

Charity Committee Agenda

Monday, 18 October 2021 at 6.00 pm

Council Chamber, Muriel Matters House, Breeds Place, Hastings, TN34 3UY.
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	Page No.
9. Coastal Users Group minutes 12th October 2021	1 - 4

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Agenda Item 9

Hastings & St Leonards Coastal Users Group

AGM & meeting

Tuesday 12th October 2021

East Hastings Sea Angling Association 1800

Present:

Paul Carter – East Hastings Sea Angling Association - Chair
Anne Scott – Old Hastings Preservation Society
Christine Boulton-Lane – West of Haven Beach Users Association
Chris Richards – Hastings Adventure Golf
Cllr Trevor Webb – Charity Committee Chair, Hastings Borough Council
Dick Edwards – Hastings Old Town Residents Association
Kevin Boorman – Hastings Borough Council
Melanie Clark – Hastings and St. Leonards Sailing Club
Cliff Meaden – Hastings Windsurfing
Cllr Ruby Cox – Hastings Borough Council (Central St. Leonards Ward)
Cllr Karl Beaney – Hastings Borough Council (West St. Leonards Ward)
Cllr James Bacon - Hastings Borough Council (Old Hastings Ward)
Cllr Julia Hilton – Hastings Borough Council (Old Hastings Ward)
John Bownas – Love Hastings/BID
Yasmin Ornsby – Stade Partnership
Aaron Woods – Hastings Borough Council
Abbie Williams – Hastings Borough Council
Jeremy Towns – Beach Café
Peter Wheeler – Hastings & District Canoe Club
Nick Fawcett – 1066 Board Riders
James Cook – Protector

1 WELCOME, INTRODUCTION AND APOLOGIES

Everyone was welcomed to the meeting and introductions were made, Abbie introduced herself as the new CUG liaison officer

Apologies received from Andy Davy (RNLI), Tim McDonald (Shipwreck Museum), Andre Palfrey-Martin (Save Our Heritage Group), Steve Peak (Friends of Hastings Country Park), Di Cooke (Hastings Voluntary Lifeguards), Paul Joy (HFPS) and Sarah Godley (Sussex Police)

A brief summary was given on the role of Coastal Users Group (CUG) for those that had not attended before. The group has no formal powers, but provides a forum for all those involved with the coastal strip of Hastings, and also acts as a stakeholder reference group for the work of the council's charity committee, which manages the Foreshore Trust. The aim is to do the best for the area.

2 ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR

Paul Carter and Christine Boulton-Lane were unanimously re-elected as chair and vice chair respectively

3 CONSTITUTION

Paul explained that Abbie had tried to contact every organisation listed in the CUG's constitution to see if they wanted to remain as members; it appears that some organisations no longer existed, and in others the contact person had moved on, and their email address was no longer valid. Abbie had tried websites and other means of contacting those whose contact details appeared out of date. Around 70% of organisations were successfully contacted and indicated that they wished to continue as members.

There was some discussion about numbers of reps attending, voting rights, etc., and in principle it was agreed that one person should represent each organisation. It was accepted that observers might be brought along e.g. for mentoring/training purposes, and if a presentation was being made of interest to a particular group then other guests could be invited; these additional attendees would be allowed at the discretion of the chair, who should be contacted in advance of the meeting. It was also agreed that each organisation would have a vote, with the exception of the ward councillors, which there were four places for, and the meeting quorum was nine, meaning HBC could not outvote the other members.

It was agreed that a subgroup of Yasmin, Chris and Dick would meet with Abbie to discuss the constitution, attendees, etc., and report back to the wider group.

ACTION :- Abbie to arrange sub-committee meeting

4 NOTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING (15th JUNE)

The notes were accepted as an accurate record.

Matters arising:

Isabel Blackman Centre – Dick said HOTRA had finally taken ownership of the IBC, but a funding gap remained

There was considerable discussion about the 'lost' footpath between the boating lake and Stade funfair, it being noted that if the charity committee had listened to the views of CUG some years ago we might not be in this position now. Kevin reiterated that the tenant, Michael Lee, had categorically assured him that the footpath would be reopened once all the site improvement work had been completed.

Dick asked who provided legal advice to the Protector? Trevor said if independent legal advice was needed, it may be possible to go to another local authority, or East Sussex County Council.

There were discussions about the former bathing pool site at West Marina, it was understood that not all of the necessary paperwork had been signed yet; it was acknowledged that this had taken some time.

Julia asked if the seafront drinking water fountains had been restored to use, following their shutdown because of Covid; Aaron confirmed that they had, although the new one at the Source Park had been damaged and was awaiting repair.

5 FEEDBACK FROM ISSUES ARISING SINCE THE LAST MEETING

No planning/land issues had arisen since the last meeting.

6 FORESHORE TRUST ITEMS (papers for 18th October meeting)

Questions were raised about the use of reserves, and the reserves policy, and whether the reserves were too high? The Protector said it had been good that there had been sufficient reserves to get through pandemic, we would have been in a very difficult situation if we hadn't had sufficient reserves. He confirmed he would be talking to finance officers about the level of reserves.

Dick asked that CUG be consulted on the new business plan. He absolutely accepted that old plan had had to be 'ripped up' because of Covid, but he was keen that the group be part of the discussion about the new business plan, and not be presented with it as a fait accompli.

Action :- Kevin to raise with colleagues

Paul also made the point that he accepted that the priorities had changed over the past two years.

7 COASTAL ITEMS UPDATE

Aaron gave an update on phase 3 of the sea defence works, which had concentrated on the groynes between the pier and west St Leonards. Around 48 bays' worth of work had been completed, this had been more intensive than had been expected, but it had been completed on budget.

Melanie asked about reprofiling the beach outside the sailing club, as they were trying to make sailing more accessible. The current profile made it very difficult to manoeuvre boats up the beach. Paul Carter offered to talk to Melanie about how the East Hastings Sea Angling Association had handled a similar problem, which had also affected the nearby Hastings & St Leonards Angling Association, who they had also helped.

ACTION :- Paul to talk to Melanie

Dick Edwards introduced his paper on Southern Water (SW), and HOTRA's views on how compensation should be paid. There was very considerable discussion about this. Christine made the point that she was disappointed that the beach hut owners hadn't been consulted about it, and also that the recent incident had been caused by a broken pipe :- it was not the deliberate discharge of sewage into the sea which had led SW to be fined £90m earlier in the summer. Although the damage had been devastating, Christine said that she felt SW had genuinely been trying to sort the problem.

This led into a related detailed discussion about bathing water quality, misconnection of plumbing systems, the confusing number of different apps, how the water was tested, what it was tested for, and what basis the red flags were flown by the lifeguards.

It was agreed that the best way forward was to invite both SW and the Environment Agency to the next meeting, to explain their roles, how bathing quality water was being improved and how it was monitored, etc. It was agreed that we should ask SW for a copy of their report into the recent Bulverhythe incident in advance of the meeting, so attendees could make the most of the

opportunity to question them. Paul made the point that it was intended as a genuine fact-finding, learning exercise, and not as a witch-hunt against SW.

Action :- Abbie to invite SW and EA colleagues to next meeting

8 MEMBER UPDATES

Chris said that the summer had been one of the strangest ever, turning into one of the busiest ever as the pandemic restrictions eased, with July and August being around 30% up on a usual year. He also acknowledged the help he'd received from HBC, who he said had been brilliant, providing lots of useful advice and help. He was looking very optimistically going forward, and he was looking at large development of part of the site. They had undertaken some informal consultation and had submitted a 'pre-app' to the council, and would be looking to submit full planning application in March. He would talk to CUG before then, then leave the room so that the item could be discussed frankly without him being there.

Dick advised that HOTRA had a new chair, Sam Taylor. He also handed round brochures for their forthcoming Storytelling Festival.

Anne thanked everyone for their support for Hastings Old Town Carnival Week; it hadn't been quite as normal, but lots of events had taken place. The Fishermen's Museum was still open every day, and they were hoping to keep it open every day throughout the winter, but this depended on visitor numbers.

John advised the meeting that ESCC were looking at making changes to the seafront junctions at White Rock and Albert Road.

Paul said the club were looking to submit a planning application for their marquee on their outdoor area, if one were still needed under the latest planning guidance.

9 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Provided the charity committee takes place on Monday 13th December, the next CUG meeting will be held at the East Hastings Sea Angling Association at 1800 on Tuesday 7th December.

Meeting closed at 2015