

HASTINGS & ST. LEONARDS SOCIETY

Promoting Our Heritage and Civic Pride

Website: www.hastingsandstleonardssociety.org.uk

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Newsletter: Issue 12 (26 March 2019)

West Hill (Hastings) Project Underway

It was recently announced in an e-bulletin and the Hastings & St. Leonards Observer, that H & St. L Society has been awarded a grant of £8,500 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund for our West Hill (Hastings) Local Heritage and Community Festival Project. Permission to start the project has been given, and the deadline for completion is May 2020.

A sub-committee of the Society has been set up to work on the project, which is to research the substantial local history of the West Hill area, and to organise a community festival to promote and celebrate that heritage. The area of research is from the Ladies Parlour northwards to just beyond Croft Road and Emmanuel Church. Hastings Castle is not included, as the history of this Grade I Listed ruin is already well documented.

The Grant will pay for the production of an exhibition, heritage trail leaflet, booklet (to be distributed free) and the events at the Community Festival. Oral history recordings will also be made as part of the project. **The Community Festival will take place over the weekend of Friday 20 – Sunday 22 September**, which corresponds with dates in the national Heritage Open Days programme. To open the festival there will be a free classical music concert at Emmanuel Church on the Friday evening. We have booked the highly-regarded Benyounes String Quartet to perform. Although the concert is free, seats must be booked in advance and we will announce when tickets have been printed in due course. Everyone taking a ticket must agree to use the ticket or pass it on to somebody who will use it. There will be an exhibition (work in progress) at the West Hill Community Centre on the Saturday and Sunday, guided heritage walk and various other events to suit all ages. Emmanuel Church is holding an Open Day on the Saturday, at which there will be a rolling slide-show of the Church's history and it is hoped to play some of the oral history recordings at that event.

We are pleased that there has been an enthusiastic response to the announcement of the project, with some people contributing reminiscences and eager to get involved with the research. Please do get in touch via e-mail (hstlsoc@gmail.com) if you have something to offer to the project. Updates on the programme for the festival and the progress of the research will be maintained on our website.

Annual General Meeting

The date for the Hastings & St. Leonards Society 2019 Annual General Meeting is **Monday 29 April, 6 pm start**. This is at the **White Rock Hotel (ground floor meeting room)**. Drinks purchased at the bar prior to the start time may be brought into the meeting room. We hope to see many of our members at the meeting – the Agenda for the AGM will be circulated to all members in due course. You must be a paid-up member (for the Society Year ending 31 December 2019) of H & St. L Society to attend the AGM, or the representative of an organisation with Group Membership. If you are not a member of the Society, or have yet to pay your 2019 subscriptions, there is time to rectify this: memberships details on the website (www.hastingsandstleonardssociety.org.uk) with subscriptions rates. The more members we have, the better we can operate for the good of the Town and its community.

Open Meeting of 25 February

The last H & St. L Society Open Meeting was very well attended, including some Councillors. The main topic on the agenda was the future of the St. Leonard's Church building and its surroundings. There was a presentation by Chris Lewcock of Hastings Urban Design Group followed by a general discussion. It was recently announced that due to the instability of the land, the building cannot to be used as a church – it has been closed for a considerable time. It is felt, therefore, that a scheme to secure the future of the building is urgently required. Chris also considered the church in the context of the wider landscape, calling on key authorities and organisations to play a part in working to save and enhance the building and its surroundings. He said "No action is not an option". More about Chris's thoughts on this topic are available on our website.

Also at that meeting Virginia Vilela gave a report on the West Marina Neighbourhood Group's concerns over the proposed development of the former West Marina Bathing Pool site. Virginia was due to speak on behalf of the residents group, which has been campaigning for on-going consultations with HBC and potential developers for the future of the site, at the Council's Cabinet Meeting on 4 March. There is a website <https://westmarina.org> and Facebook Page: St Leonards SOBS. If you wish to be put on the group's contact list, e-mail: viriniawrightuk@yahoo.co.uk

Other topics on the Agenda were an update on the scoping group's work on the proposal for a UNESCO World Heritage Status application for a site in the Borough, and Colin Booth's 'Diving Tower' sculpture project for the West Marina. See our website for more information.

We hope to have a date for our next Open Meeting agreed soon, and we have been asked to include a discussion on the plans for Hastings Pier at this meeting.

Coach Trip to Standen House and Gardens

The Society has arranged a coach trip to Standen House and Gardens (National Trust), near East Grinstead, for the tulip festival. This is on **Wednesday 8 April**. Cost for seat on the coach is £15.50 for members and £17.50 for non-members. Pay on the gate for admission (standard charge £12.60), National Trust members are admitted free. Members had priority booking until 22 March, and there are six places available at the date of this newsletter. Pick-ups at Ore Village, Hastings Old Town, Hastings town centre (seafront), Warrior Square and Silverhill. We are due at Standen at 11.30 am; depart 4 pm. Book by e-mail (stating if you are a NT member and your chosen pick-up point), and payment details will be given with confirmation of your booking.

Submissions invited for 2020 Calendar

We announced in our last Newsletter (17 February) that the Society intends to produce a calendar for 2020, featuring photographs of locations in the Borough appropriate for each month. Submissions invited. A free calendar will be given to each person with a photograph featuring in the calendar. Send your submissions as e-mail attachments, and don't forget to provide your name and give your photograph a title for inclusion on the calendar. We will contact successful submitters by e-mail for postal addresses to send prizes to, or you can include address with your submission. If you have photographs suitable for January and February, it is not too late to send these.

'Hastings Hideosities'

We now have an Ugly Buildings in the Borough feature on our website. Our treasurer, Eve, has provided the title: 'Hastings Hideosities'. One building that has been put forward is the Poundstretcher/Snooker Club building at the corner of Albert Road and Wellington Place in Hastings town centre. This building replaced the Castle Hotel. Any other candidates for the title of 'Most Ugly Building in Hastings and St. Leonards'? Send your photographs for our website.

Hastings & St. Leonards Society committee