

issue forty six
winter 2010

about

about you about life about Hastings & St Leonards

The Big Conversation

What you told us

Adventures and fun in Ore Valley

Fantastic playground unveiled

Rubbish and recycling

Christmas and New Year arrangements

Plus: all your favourites including our What's On guide



You said...

As promised, here are the results of the readers' survey from earlier this year. Once again a huge thank you to everyone who filled the form in to let us know what you thought about About. It made for fascinating reading and will really help us plan editions for the future.

Here is a break down of some of the things you told us:

What we get right:



Frequency: 74% of you agreed that three times a year was just right, though 18% thought that should be a bit higher and 6% asked for fewer editions.

Size: 95% of you like the current A5 size

Length: 84% of you think that 32 pages is just right

It appears we've got the basics right and have no plans to change any of these aspects of About magazine. We also asked you about some of the things you find enjoyable to read and you told us the following in order of preference:

- 103 readers enjoy 'Hastings' heritage and history'
- 97 readers opted 'Up and coming' events
- 76 readers for 'Regeneration and community news'
- 75 for 'Green living and the environment'
- 61 enjoy 'Entertainment listings'
- 40 for 'Leader's column'
- 39 for 'Leisure / young people / sports'
- 2 people enjoy nothing

In terms of what you find useful Council contact details and information on services topped your list, followed by entertainment listings. You also had the chance to write some suggestions on future articles or items you would like to see regularly and suggested: crossword puzzles, features on Hastings & St Leonards' history, gardening advice and a letters page.



How we can improve:

Thanks to your suggestions we can now look at tailoring some of our feature ideas around your interests. We are looking at the possibility of including crosswords in the magazine and how we can increase our heritage and entertainments pages. Gardening too, seems a popular request so we will look at how we might manage to make this a regular feature.

Mortgage Rescued!

A scheme set up to help people struggling to pay their mortgage has had its first success.

Mrs and Mrs X found themselves struggling to pay their mortgage earlier this year after a string of redundancies. They had explored lots of options with mortgage lenders but found themselves facing the very real prospect of becoming homeless.

They came in to see officers at Hastings Borough Council's Housing Assessment team to talk over their choices.

The couple had lived in their house for 28 years and were desperate to keep their home, despite being served with a possession order. They came to the council after hearing about the Mortgage Rescue Scheme.

After talking to officers the couple decided to apply for the scheme and after handing over paperwork, housing officers got in contact with Moat Housing Association.

In the meantime, the possession order was frozen removing the immediate fear for the couple of losing their home.

Moat representatives got started with surveyors and quotes and just two months later came up with an offer where the housing association would take on the mortgage and rent it back to the couple in return for some work on the house being carried out.



By November the whole scheme had gone through, the couple had kept their home and are now tenants of Moat Housing Association.

Councillor Trevor Webb, lead member for Housing, said: "Well done to the Housing Options team for making this scheme work for Mrs and Mrs X. They're delighted with the outcome and don't have to face the trauma of moving from the home they have lived in for almost 30 years. In these austere times, many people are facing financial hardships but there is advice and help out there, including Hastings Borough Council.

"I would say to anyone struggling in this way; don't let it get out of control, take action now. Come in and have a chat and see if we can help you."



How the scheme works

To be eligible for the Mortgage Rescue Scheme, you must meet certain criteria including having talked to mortgage lenders before application and be able to show a clear need to stay in the area.

The Mortgage Rescue Scheme may not be suitable for all home owners but other options are available and an options review is a useful first step.

More information on the scheme can be found by phoning 01424 451100 or by visiting: www.hastings.gov.uk/housing_advice/mortgage.aspx



Adventure play in the heart of Ore Valley

A whole new concept in play has been opened in Ore Valley. After months of hard work, talking to potential users, residents and play workers - the Hastings and Ore Valley Adventure Playground is now open.



creative and adventurous freedom has now come to fruition. In fact the concept isn't a new one. In the past outdoor play was a regular feature for previous generations. This playground offers a lot of freedom but has the added bonus of having on site staff in In2Play who will encourage users to really make this playground their own; to paint, build, demolish and above all have fun.

"My thanks go to everyone who has been part of this project; it's a real asset to the Ore Valley and to the rest of Hastings."

Alongside the outer play area, the derelict coachworks building was refurbished to accommodate indoor play. The facility includes an accessible walkway and toilet with hoist and changing bench which will enable children with disabilities to be fully involved in this evolving project.

Following a successful funding bid to central Government in 2008, East Sussex County Council secured £800,000 for the playground project.

Hastings Borough Council then appointed architects and builders and managed this unique project through to completion with significant help from In2Play, play workers based on site.

Adventure play is a world away from traditional playgrounds. It encourages children to explore the natural environment, take risks and build their confidence. Where else can children and young people create their own play equipment from scratch using real wood and real tools, dismantle it completely and start all over again on a different construction. All manner of equipment stands ready for play, while young people are encouraged to build a rope swing on trees from the woods surrounding the site.

Councillor Jeremy Birch, leader of Hastings Borough Council, opened the playground in November. He said: "The idea to give children



Stade Photo Competition Peoples Choice Winner

Maria Dyas from Hastings has been announced as the winner of the People's Choice prize in the My Stade photography competition. Maria's winning photograph is entitled 'Clandestine Rendezvous' and features two seagulls between the net shops, looking as if they are deep in conversation.



Councillor Trevor Webb, lead member for Leisure, said: "Lots of people said they voted for Maria's photograph because they like seagulls and one person said they thought it looked like two old fish wives having a good gossip! The public felt this photograph summed up the Stade in one picture as it depicts seagulls, net shops, boats and fish all in one image. It also has a humorous touch which makes people smile."

The My Stade photography competition was launched earlier this year by the Stade Education project which is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. Members of the public were invited to submit photographs that showed 'What the Stade means to me'.



Council Christmas opening hours

Our council offices will be closing on Christmas Eve and re-opening as us on Tuesday, 4 January 2011.

The Hastings Information Centre will be open as follow

Christmas Eve

from 8.30am until 6.15pm

Christmas Day

Closed

Boxing Day

Closed

Monday 27 December to Friday 31 December

Open between 10am and 6.15pm

New Year's Day

10am and 5pm.

Sunday 2 January

10.30am and 4.30pm.

Monday 3 January

10am and 6.15pm.

From Tuesday, 4 January 2011, normal opening hours resume. For information on the Hastings Information Centre telephone: 01424 451111 or visit www.hastings.gov.uk

Out of Hours Number

01424 451999

Please also note that you cannot contact the emergency services (Fire and Rescue, Police, Ambulance or Coastguard) on this number.



Saying NO to domestic violence

Hastings Borough Council has signed up to a campaign to help stop domestic violence in the town.

National White Ribbon Day took place on 25 November, when the Town Hall was wrapped up in ribbon and passers by invited to sign a pledge to: never commit, condone or remain silent about domestic violence.

Councillor Jay Kramer, lead member for Equalities and Community Safety, said: "The sad news remains that less than 40% of domestic violence crimes are reported in the UK. In Hastings between 2009 and 2010, there were 1,988 reports made to the police and in 47% of these cases, this was not the first time the victim had experienced domestic abuse. Hastings makes up one third of all reported incidents in East Sussex.

"This means that we are not just appealing to victims to get in touch with agencies that can help them, we're also asking everyone to stay vigilant and report incidents of domestic violence to the police if they believe someone is in trouble.

"We need to get the message across that this is an issue for the whole community not just the victim or the perpetrator."

Domestic violence is a range of repeated abusive actions and behaviours to gain control over a partner (current or former), or between family members. It can include emotional, physical, sexual and financial abuse.

If you need advice then the CRI Domestic Abuse Service includes community independent domestic violence advisors who work to support victims of domestic violence. They offer practical help and advice to victims.

If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic violence you can get help and talk through the options available to you. Contact CRI Domestic Abuse Service on 01424 716629 or contact Sussex Police on 0845 6070999.

Always dial 999 in an emergency



