

**INSIDE: The HIP List**  
*Your Pull Out Guide to  
What's Happening in  
and Around Hastings*



## Pedalling a Good Cause

See page 7

# 10

## Years of Independent Journalism

See our special section inside



# MIXED RECEPTION FOR TOWN CENTRE RE-DESIGN

**HUGH SULLIVAN**

A preliminary re-design of Hastings Town Centre was unveiled at a Town Deal Board meeting last week, then presented in the central hub of Priory Meadow shopping centre on Saturday at the start of a six-week public consultation process.

The project, styled Hastings Public Realm and Green Connections, was approved in principle two years ago as part of the overall £24.3 Town Deal package awarded to Hastings by DLUHC (the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities). It was then given a large expansion of funding when other projects were withdrawn, so that it now has

a budget of over £10.2m. It is to be delivered by East Sussex County Council (ESCC) in conjunction with architectural design firm Arup.

The design involves substantial greening of Havelock Road, Wellington Place and the central area referred to as 'Albert Circus' with sustainable plantings of trees and shrubs, and an emphasis on prioritising 'active travel' i.e. bus lanes, cycle routes and pedestrian areas.

Chair of the Town Deal Board, Graham Peters, described the design at the Board meeting as "absolutely transformational and hugely exciting". Other attendees were less fulsome in their responses. Sean Dennis, director of the Hastings Chamber of Commerce, complained that the design 2 →



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EDITOR'S NOTE

Break out the champagne, in a world where nothing seems to work and everything seems to have gone awry, cause for celebration, somehow HIP has arrived at its 10th anniversary!

Undeclared by Covid, legal threats, occasional internecine strife, and being perpetually brassic, for the last decade an ever-evolving team of volunteers has written, photographed, edited, and distributed a free paper truly written by the community for the community. Many of HIP's scoops have been picked up by the national press, we've produced supplements for worthy causes, trained would-be citizen journalists and confronted the great and - sometimes not so - good. Unlike other almost as worthy alternative newspapers, HIP has no grant funding, no deep-pocketed philanthropist, no premises, no computers and no assets (so no point in suing us...) It doesn't even have an overall editor.

Despite the temptation to pursue the cheaper option of going wholly online (HIP also has a website and social media pages) our readers tell us that what they really want is a bi-weekly, collect at a shop, chat about in a cafe, printed local newspaper.

*Here it is. And here's to the next 10 years. Thanks for reading.*

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# Beach Hut Tenants Rebel

MARISA MCGREEVY ROSE

A group of tenants of the beach huts at West Marina are demanding that Hastings Borough Council (HBC), their landlord, schedule a full programme of maintenance to bring the huts "back up to working order". In the alternative they have asked to be allowed to undertake their own maintenance and deduct the cost from their rent.

There are 86 huts at issue, arrayed in two rows just beyond the Old Bathing Pool. Their rents or "licence fees" have almost doubled in the last six years - a front-row hut

facing the sea cost £900 in 2018; this rose to £1,367 in 2020. The invoiced figure for 2024 is £1,752.

At that level, and even allowing for slightly moderated rents for the back-row huts, HBC would be grossing nearly £150,000 per year.

**REPAIR BUDGET**

Some beach hut contracts state expressly that HBC is responsible for external maintenance, others don't mention external maintenance at all, yet all huts have been subject to the same level of rent rises. The tenants say they have been told that the council allocates an annual budget of just £8,000 for their upkeep, which seems to be expended

on 'ad hoc' emergency repairs. No regular maintenance has been undertaken, either to the huts or to the toilets which serve them, for many years.

"They need painting ASAP," says Susie Barnard, whose hut is on the front row. "Much of the wood is now exposed and will soon start rotting - some already has. This will incur far more work and cost than painting would have. I've emailed the Resorts office many times and even spoken to the leader (now ex-leader) of the council. We're told they have no budget to do the work."

A source within HBC advised that the council did explore "a light touch redecoration of all of the huts at that site this year", but that the quote for the works was too high. The officer also shared that "whilst the external decoration of the huts is in a relatively worn condition, the team have carried out three separate repairs recently, including to damaged roof felt". Unfortunately,

according to an industry professional who recently reviewed the condition of the huts, the repair work that has been carried out (viz. nailing batons into the roof felt, so these are now leaking.

Polly Brookes, another front-row tenant, removed black mould from her interior last year and paid her own contractor to repaint. Currently she is unable to open the hut at all. "Council workmen have put the lock on upside down," she reports, "so it's filled with water and is now too rusty to open."

The lack of maintenance has also extended to the toilets. "We have been complaining about the state of the toilets for ages," says another tenant, Jean Harvey. "They are disgusting."

**APPROACH TO HBC**

In early January a letter was submitted to Victoria Conheady (Director of Place at HBC) and Aaron Woods (Resort Services Manager) proposing that the council collaborate with the tenants in getting works undertaken with costs to be deducted from the rent. Within hours of acknowledging receipt of this letter, the council issued invoices to all tenants demanding full payment of the year's rent by 31 January. A further written response from Woods advised that HBC did not feel that a meeting with the tenants was appropriate at this time, as "there isn't a constituted body who represents the site, and tenants with issues can contact HBC via other routes, including the My Hastings website."

The tenants have decided to go to the top, using the Public Question Time slot at the start of HBC cabinet meetings. A group were due to attend this week's meeting (taking place on Monday evening as this report was being filed) in order to present their proposal to set off maintenance costs against the rent demands.

| HASTINGS TIDES |                    |          |          |          |         |        |       |
|----------------|--------------------|----------|----------|----------|---------|--------|-------|
| DATE           | HIGH AND LOW TIDES |          |          |          | SUNRISE | SUNSET | MOON  |
| FRI 2 FEB      | H3:00am            | L9:58am  | H3:19pm  | L10:07pm | 7:31    | 4:50   | THIRD |
| SAT 3 FEB      | H3:42am            | L10:40am | H4:10pm  | L10:56pm | 7:30    | 4:51   |       |
| SUN 4 FEB      | H4:39am            | L11:38am | H5:16pm  |          | 7:29    | 4:53   |       |
| MON 5 FEB      | L0:07am            | H5:53am  | L12:54pm | H6:39pm  | 7:26    | 4:55   |       |
| TUES 6 FEB     | L1:39am            | H7:18am  | L2:26pm  | H9:07pm  | 7:25    | 4:57   |       |
| WEDS 7 FEB     | L3:12am            | H8:34am  | L3:54pm  | H9:15pm  | 7:23    | 4:58   |       |
| THURS 8 FEB    | L4:16am            | H9:36am  | L4:43pm  | H10:08pm | 7:21    | 5:00   |       |
| FRI 9 FEB      | L5:10am            | H10:27am | L5:37pm  | H10:57pm | 7:20    | 5:02   | FULL  |
| SAT 10 FEB     | L6:00am            | H11:16am | L6:25pm  | H11:42pm | 7:18    | 5:04   |       |
| SUN 11 FEB     | L6:48am            | H12:03am | L7:10pm  |          | 7:16    | 5:16   |       |
| MON 12 FEB     | H0:27am            | L7:32am  | H12:51pm | L7:51pm  | 7:14    | 5:07   |       |
| TUES 13 FEB    | H1:12am            | L8:14am  | H1:37pm  | L8:28pm  | 7:12    | 5:09   |       |
| WEDS 14 FEB    | H1:53am            | L8:53am  | H2:18pm  | L9:04pm  | 7:11    | 5:11   |       |
| THURS 15 FEB   | H2:32am            | L9:31am  | H2:58pm  | L9:40pm  | 7:09    | 5:13   |       |

\* L = LOW TIDE H = HIGHTIDE For beach safety advice visit: [rnl.org/safety/beach-safety](https://rnl.org/safety/beach-safety)

has been undertaken so far without any significant engagement with the local business community. John Bownas, of Love Hastings, which represents town centre businesses, asked what cost/benefit studies had been undertaken to show that the scheme was value for money compared to all the other needs of the town.

New council leader, Julia Hilton, who is herself a professional landscape architect and clearly favours the greening agenda with its emphasis on walking and cycling, noted that the consultation process, which runs until 1 March, was "long overdue".

Ellie McDaniel, project manager for ESC, told the Board that, once the consultation was concluded, the design was expected to be further developed by June and planning application documents prepared by July. The whole scheme is due to be delivered by 2026.

The Saturday presentation at Pri-

ory Meadow included not only the new design of the Public Realm project but also updates in respect of other Town Deal programmes. The large numbers of interested viewers included many councillors and leading community activists. There was clearly an appetite for consultation, with concerns raised both in immediate feedback and subsequently on social media.

Proposed changes in bus routes and loss of the taxi rank in Havelock Road were questioned. But, more fundamentally, people wanted to know how the future town centre would be maintained and policed, many pointing out that the current supposedly pedestrianised areas of the centre are constantly overrun in the evenings with delivery bikes and vans.

To participate in the consultation on the town centre design, go online to [consultation.eastsussex.gov.uk](https://consultation.eastsussex.gov.uk).

# Controversy over Council Cabinet – Carr Quits

On Monday (29 January) new Hastings Borough Council leader Julia Hilton presided over her first cabinet meeting since being voted in by the full council a fortnight ago. As reported in HIP 243, the cabinet includes three councillors from the Hastings Independents group – see adjacent column – but only two from her own Green party. A third, Cllr Claire Carr is understood to have been earmarked for the Culture portfolio, but told Cllr Hilton that she could not support the decision to ally with the Independents, and was resigning from the party.

Cllr Carr has subsequently issued a statement complaining that Cllr Hilton had made her deal “without any Green group discussion, moving away from what the group had previously agreed to”. She was particularly concerned that Cllr Paul Barnett has been retained as holder of the finance portfolio despite the criticisms levelled at him and his administration by recent external reports.

Other party leaders, Cllr Heather Bishop for the loyalist Labour group and Cllr Andy Patmore for the Conservatives, have made similar criticisms. Cllr Bishop was quoted by the BBC as commenting: “Despite their record of failure bringing the

council to the brink of bankruptcy, Cllr Hilton has put the Independents back in charge of the council finances”. Cllr Patmore pointed to a track record “of successive Labour cabinets failing to take the necessary decisions in order to keep the council afloat”. The Conservatives, he said, preferred “to stay out of a cabinet with members who have presided over failed policies”.

By contrast, Cllr Hilton has told HIP that, notwithstanding the stated positions of Cllrs Bishop and Patmore, “all political parties agreed that, for the sake of continuity and stability until the May elections, it would make sense to keep the responsibility for Finance and Housing portfolios with the same people, i.e. Cllrs Barnett and Simon Willis”.

There was some confirmation of this in the leadership ballot. Only one Conservative, Cllr Matthew Beaver, and the Reform UK councillor Lucien Fernando voted against Cllr Hilton’s appointment. The rest of the Conservative group, the whole of the Labour loyalist group and Cllr Carr herself abstained.

Cllr Carr says that she will retain her Castle ward seat until May, “sitting as an Independent and serving residents as I always have”, but will not seek re-election then.

## Cornwallis Street Hotel Sale Set for Approval

The controversial hotel development on the site of the former car park at Cornwallis Street is set to proceed after a renegotiation of terms between the land owners Hastings Borough Council (HBC) and Whitbread PLC, proprietors of the Premier Inn brand.

The original deal, made in October 2019, required the council to undertake the building work at an estimated cost of £7m before granting a lease on to Whitbread. Post-Covid, the tenders received for the work came in around £13.6m, almost double this estimate, and beyond what the council could afford. However, it was under financial pressure to proceed because the

original contract imposed what Chief Executive Jane Hartnell described as “significant financial penalties” if the hotel was not built within the specified timescale.

HBC’s newly constituted cabinet was due to debate on Monday (29 January) – behind closed doors for reasons of ‘commercial sensitivity’ – a revised deal, strongly recommended by Ms Hartnell, under which Whitbread will buy the land at “not less than market value” and undertake the building itself without the need for council investment.

The development is estimated to create 35 construction jobs and result in 84 beds, with around 30 future staff, and a visitor spend of £2.1m a year.

Council leader Julia Hilton said in advance of the cabinet meeting: “All councillors are grateful to officers who have been working hard for several months on this to achieve a much better outcome for the council. This project is a legacy project that was agreed before COVID. It will provide much needed hotel bedspace for our tourism economy, while removing any financial risk to the council. We will be ensuring that Whitbread keep residents in the area fully updated about what is happening, and that the hotel is built as quickly as possible.”



Cllr Maya Evans and Cllr Andy Batsford

## Independents Party Launch

PAUL McLAUGHLIN

The newly formed Hastings Independents Party celebrated the launch of its breakaway political venture with 40-50 people crammed into Mike’s Bar in Norman Road, St Leonards last Friday (26 January).

The new political grouping consists of eight erstwhile Labour councillors who resigned the party whip in December. They are: the former Council Leader, Paul Barnett, his Deputy Leader, Maya Evans, and Cllrs Andy Batsford, Simon Willis, Ali Roark, John Cannan, Nigel Sinden and Mike Turner. They have applied to the Electoral Commission to list the Hastings Independents Party as a political party on the national register.

Cllr Sinden, who represents the

Silverhill ward, expressed his sadness at leaving Labour. He said he had become “deeply frustrated” at the way the national party had tried to control the local party in Hastings in recent years. “My values have not changed, he said, “it is the Labour Party that has changed”, adding, “it will be much easier for me to stand up for my residents in Silverhill and across Hastings as an independent voice within the Hastings Independents group.”

Cllr Batsford told the gathering that, since the formation of the new group in December, he and his colleagues had been “overwhelmed” by positive messages of support from people across Hastings who were “desperate for a new type of politics” and one “not constrained by out-of-date national party rules”. He said he wanted to “harness the hardworking, creative, and independent nature of Hastings and St

Leonards to drive this community forward in a way that will capture everyone and provide a sense of community, pride and energy”.

Cllr Evans spoke passionately about the need to build a progressive alliance to deliver social justice for all the people of the town. She said the agreement with the Green Party was “the first step towards working in a new way that is not constrained by national party rules and shows a strong commitment to opening up the council so that the brightest and best from Hastings can contribute to this amazing town”.

She said that the new party will hold a series of meetings and events over the next month “not only to celebrate our town, but also to provide an opportunity for those with a passion for this town to help shape the strategies and policies we will bring to residents’ doorsteps during the local election”.

It is unclear at this stage how many seats the new party will contest in May’s elections. Cllr Evans is the only one of the group up for re-election, whilst Cllr Roark has already announced that she will be stepping down as a councillor when her term ends in April.



PHOTOS: HASTINGS COMMONS

East elevation, Observer Building in 2020

# Jess Steele, Community Entrepreneur

HUGH SULLIVAN

In an era of squeezed public finances, soaring construction costs and wasting infrastructure, the renovation of buildings around Cambridge Road by the Hastings Commons (HC) group of trusts and companies has been, in many ways, a beacon of hope for the future of the town.

Retaining the basic fabric but redesigning the spaces within, the group's property development arm HC Neighbourhood Ventures Ltd (HCNV) has acquired, restored and repurposed Rock House, Harper's Caves and, so far, four out of the six floors of the vast Observer Building. Plans for renovation of two other major buildings, 12 Claremont (next to Hastings Library) and Eagle House (opposite ESK), are moving forward.

HC's phenomenal success in raising funds from public and charitable sources – around £28 million

over the last ten years, according to HCNV finance director Bob Thust, though not all this has yet been expended – has raised eyebrows amongst some observers of the Hastings economy. How have they done so well?

A trust with over 550 community members, HC Community Land Trust, has a one third shareholding in HCNV. The trust is intended to take over the ownership as well as management of all these buildings once the portfolio becomes financially self-sustaining, i.e. paying for itself. Further subsidiaries, HC Leisure and Learning and HC Living Rents, already respectively manage educational/youth provision and residential housing units within the buildings.

## DRIVING FORCE

But there's no doubt that the driving force behind all these ventures is the self-styled community entrepreneur, Jess Steele. She would be the first to declare that she is part

of a team, and has pushed her entrepreneurial ideas forward in partnership with others, particularly her co-directors Eddie Bridgeman of Meanwhile Space and John Brunton, the General Manager of HCNV. She will explain with animation that she represents a thriving and essentially democratic community. But is she not gaining privately in this amassing of HCNV's property empire? She herself is effective owner of one third of the shares in HCNV through her personal company Jericho Road Solutions (Jericho Road). Is that not proof that there is a capitalistic motivation behind it?

Steele is adamant that's not the case. The trustees of the community land trust come from, and were appointed by, the membership. Anyone can become a member for a basic £1 share purchase. Steele herself is not on the board. She did put £85,000 of her own money, raised from a re-mortgage of her Hastings home and channelled through Jericho Road into the initial 2014 purchase of Rock House by HCNV (under its original name White Rock Neighbourhood Ventures). Jericho Road took one third of the shares in HCNV alongside a non-profit community interest company Meanwhile Space, with the community land trust being granted the other third. But HCNV's articles, which state its purpose "to promote the common good", contain an assets

lock which prevents transfer of its property assets except to another asset-locked holder, including on dissolution. Although Jericho Road is entitled to a return on its investment, the socially-driven aspects of the development – capped rents, public spaces etc – will limit its market value, as will the ongoing charitable and community objectives. The objects of HCNV are clearly set out: "to benefit the community in Hastings" by

- bringing difficult buildings back into positive use;
- providing affordable housing, work spaces and leisure facilities;
- growing the local economy;
- generating positive social benefit that contributes "to a fair, inclusive and ecologically sustainable society";
- offering an 'open access resource' for children and young people to advance their independence, education and social responsibility.

## DEPTFORD TO HASTINGS

Steele has an impressive background in community activism and urban regeneration, originally in Deptford, where she founded a creative outreach charity Magpie leading a bottom-up regeneration programme. She worked for national organisations including the British Urban Regeneration Association and Locality. Through Jericho Road, incorporated in Decem-

Hastings Pier. It's a rueful irony not lost on Steele that, after tireless work for nearly a decade to take control of the fire-wrecked structure and complete its award-winning restoration for community use, the Trust ran out of money and found it bundled into the private hands of Sheikh Abid Gulzar, whom some see as the ultimate practitioner of delinquent ownership.

Steele was awarded an OBE in 2016 for two decades of community regeneration work nationally. ("I was conflicted about accepting a gong that's associated with the Empire, but my dad was proud, and I think it's good that community work is honoured," she says). Since then she has concentrated all her efforts on Hastings, and more specifically on the area in and around America Ground, whose one-time declaration of local independence still reverberates two centuries on.

## OBSERVER BUILDING

The fulcrum point is the Observer Building which, she points out, had 13 different commercial owners between 1984 and 2019, many of them making a monetary profit with a series of planning permissions, then selling on as the fabric continued to deteriorate. "That's how our property system works. But we have a different approach: we are here for ever, these buildings will never be sold on."

There remains some local scepticism as to whether the HC renovations, and the ideas that go with them, are worth the huge amounts of public money being expended. The town's last major public regeneration programme channelled funds, first through SeaSpace, then through SeaChange, into the erection of the gleaming glass-and-concrete office buildings of the Priory Quarter now largely vacant and unkempt, the beachside restaurant of Azur that's crumbling into ruin, and the Bexhill link road whose controversial mission to open up office and industrial development on precious green space has suffered a series of legal and financial challenges. The benefits derived in each case have been disappointing, to say the least.

Steele makes a good case for why the HC vision – "bottom up rather than top down" will be more effective. "I believe in collective caring, in mutualism and entrepreneurialism", she says. "True entrepreneurs set out to do something when they don't control the resources but have to harness what's there...We should stop asking what 'they' can do, and see what we as a community can achieve. We build power through large numbers of people."

She is more than a little hurt when her motives are challenged. "Some find it so hard to believe that people might do things that aren't just for themselves", she says. But she finds the vast majority of locals supportive and "happy that we're doing it".



ber 2012, she offered coaching to community groups throughout the country dealing with at-risk buildings in the neglectful ownership of private interest or cash-strapped local authorities. A particular programme was styled CADO – the Campaign Against Delinquent Ownership.

Her first community venture in Hastings, where she moved in 2004, was as a founder member and treasurer of the Hastings Pier and White Rock Trust. It gathered in £14m from National Lottery and other funders, as well as over half a million pounds from local subscribers, to rebuild

WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND?

✉Letter

HOUSING, NOT AMUSEMENTS

Dear HIP

With reference to *Year of Shut-down for Owens Refurbishment* (HIP 241), what Hastings needs is housing, not a huge indoor games complex. How many one and two bedroom flats could be fitted into the 77,000 sq. ft. of the old Debenhams building?

Housing for local people, at reasonable rents. Not flats for sale to speculators or Airbnb or once-a-year holiday homes for the DFL crowd.

If these CFEC/Owens people are so committed to Hastings, perhaps they should rethink their business model and use the multi-million pound investment for what is really needed. A longer term investment perhaps, but a regular income stream from reasonable rents.

Yes, Hastings is a town by the sea, but it doesn't mean we have to have amusement arcades everywhere. Surely tourists should be coming for the seaside, the beach, the change of scenery. Not to spend all day indoors!

Stuart Denham

✉from our website

PUBLIC SERVICES NEEDED

With reference to *Facing the Financial Facts* in HIP 243, the moving of the sports facilities is one thing, and it sounds as though a suitable new site has been found. Fantastic. However, if a significant number of new houses are to be built on the Horntye site, what impact will that have on the local area at large? The roads are already congested and poorly maintained, schools are full, and dentists/ doctors are all over-capacity. Does the Council or Trust have plans to invest in public services to accommodate the extra people living in the Horntye area?

Ben Nice

✉from our website

LIFE-AFFIRMING MEMORIAL

How very moving and life-affirming was the Holocaust Memorial Event at the White Rock Theatre [see David Tasker's preview in HIP 243]. Thank you, David, for an excellent and powerful presentation of your mother's miraculous story of survival. Never again.

Clive Agran

✉from our website

WELCOME REBELLION

Thank you for raising this very important issue, *Grace (Housing Rebellion in Hastings, HIP 243)*. We have to move away from the idea of demolition and towards compulsory purchase to refurbish at affordable rents with tenant management.

The only new builds should be zero-carbon, mostly rented co-housing on brownfield sites. Stop selling off leisure or already scarce wildlife plots to greedy developers.

Housing Rebellion is a welcome wind of change.

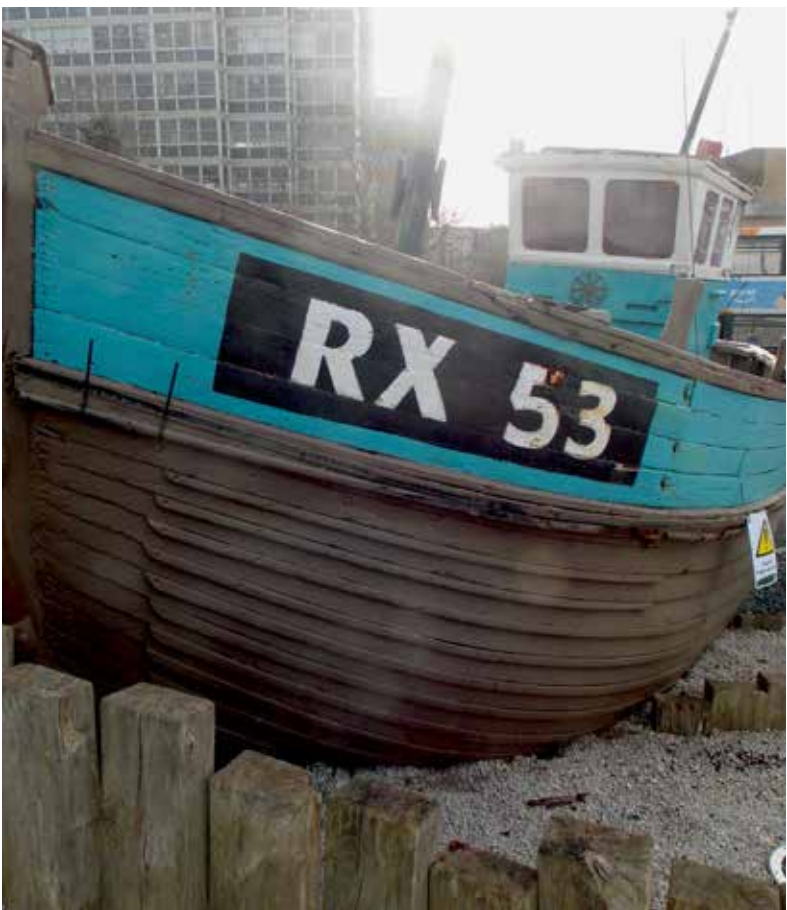
Ruth Gregory

✉from our website

WHAT ABOUT ST LEONARDS?

In response to *Deal Revealed* (HIP 242), I am glad we got the funds, but the Town Deal is mostly about the town centre. There is nothing being offered to St Leonards - let alone West St Leonards. Is it any wonder that groups outside Hastings town centre do not bother to submit applications for innovative uses of those funds any more?

Bryan Fisher



PETER CARNEY

What to do with Dorothy

PAUL McLAUGHLIN

A campaign to save the historic fishing boat which greets visitors to Hastings as they exit the railway station has divided local opinion.

The RX53 Dorothy Melinda is a traditional clinker-built wooden fishing boat, with the wheelhouse at the stern. It is one of only seven which now remain in the town. It has been on display on the roundabout outside the station for the last 15 or so years. But the years have taken their toll: the vessel is in urgent need of repair or destruction – depending on your point of view. Much of its hull is rotten, and the keel, stern and transom have all suffered from years of neglect. The upper structure is also in serious disrepair.

Officers of Hastings Borough Council (HBC), which owns the boat and leases the land it sits on from Southeastern Railway, believe it is now beyond reasonable repair. Council Chief Executive Jane Hartnell recently announced that, despite ongoing maintenance over the years, the boat has become a “potential health and safety risk to the public, passing cars and buses”.

An added factor is that HBC's lease of the land from Southeastern Railway has now expired. Under its

terms the council is obliged to remove the boat on termination. Ms Hartnell indicated that “it will not be possible at this late stage, with contractors instructed, and licenses and methodology agreed, to halt the process without considerable costs to HBC.”

CROWDFUNDER CAMPAIGN

Peter Carney, a local historical enthusiast, is undeterred by the boat's condition and has launched a campaign to save it. He has set up a crowdfunding page to raise an initial £5,000 to move the boat to a safe location and to work with a team of volunteers to help restore it to its former glory.

£1,800 has so far been raised. Peter is confident that more money will be donated before the deadline. He has approached the East Hastings Angling Association to provide the vessel with a temporary home, and he is hopeful that a permanent home along the seafront will be secured by the time the restoration work is completed.

He understands the very strict financial limitations HBC is working within and accepts the council simply does not have the resources to embark on a lengthy and very costly restoration. However, in view of the level of support his campaign has received, he is optimistic there will be a change of heart and that

the Dorothy Melinda will be re-prieved.

Steve Barrow, who has been building and repairing wooden boats in Hastings for over 50 years, thinks the boat is just too rotten and is well beyond saving. Whilst sympathetic to Peter's efforts to save the boat, he believes his campaign is misguided. “Whatever money is raised should be used to restore a vessel which could be saved rather than one that is just too far gone”, he says, noting there are more suitable boats along the beach which are in much better condition than the Dorothy Melinda. He pointed to the RX60, the Mandy Anne, which was abandoned and left to rot on the shingle behind the Net Huts for the last 20 years and which he believes, despite the conditions, could still be salvaged.

Back in the early 1980s, there were 44 boats working from Hastings beach, with a waiting list for spaces. There is now only a single wooden boat that regularly goes out to sea, and less than ten working boats in total. The near-collapse of the fishing industry in the town over this period can be attributed to many factors, including smaller fish stocks and the lack of government support, but it may not be long before all the traditional clinker-built wooden fishing boats have been discarded and lost.

Restoration of the two historic Hastings lifeboats, the Priscilla Macbean and the Cyril and Lilian Bishop, both in the Old Town, shows it's a popular cause and can be done. But it's clearly a constant battle and takes time, effort and lots of money.

We would love to hear from you.

✉ letters@hastingsindependentpress.co.uk

📘 facebook.com/hastingsindependent

📷 instagram.com/hastingsindependent

Please be aware we may need to edit letters for reasons of space and we will only withhold names if this is necessary for the protection of the writer.

# Love Comes in Doodles?

HELEN MURPHY & NICK PELLING investigate doodle dating.

As we all know, going on a real person-to-person ‘date’ is full of potential embarrassment and enough social awkwardness to turn otherwise mature people into cringing, stumbling beings who have lost the power of intelligent speech. Hastings Art School, however, has hit upon a new way to ease the pain and even have a lot of fun. Their genius idea is doodle-based speed-dating.

To get a little more clarity we spoke to the Director of Hastings Art School, Julia Kotziamani. She was quite frank with us: “Sometimes art can take itself really seriously, second only perhaps to dating! We want to create an upbeat, relaxed environment where you can meet new people and engage in a silly creative activity. Drawing can be a great way to break the ice and connect in a lighthearted way.”

### MY SILLY VALENTINE

So, what, in practice, are we talking about here? It seems that those that go along to what is described as “a fun and flirty event” will be given

drawing paper and pencils or charcoal and randomly sat down opposite another ‘date’. There will then follow a two-minute drawing session based around silly prompts. “Silly” seems to be one of Julia’s favourite words and that sort of approach certainly takes a lot of the tensions out of any encounter.

The prompts are along these lines: “draw your date as an animal” or “draw your date made only of squares or triangles”. You can imagine that this sort of thing will probably lead to some hilarity. The situation might be a little more controversial with the prompt, “exaggerate your date’s best feature”. This instruction is potentially a bit upsetting, in an unintentional sort of way, but maybe not. Maybe it’s an opportunity to flatter. To rephrase Richard Hell and the Voidoids, perhaps “love comes in doodles”. After the two minutes of drawing, there is an opportunity for the two ‘dates’ to discuss each other’s likely weird drawings.

Because it is speed-dating, each moment of artistic intimacy is quick-

ly over. Beer and snacks are provided – along with non-alcoholic alternatives – so it’s probable that even the most bizarre drawings will generate a laugh. It should be added that you do not have to be any kind of artist in order to participate. In the world of doodle-dating there are no art critics or pompous lecturers.

### DOODLERS JUST WANT TO HAVE FUN

All of the sketchy lovers are free to do what they want with their drawings: take them home, throw them in the bin or give them to someone who caught their eye, perhaps. Julia was very clear that all the school can guarantee is possible “new friends and fun”. Anything else is “up to you”.

Hastings Art School describes itself as an “alternative to a traditional art school model”. One of its primary aims is to help local artists. They run a 30-week, 3-term programme designed to help people develop skills and challenge themselves. There are no specific entry requirements and the fees are defined loosely as “accessible”.

The school is obviously very serious about its mission, but the doodle-dating is surely a wonderful gift to would-be lovers and scribblers everywhere. I think it was the venerable old Jazz philosopher, Humphrey Lyttelton who said, “we should never lose sight of silly”. What Julia and the school have come up with is, to our way of thinking, a veritable triumph of silly, with added love hearts.



# Frock up to Get Down

This Saturday, 3 February, the Observer building will host a Frock Up Friday market (10.30am-3.30pm). The market stalls will offer a whole range of glamorous frocks, hats, shoes, jewellery and all round retro-glittery accessories to get everyone in the mood and the mode for the Fat Tuesday festival, starting on the following Friday.

This year, of course, it is a slightly slimmed down version of Fat Tuesday – thanks to the arbitrary cessation of the Arts Council grant – but it seems that, thanks to some heroic crowdfunding, Hastings can still be its own New Orleans, even if there won’t be the usual parade.

### FROCKS ON FIRE

Frock Up Friday is an extraordinary fashion phenomenon. In an odd way it was a by-product of Covid. Two female friends, Suzie Simms and Bev Francis, exasperated by the boredom of domestic incarceration, started to have

dress-up Fridays and send each other pictures. Rapidly, their friends got on board, and now it is a truly global phenomenon on Facebook.

As it has grown, Bev and Suzie have inevitably wondered about the reasons for its wildfire popularity, and what it’s all about at a deeper level. Their mission – if that doesn’t sound too pompously evangelical – has certain defining attitudes behind it.

The FUF philosophy is first and foremost that dressing up is for everyone and anyone. Although it’s obviously an expression of the enormous positivity and power in female friendships, it’s open to all genders. It’s also about being kind to yourself, complimenting others and shutting off the negative voices that might tell you that going all shiny and Hollywood is a little bit daft.

A kind of unwritten rule in this arena is that glamour must not cost the earth. The sources of the glitzy garb tend to be charity shops, vintage boutiques, car boot sales and the whole world of what we now call ‘pre-loved’ stuff.

### PIMP YOUR BROLLY

For those that want to get in the Frock Up mood but fear that the February rain might dampen the spirits, there is an umbrella workshop at Hastings Museum on Sun-

day 4 Feb, from 11am, run by Radiator Arts. The idea is that you bring a basic umbrella and pimp it up with all manner of shimmery stuff. Glue guns will be provided.

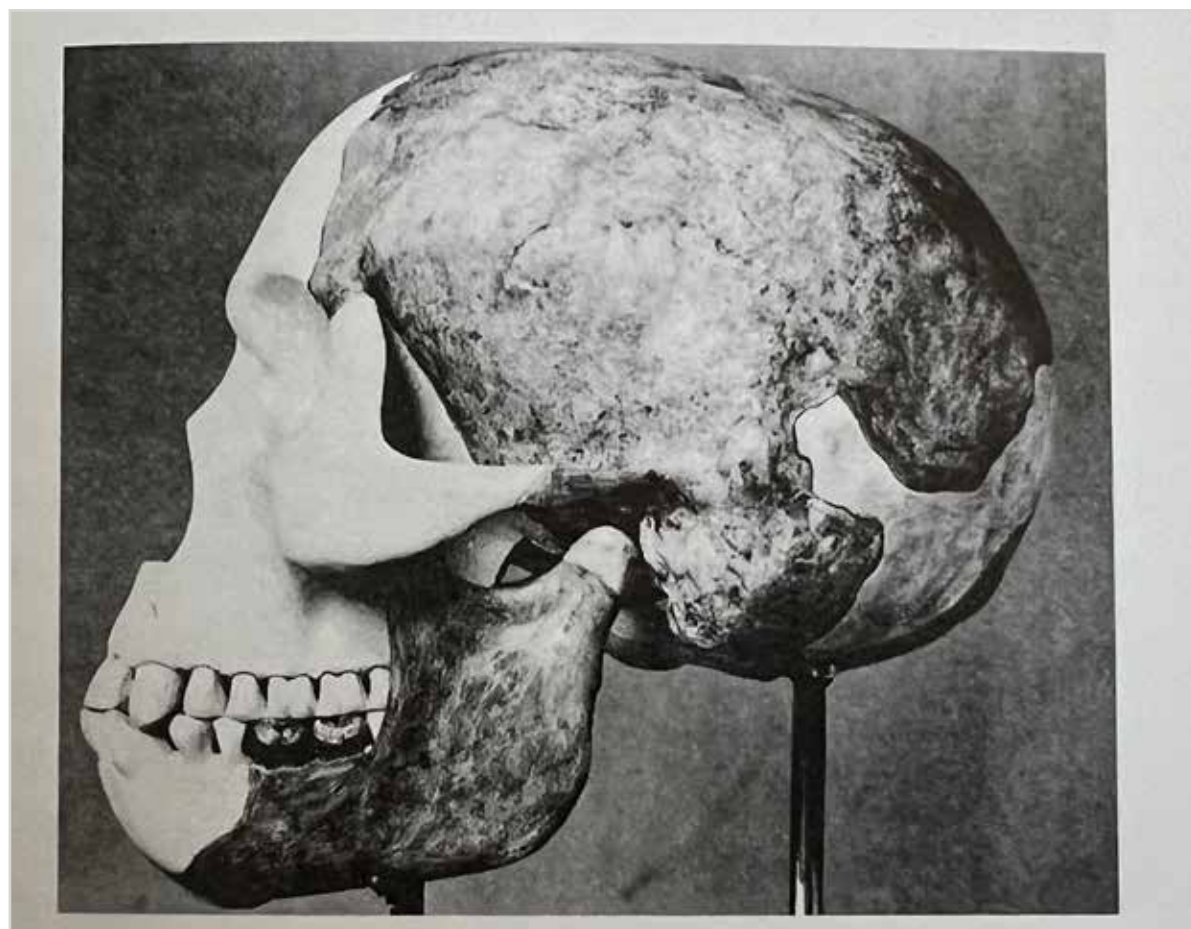
The way Hastings creatives, including FUF, have all rallied round to keep the festival alive is impressive and says a lot about the town’s commitment to having a good time. As Bev and Suzie say: “We’re only here for a short time, so have fun.”

## FOOD BANK NEEDS HELP

Every Thursday, Karmabank food kitchen cooks meals for the local community and donates food bags to local people and refugees.

To tackle poverty and reduce waste, Karmabank collects surplus food from local shops and stores it in three chest freezers which urgently require a new home. The ideal storage premises would be in Hastings or St Leonards, be clean and hygienic and have adjacent parking. Four volunteer drivers need to be keyholders with access seven days a week. Able to pay a small rent.

If you can help, please contact: [kitchen@karmabank.co](mailto:kitchen@karmabank.co)



# A Forgotten Hastings Hoaxer

HELEN MURPHY & NICK PELLING investigate a curious case

Have you ever heard of Charles Dawson? I suspect not. He was a well respected Victorian gent who was brought up in St Leonards and later became one of the bewhiskered, worthy founders of the Hastings Museum and Art Gallery in 1892. So far, so boring. But it seems he was also a hugely successful con man, responsible for one of the great hoaxes of the early 20th century.

In 1912 Dawson 'discovered' an ancient skull that seemed to be the 'missing link' between ape and man. This became known as the Piltdown Man; it sealed Dawson's reputation as one of the great amateur scientists of his time; a reputation that lasted far beyond the end of his life in 1916. It might be slightly embarrassing for the town, but one of the key founders of the Museum, was essentially an inventor of archaeological lies. So, who was this esteemed gentleman faker?

Charles Dawson was brought up in St Leonards in the later nineteenth century and became a well regarded solicitor, but most importantly, he also became an amateur paleontologist and antiquarian. He built up quite a collection of sup-

posedly ancient artifacts, such that he was welcomed into the Sussex Archaeological Society and was soon giving 'important' academic papers about his 'finds.'

## A VERY BRITISH HUMANOID

His already growing reputation escalated into national fame when, in 1912, he 'discovered' the skull in a ditch in the tiny hamlet of Piltdown. Dawson claimed that the skull fragments were in fact the 'missing link' in the evolutionary chain: the skull was apparently the vital evidence of the transition from Ape to Man. (That such a transitional link might one day be found had been a Victorian supposition ever since Darwin's evolutionary ideas were largely accepted.) Absurdly, the notion that the first half-humanoid should turn out to be British made the public seize on the story with national-ist glee.

From this discovery onwards, Dawson was seen as probably the best amateur scientist in Britain: in the dusty realm of bits of old bone and pottery, he was a sort of tweedy celebrity. When he died in 1916, he

was still 'a great man'.

You might assume that such a genteel fraudster would essentially be an unpleasant chap, but that does not seem to be true. A fellow archaeologist from the Natural History Museum, Arthur Smith Woodward, said he was a "delightful colleague" and Dawson's wife, Helene, said he was "the best and kindest man who ever lived".

## RATHER RUBBISH FAKERY

It took forty years for the archaeological world to prove, definitively, that the skull was fake. In fact, modern forensics revealed that the skull was something of a bodge job: it was a combination of half a medieval human skull and an Orangutan's jaw, with some crudely filed down teeth to make it fit. In many ways, the hoax is a piece of rather rubbish fakery.

Why did the apparently upstanding member of the Hastings community stoop so low? Perhaps Dawson can be seen as just another of this town's eccentrics. He does not appear to have been a bad person or even a profiteer. He has been described by the historian Miles Russell as "a genial Jekyll and Hyde": a loveable enthusiast whose genuine love of antiquities pulled him into inventing that which he passionately hoped to find. Later research also found that many of the artifacts that he generously donated to Hastings Museum were a bit dodgy. The Museum now has a little display about the whole curious tale. But why this man of science chose to betray his calling remains mysterious and probably always will.



# Pedalling a Good Cause

Are you looking for a new fitness challenge for 2024? And one that would actually help other people? How about a 4-day cycle ride from Eastbourne to Amsterdam? Obviously that is a tough one, but if you do join up, you will be raising money for St Michael's Hospice in Hastings and St Winifred's hospice in Eastbourne: clearly a most worthwhile cause.

The charity project entitled *Hospices to Holland* is a professionally organised venture that is planned for this September, but it will require all participants to get into training this spring and summer. Riding roughly seventy miles a day is quite something! Would-be cyclists will have to make sure they have reached a good level of fitness and stamina.

## NOT A RACE

Impressively, one of the riders will be 82-year-old Vic Butler. Vic says that: "Over a number of years, close friends and family acquaintances have used the care and support which St Michael's hospice provides. I want to be able to contribute in a small way to that work, whilst I still can." The organisers are keen to assert that "this is not a race!". Riders can travel at their own pace. We should also add that Vic looks like a very fit octogenarian.

The route begins in Eastbourne and soon hits the pleasant Kent and Sussex coastal routes, which will take the riders through beautiful Winchelsea, Rye and the Romney Marshes on the way to the Dover ferry and then Dunkirk. The next day the riders will wend their way through France and Belgium and the Netherlands until reaching Amsterdam, taking in the scenery and enjoying necessary breaks in de-

lightful towns such as Bruges and Middelburg.

It is to be hoped that there will be time for sightseeing and taking in a bit of the local history. Middelburg for example, is famous for pioneering lenses in the scientific revolution of the 17th century. Who knew? Belgium and the Netherlands have tremendous cycling infrastructure with loads of cycle lanes, paths and even protected intersections. The Dutch, in particular, see cycling as a way of life.

## SIGHTSEEING ON TWO WHEELS

Exhausted pedal pushers will stay the night in a series of decent hotels where basic refreshment will be available. There will also be time to enjoy Amsterdam after the challenge has been completed, and riders will doubtless be relieved to learn that they return home on the Eurostar. (Bicycles are transported separately to the hospices by the organisers of the event.)

Although pre-event training is vital – and the website has a programme to download – participants must also make sure that they have medical and travel insurance. The team provides support throughout both the build up and the challenge itself. There will be a team of mechanics on hand for bicycles that malfunction and general support in terms of someone to turn to in the event of illness or injury.

Although food and accommodation costs are covered, the registration fee is £149 and all riders must guarantee to raise £1,950. It is obviously not the faint hearted or the disorganised, but if you fancy it, check out their website and follow the instructions at [hospicestoholland.co.uk](http://hospicestoholland.co.uk).



A regular column to update readers on the damaging effects of the current management of water in Hastings, surrounding areas (and nationally) and what people are doing about it. If you have any information, please contact [community@hastingsindependentpress.co.uk](mailto:community@hastingsindependentpress.co.uk) marked *Clean Water Watch*.

**HAPPY HIP BIRTHDAY FROM CLEAN WATER WATCH**  
Not only ten years of HIP but ten Clean Water Watch columns since it began on 23 August 2023: a regular column to update readers on the damaging effects of the current management of water in Hastings, surrounding area (and nationally) and what people are doing about it. If you have any information, please contact: [community@hastingsindependentpress.co.uk](mailto:community@hastingsindependentpress.co.uk) marked Clean Water Watch.

**DON'T GIVE UP**  
A reminder of what needs to be done, not just to improve the present but also to prevent future disasters was highlighted in a 2004 report commissioned by the aptly named Foresight programme from their Flood and Coastal Defence project. Foresight is run by the Office of Science and Technology under the

direction of the Chief Scientific Adviser to HM Government. In the forward, Elliot Morley MP, Environment Minister in the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) from 2003 to 2006, said he was “delighted to receive it”. We can’t help but wonder what he did with it next. An extract reads: “Besides flooding from rivers and coasts, towns and cities will be subject to localised flooding caused by the sewer and drainage systems being overwhelmed by sudden localised downpours. The potential damages could be huge, but much more work needs to be done to quantify the potential problem.”  
20 years on we are finally talking about the results of the flooding as well as the results of government inertia, inaction from regulatory bodies and greed from privatised water companies. For the full report, visit [tinyurl.com/2m3n7p8d](https://tinyurl.com/2m3n7p8d)

**BAD NEWS SECTION**  
Water companies have until the end of January to publish the new charges for household waste. The increase is said to be for work needed to help fix ageing infrastructure – left to deteriorate over many years of neglect. However this is not part of the package of £10bn that the companies say is needed to fix the pollution problem. The rises will come into force in April and will no doubt add to the anger that water companies already face – and no doubt add to those refusing to pay their bills until real progress is made.

**GOOD NEWS SECTION**  
*Local*  
We understand that Southern Water has agreed to fund an ecological survey of Old Roar Gill, something that campaigners have been asking for since early last year. The details are not yet clear, but Glenn Haffenden, Green Councillor recently given responsibility for the environment, should soon be up to speed and reporting back.

**National**  
Up until now, water companies have been able to make their own checks on how they run sewage works; this includes testing samples of water they discharge into rivers. Not a good idea when saving money seems to be more important than environmental safety. The Environment Secretary, Steve Barclay has now announced that this will have to stop, a victory for all those campaigning to take this key task out of the hands of the water industry and into the hands of the Environment Agency (EA). The bad news is that this is currently only an intention, and the underfunded Environment Agency has so far been unable to properly monitor the water companies. Let’s hope they can properly monitor the sewage coming from them.

**LAUGH OR CRY?**  
Private Eye poked fun at Southern Water in Turd of the Week for publishing a message on Twitter/X and Instagram saying proudly: “We’re delighted to have been awarded a green status in the Environment Agency’s 2023 Environmental Performance Assessment.” Apparently it led to a “tsunami of outrage”.

ADVERTORIAL

# Dealing with Potholes



This article explores issues related to potholes, particularly how to avoid, and the importance of repair. Negotiating the roads during the winter can make for a difficult journey, especially when faced with the menace of potholes. Potholes are the hot road topic of the winter with a record amount of money spent on repairs caused by around one million potholes on the UK roads! Although it’s in the news after National Pothole Week on 15 January, pothole awareness is not just for one day.  
Hitting a pothole can be jarring, both physically and financially. The impact of these seemingly innocent holes goes beyond the immediate inconvenience. It can also lead to damage to your car that may go unnoticed. Understanding the potential hazards and spotting signs of damage is important to ensure the longevity of your vehicle.

**DANGERS OF DEEP & WATER-FILLED POTHOLES**  
While all potholes pose risks, deep potholes filled with water amplify the dangers as it becomes difficult to see what is below; impacting both road safety and maintenance efforts. With the colder winter weather this water can also freeze, escalating road dangers by creating icy surfaces that increase the risk of skidding.

**RECOGNISING THE SIGNS OF DAMAGE TO YOUR CAR**  
Steering wheel misalignment is one indicator of pothole damage. If your vehicle pulls to one side, or you find yourself constantly adjusting the steering to keep the car straight, it’s a sign of possible pothole damage that needs to be fixed.  
Pulling to one side can also be caused by damage to the suspension, causing additional handling issues. Any damage to the suspension requires prompt inspection and repair.

Potholes can also wreak havoc on your tyres. Regularly inspecting your tyres for bulges, cuts, or irregular patterns can help you identify potential pothole damage before it escalates.

**REPORT POTHOLES TO LOCAL AUTHORITIES**  
Local councils and authorities are responsible for maintaining roads, making it imperative to report potholes promptly. Responsible road maintenance contributes not only to driver safety but also the longevity

of vehicles navigating the roads. It’s important to report potholes whenever you come across them. The process is simplified through platforms provided by the local council (see the Hastings Borough Council website). This contributes to the collective effort to maintain road surfaces. If your car has been damaged by a pothole, you will also be able to apply for compensation for the cost of repair if you record the details when reporting it.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**  
The amount of money spent on pothole damage has doubled in recent years. It’s important to urgently tackle the underlying reasons behind the dangers of the approximately one million potholes on UK roads.  
But bear in mind that pothole damage may be covered by car insurance. Understanding the terms and conditions of your policy is essential to ensure you receive the necessary coverage for inspection and repair.

**TOP TIPS TO AVOID DAMAGE**

- Stay alert
- Keep your distance behind other cars to be aware of any unexpected potholes
- When avoiding potholes make sure you don’t cause an accident
- Where there are potholes keep your speed down
- Break early or not at all. Breaking while hitting a pothole can cause more damage
- Keep your hands on the wheel to avoid losing control
- Tivoli Auto Services: Your Partner in Inspection and Repair
- Hitting a pothole is an unavoidable reality on UK roads. Seeking prompt inspection and repair is crucial in mitigating the aftermath of pothole damage.

At Tivoli Services, our skilled mechanics conduct thorough inspections to identify and address any damage caused by hitting a pothole – from tyre issues and suspension problems to the physical wheels. We are the go-to solution for addressing pothole-induced damage to your vehicle!



01424 442277  
INFO@TIVOLIAUTOSERVICES.CO.UK  
WWW.TIVOLIAUTOSERVICES.CO.UK

## APPLICATION FOR VARIATION OF A PREMISES LICENCE

Notice is hereby given that on **23 January 2024** an application was made to Hastings Borough Council by:

**Sean Conneely**  
2-6 Sedlescombe Road  
St Leonards-on-Sea  
TN37 7DG

to vary a premises licence for the premises known as:

**Beak and Tail**  
34 Robertson Street

**Hastings TN34 1HT**  
In the following respects:  
**Alcohol licence Between the hours of 09:00 to 19:30.**

Any person wishing to make representations about this application for variation should write to the Head of Environmental Services, Aquila House House, Breeds Place, Hastings, TN34 3UY; [www.hastings.gov.uk](http://www.hastings.gov.uk) within twenty

eight consecutive days of the application date shown above. It is an offence knowingly or recklessly to make a false statement in connection with an application & a person is liable to a fine of up to a maximum of £5,000 on summary conviction for the offence.

Dated this **23rd** day of **January 2024**

## SITE NOTICE FOR APPLICATION FOR A PREMISES LICENCE

This notice is to advise that on the **24th** day of **January 2024** an application for the grant of a variation of a Premises Licence was made to Hastings Borough Council for the premises known as:

**UK Off Licence,**  
88 Queens Road,  
Hastings, TN34 1RL  
Was made by: **Karzan Ramazan Aziz**

For the following licensable activities or proposed variation:  
**Sale of Alcohol by Retail (off**

the premises) 10:00 to 05:00 Monday to Sunday apply to extend the hours for the off sale of alcohol through a delivery service between the hours of 22:00 and 05:00

Any person wishing to make representations about this application should write to Hastings Borough Council, Head of Environment & Place, Muriel Matters House, Breeds Place, Hastings, TN34 3UY, or email [Licensing@hastings.gov.uk](mailto:Licensing@hastings.gov.uk) within twenty eight consecutive days from the

date of the application shown above.

The application can be viewed by pre-arranged appointment at our offices, during office hours. It is an offence knowingly or recklessly to make a false statement in connection with an application & a person is liable to a fine of up to a maximum of £5,000 on summary conviction for the offence.

Dated this **24th** day of **January 2024**



# Keeping HIP on the Road

ROD WEBB

Hastings Independent is a print newspaper that attempts to be both for the community and by the community – but given that our town is a particularly diverse community, that can be a difficult task. On the one hand Hastings has a high concentration of creatives, but on the other, there’s a lack of job opportunities; there’s also been a recent influx of wealth, but Hastings maintains its unenviable status as one of the most deprived areas of England.

It’s a difficult balancing act and, inevitably, we sometimes get it wrong. That’s why, on our tenth anniversary, we would really like this redesigned issue to connect with all kinds of people in Hastings. The look of a paper has a surprising effect on who picks up a copy, and the more people pick one up, the more we hope a wider range of people will engage with it.

We hope this article will give you information and insight into why you should.

## LISTINGS

The HIP List has been part of Hastings Independent in one form or another since 2014, when it started as a Music Listings page. It went on to deliver free advertising for local

activities: music, film, performance, general events and classes. There have been many attempts to replicate this in print and online, but we still feel it is one of the best. We also think it can be improved – which is why we have increased the section from four to eight pages. This not only gives space for more listings but also allows us to preview articles and include adverts.

We’ve increased the space, so now it’s up to you to provide us with the content. We would particularly like to have add a section on things for children: toddlers to young teenagers, so why not volunteer as a Listings coordinator for that section?

Of course, to find Listings, you first have to pick up a paper and open it; so we’re glad to see you already have.

## FINANCING THE PAPER

We rely heavily on advertising to finance the paper, with printing being the most costly aspect. Why print? Because it’s still in demand and sets us apart from other media outlets that are online only (and still has a kind of status). With a current distribution of 7,000 copies, many of them read multiple times while people are out and about enjoying a break or waiting for a haircut, HIP is a good platform for advertisers – and the rates are reasonable.

But advertising doesn’t fund all our outgoings, so we have to find

other income. The other sources are:

- **The Friends subscription:** (find out more here [hastingsindependentpress.co.uk/become-a-friend](https://hastingsindependentpress.co.uk/become-a-friend)) It’s an enormous help to have a steady income. Thanks to those who already subscribe – and to those who are about to!
- **Donations:** If you feel you suddenly wish to donate rather than subscribe, please do.
- **Supplements:** For organisations and businesses that have a lot of information to put to the community, this is a very reasonable option (see here for a typical supplement: [tinyurl.com/5n7acstm](https://tinyurl.com/5n7acstm))
- **Events:** Our most recent event, the Hootenanny, hosted by Henning Wehn, went down a storm. We also raised money via three art auctions in 2018, 2021 and 2022.

## MISCONCEPTIONS

People who regularly read the paper may still be unaware that the paper is also available online – even some of our contributors or subjects of our articles may not realise they can post their article online to spread their message further. In fact there are several web versions of the paper, the first two available on the website:

- The fully laid out paper that you can read online as a pdf
- Individual articles – that you can read and comment on should you wish.
- A weekly newsletter that provides a digest of the paper with some additional comment

If you read articles online, you can comment at the end of the article. If the comment is interesting and

sufficiently short, we can also publish it in the print edition (or we can also edit the comment). If you read the print edition, you can email us at [letters@hastingsindependentpress.co.uk](mailto:letters@hastingsindependentpress.co.uk) or go online and add the comment to the article there. However we get it, we’re always happy to hear your views – in as polite a form as possible.

Perhaps the biggest misconception is that we work from a comfortable office with high tech equipment and a helpful administrative department to keep the wheels well oiled. In reality, we are all volunteers working from home and doing it for whatever reason that motivates us (except money). Having said that, our designer is paid, but below market rate and our sales director is paid on commission.

As our biggest expense is printing, we need to keep the money flowing in every month. This can be a nailbiting process sometimes, especially at this time of the year which is the quietest time for many businesses – who are also counting their pennies.

And for those interested, we operate as a Community Interest Company (CIC) rather than a charity because this gives us a greater degree of flexibility as well as being easier to set up.

## WHAT DO WE GET OUT OF IT?

There are many reasons that people start working with HIP and there are numerous ways to get involved:

- **As a contributor:** you can contribute whenever you have something you want to write about, so this doesn’t involve too much

commitment. And you don’t have to be the new Charles Dickens, just someone with something to say.

- **As a subber:** you can check other people’s articles to make sure there are no mistakes and that they are fit for purpose – or so we hope.
- **As a distributor:** we always need help with delivering HIP to our expanding range of outlets.
- **As a section editor:** you would look after one of the sections (or part of one of the sections) of the paper and decide which articles to put on our pages. At the moment, several sections need volunteers, including Health, Community and perhaps something for people with young families.

Compiling Listings can be for those who like finding out about what’s going on in the town or are motivated to do so by a two-week deadline; others, perhaps altruistic, just like to feel they are providing a useful service. Our listings coordinator often needs help with compiling the different activity types, so get in touch if you feel you could help out.

Like all media outlets, we’re also on social media, so we have a social media editor as well as a newsletter editor. Then of course there’s the art director and the sales director (their importance demonstrated by their job titles).

*What we don’t have is a the ‘helpful administrative assistant’. If there’s anyone who would like to help keep this show on the road, we’d be very happy to hear from you. Just one day a week – or even every two weeks – would be very wonderful.*

ISSUE 1

# Hastings Independent

Hastings Independent Press

No. 1

Hastings, Friday, 28.02.2014

Free



## DEATH OF LOCAL MEDIA MON

Welcome to the first edition of The Hastings Independent, a new local newspaper for Hastings & St Leonards.

Hastings Independent Press is a community interest company that operates as a not-for-profit organisation. Set up by a small group local residents who were frustrated at the quality of local print journalism. We decided to take the matter into our own hands and establish a newspaper run by local people, for local people. We are a newspaper for anyone and everyone who wishes to get their views heard.

We aim to deliver local news accurately and ethically without the usual sensationalist found within tabloid journalism. We want to provide a deeper look at some of the social problems in Hastings and attempt to come up with solutions to solve them, rather than just making a statement. We want to look at national issues from a local perspective.

We couldn't have done it without the help of many people. We would like to thank the following: Collin Sellens (Union Bar), Kate Renwick, Alan Bolton (The Union Bar), Geoff Dann, Henry Stephane Cohen, Phoenix & Plum, Tom May Risholt Fossnes, Paul Owen, Matt...

very local level. To be a voice for the local residents, the council, businesses and charities. A free newspaper that brings out the very best of Hastings & St Leonards and its residents.

We have endeavoured to produce a newspaper with very little journalistic experience. We have - after much work, effort and a lot of patience - finally managed to get this far and print our first edition. You may find our approach...

This, Hastings, is as you will wish to use, to read, to get it to get it...



# Snippets from the Past Ten Years

If you wish to read any of these articles in full you can find them on our website here [hastingsindependentpress.co.uk/back-issues](http://hastingsindependentpress.co.uk/back-issues)

# Hastings Independent

Hastings Independent Press

No. 5 - Fortnightly

Hastings - Friday - 25.04.2014

FREE



## READ ALL ABOUT IT!

g dancer Keith Leech. A couple of dozen sweeps, giants and green amorphous t morris dancers and green 'bogies' masses, will march Jack from the e e hill that May. They have continued to on the morning of the first Monday of n do so, in increasing numbers every May. The affair will be ritually v year since...

One because of the fact that the town is a very attractive place to live. It is a town with a lot of history and a lot of character. It is a town that is full of life and full of people who are proud of their town.

CONSOLE from the Coombes on, and luck to the end of the numbers bogies.

READER: What time do you call this?

MYSELF: Sorry?

READER: You know what I'm talking about. Where were you last issue?

MYSELF: Oh that. I was away assisting the government as it happens.

READER: Oh pardon me. Top secret I suppose? Spy stuff?

MYSELF: Not at all. As a matter of fact, I was working in the department that deals with conspiracy theories.

READER: Conspiracy theories! I take it all back. Fair play to you. 9/11, alien abductions, it's about time somebody put a stop to all that nonsense.

MYSELF: Actually I was writing them.

ASK DR. GUANO

I receive, as you would imagine, sacks full of letters asking for advice of one sort or another. Naturally I throw most of them into the waste paper basket, but this one appealed to my innate sense of public duty. No more thought please, as I am not a real doctor.

Dear Dr. Guano, I was recently approached by a very attractive well-dressed man who claimed he was a relative of Ferdinand IV of Sweden.

He said he could offer me security and a happy prosperous life in Scandinavia with his own herd of reindeer and an Ikea Gold Card. Should I tell my husband, or just go?

Calamari Taliban (Ms), Beyondendon

Dear Ms Taliban, Men, as a rule, are fiendishly jealous creatures. Your poor husband will undoubtedly misinterpret your present dilemma as some sort of threat to his fragile manhood. Be gentle with him. Tell him you are popping out for some chips, and don't come back. It will be better this way.

READER: That wasn't a real letter.

MYSELF: You're not a real reader.

ISSUE 5

Leonards

# Hastings Independent

Hastings Independent Press

No. 2 - Fortnightly

Hastings - Friday - 14.03.2014

FREE



## INGS PARTY SEASON KICKS OFF IN STYLE

The start of Hastings busy social calendar was marked on Saturday with the unplugged tour in celebration of Mardi Gras (Fat Tuesday), the first of the season in an impressive series of local community run parties and festivals.

Now into its 5th year, Hastings Fat Tuesday has gone from strength to strength, this year featuring more than 200 gigs from 30 predominantly local bands, and spread across 5 days from Saturday to Tuesday.

The organisers, Adam Daly and Bob Tipler were especially pleased with the turnout this year and had this to say "The Hastings Fat Tuesday Team would like to say a huge thank you to all the musicians, support staff and charity collectors, without whom the festival would not be possible. We would of course also like to give a massive big-up to the people of Hastings, who once again turned out in their masses, fantastically dressed for the occasion, to party like no other town can party... what a great community we are lucky to live in!"

With a program of events covering everything from a WI cake morning in aid of St Michaels to a dog-walking-pancake-tossing foot race featuring one of the organisers dressed as a dog/clown, it's clear to see why this wacky festival in celebration of music, hi-jinx and excess has become a firm favourite on the Hastings party calendar. The fun's not over yet with a Fat Tuesday thank you party set to tear the roof off of the Jenny Lind on the High Street on March 20th.

Turn to page 2 where we'll take a look at all the other fun festivals and parties still to come this year.

## YOUR AD HERE

From as little as £75 an issue

Hastings independent, we believe that supporting local business is important. That's why we offer competitive rates on all our adverts, and we will work directly with small local businesses to find a package to suit your budget. Contact our sales team today at [advertising@hastingsindependentpress.co.uk](mailto:advertising@hastingsindependentpress.co.uk)

ISSUE 2

No. 2

Hastings - Friday - 14th - 14.03.2014

## A note from the editors

So here we are, second edition and again we hope you like it. The response so far has been almost entirely positive, with a number of you e-mailing us congratulations. There were also a number of you out there who e-mailed us to point out our mistakes, our sails team were particularly embarrassed. To those of you who did spot our intentional mistakes we'd like to offer our congratulations on passing our secret entrance examination and we'd now like to offer you all voluntary positions within our hard-working team of sub-editors...

You may have met some of our street vendors this past week, in which case you've also met a number of our editors and even company directors. There's a photo at the bottom of the page featuring a small number of us (we'd hoped to get a big bustling group photo together but it turns out a voluntary news team are a hard bunch to get together without the promise of a drink...). Introductions! On the left is Clare, our resident food editor who also does a rather nice line in handmade silver and crystal jewellery (CVM design on certain social media sites), next to her is Sam, one of our company directors/editors/photographers/design team. Back and centre is Paul, another of the company directors as well our ad sales chief. To the right of Paul is Alan, our third company director and also one of our editors and regular contributors, he's also one of the team behind CarbonCreativeArts.com, which is well worth a look, even if we do say so. Behind Alan, and with a far off look in his eye is

Joseph, our design chief. Joe has the unenviable task of laying out each edition and is integral to the running of the paper. Lastly, off to the right, is Kate, another of our directors as well as a regular contributor, she is also our resident arts and culture editor. As well as all these folks there are a number of people who keep the paper going in various ways, Cathy, our chief sub-editor, Jamie, another regular contributor, Tim at Bookbuster who keeps us in book reviews... as well as those guys there are plenty of other people who've helped us along the way, with tips and advice about how to get to where we are now. Now you've met us, let's meet you! Our main E-mail addresses can be found below, so please get in touch! Don't forget you can always meet us in person at our regular weekly meetings every Tuesday, at The Union Bar. We know you've got strong opinions Hastings, now let's hear them!

So running a newspaper is quite a task. We knew all this time that once we got the first one out, we'd need to up our game and keep it high and so these last 2 weeks have been a real test, but we've made it. What we do need in order to keep this going is money to pay for printing (we're all volunteering, with Joseph having spent nearly 50 hours on lay-out for the first edition, unpaid). We aim to fund the printing by selling limited ad space to small local businesses. We need your help too, if you know of a local business owner then tell them about us, we have ad spaces to suit all budgets and businesses. We also have an indiegogo page where you can make direct contributions, whatever you can afford, the page can be found here [bit.ly/1hYxFSZ](http://bit.ly/1hYxFSZ). So without further ado, please read on!



Read More! Downloads Available here

Birthday Special

11

**KIM BATTY**  
Here in food and drink, we're all yellow, like the sand, sun and banana, not like the snow. Put your sunglasses on to read the articles in this issue, they're sparkling with

LA BELLA VISTA COURGETTE RISOTTO

**ARNO MAASDORP**  
How lovely to catch up with the very talented Gianluca Tozzi, head chef at the award winning La Bella Vista just before service to ask for some courgette inspiration. As we all know, a bumper crop of courgettes is guaranteed in these parts of the world. This luxurious bowl of golden comfort will bring sunshine to any table!

**SAFFRON AND YELLOW COURGETTE RISOTTO**  
Serves 2  
**Ingredients**  
■ 150g carnaroli rice  
■ 1 shallot  
■ 1 yellow courgette  
■ 1 red chilli  
■ Pinch of saffron  
■ 125ml good white wine  
■ 70g butter  
■ 70g gorgonzola  
(you can use parmesan or pecorino if you prefer)  
■ 1.5l vegetable stock  
■ 1 bunch of dill

**Ingredients for vegetable stock:**  
■ 1 onion  
■ 1 carrot  
■ 2 sticks of celery  
■ a few bay leaves

1. A good stock is fundamental, trust me your efforts will be rewarded by bags of flavour.  
2. Start with 2 litres of cold water and pop in all your vegetables. Don't worry about chopping them into small pieces, just halves is fine. Remember, you can use all kinds of vegetables for your stock and it will provide a different flavour. Boil the water for at least an hour on a low heat.  
3. Finely chop the shallot and chilli. Cook in a pan on low heat with 50g

**vitally and Hawaii Tropic but take them off again, silly, reading the paper with your sunglasses on, everyone knows you're pretending. We're not mellow, we're cello, it doesn't make sense, what does - Who was I?**

4. Finely dice the yellow courgette and place in the same pan with the shallots and chilli. Season with salt and black pepper.  
5. Stir the pan until the courgettes are slightly softer. Add a bit of stock if it is too dry.  
6. When the courgettes soften, add the white wine, on a medium heat, allow all the wine to evaporate.  
7. Take another pan and toast the rice on a medium heat. Do not use any butter or oil while toasting your rice. Do this for a couple of minutes and then start adding your stock, one ladle at a time. It is important to keep your stock hot. Half cook the rice and make sure you keep stirring it.  
8. Transfer your rice into the sauce and finish cooking the rice. Adding a small amount of stock at a time and constantly stir.  
9. The end of risotto cooking is called mantecatura, which is blending the rice with a sauce using a fat, usually butter, cheese or oil.  
10. At this point, add your gorgonzola (or your alternative if you prefer), a pinch of saffron and the remaining 20g of butter. Stir vigorously.  
11. Finish with finely chopped dill and your risotto is ready to serve.

This dish is perfect to enjoy in this beautiful weather we've been having, with a chilled white Pecorino wine or with bubbles.

**FIVE QUESTIONS!**  
**Favourite ingredient:** Lemons  
**Style:** Modern European  
**Favourite white wine:** White Rioja  
**Holiday:** Ongoing search for exciting new destinations  
**What do you do on your day off?** Day trips discovering what is on offer closer to home

■ La Bella Vista, 8 Grand Parade

**GEOFF DANN**  
One of the most versatile of all foraged wild foods, and one which can be found quite abundantly in a few places locally if you know where to go, is Reedmace (Typha latifolia). This is a plant which is very widely known by the wrong name - no, it's not called Bullrush, that's a mistake dating back to a 19th century painting of Moses in the Bullrushes, which included both real Bullrushes as well as Reedmace in the background. It's the large aquatic grass with the big, black, cigar-like flower-heads.

At this time of year, short window when available (you may have some in the next few days accompanying this taken on June 2nd), collect it between immature green (if spikes first emerge, it flowers end up black stage, those male flower - very yellow - and pollen, all you have plastic bag over the

shake. I say all, but this can be a bit of a game if they are growing in a foot of thick, submerged mud! The resulting turmeric-coloured powder is a flour extender and thickener. You can use it up to replace up to 50% of wheat flour in

taste is pleasantly grassy with a slightly aromatic hint. The immature green male flowers are also edible, and taste much the same. Finally, if you have the landowner's permission and are prepared to brave the cold, the

ISSUE 104

**local media gets hip**  
**BY PETE DONOHUE**  
The day local media got hip was born out of disillusion with what a small group of us saw as blatant misrepresentation of tight-knit community cohesion in a town of creative compassion which cultures of mainstream media sensationalised as is the fashion with bad news & fatuous conjecture trivia & cultural chasms til a one-sided story too far spurred our hip heroes into action let's start up our own newspaper what could we possibly lose only our own time & money & we've already lit the fuse

so a gathering soon came about in the hub of a pub called the tub where plans were discussed & agreed in a sharing of tears sweat & blood we knew little of media production business layout design distribution & adverts we would learn all that stuff over time the important thing is the message speaking out for the real Hastings in a way that is true to the town inclusive honest ground-breaking so we started with sixteen pages funded by friends & well-wishers we wrote & we took some pictures found ourselves a printers our skills were naive & nascent but we laid our hearts on the line

took advice where we could find it taught ourselves indesign when the first issue hit the streets it was immediately well received inspiring new volunteers to a press that the public believed pagination is now twenty-four with community-driven news all-inclusive local culture & a range of political views volunteers come & go we have no editor-in-chief just a dedicated band of newshounds with ambition passion belief we celebrate issue one hundred & our four & a half year trip with the joy of collective achievement now that local media is hip.

ISSUE 150

1066 LOCAL ENERGY SHARE OFFER

Offers you the chance to invest and helps us fund solar panels on local community buildings. See Pg 1.

+IMPACT 100% GREEN TARIFF

You can switch to the Our Power tariff that helps tackle energy poverty locally. See Pg 7.

UP TO £2500 OFF YOUR NISSAN ENERGY SOLAR INSTALLATION

See offer Pg 8-9.



FEATURES

150 issues of HIP! What sort of newspaper are you reading?

The Hastings Independent is in its sixth year and 150 issues later POPPY PRESCOTT looks back on how it started and what it hopes to achieve for the Hastings and St Leonards community.

In its early days I was a teenager, watching the newspaper grow, silently admiring its efforts but too insecure to join. I knew it was started by local Hastings people who at the time were mostly unemployed, below the age of 35 and with little to no prior experience in journalism. It was exciting to have a new physical newspaper - not together by

team of volunteers to produce one fortnightly and, most importantly, what HIP's roles were within the community and how these differed from those of other local newspapers. I interviewed the founders, the designer and seven of the section editors. To celebrate the incredible achievement of 150 issues of HIP I'd like to share a brief summary of the answers I found at HIP's beginning. Perhaps you'll be drawn in like I was.

"SHALL WE START OUR OWN NEWSPAPER?"

HIP was created out of anger, frustration and a passion for a different kind of news model. I

ISSUE 150

ISSUE 204

HASTINGS INDEPENDENT PRESS SUPPLEMENT #3 SUMMER 2018

FREE

HOLLY



HOLLY JOHNSON

**TURMERIC, ROSE & LEMON-INFUSED**  
I've been absolutely in love with this tonic recently. Slightly in viscosity than a smooth perfect accompaniment evenings in the garden about locking in ingredients so that their magic from the

**You will need:**  
■ 1 x frozen banana  
■ 400ml coconut water  
■ 1 sliced lemon  
■ Bunch of fresh rose  
■ Fresh turmeric, ginger  
Blend together the banana, water and banana ingredients and let overnight in fridge.

THE FUTURE OF ENERGY

phase out of coal, oil and gas will mean energy transition to renewables. This is feasible, it is happening before our eyes."

gett, Hastings born climate campaigner and solar entrepreneur

Hastings Hustings - A Sketch

BY MAX POWER

It started awkwardly. A soft opening question on which fictional character the candidates would like to switch lives with led to several excruciating seconds of dead air as Labour candidate Peter Chowney floundered desperately in search of a fictional character. Any fictional character would do. Peter's mind went blank - Jeremy Corbyn? Not fictional. Boris Johnson? Sadly not fictional. Time stood still until Peter eventually plumped for the decidedly non-fictional Robert Tresselt, celebrated local author of The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists. Nick Perry attempted to soften image in comparing himself Baloo the Bear - although the Dems were not so cuddly in the five-year stretch propping up Tory government - while Sally-Hart displayed her modesty implying her similarity to Jesus Christ himself, in the form of A. Soon a battle for the oxygen publicity broke out between Independent candidate I. Crosland and host Chris Conne Crosland bizarrely revealed support for the Labour Party Canterbury, calling into question the logic of running against Labour in another marginal. He invited audience to visit his website 2.co and Twitter page so often

words lost all meaning. Meanwhile, Connelly's constant interjections into the debate made one wonder whether he was pondering jumping behind the desk and running for MP himself.

Hart, a semi-professional Amber Rudd impersonator hoping to make it in the big leagues, demonstrated why she had kept a low profile in the campaign up to this point with a series of right-wing monologues. She took aim at immigrants after an unrelated question about the skills gap in the local area, before reducing to using the town's foodbanks, and finally settling on

they 'don't understand money'. All classic vote winners, these. Give them enough rope, as the saying goes.

And things only got worse for the Tory candidate overnight as various national news outlets got hold of her comments. Perhaps she should have taken a leaf out of her hustings altogether. Oh, wait, she already did that at the climate hustings.

Perry was reportedly generated within a Liberal Democrat headquarters by scientists tasked with designing the archetypal liberal, and he lived up to his billing

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ISSUE 231

features@hastingsindependentpress.co.uk

28 JULY 2023



NEWS

FEATURES

HASTINGS INDEPENDENT IS YOUR PAPER -



Digital Voice: Switching Off the Elderly

Due to a perceived conflict of interest, this contributor's employer has asked them to publish anonymously. While HIP generally prefers to acknowledge the source of its articles, in this case we can verify the writer.

The famous 1983 advert shows JR Hartley using a working telephone to locate a copy of his book, Fly Fishing. Fast forward to 2023 and vulnerable clients find themselves disconnected from their landline phones and Telecare health mon-

copper line is expensive to maintain, replacement parts are no longer made and quoting long standing service issues.

BT waves goodbye to a remote-powered service which allows emergency 999 calls in a power cut and replaces it with Digital Voice which relies on power and a network to operate. If you have no power, you have no phone; if you have no network, you have no phone; if you have Telecare and no power or network, you are scuppered.

As Digital Voice is promoted to

87-year-old with dementia reported in the Stratford to have struggled to use the handset and lost service for several days on three separate occasions due to network and handset failure. She was later wandering and confused with Telecare device disconnected unable to alert family or services. Twitter user @Perry87 tweeted that his 92-year-old was struggling to use a phone in lieu of a digital handset.

"How do you propose that son who has mild dementia arthritis in their hands and will remember to recharge line phone? How do you think will manage to plug in the when they are partially sighted? You have not tried and tested products on the old."

@perry87 tweeted reporting his terminally ill mother disconnected for two weeks @SChristiansen87 tweets her parents' 91-year-old daughter had been disconnected five weeks, adding "he's scared with the isolation heartbreaking".

MY STORY

BT lost my mum's 41-year-old phone number when ported Digital Voice and eight weeks inaudible sound quality for the digital phone soon for receive incoming calls. BT three replacement handsets did not work. An Openreach never visited and was unable to make the digital receive calls. This wasn't ju

FAT TUESDAY SPECIAL



Insane Nights

become not just a local festival, but a destination event from all over the country, hosting up to 14,000

be Ciel, with support from UK Americana hero Danny George Wilson, Berkshire power poppers

ISSUE 219

glappy 10th Birthday

HIP, HIP HOORAY!





LUCY BELL  
GALLERY



HASTINGS  
CONTEMPORARY

THE  
CROWN  
HASTINGS

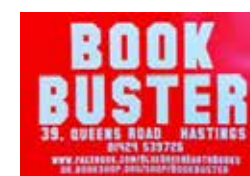


HANUSHKA  
COFFEE  
HOUSE

*Happy Birthday  
to HIP from*



BAYTE



PROJECT78GALLERY

# Voices from Founder Members and Contributing Members

As part of our 10th anniversary celebrations, we are including thoughts from some of the original founders and others who have contributed along the way. One of the founding members was the poet Pete Donohue, and he is still working with us as Literature Section Editor (read one of his poems on page 11).

We owe a huge debt to the enthusiasm of those who got the paper off the ground and helped keep it going. This is what they said.



**SAM KINCH**  
founder member and former director

When HIP started back in 2014 on the back of the financial crisis, phone-hacking scandal and three years of coalition government, we could all feel that Hastings was changing in ways which we couldn't quite put a finger on. It was exciting but with a vague hint of threat. We'd seen what gentrification was doing to similarly deprived London boroughs and it felt as if Hastings was venturing down the same path: HIP was part of our response.

At the time of the newspaper's launch, we did everything we could to appeal to readers from across the board. Newcomers or Hastings, we didn't really care, but what we did try to make sure of was that, provided you weren't out-and-out libellous, or doing anything to attack or talk down vulnerable groups, we would act as a platform for your voice.

In the years since we started, Hastings has changed in ways that perhaps we never expected. Some of that change is for the better, bringing new energy and ideas and pas-



sions, but some of that change risks tolling the death knell for the creativity and activism which launched the paper in the first place.

HIP itself seems to be feeling impacts from those changes. The average age and level of financial stability of volunteers has changed significantly as the cost of living and generalised insecurity has increased. The impacts this has had on the editorial position are noticeable, a more 'grown-up' voice has emerged, for good or ill.

Regardless, it's a joy to know that something started 10 years ago, in a pub that no longer exists, by a group of people (some of whom are sadly no longer with us, others having been priced out of town) lives on without us. Here's to another 10 years.

**PAUL OSMOND**  
founder member and former director

Who'd have thought that an off-the-cuff comment to Sam saying: "We should start our own newspaper" would result in the formation of Hastings Independent Press. At the time, I'd envisaged something akin to Private Eye meets The Anarchist Cookbook, but that kind of thing is frowned upon and probably wouldn't have mileage and, these days, attracts a prison sentence. However, after many meetings, we gathered together a great team of friends, all with a gritty determination to take back control of our local press.

We had a very clear vision. We wanted a fluid movement of editors, contributors and directors, which would help keep the content and opinions expressed fresh and not become too stymied by one editor or the directors. No one should gate-keep the local press. The fact that 10 years later the paper is still going is a testament to all those who have and continue to volunteer their time and skills.



**KATE RENWICK**  
former director and arts editor

I was asked to write a short and light-hearted piece about the birth of the paper, and of course I jumped at the chance to do so. Then I struggled with what story I wanted to tell. It occurred to me after a few days of really wrestling with it, that my writer's block was down to the word 'light-hearted'. I don't think it's possible for me to convey the urgency and passion that each contributor possessed that brought about the birth of HIP. I can tell you that fun was had, but that was also due to the nature of its creation.

There are so many stories to tell as each person involved had their own motivations. For me, the paper represented resistance, a small whisper of revolution. We were taking on the vastness of Johnston Press, the company that owned 75% of all local newspapers at that time. The right-wing 'local rags' in nearly every town in the UK, printed by one media conglomerate.

Our very first meeting was at the Union Bar, a now legendary pub, sadly one of many consumed by the inevitable gentrification of the town, that we were so painfully

aware of at the time. The first meeting had coincided with an established anarchist group meeting, which will give you some idea of where the paper was politically when it started.

Those months running up to our first issue were a mix of fevered excitement, terror, and finally joyful disbelief when we succeeded. It was a mammoth effort, one I think none of us were prepared to duck out of. Then when pouring our celebratory drinks it dawned on us all that we had to do it all again – but this time we only had two weeks!

It was like this for a long time, a good couple of years of financially winging it while reaching for the stars. It was, for me, one of the best times of my life, whilst also being one of the most stressful. I can't imagine the years of rollercoaster that have come since those days. I don't imagine it's any easier than it was back then.

I no longer live in Hastings, so I don't have access to the paper now, but I hope it runs forever and I hope it never stops reaching for the stars and planting its seeds of revolution.

Happy birthday HIP!

# Birthday Special

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## ALAN BOLWELL former director and politics/news editor

What was great about working on the Hastings Independent was that it used to have politics. It used to be an alternative to the right-wing sludge of media working its way downriver with the rest of the sewage.

## SARAH YOUNG former politics editor

Being a part of Hastings Independent Press at the beginning felt so exciting. Volunteering on the Politics section during a period of such immense social change for the town was a highlight. We ran Q&A with local candidates in the run up to the general election, as well as covering the Brexit vote.

I'm going to unashamedly say that when we held a Hastings and Amber Rudd got absolutely put through her paces by residents, that was a good day. When you have a group of people together who love where they live, are aware of the issues and want to enact positive social change, that's a very powerful thing.

The roots of the paper were based on giving the town the media coverage it needed and deserved - there were lots of things to care about. I loved the meetings. They changed location but at one point ended up in the Horse and Groom and are amongst some of my fondest memories. We got stuff done but also had a few pints and a lot of fun.

It was an eclectic group of people,

ever, I think that local journalism is hugely important and am pleased to see important topics being covered, and challenges made, as well as passion for what is a very special place to live.

## KATIE ROGERS former content coordinator, contributor and sub-editor

Firstly, Happy 10th Anniversary HIP! What an incredible achievement for an independent, community-led, volunteer-run newspaper.

I joined HIP when it was relatively in its infancy, when the meetings took place at The Tub, a pub I once frequented as a teenage something! A recent English Language graduate, I wanted to continue my skills in writing and learning more about what was involved in working with a newspaper; the fact this was a community-led publication celebrating my hometown felt like a perfect fit.

My key memories are of the HIP people at the time, Cathy often leading each issue, making the most of the scramble of people and pieces involved. Kate, Paul, Jon, Alan, Sam and the gang, ensuring we all had the heart of the paper intact, our town and the residents.

Gathering of an evening, chatting mostly about what was going on in the town, the good news as much as the bad. There was an overwhelming sense of wanting to showcase the real spirit of Hastings, the artists, the charities, the projects, the music and food scene, the events!

of highlighting it; HIP very much took up that neglected mantle and worked tirelessly to make each issue happen. Hastings at its best.

## ADE PEACHMENT former listings editor

Those who believe in Telekinesis, raise my hand! Hastings is blessed with numerous musicians, promoters, bands, DJs, and artists; so when HIP offered me the keys to the Listings Bunker I jumped. An honour to document such a rich and talented music scene via samizdat newsprint. Wandering streets, jotting down events, emailing and texting, endeavouring to create the definitive gig calendar for the most musical borough in the UK.

The palpable excitement before Jack in the Green, Fat Tuesday, Pirate Day, and The Frat Cave/Beatwave were slavishly documented, and Flairz was always a terrible name. I saw Krautrock legends below Borough Wines, played records to Hells Angels and pagan flower folk, drank responsibly throughout bonfire season and raved about Riddles: a dark force of nature (RIP). Watched Kid Kapichi unplugged at SEED, danced the Argentine Tango, and plugged The Piercings, Marie White Band, Sine Waves and The Lennys. I experienced The Roomz Psych-fest, checked out the Funk and Soul of Voodoo, led the Pier to Eternity Acid House bike ride, and skanked with the Dub Generals.

I forever banged on about Admiral Sir Cloudesley Shovell: "English tribal grease rock channelling the



DAVE YOUNG

## JON DUNHAM former sales director and listings editor

Due to a bit of media sales experience from my London days, when I saw a Facebook message about a start-up newspaper, I thought I'd see if I could help. And so it started: from a cold and derelict basement office in what would become Rock House, I got on the phone and managed to drum up some advertising business. It soon dawned on me how important this free-of-charge paper could be for independent traders to promote themselves to the local community.

Although brought into the fold to fill this commercial gap, it soon became apparent that it was all hands on deck, as I soon helped collate the Listings section and eventually took over the all-important Tidal Times. I recall one night at the Horse & Groom, a gentleman took out a hand-torn section of the tidal times from his wallet, stating it was his go-to guide for future dog walks. I couldn't have been more proud!

Another well respected artist said the paper reminded him of the legendary Village Voice in New York, as HIP covered the counterculture and was never afraid to be politically aware. During an event on the Pier to celebrate Hastings Independent's 100th issue, the question was asked to local dignitaries: Which one word summed up the paper? The majority of responses were simply 'community'. However, the answer from the then Hastings Borough Council Cultural Regeneration Manager, came: "Bolshy!"

I remember thinking, "Our work here is done." Being a volunteer for the paper opens up the opportunity to learn new skills and be a part of something unique. In these times of fake news, oligarch-owned, biased press and social media click-bait rabbit holes, it's a blessing that Hastings has this independent voice, written by the community, for the community.

## MICHELLE SHAKESBY former director and art director

Heavily pregnant, I met Colin, Zoya and Jon Dunham in a random pub

on a random Wednesday in 2016 and got the first issue out the following Monday. I somehow then only missed a couple of issues, to give birth, during the next seven years.

Thinking back to some of the highlights, the opportunity to be a key organiser of the HIP Election Hustings of 2019, was up there. The event was fully booked and grabbed the attention of the press, both local and national, for some "interesting" comments on the night.

Another highlight was a transformative programme called the "Organisation Workshop." These workshops weren't just about honing professional skills; they were about empowering and uplifting members of our community who may traditionally not have accessed resources like this. Witnessing individuals from varied backgrounds gain practical experience and confidence was very fulfilling. It showcased HIP at its best, with a commitment to inclusivity and social impact - not "just a local newspaper" but a force for positive change.

Of course, working on a deadline-focused publication with a flat democratic structure also brought its challenges... A phrase that came to mind, often, was 'herding cats'. I am happy to say, we were always more or less on time - even if I have a few more grey hairs to show for it.

As an independent publication, there were a lot of strong opinions around the table - some of which were not always to my taste - but that's democracy! I hope HIP continues to provide an independent voice for Hastings for the next 10 years and wish it the best.

## KIM BATTY former food and arts editor

I got involved with HIP when my daughter started school. I had become quite lonely from the constraints of being a single parent, which had eroded my confidence. I was a journalist and copywriter before having my daughter, so I offered to volunteer with HIP. The first meeting I had was really fun, getting involved in all the discussions and planning, I felt included and ready to write again. I became the 16 →



HIP meeting during the pandemic.

some with very niche interests and experiences and there was room for that. It gave me an appreciation for how unique the town is and how many people wanted to make good things happen - often being innovative and stretching resources to bring creativity, moments that felt magic or make life a bit more bearable for others.

Congratulations to HIP volunteers who have made sure the paper has reached its tenth year. I'm not living in Hastings but always pick up a copy when I'm back and it's still such a good read. More than

I started contributing some small features in the Community section, and eventually took on other roles with photography, section editing, and eventually editing the newspaper as a whole. As is the nature of newspapers, it could feel chaotic, rushed, but always fun.

I am sure I still have some of the issues I worked on somewhere. It is wonderful to see the HIP spirit continuing all these years later.

Let's face it, Hastings is a rather unique and kooky place, and the mainstream newspapers at the time weren't always doing the best job

true spirit of Stonehenge era Hawkwind and Motorhead" and danced until dawn at Remi's Body Circus. Interviewed Sir Norman Jay and documented every essential gig down The Union Bar. Attended the filming of King Size Slim, Matilda's Scoundrels and Maid of Ace videos, and checked out Puffy Fetlock and Lil' Vinegar Stroke spitting carnage at the Silverhill Abyss. Got all Balearic with Los Twangueros at Trago, sang shanties, followed Dr Savage's coffin procession, and supported psychedelic troubadours Ceyote. It was one hell of a ride.

16

Birthday Special

**15** ← Food Ed and then the Arts Ed. As well as lifting me out of quite a low point, it kick started my writing again, which is a big part of my job – and I met some great people. My quite ‘out there’ writing style seemed well received, and sometimes I did a cartoon or two - Thank you HIP.

**SIMONE WITNEY**  
*former director and features editor*  
I joined in the second/third year, made good friends, leant a lot about conflict resolution – especially when to keep quiet – and developed some skills I wasn’t sure I had. This led to the projects I’m involved in now, and to my moving away to Edinburgh. Here in Scotland, farmers are restoring meanders to straightened rivers as it is understood that this organic form is vital for the environment and wildlife to flourish. Everyone who has been involved in HIP is familiar with the vulnerabilities of an organic structure, but this, and the individuals who have worked on it have been essential to the flow of its survival and character. I’m super proud to

have been part of this articulate, inclusive and resilient paper.

**ANDREW MYERS**  
*former arts editor*  
Happy 10th birthday, HIP!  
I’m so grateful for the time I spent as co-editor of the Arts pages, somewhere between 2018 and 2020. The exhilaration/panic at the sight of two blank pages that needed filling by Wednesday still hasn’t left me – I was always a fan of the Very Large Photo! Such a fantastic opportunity to get involved in the town.  
Particular highlights were getting the chance to interview some great artists and musicians, including sax legend Trevor Watts and composers Chris White and Polo Piatti. But probably my masterpiece was managing to write a 900-word review of a gig I wasn’t even allowed into.  
Ultimately, I couldn’t sustain working for HIP alongside the dreaded 9 to 5, but I still look back with pride. Sadly, I haven’t written a word since – but now you’ve got me thinking...  
Força, HIP – Hastings is lucky to have you!

In at the Deep End with HIP

**BEN CORNWELL** worked as an intern with HIP from 2020 to 2021. It’s good to know we were as useful to him as he was to us.

My placement year at HIP, during my degree course at the University of Sussex, was my first real experience of working in the media industry. With the practical elements of my journalism course being interrupted and restricted by the pandemic, I wanted to put some of the skills and principles that I had learned on my course into action.  
During my first week, I was tasked with exploring Hastings and St Leonards to get acclimatised and have a better understanding of everything going on in the local area. As someone who was not a local and hardly knew the town, this was extremely beneficial. It was also helpful when settling into my present job as a reporter for the Times of Tunbridge Wells as I felt comfortable integrating myself into a new community.  
While in Hastings, I covered all sorts of topics and stories from sewage leaks on Bulverhythe Beach and safety on our streets to pickleball. It was crucial for me to write as much as I could and build my portfolio. After writing over forty arti-

cles and with the help and guidance of the various section editors throughout, I firmly believe that there was a clear growth and development in my writing compared to when I first joined.  
Very early into my placement, I volunteered to take over writing the weekly online newsletter and handling the social media accounts. This digital experience has been very useful in my current employment as I have now taken over similar responsibilities for the Times.  
My time at the Hastings Independent ignited my passion for local journalism and community news, and I am extremely thankful for the entire HIP team for taking me on and for their endless trust and support.  
The experiences and lessons I learned at HIP have helped me get to where I am today and will help me as I continue my journey as a journalist for years to come. If you are thinking of pursuing a career within the industry or just looking to try something new, then I would definitely consider getting involved in your local newspaper.

WHERE TO FIND HASTINGS INDEPENDENT

People often ask where they can get a copy of HIP, so we are including a list in our anniversary paper to make it completely clear (and encourage you to keep this anniversary copy for reference). We’d also like to thank all those who stock the paper and who help make delivering the paper such a friendly experience.  
There are three categories of outlets: bulk outlets, which take more than 100 copies, smaller outlets which take up to 100, and cafés, hairdressers, estate agents, doctor’s surgeries, etc that take copies to read while customers are waiting. Bulk outlets can run out quickly although they are restocked several times after the first delivery, so smaller outlets can be a good bet.  
For space reasons, we are only including a list here of those taking more than ten copies, but we thank them all. For a full list go to [hastingsindependentpress.co.uk/where-can-i-find-a-copy](https://hastingsindependentpress.co.uk/where-can-i-find-a-copy). Apologies for any we have missed.

BULK OUTLETS

- Asda, Silverhill
- Bookbusters, Queens Rd
- Co-op, Fairlight Rd
- Convenience Store, Whitefriars Rd
- ESK, Cambridge Rd
- Lidl, Bohemia Rd
- Londis, Norman Rd
- Morrisons, Queens Rd
- Old Town Launderette, High St
- Priory Meadow Shopping Centre
- Saint Coffee, Warrior Square Station
- Spar at Shell Garage, the Ridge
- Spar, Kings Rd
- Tesco, Church Wood Drive
- Tesco, Ravenside, Bexhill-on-Sea
- White Rock Hotel
- Wonderfill, Kings Rd
- Full Distribution List
- Hastings Town
- Trinity and Cambridge Rd
- The Common Room, 27 Cambridge Rd
- ESK, 18-24 Cambridge Rd
- Trinity Refills, 41A Cambridge Rd
- The Corner Shop, 55 Cambridge Rd
- Sweet Selection Robertson St, 11 Cambridge Rd
- Jempsons, 18 Wellington Pl
- Bullet Coffee House, 38 Robertson St
- Stooge Coffee, 4 Trinity St
- Trinity Wholefoods, 3 Trinity St
- Hastings Library, Brassey Institute, 13 Claremont
- Hastings Station
- East Sussex College, Station Plaza
- Hastings Visitor Information Centre, Station Plaza – closed for winter
- Reception, Station Plaza Health Centre
- The Seadog, 32 Station Rd
- Queens Rd
- Morrisons Cafe, Morrisons, 170 Queens Rd
- Morrisons Petrol, 170A Queens Rd
- Imperial, 119 Queens Rd
- Fountain on Queens, 93 Queens Rd
- Bottle of Hastings, 91-92 Queens Rd
- Printed Matter, 185 Queens Rd
- Bookbusters, 39 Queens Rd
- Prince Albert Pub, 28 Cornwallis St
- Pissaro’s, 9-10 South Terrace
- Eel & Bear, 28 Waldegrave St
- Priory Meadow shopping centre

OLD TOWN

- The Albion, 33 George St
- George’s Bookshop, George St
- Dirty Old Gallery, 31 West St – closed for Winter
- Old Town Stores (Premier), 21-22 George St
- Select Convenience, 61 High St
- The Nest, The Old Town Hall, High St
- Old Town Launderette, 44 High St
- The Bourne Mini Market, 29 Courthouse St
- The Crown, 64-66 All Saints St
- Hastings Contemporary, 1 Rock-A-Nore Rd

- Isabel Blackman Centre, Winding St
- Stables Theatre, The Bourne
- Hastings Borough Council, Muriel Matters House
- The Shipwreck Museum

ST LEONARDS

- Cambia Kitchen, 44 Marina
- Poffley’s Coffee Shop, 40b Marina
- Nisa Convenience Store, 41 Marina
- Hastings Arts Forum, 36 Marina
- Dark Circles, 6 Marine Court
- Pizzarelli, 12 Marine Court
- Bonjour, 13 Grand Parade
- Kassa, 15 Grand Parade
- Forbidden Fruit, 22 Grand Parade
- Goat Ledge, Lower Promenade, Warrior Square
- White Rock Hotel, White Rock
- Central St Leonards
- Lucy Bell Gallery, 46 Norman Rd
- Kino Teatr, 43-49 Norman Rd
- Gizem Nur Newsagent, 17 Norman Rd
- Londis, 23 Norman Rd
- Heist Market, 22-26 Norman Rd
- The Piper, 1 Norman Rd
- Saint Coffee, Warrior Square Station
- Dandelion Deli, 14 Kings Rd
- Wonderfill, 43 Kings Rd
- Spar, 29-30 Kings Rd
- Milk + Hustle, 45B London Rd
- Launderette, 42 London Rd
- St Leonards Grocery, 15 London Rd
- Collected Fictions, 4 London Rd
- Launderette, 22 Silchester Rd
- Sugar Pie Honey Buns, 235 London Rd
- The Tower Pub, 251 London Rd
- Tower Launderette, 142 London Rd
- West St Leonards
- Marina Park Stores, 1 Seaside Rd
- Dove Café, 19, Bexhill Rd
- Marina Fountain, 26 Caves Rd
- The Bo Peep, 25 Grosvenor Crescent
- Costa Coffee, Bulverhythe Retail Park
- Greggs, Bulverhythe Retail Park

THE RIDGE

- Premier, 220-222 Harrow Lane
  - Harrow Stores, 821 The Ridge
  - Conquest Hospital convenience shop
  - Spar at Shell Garage 364 The Ridge
  - Esso Garage, 54 The Ridge
- ORE**
- Good on Greens, 466 Old London Rd
  - Londis – Drishi News, 492 Old London Rd
  - Ore Community Library, 469 Old London Rd
  - Co-Op, 4-6 Fairlight Rd
  - The Steamie Launderette, 53-55 Mount Rd
  - One Stop, 77-79 Mount Rd
  - Beney’s Londis, 51 Hughenden Rd
  - JN Convenience Store – Premier, 9 Whitefriars Rd

SILVERHILL

- Lidl, 63 Bohemia Rd
- Esso Garage, 64 Bohemia Rd
- Co-op, 45-47 Bohemia Rd
- Asda, Battle Rd
- BP Garage (Londis), 12 Sedlescombe Rd North
- Silverhill Laundry, 49 Sedlescombe Rd North
- The Welcome Pub, 55 Sedlescombe Rd North

HOLLINGTON

- One Stop, 39-45 Blackman Avenue
- One Stop, 2 Bodiam Drive
- Wishing Tree Stores, 3 Wishing Tree Rd North
- Parker Building Supplies, Highfield Drive
- Hollington Oak, 210 Wishing Tree Rd
- Tesco Extra, Church Wood Dr
- Welcome (Southern Co-op), Battle Rd
- Best One, Battle Rd
- Co-op, Battle Rd



KENT BARKER

# Greening Hastings

IAN BUNCH argues that the council needs to step up to the mark and lead a volunteer army to plant trees in Hastings.

Most of us love trees and understand the great benefits they can bring to help in mitigating the effects of climate change. Once established, they last for decades and need little or no maintenance. Trees absorb CO<sub>2</sub>, and provide habits for wildlife. They give shade, significantly reducing the temperature of their surroundings, and they delay water runoff, thus helping to prevent flooding. So what's not to like about trees?

The one thing we can do quickly and locally to reduce climate change is to plant more trees. Hastings Borough Council (HBC) should be proactively pushing this agenda. It should be the number one long-term priority. HBC declared a climate emergency years ago. They set a target of net zero by 2030, so planting trees is an obvious part of the solution.

Roads and verges are maintained variously by HBC, ESCC (East Sussex

County Council) and some housing associations. We need these various organisations to work together: step up, recognise the requirement and take action. You can't expect volunteers to be motivated if they are unsure about council approval.

If HBC used just a little of its public relations machinery – at practically no cost – to create interest in tree planting and maintenance, they could generate a veritable army of volunteers to do the legwork. I'm not suggesting the council needs to spend a lot (I know they don't have any money) but regular PR on the subject and some admin help would generate a lot of interest. Without this proactive approach you'll never inspire the groundswell of support that exists in Hastings – just awaiting the council's leadership.

Along the coast, a charity, Make Eastbourne Green, has been set up

“to double Eastbourne's tree cover by 2030”. They've already planted more than 17,000 saplings. As their website, [treebourne.org](http://treebourne.org), says: “We're working with the council and independently, to find sites – large and small – where we can plant trees. Our aim is to maximise the capture of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions before they can escape into the upper atmosphere and wreak havoc on the planet's climate. In short, we plan to turn Eastbourne green.” Why isn't that happening in Hastings? We could be a leading town in UK, with beautiful tree-lined streets, if the various public bodies could only get their acts together and support such a scheme.

Hastings Borough Council's 2023-24 Corporate Plan update makes no mention of trees; he earlier final climate emergency action plan of March 2022 mentions planting more trees in the cemetery and recycling of Christmas trees – nothing more!

The starting point should be HBC and ESCC stating clearly and unequivocally that they want more tree planting; that they will actively support applications if submitted by local groups and that they will work with volunteer groups to make this happen.

Unfortunately, I'm told by the Council: “The highway verges in Hastings are now lined with established young trees of various species, there is little space left unplanted.” and “We now have excellent tree cover within our streets.” Both these statements are demonstrably wrong.

# Climate Weirding

Local permaculturist TIM REDFERN has observed how, as the seasons go out of kilter, so too do the plants.

Over the last three years I've been working in a series of gardens including my own. It's been a trip observing how the seasons have altered and comparing thoughts with other growers. They have changed – dramatically. They have skewed. It's less global warming (although that is arguably the cause) but more Climate Weirding, which even the most sceptical and dubious have to admit is factually evident and happening as I write.

You only need to drive out of Hastings to the flooded flats and (more bizarrely) flooded hilltops to see that something is not right.

During this time, I have been putting my permaculture learnings into practice working with different clients and various plots with various degrees of success. In terms of scale, the plots range from small, terraced ‘all you can eat’ raised beds with natural habitat for wildlife, to semi-wilded formal gardens and a two-acre plot of lovingly unkempt, regenerated formal garden.

The big thing I have observed is that we are getting rainfall or temperatures that don't correspond to the season. Plus we've haven't had prolonged periods of winter frost, which means that what is usually subdued or killed is starting to affect the delicate natural balance.

Sure, plants still die back: that is the nature of temperate annuals



BOHEMIA WALLED GARDEN ASSOCIATION

Permaculture in Hastings

and perennials – it's how they respond to the seasons. But as the seasonal climates get out of kilter, so do the plants. They weaken, become more susceptible to blight, attempt to blossom at the wrong time and wither. Random hot and cold spells mean plants don't know which way to turn. I have observed plants come and go and then come

back in two seasons, then wilt and perish because they don't know what to do with themselves.

Because of Climate Weirding we are getting more rain – largely caused by the planet's warming. For the scientific evidence you need only look at NASA's website to see that the last ten years have consecutively been the warmest since re-

ords began. The Meteorological Office also says the last four years have consecutively been the hottest on record.

Warmer air creates more condensation which in turn leads to more, bigger and therefore heavier rainfall, which in turn devastates crops and plants and creates flash floods and potholes. The latter in particular demonstrate that we don't have the infrastructure for what is happening. It's an elementary cause and effect thing, more heat equals more evaporation, which creates more profound condensation and bigger raindrops.

I remember when I lived in the USA, there were storm drains on every street because of their more extreme rain and seasonal climates, which was a treat to witness when I was there. But now I see us contending with similar weather here, climates which match patterns previously only witnessed further south.

There's too much green for the depths of winter, and it's not right. Instead of dying of exposure for good reason as nature intended, critters, bugs and diseases should be suppressed by the cold and kept in check. Now, instead come microclimates which allow these unwanted pests to propagate and incubate and hatch. And I should not be swatting mosquitoes while enjoying my porridge in January.





# The Scoundrel’s Plea

ROBIN HOLTOM argues that William Blake’s epithet ‘the general good is the plea of the scoundrel’ supports the view that Medical Ethics has become separated from Ethics generally.

The chaplain in a psychiatric hospital I used to work in was an even tempered and conscientious Welshman but on one occasion I noticed he was uncharacteristically upset. I asked him what the trouble was. He explained that he had asked if he could become a member of the Hospital Ethics Committee. It seemed a reasonable request as he was probably one of the few people in the hospital who had actually studied Ethics at university. After some weeks he had been informed that the committee was not really ‘Ethics’ but it was ‘Medical Ethics; and it would not be appropriate for him to be a member.

Throughout the Victorian era what we would now regard as a talking cure was described as ‘Moral Treatment’ in order to distinguish it from physical and medical remedies. When Victorian morality was vigorously rejected in the 20th century, we may have thrown out a baby with the bathwater because medicine became much further

separated from morality. The ascendancy of the modern drug manufacturing industry regularly presents examples whereby ethics and practice have become uncoupled. Thalidomide and the Sackler opioid scandal are among obvious examples. Medical Ethics has clearly split off from Ethics.

Medicine is not the only example of this split but it is a particularly telling one which impacts us all. The Military Industrial Complex (the relationship between a country’s military and the defence industry that supplies it), which can shorten life, influences politicians’ decisions about war. The Medical Industrial Complex, (the relationship between pharmaceutical companies and health care practitioners) which can lengthen life, influences doctors’ decisions about our health. All are ‘ethical’ on their own terms of course, and they certainly claim to promote the general good. But they are also profitable and especially good for some.

Blake was objecting to the utilitarian project of creating the greatest good for the greatest number – an appealing idea at first sight. But a problem arises when one realises that different people have very different beliefs about what is good for the greatest number. Not only do they have different views, but some of them also are often convinced that their ideas are ‘right’ and others are ‘wrong’. Religious beliefs amplify these convictions and this may give people the self-confidence to kill each other.

It is a truism that we project onto others those characteristics that we are unable to recognise in ourselves. Right and wrong, good and bad are ways of classifying events by pre-established categories and these categories are easily substituted for real ethical soul-searching. Thus our uncertainties and, their twin, our bigotries, are sidelined and we can persuade ourselves that we have ‘Right on our Side’. Yet time and again we are forced to realise that apparently good things have bad consequences. Fossil fuels warm the planet to dangerous levels. Overuse of antibiotics damages our immune systems. Over fertilised soil becomes barren. More convenient and faster private cars make journeys across London’s roads slower than in the days of horses and carts.

Blake had a point.

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# The Brice is Right

BEN THOMPSON

Released in 2022 on the resonantly named West Hill record label, double bass virtuoso Olie Brice's *Fire Hills* – a double CD for trio and octet – has a good claim to being the most potent selection of site-specific jazz ever to come out of East Sussex. Time was when the Arts Council was constantly bankrolling people like Stan Tracey to make slightly half-arsed concept albums about the High Weald, but those days are sadly long gone, and the intensity of Brice's musical love letter to Fairlight's breeziest beauty spot testifies to a cultural landscape in which if you're doing it, you're doing it for love.

With pieces dedicated to (and implicitly referencing the work of) inspirational jazz figures Johnny Dyani, Eric Dolphy and Andrew Hill, *Fire Hills* is definitely at the composed end of Brice's broad creative spectrum. But those who know him best as co-curator of Hastings' regular (and ever more popular) Two Ship nights of purely impro-

vised music should not be put off. Esteemed jazz critic (and erstwhile Old Grey Whistle Test presenter) Richard Williams has written of Brice's "ability to use his role as a composer to guide rather than prescribe", and fans will finally get the chance to judge for themselves when the trio featured on the album (Brice on bass, Will Glaser on drums and Tom Challenger on tenor sax) makes its belated home town debut in the back room of the Pig this Friday night.

"I don't personally feel like there's a very big difference between playing completely improvised music, and projects like my trio where there's loads of room for improvisation but there is some pre-composed material", Brice explains. "In both cases you're developing material, listening to the people you're playing with and the vibrations in the room, drawing on all the music you've listened to and played in the past – it's just that in freely improvised performances you have to generate the material spontaneously."

The way improvising musicians communicate is a topic of great fas-



ALEX BONNEY

and a listener", he enthuses of a set-up which will be new to many listeners, citing Dave Holland's *Emerald Tears* and Barre Phillips' *Journal Violone* as classics of the genre, and emphasizing that "it's an instrument where a lot of the complexity and subtlety can easily be lost when there's other stuff going on".

Among the other stuff going on in the backroom of the Pig will be the fifth ever gig by all star (and all caps) St Leonards post-punk trio BEAU (featuring fiery troubadour Otti Albiez, Borough Council's Haydn Ackerley, and gallerist/tub thumper Colden Drystone). They're an unusual booking as support act for a jazz show, but one Brice is fully behind – "I think BEAU are fantastic; when I first heard them they made me think of (US alt-rock pioneers) The Minutemen. I've always liked combining different genres on bills," Brice continues. "My first gigging experiences – both as promoter and playing gigs – were in the DiY scene that grew out of punk, and I've always been into that approach, politically and practically...."

*The Olie Brice Trio play the backroom of the Pig with BEAU and DJ Fritz Catlin on Friday 2 February. You can also hear Olie talking about his music on an hour-long edition of The London Ear on www.resonancefm.com at 4.30pm on Saturday 3 February*

cination to non-combatants. I wonder does he use physical signals to suggest to fellow players the direction he feels things should be going in, the same way that on Match of the Day they'll talk about Arsenal's captain Martin Odegaard fiddling with his sock on the edge of the area just before a corner, to let his team mates know if it's going to be a short one or a long one?

"There's nothing like that, no", Brice laughs. "To be honest, I normally have my eyes shut when I'm playing – everything is completely improvised and in the moment – so

even if someone was frantically gesturing at me to stop, I probably wouldn't know about it".

Brice will have no worries about fellow musicians frenziedly drawing their index fingers across their throats when he returns to improvising duty at the next Two Ship at The Nest on 16 February, because it's a solo double bass performance, alongside Hastings' very own godfather of free music Trevor Watts (who also plays in a power trio format with John Edwards on bass and Toller Ostvang on drums). "I love solo double bass – both as a player

## DeFries Leaps In

VICTORIA KINGHAM

As jazz musicians get older, it is perhaps understandable that they might settle into a comfortable groove, doing what they are confident in, playing through familiar changes in a style they have long practised. Not bad, just – well, static. But jazz moves, has always moved.

Dave DeFries' playing continues a quest. As a rising star on the UK jazz circuit in the 1980s, he blew with great pitch, sweet mellow trumpet sound, something more: that indefinable thing called swing. He continued through Brotherhood of Breath, Loose Tubes, and The Penguin Café Orchestra. In this one-off visit from Spain (where he now lives) it was good to see that his enthusiasm has not waned, that he still explores new ways to present old tunes, revering melodies while embellishing the form. And though his improvisational technique is sometimes unexpectedly off-the-wall, and definitely off-the-page, it's surprising how closely it suggests the original melodic line.



The DeFries Quartet

The quartet was brought together ad hoc for the unscheduled visit of DeFries. Despite some unavoidable ragged edges, they demonstrated excellent form on a series of well-chosen standards, often in unusual time signatures: a 6/8 version of *Invitation* for example and an upbeat, bossa version of *Easy Living* featuring an extended solo break by guitarist Andy Williams. A daring treatment of a ballad, given the classic ballad versions by Miles Davis, Clifford Brown et al, but carried with aplomb.

Local resident Terry Pack's stellar career as a bassist has featured in this month's *Jazzwise* magazine. His confident, inventive, but rock-solid bass playing coupled with straightforward, excellent drum shapes from Tony McDonnell enhanced the evening and served to anchor the freedom elicited by DeFries' trumpet and Williams' guitar. Enjoyable and unexpected, an important one-off for this town.

Dave Defries played at Barnaby's Jazz Lounge, Hastings, on 16 January

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PHOTOS: PROJECT ART WORKS



# ‘One in a Million’ Ellen Prebble at Hastings Museum and Art Gallery

SARAH MILNE

As a working artist and arts writer, going to art shows and events is a central part of life, something I am incredibly grateful for. I can honestly say there are very few exhibitions I have seen in my life that have given me such joy as the Ellen Prebble Exhibition, which opened last week at Hastings Museum & Art Gallery.

Ellen Prebble has an enduring relationship with the Museum & Art Gallery, having visited throughout her life, and describes it as “a lovely little museum full of things that I love, including birds.” She has been working with the museum for

over a year to bring her exhibition to life, including time spent choosing pieces of taxidermy from their collection to sit within the space.

Her work is nothing short of breathtaking. Her paintings and sculpture, drawn from influences ranging from the natural world to pop culture, are pure, fresh, bold and exciting. Familiar scenes are rendered in minute detail and a festival of colour from a palate she mixes herself.

Prebble is an artist who is truly in love with the things she chooses to paint and sculpt, with the process of making the work and the finished pieces. She showed me around her show, pointing out some of her favourite works. Ellen described The

Albatross to me as “a wonderful painting of a beautiful and respectable bird,” and her favourite of all on show, Venice, a painting that is “one in a million!”

No wonder Ellen’s work is such a delight when it is made with such affection, belief and confidence in her talent and identity as an artist. I wanted to find out more about Ellen and her practice and went to visit her in her studio at Project Artworks in Hastings.

There she told me how she inherited her artistic skills from her great grandfather, who was a painter, and how proud her family are of the heights she is achieving with this gift, especially this, her first solo exhibition in a prestigious public gallery. I asked Ellen how it felt when she cut the ribbon to open the show. She said, “I felt very proud and very famous. My exhibition is brilliant and everything I hoped for, fame, lots of pretty paintings and everyone finally realising what an amazing gift I have.”

I felt honoured to see the beginnings of Ellen’s newest work, a minutely detailed painting of Tokyo. She expects it will take her all this year to finish this. She chose Tokyo because it is a place she and her big brother, Thomas, want to go to - the home of Pokémon and Godzilla, two of their most favourite things. Ellen told me how she travels to places she wants to see as she paints. She wants to share these places with us too and

paints with a vibrancy that “makes people feel like they are really there.”

Tokyo is a new painting, currently a vast bare canvas except for one tiny corner where the beginnings of a perfectly formed skyscraper are emerging. Ellen doesn’t outline her work or put down layers of wash and form. She frequently works from photographs, building her representation from a small block in the corner, spreading out in finished detail across the canvas. Scale and perspective come naturally, instinctively as she works.

Having studied Art at Hastings College, Ellen joined the studio at Project Art Works, where she has worked since 2017. As part of the Project Art Works Collective, her works have featured in exhibitions at venues including Piano Nobile Gallery (2019), the Herbert Art Gallery & Museum in the Turner Prize exhibition (2021) and the Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art (2023).

Project Art Works CEO and Artist Director, Kate Adams says: “We are very pleased that Ellen’s work is now showing at Hastings Museum and Art Gallery. They have been great to work with and we know that this is a significant moment for Ellen in her life and practice. It is very reassuring to feel the strength of

local connection and community that are so important in supporting the creativity and potential of its citizens, including Ellen! Her work invites viewers into a world that resonates with her interest in nature and aligns beautifully with the exceptional natural history collection of the museum.”

Ellen told me, “When people look at my paintings, I want them to feel amazed and fascinated.” That’s exactly how I feel when I look at her work. Ellen inspires me to approach my own art with the same conviction and joy as she does hers. This is a show I will keep coming back to.

*The Ellen Prebble Exhibition is on at Hastings Museum and Art Gallery until 14th April 2024. [hmag.org.uk/see-and-do/exhibitions/the-ellen-prebble-exhibition/](http://hmag.org.uk/see-and-do/exhibitions/the-ellen-prebble-exhibition/) Ellen’s work can also be seen in the window of 12 Claremont, Hastings, as part of Untitled Gallery, a contemporary art gallery presented by Project Art Works, and at Residential at Baltic Centre of Contemporary Art till February which will be travelling to Copenhagen Contemporary in April. For more information about Project Art Works visit [www.projectartworks.org](http://www.projectartworks.org)*



Sam Glazer at a Hastings International Piano School

# Learn and Participate

The organisation behind the Hastings International Piano Concerto Competition, firmly believes in its responsibility to reach beyond the competition to engage locally through its *Learning and Participation* programme.

## SCHOOLS PROGRAMME

Last week Hastings International Piano launched its 2024 schools programme, with three days of high-quality musical experiences for primary school pupils (Key Stage 2). At Christ Church CE Academy, Silverdale Primary Academy, and St Leonards CEP Academy, groups of 9-11 year olds took part in workshops led by Sam Glazer, and a previous Hastings International Piano competitor Gabriele Sutkute.

The students composed their own original music, using keyboard instruments to write their song, which they then rehearsed and performed with Gabriele at a special showcase school assembly. More than 100 children took part in the workshops and another 600 experienced the completed performances.

Sarah Kowitz, Chair of the Trustees for Hastings International Piano, says: "We believe that there is

no better way to engage children and young people in music than by involving them in the activity itself. The gradual sidelining of creative subjects in the national curriculum, and wholesale cuts in arts funding, have left many children unable to access music at all." Hastings International Piano is attempting to fill this gap, not only by bringing the best young pianists to Hastings, but also by developing the passion and musical talent of children and young people who live in the town by involving them directly in co-creating their own music.

## TEACHING REMARKS

Andrew Marsh, Music Subject Lead for the Silverdale Primary Academy, talks about the

"inclusive and inspiring" workshop that Sam and Gabrielle delivered to the Year 5 group: "They made the whole experience fun, exciting,

and creative for all the children. They demonstrated wonderful motivational strategies for those finding the process challenging, and kept all of us smiling with their positivity and humour." He added: "We would definitely welcome Hastings International Piano back again soon."

Later in the year, Hastings International Piano plan to deliver a legacy project with children who showed particular interest and aptitude. They will be invited to take free weekly group keyboard lessons for a period of 30 weeks, and will be invited to a piano finalists' concert. Plans are also afoot for a primary school workshop project specifically designed for SEND children.

## FUNDING

At least ten local and national organisations have had a part in funding this unique opportunity for local schoolchildren at a time when state schools nationally are punishingly restricted in the amount of music and arts teaching that they can offer. The lack of state funding has led schools nationally to cut their music and art budgets and this is, of course, a different much bigger story.

Is music education really destined to become accessible to only a privileged few? Organisations like Hastings International Piano and the Garfield Weston Foundation and the Kowitz Family Foundation do a wonderful job, and we are fortunate that they promote music locally. But nationally there are fewer and fewer music teaching jobs in primary or secondary schools, which are struggling sometimes even to provide the most basic facilities.

# Writing about Writing

VICTORIA KINGHAM

The Palace Workspace is a well-considered refurbishment of an ex-department store in Robertson Street. It's five floors of glorious open space, warm, redecorated and lined with nicely-selected paintings by local artists, vintage posters, maps and photographs. A terrific central resource for all kinds of conferences and classes: I hope it will be well used.

If you know me as a writer at all, it will be for reviews, short pieces, interviews. I've produced a great number for this paper (and others) which makes me very happy. I am hoping that the power of a group, however, will enable me to produce fiction, rather than opinion or everyday facts, so I have signed up for James Young's creative writers' workshop on the top floor of the Workspace. He himself is an engaging man from Northern Ireland, with something positive to say to

descriptions, my own effort, while moderately well-written, remained obstinately grounded in the realm of the factual. So I am waiting (hoping?) to have my own powers of imagination unleashed, removed from the merely immediate experience.

## LIFE, STORY, LIFE STORY

Alternatively, if I do end up writing non-fiction, I could aim to free myself from the conventionally-structured academic style so painstakingly worked over a number of years. It earned me qualifications, and indeed, with only slight modification, enables me to write this. There are, and have been, of course, many great authors whose actual life experience corresponds approximately to their fictional representations of themselves, whose writing style corresponds to their lifestyle. If I were Jack Kerouac for example, I could write an endless, wild journey on yards and yards of uncut paper with dubious paragraph breaks. If I were David Foster Wallace, I'd write huge chunks of almost undifferentiated text-and-dialogue, some seriously drug-fuelled, some corresponding to the form of a tennis match. If I were Jonathan Safran Cohen, I'd start from the middle and work backwards and then forwards, and my dog would tell jokes. If I were Wordsworth, I would pace up and down my sister's cottage making sure that the rhythm of my life-poem flowed correctly, incomparably.



James Young

everyone and an encouraging manner.

This was an elegantly diverse group of eight people: ages ranged from mid-twenties to mid-seventies, with contrasting, fascinating life positions. The customary introductory exercise (pair off and each one of you introduce the other) revealed a very constructive variety of writing experience and *milieux*. After that came a short exercise – listening to background sounds for three minutes and writing about the interlude for four. But where other people seemed immediately able to diversify into coherent memories, imaginative flights of fancy, short fictional paragraphs and poetic de-

If I were Caitlin Moran, I'd produce lewd, short, humorous descriptions of what appears a chaotic, but enviable, childhood. There are, after all, infinite ways of representing pieces of one's life.

This workshop was an excellent start to what I am sure will be a valuable experience. Like David Copperfield, "Whether I shall turn out to be the hero of my own life, or whether that station will be held by anybody else, these pages must show." Watch this space.

*Hastings Writers' Workshop, The Palace Workspace, 1-3 Robertson Street. Details at [hastingswriter-workshop.com](http://hastingswriter-workshop.com)*

# The Stamp of Innocence

by Aled Gwyn Jôb  
Published by Troubador  
rtp £11.99 at Bookbuster  
REVIEW BY TIM BARTON

The 'Post Office scandal' has dominated the news for a few weeks now, yet it goes back a quarter of a century! That incredibly long-running series of injustices is one of the reasons it is so scandalous. I imagine most of those reading this will know the gist of the sorry tale. Amongst the salient details are the facts that well over 900 sub-postpersons were prosecuted for stealing from their employer; that although 'privatised', the sole shareholder is the state; that a significant proportion of those accused were jailed; that many more had their lives and standing in their communities wrecked; that a few committed suicide; that the problem was an IT bug that was denied despite negative feedback from day one.

The software issue involved a program called 'Horizon', from one of the largest contractors, Fujitsu. In November 2021, Karl Flinders wrote in Computer Weekly that "the behaviour of Post Office senior management during the Horizon scandal was so egregious that the supplier of the faulty software that triggered it has escaped a large financial penalty," clearly implying they deserved one, and that "the case is a warning shot to IT suppliers that they should ensure that their systems are not misused by corporate customers".

Nick Wallis, author of *The Great Post Office Scandal*, regularly hears from people caught up in the mess caused by the dodgy software, its lack of security, and the horrendously high-handed way the PO has treated it's workers. This week, his email newsletter includes this sorry tale:

"Hi, I was a Subpostmaster 2002-06. I was taken for £5,000 on the day the office closed. The previous day had balanced, then overnight it was

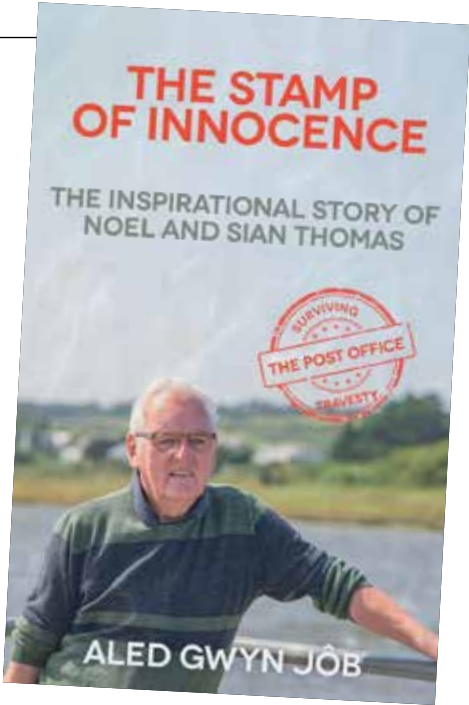
£5k down. The closing audit showed it as stamps, though no delivery of the said stamps were on record, and the office only held a stock of a few hundred pounds worth at any time. The Post Office auditor told me the system was wrong, but I was lucky it was only £5k. He said he knew of far worse cases. He tried to talk to the two Post Office officials who had turned up demanding the £5k before the audit had even started, but he told me they would not listen, I was to pay up or I was going to be arrested for fraud."

It is this kind of personal testimony that gives the greatest insight into how awful the PO has behaved, and that has engendered the high level of anger we feel. Aled Jôb's book is subtitled 'the inspirational story of Noel and Sian Thomas' and features on its cover a post office style stamp with the words 'surviving the post office travesty'. Noel was sub-postmaster on Anglesey, and was jailed for purportedly stealing money. His daughter led a decades-long campaign to get justice for Noel, seeing legal success, finally, only in April 2021, and fighting since to receive compensation. This detailed personal history of this case is a great and necessary insight into the tragedy of this astonishing affront to justice, and a warning to all who trust the security and integrity of the IT systems we rely upon every day, from social media to banking, as well as a warning to distrust anonymous corporate entities and unaccountable state bodies.

The hasty scramble to do something now the story has finally broken into the public consciousness is, after 25 years, itself slightly scandalous. My view of our inglorious PM's high-profile 'doing something' is quite cynical, he is doing badly in the polls, and an election is com-

ing this year, so naturally this is a factor in his way of dealing with the issue. But, too, I think his promise to address the accused postal workers legal cases in bulk is not simply a way to speed up the terribly long and apparently ineffectual CPS case-by-case approach – one which has seen only 93 convictions overturned as of the third week in January 2024 – but also yet another Tory assault on the independence of the judiciary. This follows on from Johnson's attempts to prorogue Parliament and the subsequent backlash from our highest courts who properly deferred to our Bill of Rights, which last spring saw him enter a Bill that included amendments to our constitution that in effect makes Britain an 'executive sovereignty'. It has also led, with added momentum as fallout from the benighted 'Rwanda' scheme, to a Tory assault on the Supreme Court and the Human Rights Act, once again aided by the propagandist right-wing press.

Nevertheless, we would all like to see appropriate action and compensation for those caught up in the scandal. All the more so, after hearing the moving personal testimonies of victims such as Noel, their families, and communities. Many have had an even worse time of it. Not all families held together, not all communities backed their members: what would yours do for you?



## POETRY CORNER

Haiku Sequence  
JOHN R PARSONS

riding networks  
of winter trees  
gibbous moon heads  
for the open

after the tree surgeon  
I stack his  
sawn off limbs

freak weather  
a bare cherry  
in full blossom

one gold herringbone  
in clear blue evening sky  
wind shreds the lake

silent fox  
as I exit the park  
I catch an eye glint

owning the whole  
evening sky, half a moon  
and Neptune

on the old TV  
ariel two black and white  
magpies change sides

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or email info@associationofcarers.org.uk

## CROSSWORD CORNER

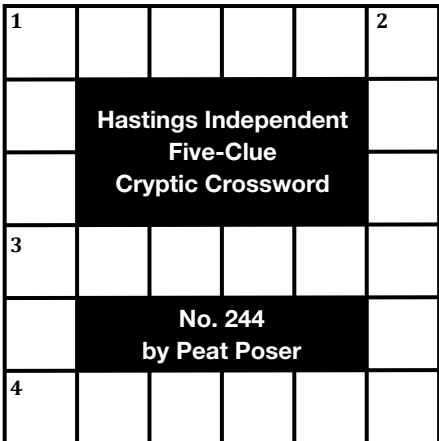
### Across

1. Help fool first (6)
3. Prophet used partly for a clear answer (6)
4. Anti on confused state (6)

### Down

1. Be next to Jo in ad somehow (6)
2. Nature enclosed somewhat this covered dish (6)

Crossword Solution: Answers on page 7 of The HIP List



FOOTBALL

# Home Comfort for United

20 January:  
Carshalton Athletic 2,  
Hastings Utd 1

27 January:  
Hastings Utd 2,  
Hashtag Utd 0

HUGH SULLIVAN

Hastings United’s ten-match unbeaten run came to an end on 20 January when they lost 2-1 at Carshalton. However, they remain sixth in the Isthmian Premier League after last Saturday’s comfortable home victory over Essex visitors Hashtag, and with the three teams immediately above them, Billericay Town, Enfield

Town and Wingate & Finchley, all losing on the same day, a (top five) play-off place is still beckoning.

The ‘U’s’ defeat at Carshalton came after conceding two first half goals – a glancing header from a free-kick and a top corner finish when the ball was lost just outside their penalty area. They dominated possession in the second half and came close on a number of occasions, with Ollie Black’s long throws causing particular problems to the home defence. But they only managed a single goal in reply when John Ufuah’s cross was parried out by the home goalkeeper to the lurking Davide Rodari.

That was Rodari’s eighteenth league goal of the season, and it took him less than a minute of the game against Hashtag to add a nineteenth. Again Ufuah was the provider, latching onto a long pass from Tommy Penfold, outpacing the visitors’ defenders and squaring the ball for Rodari to sweep into a gaping net.

Hashtag responded positively: Charlie Grainger, in the United goal, was forced to dive at full stretch to keep out a shot from his bottom corner. But on 25 minutes, Penfold hit another long, inch-perfect through ball to Ufuah. He again scampered

through the flailing defence and finished with aplomb.

At 2-0 up, the ‘U’s saw no need to play too expansively, and for the rest of the game were generally content to let their Essex opponents have the ball in unthreatening areas while shutting off any penetrative incursions. They were helped by the visitors having to play the last half hour with only ten men, following two yellow cards brandished in quick succession to the same miscreant for rough midfield challenges.

The back line of Penfold, Black and Sam Gale was dominant in the air and never pulled out of shape. Grainger enjoyed a very comfortable afternoon between the posts. Ahead of them Adam Lovatt and Jack Dixon acted as a hornets’ nest of buzzing activity, snuffing out Hashtag’s attacks and recycling the ball for resumed Hastings possession.

Sam Okoye and Tom Chalmers were kept relatively quiet down the right, but on the left the combination of Kian Moyes’ trickery and pace of Ufuah always threatened further goals. Leading the front line doesn’t, you sense, come naturally to Rodari – his favoured number 7 shirt shows his preference for a little more space and time than you get as a centre-forward – but he

worked selflessly throughout to link Hastings’ attacks.

There’s still more than a third of the season still to play but, barring injuries of the sort which torpedoed Gary Elphick’s promotion hopes a year ago, United’s performance in this game showed a team that’s still on an upward curve. Manager Chris Agutter continues to seek reinforcements: latest recruit is a physically imposing defender Jerry Gyebi, previously of National League side

Hungerford, who was given a cameo debut as late substitute last Saturday. But the central core of the team looks balanced and solid.

The crowd at Pilot Field for the match against Hashtag topped 2,500, with little indication of many away supporters among them. Three of the ‘U’s next four matches – including Tuesday of this week against Margate (after this newspaper has gone to press) – will also be at home. Expectations are growing.

## ISTHMIAN PREMIER LEAGUE STANDINGS AS AT 28 JANUARY

|   |                 | P  | W  | D | L | F  | A  | PTS |
|---|-----------------|----|----|---|---|----|----|-----|
| 1 | Hornchurch      | 25 | 17 | 7 | 1 | 62 | 21 | 58  |
| 2 | Chatham Town    | 26 | 16 | 4 | 6 | 53 | 34 | 52  |
| 3 | Billericay Town | 25 | 15 | 3 | 7 | 43 | 19 | 48  |
| 4 | Enfield Town    | 26 | 13 | 6 | 7 | 50 | 41 | 45  |
| 5 | Wingate & F.    | 25 | 14 | 2 | 9 | 48 | 44 | 44  |
| 6 | Hastings Utd    | 26 | 12 | 6 | 8 | 46 | 36 | 42  |
| 7 | Bognor Regis    | 26 | 11 | 9 | 6 | 44 | 35 | 42  |
| 8 | Lewes           | 24 | 12 | 5 | 7 | 43 | 39 | 41  |

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# Moon tell me truth

Artwork by **Samia Baroud** (age 14), Palestine

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with **The Hands Up Project**.

Sponsored by the **Chalk Cliff Trust** and  
**Hastings and District National Education Union**.

9—15 February 2024

Stade Hall, Hastings  
Open daily 11am—5pm | Free Entry

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