



## HASSOCKS AMENITY ASSOCIATION

December 2015

Dear Member,

Our best wishes for a happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year! Nationally, the news is not very encouraging; here in Hassocks the outlook is rather more cheerful, but nonetheless challenging. This email paints the local picture from the point of view of HAA.

We are in the middle of the third village lottery promotion. The first two lotteries each raised £3000 and have supported the Scouts, the Jack and Jill nursery group, the Spitalford Bridge restoration, increased floral displays and, above all, subsidised Light Up Hassocks by £1000 each year. At present, we are down on numbers. Of course, many HAA members have already subscribed, and if you are one of them, please accept our thanks. If you have not yet 'got around to it', please act now, either on line via our website: [www.hassocksamenity.org.uk](http://www.hassocksamenity.org.uk) or by using the attached application form. Even if you are not lucky yourself, you have the satisfaction of knowing that your contribution helps a range of community efforts in Hassocks.

Since September, these have included clearing the Herring stream of debris and then, in conjunction with HKD Transition, massive planting of native bulbs and wetland native wild flowers. In the Spring, there will be more planting, and more work on the stream bed, making it even more welcoming to the bullhead fish and tiny wrigglers that our first attempts at an invertebrate survey have revealed. Outside the pet shop, Georgia Cheshire's design for the main raised bed promises to be truly eye-catching, and our green group has been busy planting bulbs for, hopefully, a splendid Spring display. Next year, Georgia's superb late autumn display on the west entrance of Grand Avenue will be matched by a similar display on the eastern side, as the Parish Council is kindly supplying similar iron baskets. A fitting tribute to this iconic 1930's feature of Hassocks!

If only we had equally good news about that other major aspect of our work: the rail service. With the new franchise we had hoped, perhaps naively, for better things and tried not to badger Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) with complaints. But things have become steadily worse, commuters are fuming, and rail staff dispirited. Perhaps the brightest moment was when an early morning train driver, on arriving at London Bridge, told his passengers: 'We're arriving four minutes early - but don't worry it'll be the usual crap service tomorrow!' Thanks to Peter Gibbons, who has been analysing the data, the rail group has produced facts and figures to confirm the 'crap level' daily experienced by Hassocks passengers over recent months. Catherine has also spent many hours, often with little result, conveying the group's anxiety about the new December timetable, coming into force on the 13<sup>th</sup>. At last, in desperation, she has contacted Nick Herbert, our MP, who has agreed to take up our issues with GTR. Almost simultaneously she had a response to the emails she had been sending since October regarding problems at the station, not least the frequent closing of the ticket office. As a result, the rail group will be meeting Paul Wyborn, Group Station Manager Brighton Mainline and Graham Thrower, Station Manager, Haywards Heath (with responsibility for Hassocks) on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> December at the

station. Catherine would be pleased to have any comments you may wish to make, but warns you that her list is already very long! Contact: [rccass1dy@aol.com](mailto:rccass1dy@aol.com)

Looking forward to 2016, we will continue investigating the flooding at Parkland Avenue and at the Dale Avenue/Lodge Lane junction. A lot of work has been done, and various interesting ways forward are being considered – more details later. In the meantime, we have heard with pleasure that HAA was one of very few groups who were successful in bidding for funding for this type of project through Operation Watershed.

Finally, discussions continue regarding the merger of HAA and the Hassocks Community Partnership (HCP). The present proposal is that HCP should become a charity, into which HAA would be absorbed. But what form should the new structure take? Should it have a brand new name to indicate its uniqueness, or continue to be Hassocks Community Partnership/Organisation to indicate continuity? These are some of the suggestions we have received: Hassocks Together; Hassocks Community Volunteers; Hassocks Community Action. What would be your choice of name? To start you thinking, you will find below a summary of the way we hope the new organisation *might* develop. Try out your ideas by filling the gaps! And, more important, how would you like to be involved? Email: [hassocksamenity@aol.com](mailto:hassocksamenity@aol.com)

*\*\*\*\* is where individuals, groups, businesses, statutory bodies come together to ensure that our village, growing so quickly, continues to be an attractive place to live in and where our lovely countryside is effectively preserved and enhanced and our shops and offices flourish*

*\*\*\*\* aims to foster innovation and bring like-minded people together. We are rich in gifted individuals, in active retired residents, and in a steadily increasing number of young families. Often residents want 'to give something back' in return for living here, but are uncertain where to start. \*\*\*\* can provide that starting point – where new ventures can test the water, where old-established groups can be reinvigorated by newcomers, where environmental issues can be explored – and where the voice of the volunteer can be heard and heeded.*

Best wishes,

Margaret Ford (chair)



*Light Up Hassocks and Jack & Jill playgroup – both supported by the Village lottery*