

DECEMBER 09

Newsletter



Hastings Pier & White Rock Trust

Future HPWRT Events

Candidates Debate at Blacklands School

7th December. 6.30pm Film & information.
Debate starts 7pm

St Helens Ward Election

Voting: 10th December 2009

HPWRT Christmas Party

7.30pm – EGM Members only
8pm SATURDAY 19th December
at the White Rock Hotel.

Pier Petition

Hastings Observer has started an online petition. It has over 2,500 signatures so far. If you have not done so already please sign here:

<http://www.hastingsobserver.co.uk/news/hastings/Save-Our-Pier-Sign-the.5561417.jp>

The Battle For Hastings Pier Facebook Group

To keep in touch with events around the pier, you can join the Facebook group.

Not joined the Trust yet?

Forms are available from stalls www.hpwrtr.co.uk, Arthur Greens (opening soon) or contact Lesley. Annual Membership now £5.

Membership funds help keep us going.

Visit Our Web Pages

We have a fully updated web site www.hpwrtr.co.uk which contains lots of the information from the newsletter, past information as well as a photo gallery and discussion forum

DEBATE AT BLACKLANDS SCHOOL

HPWRT has organised a public meeting, 'Question Time', debate with three candidates from the St.Helen's Ward by-election. Michael Ward (Labour), John Tunbridge (Liberal Democrat) and Simon Corello (Conservative) will be on the panel

The Trust has been running a third party non-partisan campaign in the Ward for the past two weeks to raise awareness of the importance of Hastings Pier to the economic well being of the town. The campaign slogan has been 'The Future of the Pier is a Political Issue', which we feel has put this important topic to the top of the political agenda. It is a crucial by-election and this open meeting represents a rare opportunity to ask candidates questions, not just about the Pier, but all the other vital issues affecting Hastings.

An exciting new film on the 'Battle For Hastings Pier' will be shown immediately before the discussion

Date	Monday, 7th December 2009
Time	6.30pm for 7.00pm start with expected finish 8.30pm
Location	Blacklands Primary School Osborne Close, Freshwater Avenue Hastings, TN34 2HU

Refreshments available

Any questions you would like to ask let us know at info@hpwrtr.co.uk

ST HELEN'S WARD ELECTION

Following the resignation of the Conservative Councilor Keith Bing there is to be a by-election on Dec 10th, in the St.Helen's Ward (roughly in the middle of Hastings going from Alexandra Park up to the Ridge).

Hastings Pier & White Rock Trust is running a 'Third Party' campaign to focus attention on the Pier and ask all candidates to sign a pledge of support to start the Compulsory Purchase (CPO) process.

If anyone would like to help in the leafleting over the next few weeks drop me us line at info@hpwrtr.co.uk. We would be particularly interested in hearing from anyone who lives in the Ward. Poster material and information can be downloaded from our website www.hpwrtr.co.uk.

CHRISTMAS PARTY

The evening will start with a member's only meeting at 7.30pm. There are several changes made by Government that have to be altered in our Memorandum & Articles of Association. Plus we need to change our area of benefit. We need a vote by members to make these alterations. So please try and attend if you can.

Members, Supporters, Friends & Family are invited to the party from 8pm till 11pm.

OPEN TRUSTEES MEETING

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Hastings Pier & White Rock Trust

Thank you to everyone who turned up. It was great to see you all, your input is very welcome. The next open trustees meeting will be in March - we will send the exact date to you all nearer the time.



MEETING WITH MARGARET HODGE

Margaret Hodge, Government Minister for Culture & Tourism, visited the Pier Trust on Monday 16th November with Michael Foster MP for Hastings to discuss strategies for compulsory purchase of the pier with a back-to-back agreement to handover the Pier to the Trust.

Starting the compulsory purchase process would allow the Trust to make progress with external funding bids – at the moment without ‘prospect of ownership’ funders can’t look at the Trust’s plans. She has already told Hastings Borough Council that the Government sees no barrier to the Council undertaking Compulsory Purchase and she plans to write to them to encourage a more integrated approach to the seafront.



OUR REPLY TO HASTINGS COUNCIL'S PRESS RELEASE

Hastings Pier & White Rock Trust responds to ‘alarmist claims’ made today by Hastings Borough Council officers about the future of Hastings Pier.

“It seems to us that council officers are trying to scare the councillors and the people of Hastings by talking about the pier’s ‘imminent collapse’ and introducing the ridiculous figure of £50 million” said Jess Steele, Treasurer of the Trust.

Council engineers said the pier wouldn’t survive the winter of 2006 – it’s still there having made it through this weekend’s gales. Neither Giffords who undertook the last survey nor our engineers, who have detailed knowledge of Hastings Pier over many years, believe it is in imminent danger of collapse. The real risk to the pier is further dithering in solving the ownership problem.

The new figure being used by the Council comes from a rough cost estimate of the total restoration of the whole pier all at once and the creation of new tourist attractions. The Trust’s costing is £4 million to repair and reopen the Apron section – the same as the cost of demolition. By intensifying use of the Apron the Trust will generate income to undertake the repairs of the remaining sections over a much longer timeframe, working with local engineering and fabrication businesses to create local jobs, training and apprenticeships.

“We have always said that expecting a private sector solution was like waiting for a fairy godmother. The Michaels are quite right that there is no viable commercial case for a private buyer. Our approach is very different for 3 reasons: we don’t need to make a profit for shareholders; we don’t need to repair the whole pier at once; as a community trust we can access outside funds like the lottery for the restoration and the redevelopment. Most of all, our approach will be long term, not just until the next crisis. We hope, at last, the Council will engage properly with the Hastings Pier & White Rock Trust – it really is the only solution left.” said Felix Robinson, Chair Hastings Pier & White Rock Trust.