



## **PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Parties reach consensus at by-election war that could swing council Battle for Hastings Pier triggers a New Political Era**

The three main political parties reached consensus tonight during a by-election war in front of a packed meeting at Blacklands primary school and independently chaired by Stephen Kearney of Regenerate Trust. The Conservative Party, the Liberal democrats and Labour pledged to definitely push ahead with the compulsory purchase of Hastings Pier after Officers had suggested that a CPO was unlikely.

To rapturous applause from audience the three political parties representatives pledged their party to give approval in principle at the first opportunity and to seal the CPO subject to funding.

Simon Corello the Chair of the Conservative Constituency and candidate for St Helens ward said “The Trust has shown immense leadership we should not be putting up barriers to entrepreneurs like these. The Council should have done this themselves – would you like me to give them a kick up the rump?”

The meeting, that was specifically designed by the Trust to bring democracy closer to the people of the Borough said yes unanimously to Mr Corello.

One member of the public who attended the meeting said “That was the most exciting political meeting I have ever been to. The parties all agreed that they would put the needs of the people of Hastings before the needs of their political parties, I really feel as though this is the new politics for Britain being born in Hastings, just like television was.”

Nick Perry the Perspective Parliamentary Candidate for the Liberal Democrats said “The Trust have done great work to make the Pier a political issue in this by-election, which will determine the political balance on the Council. It has demonstrated beyond doubt that it has the passion and the know-how to take on the challenge of saving our Pier. HPWRT has made a compelling case that they alone, as a community trust, are best placed to take forward this work, but they

need the full backing of Hastings Borough Council to do so. I am 100% behind them – particularly their plans to make jobs and apprenticeships available to local people. The council must now get on with the Compulsory Purchase Order of the Pier. What remains to be seen is whether they can be trusted to do the right thing.”

Jeremy Birch, Leader of the Labour group said “By their efforts leafleting, campaigning and convening the public meeting the Pier Trust made the fate of the Pier an election issue in St Helens. I have given full backing to their call for the council to urgently commence compulsory purchase proceedings for the Pier. But for them to get the Tory candidate too literally sign up to this commitment just shows the power of their campaign.”

Jess Steele a Trustee said “We are now hopeful that this meeting will herald a new era of positive and practical collaboration to secure the future of the Pier. The Trust can bring in investments from outside Hastings, build partnerships and plough profits back into the Pier and the Town.”

**Contact: Stephen Kearney - 07970 830644**