

issue forty seven
summer 2011

about

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Pier Bid Successful

Heritage Lottery Fund announces support

The Budget Cuts

What it means for our town

Hastings heritage

Win tickets to Smugglers Adventure

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

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Welcome to this summer's about magazine. Well, 2011 certainly started with a bang! What with the announcement that Hastings would suffer severely as a result of the budget cuts and the Lottery pledging their financial support to the Pier, it's certainly been a mixture of ups and downs here at the council and in the town.

The spending cuts mean that in 2011/12 we will receive £2.3m less government grant, and a further £1.6m will be lost in 2012/13. That's a 50% reduction over the next two years – which equates to £70 less grant for every man, woman and child in the borough. The budget cuts left us with some extremely difficult decisions to make.

However, I made a pledge to do everything to limit both compulsory redundancies and cuts to the key services local people have said they value the most. We made just two compulsory redundancies, making every effort to limit the impact of the cuts, not just to staff but to local residents who rely on the services the council provides.

The results from the Big Conversation proved extremely useful during the budget setting

process, enabling us to make decisions based on what services and issues you told us you valued the most. One of the things residents told us they valued were those activities aimed at making Hastings more prosperous and at creating jobs for local people. And Saga of course does just that. They will become the largest private sector employer, hiring 800 staff in total. In a town with high levels of public sector employment that is clearly vulnerable to the spending cuts this has been a significant positive. Nevertheless, despite our serious budget problems there is still a lot to be positive about in Hastings. In addition to Saga and the Pier, the nationally regarded Jerwood Gallery will be open for business by the autumn, with Stade Hall and the Stade Open Space already open. University Centre Hastings phase two will be opening its doors in September taking higher education numbers in the town to 1,000. Although I'm terribly disappointed about the cuts to the council, to our staff and to what we can offer the public; I am still optimistic for Hastings, especially in terms of its regeneration.

Cllr Jeremy Birch
Leader, Hastings Borough Council

You Said, We Did....

You may recall the 'You said' article featured in last winter's edition of **About** following a short survey our readers completed.

Well, we've taken your suggestions on board and have been able to incorporate some of your ideas into this issue. For example, because a staggering 78% of you enjoyed reading articles about Hastings' heritage and history we thought we'd make it the theme of the edition! Other popular suggestions included the inclusion of gardening articles, festivals and events, sporting achievements and lots more! Unfortunately we don't have enough space to include every

suggestion, but we did manage to narrow the results down and have included articles which we think you'll enjoy reading.

Look out for 'You Said' boxes to see how your ideas have contributed to this summer's **about!**

You Said...

We'd love to hear your feedback, email the editor, Lucy Downham:
ldownham@hastings.gov.uk

Pier Lottery Bid Successful!

In October 2010 Hastings hit the headlines after the Pier was devastated by fire.

Images of the raging fire and billowing smoke, tearing through the now iconic or even ironic, 'You Can Save Me!' banner were splashed across national and local newspapers, leaving locals and others across the country deeply saddened.

The future of the Pier was uncertain; some even commented that this once glorious landmark now served as a symbol of Hastings economic demise, but they were wrong.

Last month the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) announced its intention to financially support Hastings Pier & White Trust's plans to redevelop the Pier - bringing it back to its former glory.

Councillor Jeremy Birch, leader of Hastings Borough Council, thanked the local campaigners who have worked extremely hard in securing this decision. He said: "This is great news for the town and a huge tribute to the campaigners in the Hastings Pier and White Rock Trust who have put much time and effort into this.

"Now of course the really hard but potentially very exciting work starts.

"HLF have awarded £375,000 to the Trust as the down payment on the full £8.75 million that was asked for. The Trust is expected to use £350,000 to build up a sustainable business plan and a totally convincing project that will then unlock the full award.

"So there has to be a financially sound plan drawn up to show how the Pier can be managed and maintained in the long-

term. There has to be a clear indication that businesses will decide to operate on the Pier to create the income that will pay for the long-term maintenance. .

"There has to be a detailed design for what will now be built on top of the listed sub-structure and this has to receive its planning and listed building permission.

"Perhaps even more challenging than all this is the fact that the Pier Trust has to raise 10% of the £8.75 million itself. Hastings has to show it really does want the Pier restored by raising £875,000.

"Hastings Borough Council has earmarked £250,000 as part of this match-funding but there will need to be a lot of sponsored planks to raise the rest. It really is up to local people to do their bit.

"We are already committed to spending £700,000 on the Pier, clearing the debris and the most dangerous bits of metal and wood after the fire, paying for the architects to prepare the new plans and securing the most vulnerable middle section so there isn't a collapse before the HLF money can start being spent.

"And of course we have agreed to compulsorily purchase the structure and then to pass its ownership on to the Pier Trust.

"There are still risks and pitfalls. There are certainly big challenges but the HLF's decision is the best news we could have hoped for and makes the rescue of Hastings Pier a real possibility."

The Hastings Pier & White Rock Trust (HPWRT) has been desperately trying to raise funds in a bid to save the Pier. Understandably, the members were delighted with the announcement. Ray Chapman, Chair of HPWRT, said: "This is a complete reversal of what was a symbol of Hastings decline, however we must not become complacent, there is lot of work ahead to do and we still need everyone's support. Please come and shop in the Pier Information Centre at Arthur Green, 34 White Rock on Thursdays to Mondays 10am to 5pm and join our membership programme or adopt a plank or perhaps sign up to our volunteer programme on www.hpwrt.co.uk"



Hastings Joins the Fish Fight

At the beginning of this year, celebrity chef, Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall came to Hastings on a mission to put an end to unnecessary fish discards. In the first of the three-part documentary aired on Channel four earlier this year, Hugh kicked off the fish fight right here in Hastings – home to one of the oldest fishing fleets in Britain.

Joining forces with Hastings fishermen, Hugh explored the impact of the European policy at the local level, helping to raise awareness of the quota restrictions and consequently their impact on the fishermen's livelihoods, which he described as 'poignant.'

Together with Paul Joy, local fisherman and Chair of the Hastings Fishermen's Protection Society (HFPS) Hugh conjured up a cunning plan to avoid throwing dead fish back into the sea, highlighting the huge amount of fish thrown away in the process.

Rounding up locals with the promise of free fish, Hugh asked Paul to throw the fish he caught nearer to the shore - close enough for Hugh and locals to collect them with nets.

During his visit, Hugh said he was, "truly heartened by the support of the people of Hastings."

Here at the council, we too like many others pledged our support for the campaign and our local fishermen.

Councillor Peter Chowney, lead member for Regeneration, said: "I think the current limits for our fishermen are, frankly, crazy. Our fishermen simply cannot survive on the half a cod a day they are allowed to catch – as long as it does not weigh more than 1.5kg! The local economy needs both the fishermen and their support ashore, and the visitors we know the fishing fleet attracts. I urge local residents and visitors to sign the petition to support our local fishermen and call upon the Government to try and sort this mess out once and for all. We have provided a link to fishfight.net on our website."



Donations to the Boat Project

Back in March residents in Hastings & St Leonards were invited to put their personal stamp on the 2012 Olympics by donating their wooden objects to the 'Boat Project.' The idea was developed by artists Gregg Whelan and Gary Winters, otherwise known as Lonetwin.

Once complete the 30ft seafaring vessel, made entirely from donated wood, will set sail on its maiden voyage along the south coast just prior to the 2012 Olympics.

Over 100 local residents turned up to the event held at the Lifeboat Station to donate their wood, sharing the stories behind them.

Councillor Peter Chowney, lead member for Regeneration, was there to make his donation – a wooden walking stick.



He said: "I gave this walking stick to my grandmother for her birthday, back in 1963. She used it continuously until she died in 1970, aged 93. At the age of 90, she was still walking three miles into Bournemouth regularly, from where we lived.

"I think my grandmother and mother would both be pleased to know the walking stick will be used for build something lasting, to remember them by.

"I am very pleased that other local residents were also enthusiastic about the project. The organisers were hoping for around forty pieces of wood, and were delighted that they got over a hundred."

You can find out more information about the project at www.theboatproject.com where you can also access the live webcam to watch the boats progress.

The Boat Project is funded by the Arts Council England, the project is part of the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad.

Left: Councillor Peter Chowney with his Grandmother's walking stick.

Right: Old climbing frame from Bartie Frosdick (aged 11).



Lone Twin

THE BOAT PROJECT

hastings heritage

Hastings is famous for many reasons, most significantly for 1066 with the Norman invasion. The very fact that the event can be abbreviated to just four digits and still gain recognition proves its historical significance. Every year thousands of tourists flock to 1066 Country to explore its landmarks, unearth its secrets and to marvel at its beautiful surroundings, rooted deeply in its rich heritage and historical foundations. As significant as 1066 was in shaping the future of not just Hastings but the constitutional system of England, Hastings owes its greatness to many events and many a landmark.

From the America Ground to St Clements Caves, from Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve to Alexandra Park, from the Seafood & Wine Festival to Jack-in-the-Green, Hastings boasts some of the most interesting places, beautiful scenery and unique festivals around. It's no wonder it attracts so many tourists each year, which generates a significant amount of money for our town's economy.

You said...

78% of you wanted to see more heritage & history & lots of you asked for competitions!



Smugglers in Hastings

Smuggling, or owling as it was originally termed, developed around the year 1300 in response to the introduction of customs duty on the export of wool.

Smuggling became rife, when in 1614, the export of wool was banned. Incidences of smuggling increased dramatically following the end of the Napoleonic Wars (1797-1815), and as levies on tea, tobacco and spirits were increased these goods were also smuggled.

The Sussex coast was an ideal drop-off point for smuggled goods and the beaches of Hastings, Bexhill and Eastbourne saw many incidences of smuggling. Evidence of smuggling activity can still be found today, did you know for instance that 'The Hastings

Arms' was used as a secret hiding place?

During the early 1800s Hastings consisted mainly of what we now refer to as the Old Town and the Stade (the Saxon word meaning 'landing place'). The smugglers of Hastings worked primarily in this area, but met at assigned rendezvous points across the county, colourfully named for the purpose of disguise. Popular meeting points included, The 'Old Woman's Tap' which is now the site of the Royal Victoria Hotel and 'Jinn's Stool,' a large rock near Galley Hill.

Hastings Museum holds an extensive archive collection relating to smuggling on the Sussex coast during the nineteenth century, as does the Old Town Museum which hosts a permanent display. Pop down and take a look.

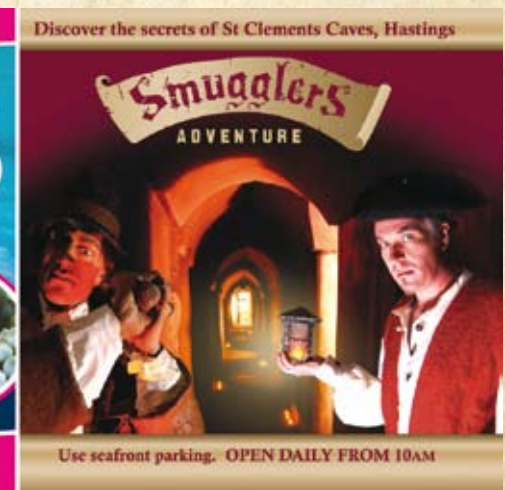
competition

If you want to learn more about the smugglers, we're giving you the chance to win a ticket for the family to visit the Smugglers Adventure, where you'll get the opportunity to roam around the eerie caves. Just answer this simple question:

Which pub in Hastings Old Town has a secret hiding place used by smugglers?

Send your answer, along with your name and contact details via email to: ldownham@hastings.gov.uk or post to the Town Hall, Queens Road, Hastings, TN34 1QR.

Six family tickets are up for grabs; winners will be selected at random.

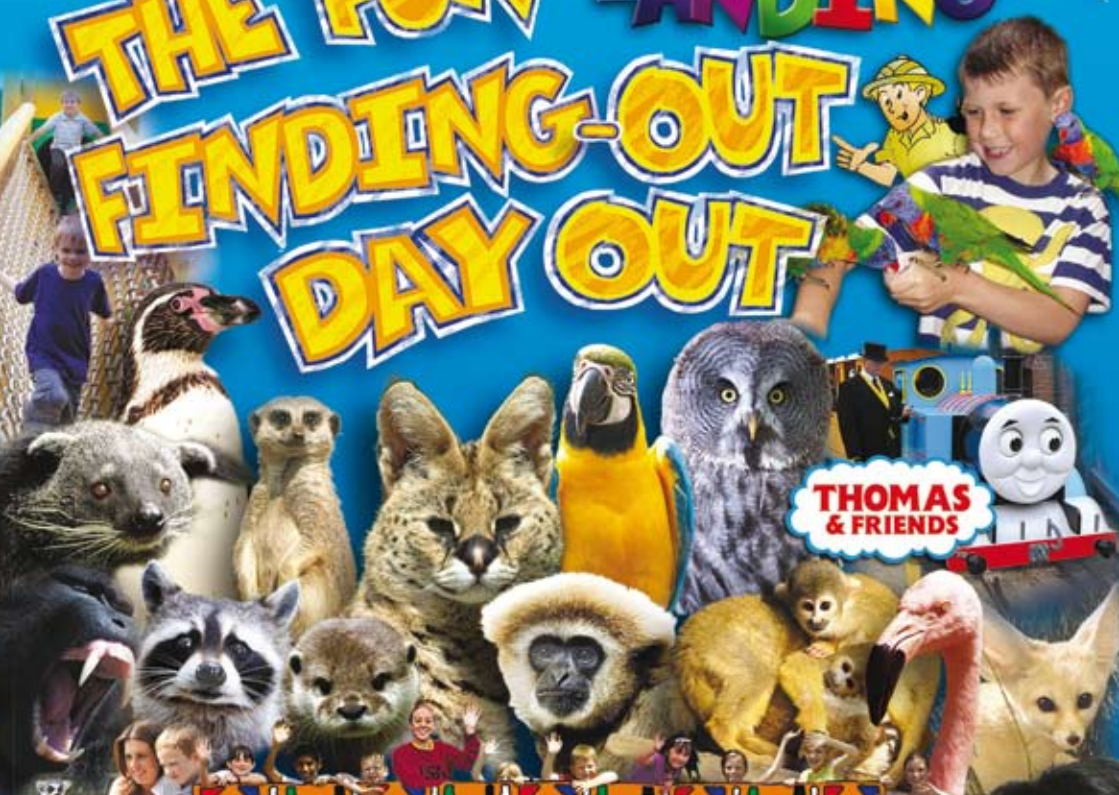




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