

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

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YEARS OF
INDEPENDENT
JOURNALISM

*International
Piano Finals*

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Hot Wax

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BOORMAN'S BACK

Former council manager joins
crisis response team at Old Roar

PAUL McLAUGHLIN

Hastings Borough Council (HBC) has set up a dedicated emergency response taskforce to coordinate efforts to help those affected by the Old Roar Gill landslide. It will be joined by well-respected former council officer Kevin Boorman, notwithstanding his official retirement last year. His role is "to engage with affected residents and provide

feedback to the taskforce".

Julia Hilton, the Leader of the Council, made the announcement after a stormy meeting at the Hastings Centre on The Ridge on 5 March attended by up to 100 local residents.

Cllr Hilton had already issued a statement apologising to residents for the lack of support or information in the immediate aftermath of the landslide on 15 February. She promised that "we will do better in the future" and spoke of a commitment "to reviewing how we work

in emergencies in the future to try to address some of the concerns that were raised by residents affected".

Responding to this statement, Borough councillors and officers attended the meeting on 5 March in force. Present in addition to Cllr Hilton were Cllr Glenn Haffenden, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Environment, Community Safety and Health; Cllr Simon Willis, Housing Portfolio Holder; the two local ward councillors for Conquest, Cllrs Paul Foster and John Rankin;

Victoria Conheady, Deputy Chief Executive of the Council; Chris Hancock, Head of Housing, and Natasha Tewkesbury, Head of Community and Regulatory Services.

The meeting got off to an inauspicious start when a request by officers for residents not to record the meeting was greeted with angry shouts from the floor. Order was restored only when it was agreed that a council representative would take notes.

Residents then vented their fury

at the lack of contact from the council and its failure to keep them informed about what, if any, action it was taking. One angry resident said that HBC "should be ashamed and embarrassed to be sitting here. You do not understand. You are going home to your nice warm house tonight. I don't have one. I have worked my whole life for that home. Everything that I have is in it....It has stood there for nearly 70 years, with no issues whatsoever."

Cllr Hilton repeated her

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Among our extensive coverage of events in Hastings, there's a focus on potential threats from far-right groups to our local mosque (P5) - an important insight into the concerns and fears of Hastings' Muslim community, written by someone who converted to Islam having been brought up in a Jewish family. On a related topic, the prime Minister's recent comments about mob rule in Britain are challenged in Opinion (P8) with the argument that marches, like the one this Saturday in London, demonstrate Britain has an honourable tradition of opposing racism. On the same page there's a challenge to the idea that just because emerging technology means something can be done, doesn't mean it necessarily should be. Speaking of technology, should school-children under 14 be forbidden access to a mobile phone? - a suggestion of a group of parents in East Sussex campaigning for a smart-hone free childhood (P6). In Features (P9) HIP incongruously offers scones to the members of a shape-shifting 'post-punk grunge' band, HotWax and discovers they may know more about music that etiquette for afternoon tea. Finally, don't miss the food page's distinctly idiosyncratic reflections on Rhubarb. Happy reading.

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Affordable Homes Dropped from ‘Greener’ Building Scheme

HUGH SULLIVAN

A 200-unit housing development at Blackfriars, to the east of Battle Station, for which outline planning permission was granted in 2020, is to go ahead. But an original condition of the permission, that 70 of the homes should be sold as ‘affordable’, i.e. generally at least 20% below market value, has been dropped.

Meeting last month, the planning committee of Rother District Council (RDC) accepted the conclusion of a Financial Viability Assessment submitted on behalf of the developers that the inflationary increase in building costs over the past two years, not matched by any equivalent rise in property prices, has rendered the delivery of any affordable units “not viable”. The committee

approved the detailed lay-out and other reserved matters proposed for the future estate, which is to be built across three former fields at the edge of Battle Great Wood, withdrawing the affordability condition. They did, however, reserve the right under a section 106 Agreement to review the possibility of re-including affordable housing in the scheme, “should viability change”.

Is this the case of a developer playing fast and loose with the planning system to the detriment of local housing policy? Well, hardly. The owner of the land is RDC itself through its housing arm, RDC Housing Company Limited.

It's council policy to maximise affordability in the sale of units newly built on greenfield sites, and there's no doubt that this development was promoted with that purpose. But RDC's own Housing Enabling Officer accepted the figures estimated by external consultants Porter Planning Economics as showing that, even without selling any units at a discount, the prospective profit margin would barely exceed 4%. Any further reduction from this modest return would expose the development – presumably a joint venture between RDC and the building company, though the commercial arrangements between them have not been disclosed – to risk of outright loss.

COSTS CHALLENGE

The RDC case officer's report to the planning committee suggested that a different mix of housing types, including maisonettes and terraced houses as well as detached and semi-detached houses, could have been delivered at greater profit. She also suggested that the estimated costs appeared excessive “when compared with other schemes that we have reviewed”, though she acknowledged that there were “topographic and ecological challenges in delivering this site”, referring to some steep slopes, uneven ground and wooded boundaries. However, she noted that the building company had been “awarded the contract through a competitive selection process” and that these costs were effectively “agreed” between RDC and this company. Contractual problems would, by implication, arise at this stage if these were challenged.

In discussion at the planning meeting, Cllr Tony Ganly (Conservative) queried whether the proposal to provide heating throughout by air source heating pumps added significantly to the costs so as to render affordable homes unviable. He was told that while this heating system did make the capital cost more expensive, it will “enhance the green credentials of the scheme” and reduce the energy costs of future residents.

Cllr Polly Gray (Green) approved the air source pumps, and went on to query whether the roofs would carry solar panels. She was told that was an option for some at a later design stage.

Neill Tickle, Chief Operating Officer of the Housing Company, told the meeting: “I do think this is an improved scheme – I'm proud of it”. He suggested that, although a retained commitment to affordable housing at the planning stage would render the scheme undeliverable, there would remain the option of pre-selling the majority of homes on the estate to a registered provider “which would end up making a higher proportion affordable”.

Cllr Sue Burton (Green) said that the most important thing was to get the houses built without further delay. The review mechanism allowed the continued hope of some affordable homes if the prices obtained were higher than currently allowed for.

The committee eventually voted unanimously to approve the design, layout and landscaping of the development without retaining any proportion of the units as ‘affordable’, though a review mechanism would be put in place to reconsider affordability in the event of changes in figures for costs and/or sales values.

HASTINGS TIDES

DATE	HIGH AND LOW TIDES				SUNRISE	SUNSET	MOON
FRI 15 MAR	H2:02am	L9:04am	H2:22pm	L9:13pm	6:10	6:03	
SAT 16 MAR	H2:45am	L9:41am	H3:11pm	L9:52pm	6:08	6:04	
SUN 17 MAR	H3:33am	L10:25am	H4:08pm	L10:43pm	6:06	6:06	FIRST
MON 18 MAR	H4:40am	L11:30am	H5:24pm		6:04	6:08	
TUES 19 MAR	L0:04am	H6:12am	L1:10pm	H7:03pm	6:01	6:09	
WED 20 MAR	L2:01am	H7:52am	L2:53pm	H8:23pm	5:59	6:11	
THURS 21 MAR	L3:22am	H9:02am	L3:56pm	H9:18pm	5:57	6:13	
FRI 22 MAR	L4:16am	H9:50am	L4:43pm	H9:59pm	5:55	6:14	
SAT 23 MAR	L4:58am	H10:26am	L5:22pm	H10:35pm	5:52	6:16	
SUN 24 MAR	L5:33am	H10:56am	L5:52pm	H11:06pm	5:50	6:17	
MON 25 MAR	L6:03am	H11:23am	L6:16pm	H11:36pm	5:48	6:19	FULL
TUES 26 MAR	L6:31am	H11:50am	L6:41pm		5:46	6:21	
WED 27 MAR	H0:04am	L7:00am	H12:14pm	L7:00pm	5:43	6:22	
THURS 28 MAR	H0:22	L7:29am	H12:36pm	L7:37pm	5:41	6:24	

* L = LOW TIDE H = HIGHTIDE For beach safety advice visit: rnlh.org/safety/beach-safety

£5.4m Awarded for Hastings Council Housing

Hastings Borough Council has been offered £5.4m by central government to tackle homelessness. A spokesperson for the council said last week that an unspecified part of this money will be spent in buying at least 25 new homes, including covering the costs of conversions where necessary. It will also be used to resource the council's housing management team and tenancy support service, which has struggled in recent times to retain the staff needed to implement its personalised help programmes.

Council officers worked with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to put in the bid for funding.

Cllr Simon Willis, lead councillor for housing, said: "This funding is hugely welcomed, and it will allow us to provide much needed homes for some of our residents who face the most barriers to finding and maintaining a home. A safe, secure and stable place to call home is a fundamental right and we are very focussed on addressing our housing and homelessness issues in every way we can. I look forward to working with our excellent housing team to invest this money for the good of our most vulnerable residents."



Women on Top

It was International Women's Day last Friday (8 March). To mark it, East Sussex College hosted a meeting of Hastings leaders.

In case it hasn't been noticed, the people who hold the most senior positions in the public, community and voluntary sectors of Hastings have, almost without exception, one qualification in common: they're women.

This fact was highlighted by Jane Hartnell, Chief Executive of Hastings Borough Council, who organised the event. She pointed to MP Sally-Ann Hart, Police and Crime

Commissioner Katy Bourne, Hastings Council's Leader Julia Hilton, Mayor Margi O'Callaghan, and Deputy Mayor Heather Bishop, all in elected positions; but also to the breadth of local organisations headed by women, including the Borough Council (Chief and Deputy Chief Executive), the County Council, Rother District Council, Sussex Police, East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service, East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust, East Sussex College's Group, Education Futures Trust, St Michael's Hospice, Hastings Commons, Fellowship of St Nicholas, Citizens Advice 1066,

Hastings Contemporary, Egg Tooth, Little Gate Farm, HEART, Afri-Co Lab, Arts on Prescription, Hastings Advice and Representation Centre, Counselling Plus, the Parchment Trust, Energise Sussex Coast and Hastings Women's Voice.

"I wonder whether there is anywhere else in the UK where women head up so many organisations that matter so much to people", she said. "This is another fabulous example of how Hastings bucks the trend. I wanted to celebrate this and share some of our experiences with some of the town's young women to inspire them".

Rebecca Conroy, CEO & Principal at East Sussex College, said, "It was a privilege to host so many women leaders at East Sussex College ahead of International Women's Day. We believe in fostering environments of inspiration, and this event reinforced our commitment to empowering young women. Their stories and achievements were so inspiring for the next generation of women leaders."

Beach Hut Owners Remain in Dispute with Council

At the cabinet meeting of Hastings Borough Council (HBC) on 29 January, a question was asked by a member of the public about the current condition of beach huts in West Marina: would the council schedule a full programme of maintenance? Council leader Julia Hilton apologised for the delay in repairs and asked for a priority list of urgent maintenance from beach hut tenants, stating that in the meantime, councillors would have discussions with officers about a programme of longer-term maintenance.

A month and a half on, a group of tenants remain in major dispute with the council.

According to an HBC spokesperson, "a number of inspections" have been carried out, a works and repairs schedule has been drawn up,

and a report was "being taken to senior leadership" this week proposing "the allocation of additional resources for redecoration work". In the meantime, waiting lists for all sites are currently closed, with vacant huts being offered "to those already on the waiting list". The list will open again "when the current backlog of applicants has reduced".

Disgruntled tenants challenge this account. They confirm that some minor repairs have been undertaken – a lock replaced at one hut, a hinge on another. However, more significant works, including roof repairs and hut repainting, have not been offered, let alone progressed. One hut tenant reports being told that "the person who usually does repairs has gone on

long-term sick leave".

The group have also raised concerns about the deplorable state of the toilets serving the area. One tenant, Jean Harvey, recently invited Simon Willis, her local councillor, to visit. "He was absolutely shocked that the floor is always wet due to the leaks," she said. "He promised to raise this with council officers."

"The service from HBC is terrible," says Sue Jirbandy, whilst Pat Landamore adds, "It beggars belief that the council have turned a beautiful seaside beach hut area into a slum."

The group are determined to ensure the preservation and upkeep of the beachfront community, saying that the council needs to implement a plan to renovate the huts or discount the licence fee so they can

pay for the work themselves.

They also want an account of the £8,000 apparently allocated by the council to annual maintenance, complaining that there has been no accountable audit trail of works done and money spent.

In the meantime they point to huts which they say have been empty for three years. "Clearly no-one on a waiting list is being actively contacted and either offered or taking up the option to lease. Is this part of a plan to get rid of the beach huts altogether?" asks Jo McFee.

Jean Harvey sums up: "This is a seaside town, and the beach huts are a local asset. We just want them to be looked after properly, which – given the cost of the licences – is in the council's interests to do."

1 ← apologies but told the meeting that a new dedicated team had been set up, with liaison to be provided by Kevin Boorman, which "will enable us to do a much better job." They would focus wholly on the issues at Old Roar Gill. She said she was still trying to secure funding for a similar team to coordinate efforts to deal with the ongoing landslide between West Hill Road and Caves Road in St Leonards.

COUNCIL RETRACTION

Residents responded by calling on the council to retract statements it had made about the origins of the landslide and, in particular, to share the details of a survey carried out by its consultants Bdr (Civil and Structural Engineering) Ltd, which purported to show that the landslide had started on private land.

It was admitted by a council officer that the Bdr graphs were not representative of the Old Roar Gill landslide but rather were a "general representational of a slip plane, and not an actual representation

of what occurred in this instance". For that, a survey would need to be carried out on private land – "not something the council could authorise, and therefore residents were advised to contact their own insurance companies to carry out these surveys."

The landslide has so far claimed over 40 trees, and tonnes of earth are now at the bottom of the Gill, along with fences, decking, sheds and other debris. There are over 100 residents who face an uncertain future, not knowing if they will be able to get insurance and, if they do, whether they will be able to afford the new premiums. Three houses are now very close to the edge of the landslide, and two of them have been deemed to be too dangerous to live in, leaving four people now homeless.

CROWDFUNDER

Those affected have set up a Crowdfunder page to fund expert legal and technical support. Money raised will go towards challenging the

conditions of the Emergency Prohibition Orders which now bar a number of residents from living in their homes. It's also intended to commission environmental, soil and geo-technical reports which will consider the legacy issues of planning, environmental and water management and maintenance.

Dr Ralitsa Hiteva who lives in Foxcote, made a general appeal: "Everything we learn about the process, what kinds of expertise are needed and where and how to look for support, will be turned into open resources, guides and advice for any community affected by landslide in the UK. We hope that you will come on this journey with us and lend your support. Because this could happen to anyone. We still can't believe it is happening to us."

Sally-Ann Hart, MP for Hastings & Rye, visited last week to see the damage for herself. She described the devastation caused to homes and lives as "overwhelming". She confirmed that, as well as contacting HBC to raise concerns on behalf of

the affected residents, she would meet with Robbie Moore, the Minister for Water and Rural Growth within Defra (Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs), to push for extra funding to tackle the issue. In particular, she would ask him to consider extending the Flood Re insurance initiative, which helps homeowners in flood-prone areas to obtain insurance coverage at a reasonable cost, to cover landslides.

She also called for a more strategic management framework of landslides, including better monitoring to detect early signs of instability. "Addressing landslides and climate change will require a team effort from all levels of government, experts and the community. Only by working together can we build resilience and protect our coastal areas."

Contributions to the Crowdfunder appeal can be made through the website [crowdfunder.co.uk/p/falling-through-the-cracks-1](https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/p/falling-through-the-cracks-1).

Lib Dems Appoint Candidate

The Liberal Democrats have appointed their candidate for the next general election in the Hastings & Rye constituency. He is Guy Harris, a communications consultant for the UK and other governments, recently appointed to the UK Stabilisation Unit of the FCDO (Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office). He and his family live locally.

He replaces Nick Perry, the Lib Dem party's candidate at the last four elections. Perry polled over 15% of the constituency vote in 2010, but lost his deposit in 2015 and 2017, and came a distant third with 7.3% in 2019.

A full profile of Guy Harris will be published in a future issue of HIP.

Can you hear the election drums, Fernando?

PAUL MCLAUGHLIN

In the latest of our series of interviews with the Prospective Parliamentary Candidates (PPCs) of the main political parties ahead of the next General Election, we feature Lucian Fernando of Reform UK.

Given the rise of small and independent political parties both nationally (George Galloway's by-election win in Rochdale last month for the Workers Party of Britain) and locally (the rise of the Hastings Independents who left the Labour Party late last year) it is timely to take a look at Lucian Fernando, who has recently been selected by Reform UK to contest the Hastings and Rye parliamentary constituency in the forthcoming General Election.

The 33-year Fernando, who currently represents the Silverhill ward on Hastings Borough Council, is a self-confessed old-style Tory at heart, a proud Thatcherite who joined the Conservative Party almost as soon as he arrived in the UK in 2008. He is staunchly pro-business, a supporter of free markets and firm believer in the traditional Tory values of hard work, self-reliance and individual responsibility. Indeed, he was elected as a Conservative when he won the Silverhill ward in May 2021, before defecting to his new party two years later.

HIGHS AND LOWS

His shock victory over the Labour incumbent Margi O'Callaghan by 70 votes could have signalled the dawn of a bright new political career.

However, just the following month, he was arrested and charged with being drunk in charge of a car. He was later fined and disqualified from driving for a year. Then in December 2021 he was caught driving whilst disqualified and was charged with failing to provide a blood sample. He was given a 12-month Community Order, including 200 hours community service, fined again, and disqualified from driving for a further three years.

Unsurprisingly, these events soured his relationship with his Conservative colleagues. There followed complaints in respect of his conduct, including allegations that he had made physical threats to another Tory councillor, which he strenuously denies.

Things came to a head in early

2023 when a special disciplinary meeting was convened to review his conduct and to consider his expulsion from the Conservative Party. Fernando claims he resigned the party whip beforehand and so did not attend the meeting. It went ahead regardless, and the decision was made to expel him from the party for breaches of group rules. Cllr Andy Patmore, the Conservative group leader, made a point of informing a meeting of the full Council the following week that Cllr Fernando had been expelled rather than having resigned.

JOINING REFORM UK

Shortly afterwards he joined Reform UK. When announcing his defection, he made no mention of the problems he had experienced, saying only that he had taken the decision after becoming "disillusioned with the Conservative Party's betrayal of Tory principles and its drift to the left since Brexit."

Since his departure from the Conservative Group (and before the recent split in the Labour ranks), Fernando tended to side with the minority Labour administration, and his support enabled them to win a series of votes over the last year – no doubt much to the irritation of his erstwhile associates – although he denies there is any animosity between himself and his former colleagues.

BACKGROUND

Born and raised in Colombo, Sri Lanka in a devout Catholic family, Fernando puts his commitment to public service down to the values instilled him at an early age in the family home. After moving to Britain some 15 years ago, he lived in Coventry and worked in family-owned off-licences and corner shops across the West Midlands. He then applied to City University in London to study asylum and immigration law and later joined HM Revenue and Customs as a security officer at Gatwick Airport.

He has volunteered with the British Army Cadet Force, became a Police Support Volunteer at the Metropolitan Police, and trained as an NHS first responder. He currently works on the railways.

Will he stand again in Silverhill? Fernando is unsure as to whether he will stand again in the Silverhill ward in this coming May's local elections, but says he is looking for-



ward to the General Election and believes the collapse in support for the Conservatives has given Reform UK the perfect opportunity to make an electoral breakthrough.

PROGRAMME FOR GOVERNMENT

Reform UK emerged from the Brexit Party, which was founded by Nigel Farage in 2018 as a vehicle to pursue a hard-line, no-deal Brexit. It is now led by the far less charismatic Richard Tice but, like its earlier inception, it continues to court controversy, particularly with its scepticism over Covid vaccines and opposition

to climate change policies. The party has published a 28-page pre-election manifesto entitled "Reform is Essential: Let's Make Britain Great". It includes some eye-watering spending commitments running into billions of pounds but contains very few details as to how they will be paid for, other than through vague savings, and by restructuring quantitative easing debt with the creation of new 75-year bonds.

Among the spending commitments are plans to free six million people from Income Tax by raising the tax threshold to £20,000, and changes to Corporation Tax which

would exempt 1.2 million businesses/self-employed paying that tax.

There are also pledges to increase spending on defence and the police, and the promise of an end to all NHS waiting lists, with patients given vouchers to go private. It makes no mention of how this would be achieved or, indeed, whether the private medical sector has the capacity to treat the record number of patients who are currently on hospital waiting lists.

In addition, the programme proposes the re-nationalisation of the energy utility companies, again without identifying where the billions of pounds that would be required to achieve this goal would come from.

The programme is dismissive of projects to tackle climate change and to clean up the environment. It describes net zero targets as "net stupid" and proposes their abolition, along with granting new licences to exploit fossil fuels.

Lucian Fernando says he fully endorses this "radical programme" but, when challenged, was unable to explain how the plans could be afforded, let alone give a time-frame for when they would be implemented.

He was equally unsure of Reform UK's main policy plank of introducing net-zero immigration. When asked what measures his party would introduce to stop the almost 45,000 people who came across the Channel by small boat from France last year, he disputed the official figures as reported on the BBC to claim that there were in fact 670,000 illegal crossings. When challenged about the veracity of his figures, he said the BBC is "openly corrupt" and "twists the figures".

POPULISM

The core assumptions within "Let's Make Britain Great" are clearly designed to tap into the current distrust of politicians and exploit the disconnection many people feel towards those who govern them in Westminster. The strategy seems to be working: opinion polls show support for Reform UK steadily increasing over the last year to the point where, nationally, it has overtaken both the Greens and Liberal Democrats, with some 11% of voters currently backing its brand of right-wing populism.

Such has been the increased levels of support that the party is extremely bullish ahead of the General Election and plans to contest every parliamentary seat. Fernando is optimistic that his party's polling numbers will surge even higher if Farage returns to take up a formal role ahead of the election campaign.

Even with its current levels of support, Reform UK may not win any seats in the election, such are the vagaries of the first-past-the-post electoral system. However, the party will take lots of votes from both Labour and the Conservatives, increasing the uncertainty of the outcome.



Community Solidarity after Right-Wing Threat to Hastings Mosque

Muhammad Daniel provides a personal perspective

Last week, Hastings Mosque received an anonymous email saying a group of 'Britain First' members would be marching to the mosque on Sunday morning (3 March) to "cause trouble".

What most disturbed us about this threat was the timing - Sunday mornings are when over 150 children are in the mosque to learn about Islam in the weekly madrasah.

After discussion, we decided to err on the side of caution, and cancelled the madrasah for that day. We also informed the police, local councillors, activists and neighbours, asking them to come and support us in case any danger should materialise.

From 10am a wide variety of people, both Muslim and non-Muslim, started arriving at the mosque.

Some people stood outside while everyone else relaxed in the main hall, chatting over tea and baclava.

As the morning drew on, it became clear no one from 'Britain First' was coming. We will never know if it was an empty threat, or if they just don't like baclava.

So, we settled down and listened to different speakers from the hosts and visitors. Some talked about their fears upon receiving the threat, some mentioned the wider context in which the threat was made. Everyone expressed their joy at the strength of the response from the community, and the tangible

warmth present between people of all faiths and none.

As a convert to Islam, I was so happy to see Muslims and non-Muslims getting to know one another. In the 25 years I've been Muslim, I've often felt split between two worlds - last Sunday I felt the barrier between those worlds disappeared and we were simply human beings - with the same needs, loves, hopes and fears.

It cannot be a coincidence that we received this threat at a time when mainly Muslim children are being killed on a daily basis in Gaza. While everyone with a heart is deeply troubled by the ongoing massacres, Muslims feel personally attacked: many of us have friends and family in Palestine, and all of us have children with the same names as Gazan kids. So, to be threatened with "trouble" on the main day of the week children attend the mosque made us feel extremely unsafe. Did the anonymous coward who wrote the email feel emboldened by the ongoing, un-

checked Israeli aggression? Have Muslim children now become a legitimate target in fascists' eyes? We hope not. We pray not.

I was brought up in a Jewish family in North London, and converted to Islam in 1998. Part of my journey to Islam involved reading the history of Palestine and Israel. Anyone who studies the facts will see Zionism for what it is: a settler colonial project that seeks to displace the indigenous people of Palestine. It's time to call for an end to this divisive project, and the devastation and enmity it is causing between Jews, Muslims and Christians. We all lived together harmoniously in Palestine for centuries - we can do so again.

We are enormously grateful to the police and the wider community for their support on Sunday, and we will be holding more community events soon. Everyone is welcome - if you don't like baclava, we'll get in some ginger nuts and rich tea.

I'd like to leave you with this poem I wrote about the situation in Gaza, and the danger of staying silent about it.

WHAT A WORLD

What a world is this?
Where children are killed
And people vote to kill more
What leaders are these?
Who dispute numbers dead
As if it's a game with a score
You debate and resolve
But refuse to condemn
Despite the difference it could make
If you're so convinced
There should be no ceasefire
Then why does your hand start to shake?
What a time is this?
Where we watch genocide
Then scroll down for cooking tips
How dangerous it is
To be desensitised
To the horrors we soon learn to skip
Because life must go on
If only for some
But tell me, what will you do?
When the dust settles down
On the burial ground
And they turn their attention to you?

Kick Out the Grey Cliché

NICK PELLING looks into a forthcoming action day.

I suspect that most people don't think being old is a desirable state of being. Oldies tend to get a bad press: they are often seen as doddering, mentally incompetent and fundamentally pre-digital. (If you think you are free of these prejudices, ask yourself whether you

think 81-year-old Joe Biden is likely to make a great second-term president.) But, maybe it's time for a rethink about the last phase of our lives.

Hastings Voluntary Action (HVA) is determined to find ways of countering this casual bigotry. On 20

March, HVA will be holding an interactive workshop which hopes to stimulate meaningful discussion about the issues surrounding ageing as part of an 'Age Without Limits Action Day' organised by the national Centre for Ageing Better.

Breaking down negative attitudes won't be easy. The Centre believes that there needs to be a major cultural shift to escape the old clichés that surround the idea of being old. Above all, they are urging us all to understand that age should not define us, and that there are all manner of ways to embrace ageing.

The workshop will be hosted by Debby Anderson from HVA and Jessica Duffy from Leeds Older People's Forum. Jessica hopes that she can share some of the best practice regarding the older community from

her experiences in Leeds. But, it's also hoped that older people in Hastings can get more involved in shaping where they live.

Apart from opening up a discussion, it is also hoped that, ultimately, Hastings can achieve the status of an 'Age Friendly Community.' What, you ask, is an Age Friendly Community? It seems that the idea came from the World Health Organisation and is now promoted by the Centre for Ageing Better in the UK. The benefits of being an AFC include training days and sharing of resources and talents. It seems that no official accreditation is needed to achieve this status, simply political commitment from the Council.

There are undoubtedly some serious issues facing the older com-

munity, but it's often the negative problems that are stressed: health, social care, financial insecurity, loneliness and boredom. But, arguably, there should be more stress on positive opportunities. For example, HVA is hoping to persuade local firms to pledge to become Age Friendly Employers. Any business taking this pledge would commit to positive practices, such as offering career advancement opportunities at all ages. Older workers, it is argued, should be seen as an asset to any firm, given their experience and maturity. Is it time to reimagine what it means to be old?

You can reserve your spot on the interactive workshop via hastingsvoluntaryaction.org.uk/news or search on eventbrite.

Hastings Parents Campaign for Smartphone-free Childhood

HAZEL SHEFFIELD

A group of parents in East Sussex have come together to call for children to have a smartphone-free childhood, inspired by a national campaign.

Antonia Deeson set up the Hastings, Rye and Battle Whatsapp group on February 20. Deeson was inspired by two mothers who started a national group off the back of a viral Instagram post at the beginning of February calling for children to be smartphone free until they turn 14. Within ten days, 5,000 people had joined a national Whatsapp community, igniting the debate across the national press on an issue that leaves many parents feeling isolated and afraid.

"I was very keen to set up a local group covering Hastings, Battle and Rye because I feel the more local these groups are, the better," Deeson, a writer based in Hastings, said. Deeson has a five-year-old daughter and believes Reception and Year 1 is a good time to start having the

conversation about smartphones with other parents. "The aim is to get a cohort of like-minded individuals to provide support for each other to try and change the status quo, because that's what we're trying to do: change a very entrenched habit that we all have."

The national campaign was set up by journalist Daisy Greenwell, who described being on "a travelator of doom" as her child approached secondary school, not wanting them to feel ostracised by not having the right phone, but aware of a body of evidence showing that smartphones can lead to higher incidents of mental illness among teens and teenagers. By the age of 12, 97% of children have a smartphone, according to Ofcom, while a fifth of three- to four-year-olds already own a device.

In February, the government released new guidelines for schools intended to stop the use of mobile phones during the school day. But one school leaders' union said that phones were more likely to be used outside the classroom, calling the change "non-policy for a non-problem".



Antonia Deeson

Greenwell set up a website containing links to local Whatsapp groups for parents to talk to one another and letter templates to contact teachers about the issue. The

website also links to evidence showing some of the negative aspects of smartphone use among children, including addiction, reduced attention spans, problems with mental

health and exposure to harmful content.

The website suggests measures groups can take, including meeting up with other concerned parents, approaching the school as a collective and getting experts to come and talk to parents at a school. A Brighton group with more than 100 members has already organised a free meeting for interested parents with talks from local cyber and developmental psychologists on the risks for their children.

"If you can get a class WhatsApp group to agree together to not get our kids a phone because they don't need one, then the problem is eliminated overnight because there's none of that peer pressure," Greenwell told the BBC.

Deeson said she knew people who had tried to resist giving their children a smartphone, but who had eventually given in because they didn't want their child to be the odd one out. She added that the national groups are important for lobbying power and setting the agenda, local groups like the one she has set up in Hastings will be essential for parents to meet one another and talk to their child's school. "That's what this is going to be about," she said. "Groups of parents have got to come together through schools, because that's where the pressure is going to be on."



The East Sussex Smartphone Free Childhood community, containing links to local groups, can be found at chat.whatsapp.com/BR4F5rdxfV30ijRhTG5n0R.

Getting Back in Touch

On Tuesday 12 March, 'A Touch of Gentleness' will be celebrating two years of connecting with people through the art of a gentle hand massage. A gathering of trained volunteers will be offering relaxing hand massages to the public from 10.00am through to 4.00pm at the Gather space in the Beacon Shopping Centre, Eastbourne.

This is one of many locations where Helen Prosper, founder of 'A Touch of Gentleness', and her volunteers offer this service. Together, they create a healing bubble, a safe space for people to take a moment for themselves.

We are constantly reminded how feelings of loneliness and isolation are an increasing societal problem, a problem exacerbated by the recent pandemic. Millions of



COURTESY OF HELEN PROSPER

people are suffering alone and in silence, disconnected from other human beings.

As a counsellor and therapist,

Helen has spent thirty years developing her techniques and training to bring human connection to the forefront. 'A Touch of Gentleness'

provides a way to bring the healing power of touch – with all its emotional and physical benefits – safely back into our lives. She feels that offering this service freely to people in the local community helps to create a culture of gentleness and generosity.

All volunteers with the organisation receive thorough training which enables them to provide a soothing hand massage whilst listening with deep awareness. Connecting in this uncomplicated way, through our hands, is a sincere form of communication: we all remember how gentle touch makes us feel.

This sense of connection brought by this service is gaining momentum as the volunteers quietly work their magic all over Sussex. These healing hand massages are being rippled out to wellbeing hubs, care homes, hospices, drop-ins, community centres and shopping centres throughout East and West Sussex with new locations being added weekly.

Among those who benefit from this caring touch are ICU patients at the Conquest Hospital, following in-house training held for the nurses who work there. Over the past

two years, volunteers have supported events run by Holding Space mental health support, the Kinship Group carer support, and the Cancer for Children Fund. Organisations including Hastings Direct insurance and the East Sussex Recovery Alliance have also recognised the importance of connection through 'A Touch of Gentleness'.

Marty, one volunteer, was introduced to Helen's techniques whilst visiting The Common Room community space on Cambridge Road, Hastings.

She says: "When I was offered a hand massage, I accepted with curiosity, not realising how disconnected I had become over the last few difficult years. The gentle touch of a kind person, with no agenda other than to give, brought me back, lifted me out of the doldrums and inspired me to become part of this wonderful family."

Would you like to get involved? Do you know a person, a community group or an organisation who would benefit from training or organising a group workshop? If so, take a look at the website, atouchofgentleness.org, and get in touch! You can bring more joy, connection, and peace back to our communities.

Expanding Hastings Higher Education

CALLUM THOMSOM

Hastings is no stranger to film and TV crews, with their numerous vans often spilling out along the seafront. *The Great Escaper* (2022), *Close to Me* (2021), *Dear Mr Burton* (2020) and *Giri/Haji* (2019) are just some of the recent productions to be shot in the town. But how many Hastings people have actually worked on those shoots? Well, as part of a sizeable expansion, Hastings College is now offering a degree course in Photography and Moving Image.

East Sussex College has announced an expanded programme for undergraduate study for their Hastings campus. It will include BA (Hons) in Business Management, Designer Maker, Fine Art, Graphic Design and Illustration, Early Years Care and Education as well as a BSc honours degree in Integrated Health, Social Care and Wellbeing.

East Sussex College has campuses at Eastbourne, Lewes and Newhaven, as well as Hastings. In fact,

the Hastings part of the college is split between the main Plaza Building by the railway station and Ore Valley, which houses construction engineering and IT along with computing and music. There is also a separate Automotive Training Centre for budding car mechanics. The college is well known as a Further Education (FE) establishment mainly for pupils between 16 and 19, but it also has a sixth form and now offers the latest 'T Levels' - an alternative to A levels, apprenticeships and other 16 to 19 courses. Equivalent in size to three A levels, a T Level focuses on vocational skills and can help students into skilled employment, higher study or apprenticeships.

But East Sussex College is clearly keen to offer longer term degree courses - generally over three years and for slightly older students. This programme has been developed in collaboration with the University of East Anglia (UEA), ranked in the top 25 of UK universities, who have subjected each programme to a 'rigorous validation procedure' to ensure they meet their high standards.



Hastings Plaza Campus

Reflecting on this collaboration, the UAE have been complimentary, noting "the enthusiasm, knowledge, and experience of the course team [at East Sussex College] and the extensive support offered to students".

The college says that with this degree programme being validated by such an established, well-reputed higher education provider as the UAE, it should inspire confidence in the quality of teaching and curriculum, as well as the utility of these

degrees for future employment.

An important aim for the college is to produce graduates who contribute positively to the local economy and provide a talent pool for local businesses. They say: "We are delivering qualifications and

skills that our local business community want, building stronger employability options for our students and raising the aspirations of the local area."

The new programme of higher education by East Sussex College Group is an optimistic move and dovetails neatly with the vision of the Hastings Town Deal, the investment plan for the £24.3 million offered by the government as part of their 'Towns Fund'. The Town Deal Investment Plan expresses faith in a thriving creative sector, and hopes to show local young people they can '#makeitinHastings'.

The courses are less expensive compared to other universities; most cost £7,995 a year rather than the usual £9,000. However students can still access student finance packages.

So, roll on the next generation of graduates and, hopefully, more local people qualified to work with those apparently ubiquitous film crews.

Applications for September 2024 courses are now open. Students, parents and employers can contact the Higher Education team at East Sussex College Group through the website www.escg.ac.uk or by emailing HelloHE@escg.ac.uk.

WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND?

✉from our website

EXTREME VANDALISM

So a violent attack on elderly people by masked thugs and extreme vandalism of their property is effectively ignored by Sussex Police even though they actually have enough evidence to find and prosecute the culprits (*New Year Assault on Hunt Sabs* in HIP 246).

The police claims of "ongoing investigations" are nonsense and they are hoping everyone will forget about it. Just more proof that the police are not there to serve the people or uphold the law, but see their job as protecting the ruling classes and their minions. How are these marauding gangs of countryside reprobates allowed to break numerous laws with impunity week in, week out? All so that they can carry on hunting foxes with

hounds with numerous road traffic offences, assaults, threats, vandalism, criminal damage and thefts of property regular occurrences.

It's time for this anachronistic and psychopathic pantomime to end - our wildlife is one of the most depleted in the world thanks to hunters, 'game' shoots and certain farmers..

Andrew Nash

✉Letter

I LOVE MY BIKE

I support the plans to make Hastings more bike friendly as part of the Town Centre Public Realm & Green Connections Project.

We are a family of cyclists - I'm married to a Dutchman who thinks the British bike/car culture war is

a bit weird. In Holland, almost one third of journeys are by bike. Able-bodied Dutch people of all ages and politics generally choose to cycle - even if they also drive.

I am one of the 83% of Brits who owns both a car and a bike, but I'm with the Dutch on this. I love my bike! Parking is free. I whizz down hills and wave to friends. I can hop off for a loaf of bread or some groceries. I get exercise that's actually fun. And it's cheap.

I would love people to feel safe enough to discover the joys of cycling and the town centre plan would help with this. Cycling is such a great, green transport solution that frees up the road for people who do need to travel by car. It enriches our family's lives enormously - viva la cycling revolution, I say.

Jen Rouse

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.

• THE ROYAL •

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Legitimate Protest vs Mob Rule

SIMON HESTER, convenor of Hastings Stand Up To Racism and chair of Hastings & District Trades Union Council says that, far from mob rule, marches like this Saturday's in London demonstrate Britain's strong tradition of opposition to racism.

How embarrassing for Hastings MP, Sally-Ann Hart. She invited Lee Anderson to a fundraising dinner in Hastings in February specifically to throw some red meat to the diminishing band of local Tories, but almost immediately, Sunak was forced to cut him loose as his explicit racism became a liability.

Hart's desperation reflects the plight of the Conservative government. If the latest by-election results predict the general election, the Tories could have just four MPs! This is unlikely, but illustrates why Sunak has embarked on a campaign of scapegoating Muslims and refugees. The 2024 general election threatens to be the dirtiest and most racist in modern history.

In January, Bexhill & Battle MP Huw Merriman called a public meeting to discuss the proposed Northeye detention camp. He confirmed that the ex-prison will be used as a detention centre for refugees, claiming that it all was down to his hard work that inmates would now be locked up... Merriman defended the Rwanda Plan and the new Migration Act

as the only way to stop asylum seekers drowning in the Channel. This is a perverse argument. People smugglers rely on the 'hostile environment' for refugees. Without legal routes to Britain, asylum seekers have to resort to dangerous Channel crossings. If they can provide safe routes for Ukrainians, why not Yemenis, Sudanese, Syrians or Palestinians from Gaza?

The Tories' increasingly divisive rhetoric is a conscious attempt to deflect attention from the social crises they have caused – from mass Covid deaths to collapsing NHS and public services, from the Post Office to the Windrush scandals. They won't win, but when the Tories take up the slogans of the fascists, they reinforce the racist arguments and embolden the far right.

Internationally, the far right is on the rise. Trump is on target to win in the US. June's European elections could see a breakthrough by assorted far-right parties. The threat of fascism is growing.

After the debacle of the parliamentary "ceasefire debate", politi-



HASTINGS STAND UP TO RACISM

cians have launched a new wave of Islamophobia to intimidate the unprecedented movement in solidarity with Palestine. They have lost the argument: opinion polls show that most of us want an immediate ceasefire to stop the genocide. It's worth recalling that the suffragettes used far more violent tactics than anything carried out by Just Stop Oil or Palestine campaigners. We need more protest, not less.

The need for unity and action is greater than ever. Britain has a strong tradition of opposition to racism and fascism. In the 1930s, Mosley and his Blackshirts were knocked back not by polite lobbying but by

opposition on the streets. More recently, the National Front, BNP and EDL were all defeated by huge campaigns and mass action. We need a new antiracist movement like the Anti-Nazi League and Rock Against Racism which took on the racists at the end of the 20th century.

Despite the rhetoric from the top, polls show that the majority of people in Britain are tolerant. We can build on black and white unity to defeat the racists again.

Together with the Trades Union Congress, 'Stand Up To Racism' has called a demonstration in London on March 16, UN Antiracism Day. It will assemble at the Home Office

and march to Trafalgar Square for a concert from the new organisation House Against Hate. Travel has been subsidised by the Hastings District of the National Education Union.



To book your £5 ticket go to eventbrite.co.uk/e/819956230157.



For more on House Against Hate see: [instagram.com/reel/C3pJAAtgk-Wk/?igsh=Y2hnN2sxnNjaXZq](https://www.instagram.com/reel/C3pJAAtgk-Wk/?igsh=Y2hnN2sxnNjaXZq)

Must It Be Done?

ROBIN HOLTOM recalls how Robert Oppenheimer described inventing the atom bomb as 'technically sweet', and wonders how this concept might apply to other technological advances.

At the end of the 17th century Sir Christopher Wren invented a machine to make silk stockings ten times faster than could be done by hand. He offered to sell it to the silk weavers but they felt it would dam-

age their trade. Thereupon Sir Christopher broke "the model all to pieces, before their faces." Other innovators followed with none of Sir Christopher's humane reservations, ushering in the Industrial

Revolution with dire consequences for traditional skills. Eventually the Luddites attempted, unsuccessfully, to emulate breaking these machines 'all to pieces'.

We cannot stop progress, we are told. Eventually, someone else would invent a machine to transform the silk weavers lives and the Spinning Jenny soon wove cotton 200 times faster than a hand weaver. So was Sir Christopher Wren's gesture in vain? I don't think so. He had the courtesy to include a modifying human factor and to consult the people whose lives would be affected by his invention. They had enough sense of self-preservation to protect their skills and reject the invention.

Omitting the moderating human factor in our mania for progress clearly influenced the recent Post Office scandal. The labour-saving

Fujitsu system was not negotiated with the people whose jobs were to be changed by it. The workers were not only deskilled, but then they were also turned into criminals. Hearing the Post Office prosecutors saying they were only doing what they were told to do was eerily reminiscent of Eichmann's defence of the concentration camps.

This process of first deskilling people and then turning them into criminals is not a new one. In India the British Empire was confronted with a challenge to this process when Gandhi encouraged Indians to spin and weave their own cotton rather than importing it from industrialised England. The Empire sought to deskill Indian weavers and sell them cloth made in England.

It has taken ecologists a century since Charles Darwin to redefine the unit of survival from being just

a species to being a species plus its environment. There is a comparable change in mindset needed now in the way we, the human species, consider ourselves. We are not just one-dimensional units performing duties to produce or consume goods. We are individuals plus our skills. Our skills are part of our life support system. These skills create meaning for us and our fellow humans, and to ignore these established skills in the interest of apparent speed and efficiency is a kind of desecration of our humanity.

In 1930, the brilliant economist, John Maynard Keynes, estimated that his grandchildren would work just 15 hours per week with machines doing most tasks. He was wrong. We are too easily seduced by the glamour of new gadgetry. Just because it can be done does not mean it must be done.

PHOTOS: CHIARA GAMBUTO



Cream Tea with HotWax

SERENA FERRARI

"Which one do you put first – the cream or the jam?" asks Tallulah Sim-Savage, lead vocalist and guitarist of new hyped rock band, HotWax. "The cream, I think", whispers bassist Lola Sam, sporting her trademark dyed hair and an army green beret, pierced by a pin that says Fuck Barbie.

We're at the Royal Victoria Hotel in St Leonards and it's raining – typical English weather for a typical English custom: afternoon tea. The thought came to me on a whim; I was curious to see how the post-punk grunge of HotWax would clash with the etiquette of an established tradition. But to be fair, there is something uniquely anti-establishment about afternoon tea at the Royal Victoria. The scones are the size of boulders and the jam is, well, jelly-like, needing to be sliced rather than spooned. It's great.

"In America, they call scones 'biscuits', right?" asks Alfie Sayers, the band's enlisted drummer and final member. "Cause, I had biscuits and gravy", he recalls of HotWax's recent stint in North America, opening up for Royal Blood. "Which you

didn't really like," shoots straight-talking Lola.

For the time being, the band is on home turf – that's Hastings for Tallulah and Lola and Brighton for Alfie – and they are enjoying it. "It was weird, we thought we'd write in the van, but it wasn't really easy," says Tallulah. "So it felt exciting to come home and be able to do that."

But they are not home for long. By the time this goes to print, the East Sussex band will have played festivals in Scandinavia before opening for Frank Carter & the Rattlesnakes across Europe and the UK. I ask the twenty-year-olds (Alfie turned twenty-one on tour) if they ever get homesick while on the road, and all three emphatically shake their heads. "I liked being in places where no one knew who you were," says Tallulah, explaining how in Hastings everyone knows everybody, which can feel, at times, a little claustrophobic. Lola adds that there isn't much time on tour to miss home, what with the whirlwind of travel, soundchecks, and playing live. And as for Alfie, he sees it as an opportunity to learn, asking crew members and other musicians about their experiences and what kind of equipment they use. "And we spend so much time together," adds Lola.

It shows. Throughout the interview, Lola and Tallulah whisper side conversations which inevitably end in fits of giggles. The two met in secondary school and became instant mates when a music teacher put them together for a school band. And they've been gigging together ever since. "We've been best friends for like seven years now," says Lola "and we always play music together – we don't really play music with anyone else." That is, until they met Alfie in college and invited him to join the band. "We had another drummer who left and then when Alfie joined, me and Tallulah were initially just going to have it as ourselves, but we were like, 'This doesn't feel right; we're a band, we need to have it equally, us three – all in the band.'"

But the main writers of HotWax are Tallulah and Lola, although Alfie will come in and add his "sauce" when the music is ripe enough. However, since going global, the young women sense a definite shift in their writing process. For Tallulah, the main lyricist, she describes writing as "a massive black hole of overthinking". "It's so hard because you feel so passionately about these random notes, and then you're like, 'What am I even doing?'" She laughs, a little self-conscious before adding, "I absolutely love it, but sometimes I wish I could go back to my mind when we

were sixteen or something."

It's a common narrative for the creative in the public eye, a pining for a time less conscious of an audience. But it's not all bad. "I think, in a way, it's 'cause we are more experienced in songwriting as well," adds Lola. So, we think about the structure of a song more than we did before," an evolution formed by working with different producers and musicians. Tallulah agrees: "For a while, we were really stubborn about it [writing with other people] – we haven't been doing it a lot – but trying to work with different people expands your mind and expands the way you'd think you'd write a song." Which means that HotWax is open to a shape-shifting sound so long as it feels right. "A lot of the time, we don't really know what we want," says Lola. "We know what we don't want, but I think because we're so young, our music taste is

always changing and we've got to try new things because we still haven't found – we still haven't written the perfect song."

The band members are so young that one would be forgiven for forgetting that they've already been performing and writing for five years. Do they ever feel the world underestimates them because of their youth? "I just feel like people underestimate women in music. When we went on tour, all of the group were male. They ended up being really nice but I felt like they might think 'you don't know what you're doing' if Tallulah and I went on stage while they were setting up, even though I literally know how to do all that stuff." However, "A lot of our team are female," chimes in Tallulah, "like our managers and loads of the label are." "It's definitely team female", Lola affirms, and as I look at Alfie, who is nodding his head, he adds, "Yeah, there was a rumour we were three teenage girls from Bexhill."

Our pots of tea drained and the scones scoffed, I find myself wondering if perhaps people's prejudices can be advantageous to a band like HotWax. Once home, I watch a recording of their live show in Oakland, and I'm in awe of how the then-teenagers were able to convert a stone-faced crowd into roaring energy. If HotWax has anything to prove, it's clear that they are out there proving it, whether they mean to be or not.



Hastings International Piano Concerto

Finals and Results



Curtis Phill Hsu mid-Tchaikovsky

VICTORIA KINGHAM

So it's done. A whole year of organisation, ten days of one-after-another performances by some of the world's finest young pianists. An extraordinary event, a glittering array of talent. It was a privilege and a revelation to me to attend Stage Two and the final, comprising concerts by young pianists who are surely among the best anywhere.

They chose from a set list of concertos in each round. At Stage Two, they also had to play the same new work (premiered at the competition) by Lera Auerbach called *Time Irredeemable*. It is fiendishly difficult and unusually, interactive, in that half-way through it requires the performer to continue by choosing one of two different passages. The competitors I heard seemed to sail through this – the one piece of the whole competition during which they were allowed to have music on the piano. After stellar performances, it seemed tragic that none of these three reached the final. How good did they have to be?



Harmony Zhu plays Prokoviev

PETER MOULD



Chengyao Zhu plays Rachmaninov

There were five candidates for the finals on Friday and Saturday, 1 and 2 March. Friday's people all chose the same concerto, so we heard Tchaikovsky's No. 1 with its grand triumphant opening chords, bouncy allegro, elegant pizzicato passages three times. Now, each time hearing the nuances, the wondrous exchanges between piano and woodwind, the distribution and swell of the melody between solo instrument and orchestra, I will never ever take this piece for granted.

Friday's candidates were Curtis Phill Hsu (19 years old), Hyelim Kim (27), and Derek Wang (25). Their styles were different – Hsu's playing style is already that of a maestro, hands elegantly curving ready above the keyboard at every bar, movement, energy, concentration apparent in his every feature. He produced (from the amazing Steinway) a very substantial sound. Kim's playing was different – she sat very straight, more or less still, all her concentrated effort going



Hyelim Kim

PETER MOULD



Derek Wang

into her hands and, interestingly, her left foot. This was an intense and faultless performance. Derek Wang's sensitivity highlighted the lyricism, and showed a transformative appreciation of the drama of the pause. It was a unique opportunity to watch these three in action. The judges had a difficult task. Speaking to one of them briefly, I asked whether there was a set list of points which they used to make their decision. He said yes, of course, but most of it was in here, and he tapped the side of his head.

Saturday's performers were Harmony Zhu, 18, and Chengyao Zhou, just 16. They played with great panache – Zhou's choice was Rachmaninov's *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*, which moves one impossibly to tears at the sheer beauty of Variation 18. It was played with enormous joy and perfection, but Zhou also had the command to make the lesser-known variations sound modern, elegant, and astonishing. Harmony Zhu's choice was Prokofiev No. 3 – Not nearly so well-

known, difficult, dramatic, jaggedly entrancing. She has the gift of communicating with both orchestra and audience, and her whole body engages rhythmically, eagerly, in the exposition. She came second overall, but unsurprisingly won the orchestra prize – the soloist they all voted for before they rushed back to London in their pantotechnicon.

With regard to the orchestra, wiry, active, and apparently delighted to be there, conductor Rory MacDonald was totally in command. The Royal Philharmonic are exceptional, and they clearly enjoyed and responded to his direction throughout each evening, never flagging even at the third performance of the Tchaikovsky. Curtis Phill Tsu was announced the winner for his assured and accomplished rendering of that concerto. But by a hair's breadth – it seemed to me it could have been anybody's.

The Competition Winner's Picnic Recital will be at Fairlight Hall at 12 pm on Sunday 7 July

Alice Denny



The Royal Phil are transported

PETER MOULD



Delighted Rory MacDonald

The Politics of KABARETT

VICTORIA KINGHAM takes in Kabarett, a one-night-only presentation at The Stables

The word *cabaret* (meaning 'small room') has been used since the thirteenth century. It has eventually come to describe entertainment in an intimate venue such as a nightclub. During Montmartre's ascendancy as a nightclub venue populated by artists, cabaret flourished in Paris during the nineteenth century, attracting audiences from all classes while combining music and theatre with political commentary and/or satire.

In Germany, beginning in the early twentieth century, the style was known as Kabarett, and arose as a response to the heavy artistic censorship imposed by the German Empire. Between the World Wars, during the insidious rise of Hitler's 'National Socialism' and the Weimar Republic (or German Reich), the cabaret stage was used as a satirical weapon in a clandestine condemnation of the barbarism of war and the tragedy of Weimar domination. Performances were elegant and often savagely humorous, and (as an-

yone who has seen Bob Fosse's musical *Cabaret* will know) often presented by intentionally androgynous characters in black and white evening dress. The Nazi party, coming to power in 1933, attempted, with some success, to repress this kind of intellectual political criticism. Shows became anodyne, but pockets of resistance remained.

A KABARETT ON THE HASTINGS STAGE

How fitting then that David Manners' evocative piece *Kabarett*, performed at The Stables Theatre for one night only, should be staged against back projections of German artworks of the time, all of them subject to Nazi censorship. We saw works branded 'degenerate art' – they included that of George Grosz, Otto Dix, Wassily Kandinsky, and Clara Wolff. The performers were David Manners on piano, Tamara Leggett, Victoria Rowland, and Neil Sellman acting and singing. Some of the songs were of the period, or recalled the period,



(Left to right) Victoria Rowland, Tamara Leggett, Neil Sellman

but some were definitely later twentieth century: *Ne Me Quitte Pas* was movingly performed by Manners and Leggett, alternating on voice and piano, for example, and there was an interesting, abbreviated arrangement of *Eleanor Rigby* with the chorus left out but the essential loneliness left in place. Most people know *Where Have All The Flowers Gone?* but do they know that it was recorded by Marlene Dietrich in 1965? Manners writes of *Love Letters* (written in 1945 but made famous by Kitty Lester in 1962), "I wanted a jaded view of romance, and I thought the tearing of envelopes would cut nicely against the lyrics."

AMUSEMENT & CHALLENGE

Manners asserts that his primary hope is to "surprise, amuse, and challenge the audience". He is still ex-

perimenting with the choice of songs, which have changed since the first performance and will keep changing. "I have had a fascination with Weimar Berlin all my life," he remarks. "I had an adventurous great aunt who lived there 1900-1938 and recorded the initial wonders, then approaching horrors, until she was left to freeze and starve to death by a Nazi Youth Mädchen forcibly imposed on her. I inherited all her letters, which document the period in remarkable ways." Manners has also lived, worked, and studied in Germany, where his elderly music teacher had been a jazz pianist in the cabaret bars before WWII. "He often spoke of those days and the shock of turning up one night to find all the Jewish musicians and performers gone."

Manners finds this particularly

resonant as he has Jewish blood and Jewish family members. Tamara Leggett is Jewish and half German. Anyone with a Jewish background would relate to this production, but you didn't have to be Jewish to appreciate an excellent, incisive, and truly entertaining evening.

Kabarett was written by David Manners and performed by David Manners, Tamara Leggett, Victoria Rowland, and Neil Sellman at The Stables Theatre, Hastings, on 23 February. Polymath Manners is an award-winning writer, actor, producer, composer, musician, and stage designer. His monologue, *Picture Perfect*, was performed by Lisa Sadovy at The Stables in 2021 and is now in production for television by Ballybest Productions and Beckmann Unicorn. He lives and works in Hastings.

Hastings Sinfonia Spring Concert

Hastings Sinfonia will be giving a concert at St John's Church on 13 April. The Sinfonia is a local, inclusive orchestra. Founded in 2012 by Hastings composer Polo Piatti (now artistic director), they perform music that is popular and easy to listen to, often playing shorter pieces. They include old classics, popular works, film music, opera highlights and new melodic works by living composers; their concerts are therefore ideal entertainment for people new to classical music, for younger people, as well as serious music lovers. They aim to nurture talented young musicians and give them performance opportunities and to keep rehearsals thoroughly enjoyable – an important part of their philosophy.



The programme for the Sinfonia Spring Concert will be well-known and well-loved pieces – Verdi's overture (you might recognise it as the *Stella Artois* tune), Wagner, Dvorak's *New World Symphony* (the Hovis advert with the little boy, remember?), Sibelius' *Karelia Suite* overture ('This Week' theme tune) among others. Piano soloist (in the Adagio from Grieg's *A Minor*) will be Howard Southern, and trombone soloist Chris Schmidt will play on Piatti's new piece, *Catch Me If You Can*.

Piatti, himself a composer, aims to write music that is "accessible" and writes in a style that some call 'New Romantic'. He feels that post-Covid, musicians and audienc-

es are looking for music which is both melodic and easy to listen to, emotionally appealing rather than avant-garde. Originally from Argentina, he has studied in Argentina, Paris, and Germany. Besides Hastings Sinfonia, he has also instigated an International Composers Festival whose patron is BAFTA-winning Debbie Wiseman, composer of many memorable television theme tunes.

The concert will be held at 7.30pm on 13 April at St John's Church, St Leonards. For further details and link to ticketsource please see visit1066country.com/whats-on/hastings-sinfonia-orchestra-spring-concert-p23220



EASTER ORATORIO IN ST LEONARDS

The Hastings Philharmonic Choir will perform Bach's *St Matthew Passion* accompanied by the baroque Ensemble Orquesta. The concert takes place at Christ Church, Silchester Road, St Leonards, on 6 April, starting at 7:00pm. Tickets are on sale via the choir's website (hastingsphilchoir.org.uk),

by phone 01424 437554 or at The Bookkeeper, Kings Road, St Leonards, priced at £22/£17.50/£13. Students, under 18s, JSA and universal credit recipients £5/free

The concert will be conducted by the highly respected HPC Musical Director, Marcio da Silva, with soloists Kieran White (Evangelist/tenor), Oshri Segev (Jesus/bass), Anna-Luise Wagner (soprano) and Maya Colwell (alto).

HIP BOOK REVIEW

Fourteen Days

Edited by Margaret Atwood and Douglas Preston
Published by Chatto & Windus
REVIEW BY VIOLA VON HARRACH

Award winning author, Margaret Atwood, is the joint editor together with Douglas Preston of the much-hyped Covid novel, *Fourteen Days*. Don't expect a 'kerpow!' moment though or much in the way of enlightenment.

A week into lockdown in New York, the residents of a dilapidated apartment block start to meet up on the roof each evening, six feet apart as per the rules, to applaud the health and uniformed services, and then against the backdrop of police and ambulance sirens, settle down to regaling each other with stories. As lockdown continues so a ritual evolves. Each tenant keeps to the same place on the roof, and each brings a stool, a chair, some a table, another a cocktail shaker, a glass of wine. But more than that, neighbours become acquainted, friends even, old rifts are healed, there are fallings out, fingers pointed, tenants never noticed before appear at random to tell a story, some just sit in the shadows and listen, and a mural started by one tenant is added to by others.

A COLLABORATION BETWEEN WORLD CLASS AUTHORS

All of this is documented by the newly-arrived just before lockdown caretaker, a young woman in her twenties, Yessie, also known by the number of the room that comes with her job, 1A. As the offspring of Romanian and American parents, she is not fully integrated either as the caretaker nor in the bigger America beyond the apart-

ment block. She is also in search of her demented father who is unreachable in a care home. An outsider carefully logging the number of deaths taking place each day out there in New York. 'Death is like the distant sound of thunder at a picnic,' says the tenant known as Eurovision. Yessie also sits up at night transcribing each story from her

thors from the USA and Canada. Each has secretly written one of the stories. The book is divided up by days though somewhat confusingly, some days contain several stories. The book claims to be a publishing first but from the onset, it is obvious that the form of this novel is unwieldy. A mix of uneven stories loosely and not altogether successfully linked.

SOME GOOD STANDALONE YARNS

Fourteen Days is rather like an adult form of the party game 'Consequences' for a creative writing course. Instead of drawing, then folding the piece of paper and passing it on to the next person, this is the written word. The authors are not attributed by story but rather at the back of the book there is an alphabetical listing, by author, followed by the day of the story acknowledged in brackets. But isn't a novel about plot and storyline?

The calibre of the writing is variable, but that has in part to do with the difference in style, writing technique, and stance of so many different authors. Bringing them together coherently was never going to be an easy edit. Nor was the imposition of stringing these stories together in the framework of fourteen days. Folded between the pages though are some good standalone yarns of ghosts and spirits, a gay adoption, death, love, both hopeless and requited, loneliness, poetry, familial relations and in a lighter vein, a story that involves, 'the nuances of bonding rabbits.' Outstanding contributions, include, not surprisingly, Margaret Atwood's *The Exterminator* in Day 10. Other writers of note include Dave Eggers, Emma Donoghue (her contribution is the rabbit story), John Grisham and Celeste Ng.

phone to a log book on her desk. The action takes place between March 31 2020 and April 13 2020.

This novel was commissioned as a project by the Authors Guild of America to fund its charitable work. It is a collaboration between an impressive grouping of thirty-six well known, and mostly world class au-



POETRY CORNER

Castleham
DANNY GORING

On telly they're selling us holidays
But we haven't got enough cash
The end of the month's still a fortnight away
And the thought brings us out in a rash

The leccy bill's shocking, taxes are rising
Our money has gone down the drain
We splashed out for Christmas, it's hardly surprising
The new year's a financial pain

Priory Meadow is under grey water
Eels are shopping in Boots
Southern Water dump more crap than they oughta
In the sea, and don't give two hoots

We'd like to escape into self-isolation
And wait for the spring to arrive
A whole population in warm hibernation
Having a bloody good skive

When summer comes round we'll be sipping a beer
In sunshine and heatwaves unbroken
On the prom we'll parade, or perhaps on the pier
Provided the bloomin' thing's open

We'll laugh and we'll cry, feel the lows and the highs
The smiles alternating with frowns
And perhaps realise, as the years pass us by,
That the ups can't come round without downs



DROP IN

MEET THE TEAM
TELL US YOUR STORY
DISCUSS IMPORTANT
HASTINGS EVENTS

28 MARCH 5:30PM
BULLET CAFE & COFFEE SHOP
38 ROBERTSON STREET TN34 1HT

Hastings
Independent

THE INDEPENDENT VOICE OF HASTINGS

CROSSWORD CORNER

Across

- 1. Dreaded weed smokers? (6)
- 3. Leave inside energy unknown to show fairness (6)
- 4. Thoroughly investigates soft cloaks (6)

Down

- 1. Rebel is pure mix-up (4,2)
- 2. Agree some hearsay yesterday (3,3)

Crossword Solution: Answers on page 5 of The HIP List

1					2
	Hastings Independent Five-Clue Cryptic Crossword				
3					
	No. 247 by Peat Poser				
4					

Eat Write Love

NICKY AND SONJA of Creative Concoctions - a local social enterprise, boosting creative health.

Rhubarb! Rhubarb! Rhubarb! No, we're not talking nonsense this month. Or any other, for that matter! We are talking off-the-charts, scrumptious rhubarb cheesecake!

PREPARE TO BE WOWED.
By the taste from these shiny pink, slender stalks. By the satisfying crunch of knife chopping chunky discs. And, what's even better, this cheesecake doesn't need any baking! Quick - grab yourself some rhubarb, your journal and a pen!

- JOURNALING #1:**
 - Wild roots [3 mins]
 - Say the word 'rhubarb' out loud three times! Now you're ready!
 - Write this jump-off line in your journal and let the words out.
 - What makes me feel happily rooted at this time of year is...
- REFLECT [1 MIN]**
 - Pick out a word or two that feels supportive, comforting.

FUN FACTS

- Rhubarb means 'barbarian root' – from the Greeks who thought

- anything that came from outside Greece was barbarian.
- The leaves are considered poisonous, but you would need to eat an awful lot of them to actually poison yourself – both leaves and stems contain oxalates though, which need to be avoided if you suffer from things like gout.
 - The word 'rhubarb' is often used in the world of film – by getting members of the crowd to repeat: 'rhubarb, rhubarb, rhubarb' it creates the effect of a menacing crowd!

- NUTRITION INFO:**
- Calcium – supports bone and joint health
 - Iron – key for energy production
 - Magnesium – supports the health of our muscles, including our hearts
 - Phosphorus – supports our bones and teeth
 - Potassium – promotes healthy nerves and supports our metabolic health
 - Vitamins A – antioxidant, and key for eye health
 - C – antioxidant, and supports the immune system
 - E – antioxidant, supports wound healing
 - K – supports heart health



PHOTOS: SONJA COLMAN

RHUBARB AND GINGER CHEESECAKE
This cheesecake is super easy, doesn't need any baking, and you can freeze it for future enjoyment!

- Ingredients:**
- 500g Rhubarb
 - 150g caster sugar
 - Juice and zest of 1 orange
 - 1 tsp vanilla essence
 - 200g ginger biscuits
 - 100g butter
 - 250g mascarpone cheese
 - 250g cream cheese
 - 100g natural yoghurt / kefir yoghurt
 - 1 tbsp chopped pistachio nuts

- Method:**
1. Pre-heat oven to 180o C
 2. Wash and chop your rhubarb into 3cm long pieces and arrange on a baking tray.
 3. Sprinkle the caster sugar, vanilla essence and orange zest over the top and mix through. Drizzle the orange juice over the top. Cover in foil and place in the oven to bake for 20-25 mins.
 4. Put ginger biscuits into a bag, hold it closed and bash merrily with a rolling pin to make crumbs.
 5. Melt the butter gently and mix into the biscuit crumbs.
 6. Press the biscuit mixture into the baking tin you are going to use (I use a 23cm spring bottom flan tin). Put in the fridge to start setting.

7. Mix the mascarpone / cream cheese and yoghurt together in a bowl.
8. When the rhubarb is cooked, take half of it, along with the juices from cooking and mash using the back of a fork.
9. Gently fold the rhubarb into the cream mixture.
10. Spread onto the biscuit base, cover and leave in the fridge for as long as you can – ideally overnight.
11. When ready to serve, remove from the baking tin and put on a plate, decorate with the remaining rhubarb pieces, then sprinkle with pistachios and extra orange zest.

- SUBSTITUTES**
- Ginger and rhubarb are a classic combination, but you can swap ginger biscuits for digestives.
 - Don't like mascarpone? Use 500g of cream cheese. The yoghurt lightens the mix, but if you just use cream cheese and the rhubarb, it's just as yummy.
 - For added probiotic benefits, use a kefir yoghurt.
 - If you have a nut allergy, you can crumble extra biscuits or use chopped pumpkin seeds.

- STORAGE**
- **Fridge:** This will last in the fridge for around 5 days – keep it covered! If you know you are not going to eat it all in one go, store the rhubarb topping sepa-

- **Freezer:** You can also freeze it, either whole or in portions. Freeze the rhubarb topping separately and then put it together just before serving.

- JOURNALING #2 SWEET MOMENTS [5 MINS]**
 - Grab something sweet -- an apple, a little pot of cinnamon perhaps?
 - Smell it or taste it. Close your eyes. Breathe in deeply for a few breaths.
 - Now, write into a sweet memory.
 - Perhaps when you made fairy cakes one day after school? Or when you scooped Cornish ice cream into perfect mounds in bowls for tea?
 - Write into the everyday details, not only the sweet treat but also how you felt, and what moment felt particularly satisfying?
- REFLECT [1 MIN]**
 - I'm more aware of...

- JOURNALING # 3 ACTION!**
- What one sweet moment do you want to commit to in the 3-4 weeks ahead?
 - Walking in a new spot, coffee and journaling some more? Bashing biscuit bases?



RUGBY

Youth Success from Adult Dedication at H&B

CHERYL SITCH and PHILIP USHER

The Hastings and Bexhill under 15s squad is made up of 28 boys, some that have played since they have been five years old, some that have joined the club this season. Within the group, seven boys train in Development Player Programmes of professional clubs – six at Harlequins, one at Saracens. But they also have four dedicated local coaches, Ben Davies, Roger Roberts, Paul Fielder and Olly Turpin, all of whom have long-term connections with H&B or other East Sussex clubs.

Ben started playing rugby for H&B when he was nine years old and is still a current senior H&B player (when his body allows). He has held the roles of director of rugby, senior team coach and is now co-junior chairman.

Roger started his rugby playing at William Parker School when he was 14 years old, then joined H&B to play in the junior and colts teams. He progressed on to the senior team and became club captain for two years, though he now applies his skills in refereeing and coaching.

Paul also started to play when he was at William Parker. As a senior he played at Rye Rugby Club.

Olly started playing as a wee seven-year-old in Derbyshire, was a schoolboy player in North Wales, then moved down south and played for Eastbourne and Hellingly until his late 30s.

Paul and Olly both brought their sons to the club as juniors, then decided to get involved with coaching and volunteer their time, along with Ben and Roger, as part of the coaching team for the U15s age group.

This season, the H&B U15s are in Sussex League 1. They started with



Up front captain Azat Kesen and his band of forwards drew in the Eastbourne defence in the tight, giving more space to the backs.

With more possession and attacking intent of their own, H&B provided some champagne rugby. Both centres Louis Turpin and William Richardson started to break the gain line consistently, full back Ben Coulson was able to join the attacks, and wingers Thomas Bryant and Kieron Robinson were able to exploit the space created.

A rampaging run by number 8 Toby Fielder turned the defence, and a desperate clearing kick by Eastbourne found Coulson, who embarked on a mazy run to return the backs with interest. Turpin barrelled over to score a try that was converted by William Roberts.

That score released the floodgates. Roberts scored another try, which he himself converted to bring the score up to 22-19. Sheppard touched down his second to put H&B ahead, then flanker Monty Wheeler went over to score H&B's fifth, making the final score 31-22 in their favour.

a draw against Haywards Heath, have beaten Chichester and Eastbourne, and lost to Hove, Worthing and Pulborough. That record puts them in sixth place, with one game to play against East Grinstead on 24 March. There have also been friendlies with Cranbrook, Bromley and Horsham, and more planned against Gillingham, Dartford Valley and Lewes.

The U15s have a “take over day” on Sunday 14 April, when they will host a tournament featuring seven other teams from across Kent and Sussex.

WIN OVER EASTBOURNE

In the meantime, there's nothing more satisfying than a hard-fought win against your closest neighbours. That's how it turned out in

the U15s' most recent game against Eastbourne on 3 March.

Eastbourne's strong runners and their speed at the ruck gave them early momentum and two unconverted tries. H&B scrumhalf Rupert Sheppard found a gap in the opposing ranks to touch down for a try in response, but Eastbourne came again with two swift tries as several tackles were missed in defence. At 22-5 down, it seemed that H&B were heading for a heavy defeat.

But slowly the tide turned. H&B altered their tactics in possession, choosing a more expansive game, moving the ball wider and evading the physically larger Eastbourne team. They also covered faster in defence, denying their opposition the time in attack that they had hitherto enjoyed.

Hastings & Bexhill RFC are always looking to recruit new players from five-years-old upwards – adults, girls and boys of all abilities. See the website www.hastingsrugby.org or email minis.rugby@hastingsrugby.org to arrange a free, no obligation try-out.

FOOTBALL

Cruttwell Returns

HASTINGS UNITED 1, BILLERICAY TOWN 1

HUGH SULLIVAN

Hastings United matched play-off rivals Billericay Town in an absorbing contest at Pilot Field last Saturday – their first competitive action since 13 February following weeks watching the rain fall on saturated pitches. After conceding a penalty in the first minute of the second half, they eventually rallied to equalise through substitute Will Harley, and finished the game on the front foot, pressing for a winner. But many of the 1,600+ crowd will have left the stadium feeling that this late urgency could have been engendered rather earlier in the proceedings.

For most of the match, the 'U's found it difficult to push forward, their midfielders unable to sustain passing movements on a lumpy pitch, and twin strikers Davide Rodari and Tommy Fagg, invariably outnumbered in the centre, getting little service from either wing. The visitors adopted a much more direct approach, playing the

ball long and penning Hastings for extensive periods deep in their own half.

Billericay scored after one of many long throw-ins: a rash tackle by Sam Okoye felled an attacker in the penalty area to give the referee – who was generally lenient of physical confrontations – a straightforward spot-kick decision, converted by former Hastings loanee Bradley Stevenson. The home side looked more threatening when Freddie Legg and Harley replaced Kian Moyes and Okoye, and eventually equalised in the 75th minute: Fagg broke down the right and crossed low for Harley to net from close range.

FORMER FAVOURITE

What the home supporters will have enjoyed was the return – third coming – of former midfield favourite Sam Cruttwell. He first played for the 'U's as a 16-year-old in the 2013-14 season, receiving reported attentions from at least one Premier League club, and went on to play more than 250 games for them. Some injuries and fitness issues, plus a desire to play local futsal (an indoor variety of football) led to him being sidelined by manager Chris

Agutter in the latter's first spell in charge, and he departed to play for Little Common. He re-signed for three games in the truncated 2020/21 season, but was then again out in the cold.

Returning again, now aged 27, Cruttwell has filled out to a chunkier shape, and was deployed by Agutter last Saturday as central defender alongside Sam Gale. But his touch on the ball, and passing ability with his left foot, don't seem to have declined in quality since he was last at Pilot Field. He and Gale, who remains on loan from Gillingham, presumably for the rest of the season, stood out as the 'U's' best performers on the day.

Another former Hastings midfielder, Ansu Janneh, has also rejoined the club, on loan from National League South team Tonbridge Angels. He played the full 90 minutes against Billericay, deputising for the suspended Jack Dixon, and can expect plenty more action over the next month and a half as the 'U's' catch up on postponed fixtures.

They are due to entertain second-place Chatham Town at Pilot Field tomorrow (Saturday), then leaders Hornchurch on Tuesday (19 March) before travelling to Horsham, another promotion-chasing side, on 23 March. These seem like a crucial eight days, that will show just how fit the players are to maintain their own promotion challenge until the season's end.



Sam Cruttwell in action against Billericay

ISTHMIAN PREMIER TABLE AS AT 10 MARCH

		PL	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
1	Hornchurch	31	23	7	1	76	24	76
2	Chatham Town	34	21	4	9	72	49	67
3	Wingate & Finchley	32	17	5	10	60	52	56
4	Billericay Town	34	17	4	13	57	40	55
5	Horsham	31	16	7	8	44	35	55
6	Enfield Town	32	15	9	8	58	46	54
7	Carshalton Athletic	34	14	10	10	61	48	52
8	Hastings United	31	14	7	10	55	43	49



HM Government

Hi!

**Our four-year regeneration programme,
Trinity Triangle High Street Heritage Action Zone,
is coming to an end in March**

Join Hastings Commons for an afternoon and evening of celebration,
as we share the highlights of the programme.

20 March from 3pm, at the Observer Building

(53 Cambridge Road, TN34 1DT)

- Interactive exhibitions
- Panel discussions and talks
- Live performances and film screenings

Plus, the launch of our new publication

Back From the Brink

The Observer Building: its Rise, Fall and Rescue

Please book your free ticket
via Eventbrite



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