

HASSOCKS AMENITY ASSOCIATION

The 46th Annual General Meeting held at Adastra Hall Hassocks On Monday 23rd June 2014 at 7.30 pm

Present. Margaret Ford in the Chair and about 90 attendees.

1. **Apologies for absence.** Tim Yates (HCP) and Catherine Cassidy
2. **Minutes of previous meeting and matters arising.** The minutes of the meeting on 10th June 2013 were signed as a correct record of the Annual Meeting. There was one matter arising. 3e) Sussex Lantern have yet to remove the large metal structure on their property in Lodge Lane.

3. **Chairman's report.**

The chairman reported on the activities of the year. In brief the following points were covered:

- a) **Hassocks station.** This was now complete including the lift. Thanks were recorded to Catherine Cassidy and her colleagues on the rail group for all their very hard work. It was noted that the reason Hassocks was awarded the funding to help with the new station, against fierce competition from other towns and villages, was the fact that we had a strong working group supporting the project and were known to the rail authorities. The flower beds at the station are now being maintained by the Aldingbourne Trust which supports those with learning difficulties. One bed is still being looked after by the HAA. This is a raised bed made from the oak which had to be felled to make way for the lift. Dennis South was thanked for his work on this.
- b) **Spitalford Bridge.** Again we were able to access money to enable the work to be done to restore this bridge in the autumn because of our reputation as an organisation. Thanks to Bob Kenhard for spearheading this project.
- c) **Lottery.** This had been a big success in its first year thanks to the hard work of Bob Kenhard and his small team. £3000 had been raised for the village.
- d) **Raised beds in Keymer Road.** Despite pressing for an improvement to these beds for nearly three years no real progress has been made with the land owner. They have recently stated they would like to 'tidy up' the area and we await developments. In the mean time the Guides have planted one of the beds with heathers. There is now a small 'Green Group' within the organisation. It is planned to plant bulbs round the new road sign in Keymer when this is completed and also to plant flowers in the bed outside the sorting office in Keymer Road.
- e) **Spitalford and rail groups.** These are ongoing projects for the HAA and both are looking for additional members to help with the work involved.
- f) **Open Meeting in January.** Local traders, councillors and representatives from many of the organisations and clubs in Hassocks were invited to an open meeting in January to discuss ways to improve the village. As a result of that there had been a meeting of members of the Hassocks Amenity Association, Hassocks Community Partnership, Age Concern and Hassocks Community Association to discuss ways they could work closer together. Many people in the village were confused by the roles of these organisations. One suggestion was that there could be central administration. It is the intention of the HAA to employ a secretary for a few hours a week to help with its own increasing administration work and this role could be expanded in the future to include the administrative needs of other groups..

The chairman said that all these projects and small initiatives build up to significantly improving the Amenities of the village. She would like to see continued and increased co-operation between the statutory bodies, such as the local councils, and the voluntary sector.

4. **Treasurer's report.** A full copy of the accounts is recorded with the minutes. Astrid Stubbs has built a new attractive web site which is www.hassocksamenity.org.uk

The treasurer said this had been a consolidation year to ensure there was enough money to cover all the current projects. We are now able to claim tax back 'on line,' which helps streamline the accounts. The meeting adopted the accounts.

5. **Village Lottery and Spitalford Bridge.** The Southern parapet was completed in time for 'Light Up Hassocks' and is a big improvement. The meeting was asked to comment on three options for the Northern side of the bridge to incorporate the bus stop. The second option was agreed. This would involve replacing the existing wall and providing a new seat and bus shelter outside the fast food shop, estimated cost £16.7k. The owners of the shop were happy with this suggestion. Ian Weir (HPC) and Andy Petch (CC) are looking at possible sources of grants.

Bob reiterated what the chairman had said regarding the lottery and thanked those who had helped with this very successful project. Numbers for the new season will be on sale in September and the first draw will be in December 2014.

6. **Membership Secretary's report** Last year there were 271 HAA members. So far this year we have 246 members so it is hopeful we will increase our membership by the end of the year. 210 of these are now on e.mail and most pay by standing order. Members were reminded about the Tates Loyalty cards.

7. **Election of Officers:**

- a. Chairman – Margaret Ford proposed by Janet Slaughter and seconded by Fred Maillardet
- b. Other officers: Treasurer – Bob Kenhard proposed by Janet Slaughter and seconded by Jennifer Ritson, Membership – Judith Poncelot proposed by Peter Gibbons and seconded by Graham Quantrell. (Secretary to be a paid position in the future) Juliet Strange was thanked for her work on the committee over the last nearly 30 years.

8. **Election of elected members.** Three members of the committee were standing down, Diana Goodbourne, Heather West and Jaquie Whatford. They were thanked for their work on the committee. Diana was a past Chairman and Heather a past treasurer. There were three nominations to join the committee: Paul Mercer, nominated by Bob Kenhard and seconded by Robert Talbot, Amanda di Clemente nominated by Janet Slaughter and seconded by Bob Kenhard and Georgia Cheshire proposed by Judith Poncelot and seconded by Peter Gibbons. There was one, 'one year' vacancy due to the retirement of Roy Ticehurst. *(After the meeting Jonathan Soper came forward to fill this position)*

9. **Any Other Business.** None. The meeting closed at 8.30 and was followed by an Open forum.

Notes on the Forum –

Your village, Your vision, Your views.

The panel consisted of Andy Petch, County Council, Sue Hatton District Council, Paul King Parish Council and Peter George long standing local Estate Agent. Fred Maillardet was in the chair.

1. Jennifer Ritson (rail group) spoke about the rail group and how it was important to keep a high profile so that services could be maintained. She appealed for more volunteers to join the committee, saying there were only 2-3 meetings a year.
2. Toby Wilsdon (Hassocks Cycle Hire and repair) Toby told the meeting that the cycle hire is open on Saturday mornings for repairs and cycle hires and at other times by arrangement. Three young people are being trained to undertake bike repairs.

Concerns and views Expressed from the floor.

1. **Footpaths.** K12 the path leading from Lodge Lane to Clayton has recently been repaired and re-surfaced. A questioner asked whether the footpath from Parklands Rd. To the downs could be improved as it was constantly muddy. Sue Hatton said the Parish council were looking into this. A show of hands showed that many people used local footpaths in winter. Other footpaths that were causing concern were the one between Clayton Ave and the Cinder Path, Grand Ave to Mackie Ave. and Fir Tree Way to the park. Paths within the village appear to be the greatest concern - one reason being they are often the route children take to school. Les Cambell pointed out W.S.C.C. were responsible for footpaths, and the land owners were responsible for the land to the sides. The Monday Group were working on the Cinder Path at the present time.
2. **Street Lighting.** There were several dark spots in the village.
3. **The state of bus shelters.** Spiders in particular in the shelter on the London Rd.
4. **Housing.** A major concern was the lack of a neighbourhood plan. This means it is easier for builders to get planning permission as there is no planning policy in place. There had been a very poor response to the questionnaire which had been sent to each household in the 'Talk About' only 50 completed questionnaires had been returned. It is vital the general public are made aware that unless 50 % of the village respond we will have little control over future plans. Paul King of the Parish Council felt that the task of completing a neighbourhood plan was very complicated and time consuming. The members of the Parish Council only met in the evenings and were often ill equipped to undertake such a large project. They are consulting with other parishes to get advise on this mammoth task. Roy Ticehurst felt there should have been a public meeting right at the start of the procedure. Paul King assured the meeting the public would be kept informed and they will have the opportunity to give their opinion on the plan. HKD transition towns have already met with the council to give ideas on 'green' issues which could be incorporated into the plan. The question of infrastructure is always the underlying concern – lack of schools, shops and local amenities. Builders are obliged to provide such facilities when lodging a proposal for housing. This is sometimes not enforced. The general opinion was that houses should be on brown field sites. The question of a housing development to the north of Shepherds walk is being monitored by the Parish Council.

5. **Traffic/parking.** WSCC are beginning a Hassocks parking plan this autumn but it may take 18 months to implement. Various ideas were put forward from the floor as to where additional parking could be provided, but the root cause was too many cars on the road.
6. **HKD (Hassocks, Keymer and Ditchling Transition towns)** are planning an exciting venture with Downlands School by installing solar panels to the roof of the school and inviting the public to invest in them. People can invest between £250 and £2500 and will see better returns on their money than ISAs or from banks. They are hoping to have the panels installed during the Spring half term in February. This would provide 'free' electricity to the school and have educational benefits, which is particularly apt as Downlands is a 'Science School.'
7. Peter Gibbons gave several suggestions as to ways of improving the bus service to the village, including joint timetables with the trains and perhaps having buses meeting trains. He suggested there should be a bus group along the same lines as the rail group.
8. There was a question as to whether there could be a mini round about at the end of Grand Ave where it meets the Keymer Rd. Andy Petch said the Traffic Engineers are looking at this particular spot to consider ways of improving it.
9. Christopher Powell (local Rector) said there was a need for better facilities for the young, especially teenagers. He spoke of Age Concern which provides excellent facilities for the older members of the village and hoped comparative provision could be provided for the young. Work on reopening the Beacon Centre was ongoing.
10. In response to a comment from the floor it was noted all information about the Parish Council can be found on their website, such as dates of meetings and the minutes of meetings.