was reiterated that all local groups had been invited to help with this project but only the Scouts and Light Up Hassocks had come forward. It would be preferable if, in the future, we could run the lottery just for the HAA as Bob had done the bulk of the work involved. Budgens has agreed to put leaflets advertising the lottery on the tills and is allowing the staff to display stickers saying 'I support the village lottery' It is planned to have a table outside the store on the next four Saturdays leading up to the first draw. Although no one was able to help on the 23rd November **Diana, Heather, Catherine and Jacqui** (not 30th) volunteered to help on other Saturdays. Tates had invited us to have a stall at their upcoming 'Late Night Extravaganza' as no one was available to be at this event

we would decline the invitation. **Louise and Jacqui** agreed to drop lottery leaflets in all the houses in Grand Ave. The first draw will be on Saturday 21st December at Tates. Heartfelt thanks were expressed to Bob for all his hard work.

4. Managing Change – the future of the HAA

There was an extensive debate over the future of the Association. A discussion document had been circulated to the committee highlighting the advantages of a single community organisation. These covered the following points

- a. Hassocks is growing and is likely to change significantly in the foreseeable future.
- b. HAA resources (human and financial) are struggling to meet all the present needs.
- c. A multiplicity of agencies with similar titles confuses the public and grant-awarding bodies.
- d. HAA was founded in 1969. Is our title and function still meaningful to the man or woman in the street?
- e. Would a single umbrella organisation serve Hassocks better?
- f. The advantages of a single community organisation is that it avoids duplication of effort, especially in fund-raising and administration. It could provide a united and therefore more effective voice for the voluntary sector of our community.

Catherine reported that both the ‘Hassocks Community Association’ and ‘Light Up Hassocks’ were finding it difficult to recruit enough volunteers to function effectively, although it is hoped a new Chair of the HCP has been found. In particular the Light Up Hassocks committee was in particular need as it has to generate £5000 a year for the lights plus £3000 to run the ‘late night shopping’ the present chair has decided to stand down next year. (As an aside, the idea of putting 1p. on council tax was suggested. This would ensure the village could continue to enjoy lights each year. Peter suggested a letter should be sent officially to the clerk suggesting this.)

The result of this lengthy discussion was the following;

- a. There is a need to concentrate on the projects we have started, such as Spitalford Bridge and the Lottery and not take on any major new ones for the time being. It is better to do less well rather than spread ourselves too thinly.
- b. Fred will circulate the list of tasks which at present are undertaken by Margaret with a view to sharing some of the work. Margaret is hopeful of a new publicity officer who is willing to join the committee and will make her job easier.
- c. There should be a deputy treasurer as well as deputies for other key roles on the committee.
- d. Our overall role and place within the village should be closely examined in the light of re-visiting our constitution and considering what aspects it would be necessary to continue and what ones to relinquish, so that we could be more effective within the limited resources available to us. The debate about our structure would be included in this and continued at a later date. This proposal was unanimously agreed.

5. The Neighbourhood Plan.

A sub-committee, to be known as the HAA Neighbourhood plan working group had been formed with the following remit:

- a. To respond to the Hassocks Parish council’s desire to consult widely on the Neighbourhood Plan.
- b. To complement and supplement the PC’s work by consulting local people and organisations more widely on specific areas so that the final Plan is more representative and robust. (It is not the intention to duplicate the work of the PC even if that were possible, but to concentrate on some areas that would benefit from more intense scrutiny by local organisations and individuals.)

- c. To organise this project each member of the working group would act as a 'leader' who will consult widely and produce a written report on their findings in specific areas of their choice (as agreed by the group.)
- d. Combine the 'leaders' findings into a larger draft report for the HAA committee to consider prior to offering the final version to the PC for consideration by their NP group.
- e. Report progress of the working group to the main committee and as appropriate inform members and the public via the newsletter and Talk About etc.
- f. Continue working with the PC until a final version of the NP is agreed.

The meeting was happy to adopt the aims of the group. It was noted that the HAA group would be particularly seeking the views of the youth and the elderly of Hassocks. It was also reported that it was difficult to get a collective view from local businesses, particularly the shops, as the traders Association had been dissolved. There was to be a meeting with Cllr. Paul King on 19th December. Peter queried the title of the group as he felt it might be confusing for the general public. The meeting felt that the name should stand as it was a short term project and as long as the words 'Hassocks Amenity Association' were included when speaking or reporting on the group's work it would not be confusing. Thanks were expressed to Roy for all his hard work on this.

6. Outline Planning Application ref. 13/0381/OUT for 97 new homes to the east of London Road.

It was agreed that we should send a letter of objection to this large housing development on the edge of Hassocks and send a copy of the letter to the 'Protect Ham Fields Group.' The grounds of our objection would be; the erosion of the strategic gap between Hurst and Hassocks, air pollution, **visual impact**, the infrastructure – water, sewage etc. as well as the over subscribing of the local schools.

7. A.O.B.

a) Mayfield Market Towns Public Meeting. Fred Maillardet and Roy Ticehurst attended this public meeting and a report prepared by Fred has been circulated to the committee and a copy is attached to the minutes. RT suggested that in addition to the statement written by FM and published on our website, we should write to the LAMBS group indicating our support for their objection to a new town. At this stage there was no actual planning application but we would be joining with CPRE and our MPs in indicating that the proposal was bypassing all the normal official channels and should be resisted, if only for that reason. PG stated that the parish council had not discussed this issue yet so he could not speak for them.

b) Beacon Centre. Bob Kenhard and Roy Ticehurst attended a public meeting about the future of the Beacon Centre supporting Ian Weir's attempts to resurrect the Centre. Following the Open Day, over 100 local people had volunteered to help with this project. A constitution and management plan for the new charity was being prepared and meetings with the developer ongoing.

Dates of next meetings Friday January 10th at the URC
and Tuesday 18th March at Adastra Hall