

# Hastings & St Leonards Coastal Users Group

Monday 7<sup>th</sup> March 2022

East Hastings Sea Angling Association 1800 hrs

Present:

Paul Carter, Chair

Christine Boulton-Lane – West of Haven Beach Users Association, Vice Chair

Chris Richards – Hastings Adventure Golf

James Cook – Protector

Melanie Clark – Hastings and St. Leonards Sailing Club

Di Cooke – Hastings Voluntary Lifeguards

Cliff Meaden – Hastings Windsurfing/EPIC Life

Peter Wheeler – Hastings District Canoe Club

Hugh Richardson – RNLI

Andy Davey – RNLI

Sarah Milne - RNLI

Di Cooke – Voluntary Lifeguards

Will Stevens – Goat Ledge

Anne Scott – Old Hastings Preservation Society/Fishermen's Museum

Cllr Karl Beaney – Hastings Borough Council

Cllr Julia Hilton – Hastings Borough Council

Ruby Crowhurst – Town Deal - Hastings Borough Council

Kevin Boorman – Hastings Borough Council

Aaron Woods – Hastings Borough Council

Abbie Williams – Hastings Borough Council

Sarah Crosby – Hastings Borough Council (notes)

## 1 WELCOME, INTRODUCTION AND APOLOGIES

Paul welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were received from, Nick Paige (Environment Agency), Steve Peak (Friends of Hastings Country Park), Dick Edwards (Hastings Old Town Residents Association), and Councillor Claire Carr (Hastings Borough Council).

## 2 Chairman's Review of CUG Going Forward

It was agreed that the CUG operated a good powerful sounding board and has key players on the committee, however there were some issues that need to move this group forward:

### Constitution

As this was drawn up about four years ago it was agreed that it would need to be reviewed. Abbie would circulate a copy to all members of CUG, asking for comments and then a small subgroup of Di, Christine, Anne, Andy, and Abbie would meet up and form a new draft to be circulated back to the group. Need to include membership list in the document, and the Task and Finish Group. Also, Abbie's job needs to be included. Discussion about swimming, cyclists, runners, anglers to be included.

### Membership

The group has a large distribution list but not all members attend meetings or provide information which is disappointing. Other groups were mentioned for CUG such as the various swimming groups, the cycling groups that use the prom as do groups like Hastings ParkRun.

### Task and Finish Group

This was created to form a working group to help deal with issues that CUG had with Hastings Borough Council. It worked well for many issues but still needed CUG to approve the recommendations.

### Define Liaison officer role

Abbie should be the 'virtual noticeboard' for members to contact and pass on any information to members.

Abbie would like members to keep her updated and share any news including any upcoming events.

Abbie would like to assure members that they can contact her via email at any time and she will help with any issues, though she may not have the answers herself, she will endeavour to find out who does. She will also be arranging more regular informal face to face 'catch up's' now we are allowed to meet up in person.

## **3 Town Deal Overview**

Ruby Crowhurst from Hastings Borough Council attended the meeting to provide an update on the latest news:

- The programme has officially been granted £24.4 million from the Government's Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.
- The programme is currently in the stage where projects are moving from early development into the creation and submission of their 5-case business cases. We've had three business cases approved, with a couple more currently in the pipeline.
- The three projects approved are:
  - FreedomWorks, a flexible working company who are going to use space in the town centre for co-working offices.
  - Churchfields Business Centre, which is a sustainable new business centre mainly aimed at small businesses. The construction is already taking place and is due to be finished in the next couple of months.
  - The New Look building in Priory Meadow which has now been turned in to a job centre.
- However, because of changes in the project development stage, we now have some unallocated funds and we've decided to do a call for projects for a minimum of £400,000 worth of town deal funding. The projects have to be in the town centre and asking for a minimum of £200k. The application was launched in the middle of last week.

If you want to follow what's going on with the programme you can follow us on social media or check the website [www.hastingstowndeal.co.uk](http://www.hastingstowndeal.co.uk)

Any further questions can be emailed to [towndeal@hastings.gov.uk](mailto:towndeal@hastings.gov.uk) or direct to Ruby at [rcrowhurst@hastings.gov.uk](mailto:rcrowhurst@hastings.gov.uk)

Paul encouraged everyone to look at the website and get in contact with Ruby.

## **4 Member Updates**

Agreed that a small update from all members should be on the agenda – short summary from all members ahead of the Agenda being circulated - especially if they are unable to attend would be helpful.

#### Aaron/HBC – Coastal Work

The work was already planned well in advance of any storms but coincided well with the weather recently, notably Storm Eunice. There is heavy plant on the beach and additional plant has been brought in to help with the tidy up work needed such as moving shingle from the prom and car parks. So far, they have cleared 10,000 tonnes of beach. Work is being planned to open up sluice on groyne 3 to help replenish the beach.

The work behind all of this is based on regular surveys. These are being carried out by the end of the month and he is happy to share the results once available.

Paul mentioned the letter to CUG from EHSAA that was circulated with the agenda explaining that over the recent years the shingle had increased to much it had caused major problems for the club, and they had incurred expense in trying to remedy it. It is a major concern for costs and time to the club and would like to see the survey results. They would like to know who to challenge about the work as it does not improve the beach.

Aaron explained that our situation is not just because of the sea defence works but also climate change. We have had storms recently like no other years and the shingle movement across the town will affect the beach in the future.

There were various comments about the beach profiling and that is it dramatically affecting business including that of the RNLI who mentioned that during the works it has softened the beach so that they could now only launch from west side. Kevin will liaise with RNLI.

Volunteer lifeguards also raised the issue that they have had problems getting the boat up the beach using the quad bike – the practical element is being affected.

The council's 'experts' are from Canterbury, and it was agreed that a meeting would be set up for CUG members (and others) to meet with them and have an informal chat and pass on local knowledge. It would be held at 6pm at the EHSAA. Kevin and Aaron to arrange.

#### Di – Voluntary Lifeguards

Di has managed to run courses and work with the RNLI carrying out revalidations etc and Youth into Action. More events are being planned this year so will look at safety cover for them. They have had more capital expenditure this year and it will be more again next year. Pool training costs have gone up at Summerfields and the training room is no longer available which causes a problem for dry side training for all ages.

They are celebrating their 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this year and like to have several events, which can increase their membership.

#### Peter – Canoe Club

The sewage leak at Bulverhythe did impact on them last summer along with Covid as they normally hold a lot of training events. Shingle along West Marina has been replenished and it's stable. Noted that when they move along to Fairlight cliffs there is a lot of shingle movement. Aaron explained that there is no sea defence beyond groyne 1, it is left to erode naturally. There are good dinosaur footprints along this part but over the winter, 30 small prints have been lost.

#### Cliff – Hastings Windsurfers

Have had the joy of having up to 10 seals follow them on last paddle. They are in the process of trying to take over the toilets by pier and set up a charity to do this. Ongoing process to get sorted. Noted that of his 10 qualified staff, many are women, and more men needed.

Christine – West of Haven Beach Hut Association

Beach huts have recently been the victim of break ins and vandalism. Hope it is a one-off. Have been fortunate to discuss this with the Police, and one local officer walks his dog that way when off duty to happy to monitor that. Aaron to check that the Police have a key for the barrier. Beach Hut committee member would like to have security cameras. There has also been a lot of graffiti covering the beach huts.

Dog mess has been raised as at the moment the council do not have their Public Space Protection Orders in place as they had elapsed. They are currently being reviewed.

Bathing Pool site continues to be a worry as not sure what the future holds for that area.

Chris – Hastings Adventure Golf

Chris was pleased they had a good last quarter. Staycations and more regular visitors have helped with this. They recently held a successful competition with over 100+ players from all over the country taking part. Also has the issue of graffiti but the key thing is to stay on top of it. Planning application is still with the council – hopes it will be discussed at April meeting. Any members wanting to discuss or have further information Chris is happy to talk to them. Like CUG members to share their events as they have a very good following on their social media and happy to include information. Lot of events also at [visit1066Country.com](http://visit1066Country.com) but only lists the larger events.

Anne – Fishermen's Museum/History House

Fishermen's Museum have completed the net shop repairs as work needed to be carried out. The council budget for this has to be confirmed. The council are establishing a fishing committee which should help sort this and oversee the programme for repairs to net huts.

There is a bad one which the council area aware of. Kevin explained that we are in the middle of currently changing our contractor for repairs, but our building surveyor is aware of the work and hopes it will be sorted as a priority.

Anne informed the group that History House has changed its exhibition for 'Titanic connections' and 'Domestic Servants in Hastings Cemetary'.

The Fishermen's Museum are displaying the George Woods photos for carnival week.

Hugh – RNLI

In the process of recruiting. Will be holding an induction in April (face to face this year).

Opening camber central in Easter and weekends in Hastings, but full time in the peak season.

Andy – RNLI

The Lifeboat Station has a planning application in for new roof and windows.

Recruiting has been harder but preparing for a busy season (tractor drivers needed!), especially with migrant channel crossings. The RNLI are putting in more resources as the Border Force are struggling. Their aim has always been to save lives at sea. Seen a few mental health issues recently and this has been a problem along the coast.

They are pleased that they have an exercise planned with the Coastguard Helicopter, and they hope to be able to open for tours again this year.

Sarah -RNLI

Sarah explained that she is the water safety officer. Like to work closely with community partnerships on prevention for water safety training.

Cliff mentioned that he tried to arrange water safety training, but this did not work out – agreed that Sarah would liaise with Cliff on this.

It was suggested that there could be a water safety working group.

Sarah very interested in giving training and a number of groups agreed with this. Need to include fishermen/fishing competitions etc. (noted that it would be good to have the dates of fishing competition from the Hastings Angling Club)

Melanie – Sailing Club

Racing to start at the end of the month. Has been liaising with the Foreshore team and Aaron over the winter and wanted to thank them for their help.

Sailing struggles with getting women into sailing so looking at women only taster days to increase membership. It is World Sailing Week from 20<sup>th</sup> May.

Like to engage with other water groups and Shorething was mentioned as this proved very successful in 2001. Look at this going forward. Kevin is happy to facilitate/co-ordinate, but not organise.

Will – Goat Ledge

Mentioned that he is a swimmer and reported that some 200-300 regularly swim at St Leonards. He felt they needed to be included in CUG. Will and Abbie to liaise about how to include them, perhaps with messages on their WhatsApp groups as we have 2/3 groups in the area.

Paul – EHSAA

The club have a planning application into the council for their marquee but waiting for decision.

## **5 Feedback from Issues arising since last meeting**

Feedback about Southern Water was generally good but the follow up has been a struggle. Just today they have sent through to the council their update, which Kevin and Aaron will look at and send a summary to CUG.

Melanie asked if the Bathing Water quality testing was going to be increased this year but due to funding the Environment Agency will not be increasing the number of tests.

Melanie also asked about the electronic boards being kept on for the evening for water quality as it helped not only evening sailing but other water activities such as the swimmers. RNLI/Aaron to look at this.

Aaron reported that St Leonards bathing water quality had retained its excellence status and Pelham beach has increased from sufficient to good. Camber will not be having a blue flag this year.

James thought the presentation from Southern Water was good and learnt a lot from it.

Stade Amusement footpath was mentioned – there has been no update. The latest planning application from them appears to dismiss the footpath. There has been no consultation. The fencing looks unsightly. There was also a discussion about the 'big wheel' being parked on the beach. It is not legally able to park there, and no action has been taken. Kevin to raise with the legal team/estates department.

## **6 Foreshore Trust Charity Committee Agenda**

Kevin asked the group if they had any questions on the document circulated.

There is a large surplus this year, and the small grants look small. The way it is presented throws the accounts into a deficit. P27 showed operating profit, but the small grants added on to this makes it a loss. Estimated to the end of the year £49K loss – is this right?

Next year 2022/23 shows a £99k deficit.

Income/resources of £59k is wrong.

Year to date income is £1.2m, which looks wrong, estimated another £59k – misleading so outturn is £49k surplus after grants for this year. For following year, it is shown as £99K loss. Is this phrasing of grants?

The large grants are not listed

KB will take these comments back and Abbie will send the large grants information to CUG. Group were surprised at the large amount of expenditure on facilities that are leased out – White Rock Baths is showing a huge expenditure, but there must be income from The Source and outlets for that. Stade Hall is another example. Believed that it is shown under income but will check.

P 18 – what is VCSE – Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise.

The group asked how and who determines the reserves, what is it based on? Minimum reserves under 900K but this report show still increasing reserves. James happy to ask this question. Felt that they need to consider increasing small grants, which had 69 applications – (and given time with pandemic) they still go have large amount in reserves which could be spent on other things and for the community.

Charity is good for the people of Hastings and not necessary to have a large reserve. James reported that the income for the parking on p21 was much reduced on previous years but the position had got better recently and bounced back.

Kevin explained that the accounts not been produced yet but at the next charity committee meeting although we can't have an AGM there will be an 'Annual meeting', where public can ask questions.

Report also show works planned for Rock a Nore car park – Kevin to ask Paul for dates and will let CUG know.

## **7 Items to be discussed**

Christine raised the issue of the Bathing Pool site. Like to be kept up to date with information and support of CUG.

Cllr Beaney explained that an agreement has been signed for the area for 152 residential units and some commercial units. This will undoubtedly cause more traffic in the area and it is causing a lot of concern. Surveys are currently being undertaken and the winning tender company have agreed to hold a full public consultation before planning application is submitted.

Members agreed they needed to be included and up to date on this to help support Christine and would remain on the agenda.

Paul informed the group that Richard Read has sadly passed away and his service is on the 1<sup>st</sup> April. He was a boy ashore, former lifeboat crew and used to be one of the net menders at Seafood and Wine Festivals.

Discussion on the Art Gallery being gifted to Hastings's people. Kevin explained that nothing will change as Hastings Cotemporary will continue to run it in the same way with a full repairing lease. Lease will be between Hastings Contemporary and Hastings Borough Council. This is being discussed at Cabinet meeting this evening.

Papers are at

<https://hastings.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s46559/Draft%20report%20to%20Cabinet%20-%208%20Feb%202022.pdf>

It was asked if the lease could be amended to include extended opening hours as they only open 3 days a week – this would help all other local attractions and felt not unreasonable to enforce it.

Paul mentioned that Tush Hamilton has been making miniature replicas of the whole area, and its amazing. Like to have them on display, but Stade Hall were asking full commercial rate. Anne was happy to host in the History House, sounds like a good attraction and talk. Suggested Carnival Week through to Hastings Week, as both have programmes that could help advertise. Kevin to liaise with Tush and Anne.

## **8 Date of Next Meeting to be confirmed.**

Paul thanked everyone for coming to the meeting,

Meeting closed at 1958