

# hastings trust

issue 30 Spring 2008

news

## New Trust Director



photography Kevin Carías

**Mel Bonney-Kane is the new Executive Director of the Hastings Trust. Her last post was Regeneration Programme Manager with Hastings Borough Council. In this interview she explains the attractions of the voluntary sector and outlines her vision for the Trust.**

*Why leave the security of a statutory job for the risks of the voluntary sector?*

Today job security is relative and my background has always been the voluntary sector: in fact my first experience of the statutory was Hastings Borough Council. My last job before joining HBC was managing the East Hull wing of a community development charity – my work had always been value driven and coming to the Trust was like coming home rather than leaving any 'security'.

*What attracted you to the Hastings Trust?*

The Trust has a great and long-standing reputation – it's one of the most entrepreneurial organisations I've ever come across. The Trust has understood the need to work in a more innovative way within the development trust movement. It was centred on community empowerment, something close to my heart

*How will you build on the legacy of Christine Goldschmidt, the last Director? What are the challenges?*

Christine had a huge reputation. When I was at HBC I worked with her for about three years. We found that we shared a common approach: let the people regenerate the area through trust and enablement, a bottom up approach. Today there is a new funding environment and the challenge to move the third sector towards grant independence. A significant amount of core costs are met from the asset base that Christine had already begun to establish. One of my jobs is managing the Trust's assets so that the Trustees feel safe to take the risks to ensure the entrepreneurial spirit will continue and flourish. The Resource Centre will be improved, there will be more outreach work and I'll work to increase understanding at County level of the value of development trusts.

*What are your immediate plans?*

There is a pressing need to secure the Trust's financial position in a time of the passing of the big grant regimes.

*Continued next page*

# Christine in France

*After more than 16 years service Christine Goldschmidt gave up her directorship of the Trust and retired to France. She sent us this message.*

Fire salamanders creep to your door at night and the cats dine off mice and shrews in competition with a tribe of ferals. Owls flit about the barns and the fox sits in a den behind the house littering the ground with bits of pigeons.

When you were suffering with the cold and rain we spent days in the blazing sunshine, trimming the 36 foot box hedge, clearing brambles, dead trees and weeds high enough to form a small forest. Behind the barns I've attacked a 40 foot kiwi vine, which bleeds continually when cut but haven't the heart to start on the orchard until after the blossom has fallen.

I've dug out the space for a grand potager and have planted veg, flowers and fruit as a start towards self-sufficiency. Everything is seasonal here and local – no huge food miles. Food seems to be pig, pig and more pig with the occasional chicken – all raised in the open air and mostly organic. Hurrah! Dining out is a no-no unless you like crêpes which pall after a time, especially loaded with pork sausage. Cous cous – the favourite exotic food in Brittany – is freely available at the market on Mondays and at cous cous evenings...

The municipal election was great, with the lists of candidates easy to spot – vote for all at once – so easy. The local favourites (Lefts and Greens) came round to canvas our opinion on how to spend the money even though we can't vote here for two years. All very civilised. After 25 years of the Right, the new Maire is 30 years younger than the former incumbent and therefore more in tune with today's local values...which



*Mel (left) & Christine on Christine's last day at the Trust*

are not Sarkozy's. We pay very meagre local taxes [1/10th of Hastings] which pay for Breton bureaucrats to concentrate on the quality of life for residents and the environmental issues so dear to Breton hearts. Wind and water power galore...

Forced to communicate via telephone with the same inane music and press button idiocy as in England, sure woke me up to the poverty of my command of the French language. Virtually no one here speaks English – ooh good job too! I thought I'd use comics to improve my French and I've been reading Tin Tin in the original only to discover that some of the earliest adventures are extremely racist...The letters of Madame de Sévigné, thanks to Dennis, have been a life saver.

*Christine*

## New Trust Director (continued from front page)

*What are your longer term hopes?*

To make it the people's Trust – a true Community Anchor. A community anchor has five pillars on a foundation of good governance and financial security: the enhancement of the quality of life; taking people out of poverty and worklessness; asset acquisition and development; campaigning and lobbying; and building social capital through capacity building and social enterprise.

The voluntary sector is distinguished from the other sectors in terms of motivation – it puts values first, despite increasingly having to operate in a commercial environment. It aims to provide people with the skills and confidence which give them the means to get the best out of life.

# Innovative Finance

Since I took over from William Netley a year ago, I have developed the personal loan scheme backed by the department of Works and Pension.

The loan is available to those who are financially excluded from obtaining credit from the normal channels. This includes those who have a poor credit record and or are on a low income, which may be benefits. The aim is to stop them relying on obtaining loans from doorstep lenders who can charge them interest in the region of 177%, even though the weekly payments may appear small. It also enables them to get into the habit of looking after their money with a view to building up a fresh credit record.

Since we started the scheme we have received 466 applications requesting £223,382.

Of these 269 have been agreed with a loan value of £118,155. The loans range in value from £100 up to £1,700.

Other facts are:-

- Twenty five applications have come from the Rother area, the remaining from Hastings.
- Two hundred and twenty four have come from household with children.
- Twenty eight have come from the BME Community.
- Sixty six from those with a disability.

- Forty nine have come from those in employment

The demand for the personal loan is so great the diary for appointments is fully booked until the middle of June. One reason for the high demand is that in September 2007 the Hastings and Rother Bond Board closed. This resulted in a large gap appearing for those requiring a deposit to obtain a flat in the private rented sector.

During the last year we also introduced a 'Return to Work' loan. This was as a result of receiving applications for the personal loans for people requiring funds to obtain licences to secure positions, or even safety clothing. Following discussions with the Job Centre the loan was born. As to date we have received application for eight and agreed three for the value of £2,492.

Good working relationships have also been built during the last year, with the Hastings and Rother Credit Union, working to promote the service and savings offered by them.

We also work closely with the Citizens Advice Bureau, holding joint appointments and referring clients where we feel that it is appropriate.

*Brian Tanner*  
CDFI Loans Manager

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*Photographs by James Rose. See page 6 for more information*





# Resource Centre revamp

The Resource Centre's primary services attracted 5100 visits in the last financial year.

Soon there will be new computers in the recently redecorated centre and, after help from Hastings College and the Hastings Arts Forum, the Robertson Street will offer a new display space for local artists and students with a proper hanging system for paintings and photographs. Emma Jex, Hastings College lecturer, gave many hours of her time in planning, organising and painting the gallery space. Her students submitted 12 designs aimed at giving the gallery its own distinctive name, logo and décor. The winning design was selected by other Hastings College lecturers plus Trust staff, volunteers and board members. The Hastings Arts Forum, which has so dramatically raised the quality of life in St Leonards, gave advice on hanging (thanks to the great and tireless Sid Benyon) and other help.

## **Resource Centre services**

### **35 Robertson Street, Hastings Town Centre**

Broadband access (2p a minute); help and advice for IT novices; upstairs meeting space (pictured below); impartial information on work and volunteering (see article below); a contact point for Hastings Credit Union and the Trust's Innovative Finance offering Return to Work Loans and Personal Loans to those who cannot get loans from the main financial institutions (see page 3); net:gain, which helps the voluntary and community sector make the best of computer technology (see page 5); a new high quality digital colour printing service at very competitive rates. The paper version of this Newsletter was produced on the printer (details back page).



## Information & Advice

As part of the Community Anchor Strategy my service aims to take people out of worklessness into learning, employment or volunteering. The service has developed over a number of years establishing, increasing and enhancing relationships with a wide range of agencies. In the last year there were over 150 new clients, over 200 information and advice sessions and referrals to over 50 local agencies and services. Out of nine Trust resource centre volunteers during this period four went on to paid work.

I also facilitate learning and development opportunities for the Trust in-house staff and volunteers so as to enhance our provision in line with our aims and objectives. In the last few months our staff have had

further training to help improve our front-line services most particularly to those most in need of the most basic living support..

Anyone is welcome to phone me on (01424) 44637, email me at [heather@hastingstrust.co.uk](mailto:heather@hastingstrust.co.uk) or call into the resource centre between 10 - 5pm.

*Heather Smith*  
*Training and Development Co-ordinator*

# net:gain

Hastings Trust offer ICT Planning and Strategy support to local organisations

net:gain is a professional development programme that helps leaders of voluntary and community organisations take control of strategic planning and apply it to technology. net:gain is not designed for 'techies', but is for anyone who guides the strategic direction of their organisation: Chief Executives, Trustees or high level Managers.

The net:gain programme consists of up to three workshops as well as online support which enable participants to :

- Master a simple and effective Ten Step planning method
- Share issues with experts and peers
- Become a more effective leader of their organisation

Those organisations that undertake the development programme benefit from:

- A whole year's access to a support network
- A reference guide on how to develop their own ICT plan

- Templates and planning tools that will help them make the changes happen
- Mentoring and advice
- Demonstrations of technology that maybe useful to their organisation

And

- Discounts on training, services and equipment.

One years membership of the net:gain programme costs between £40 - £400 depending on the size of organisation

Net:gain is being managed and delivered by Hastings Trust in East Sussex.

If you are interested in finding out more about the net:gain programme or to book a place on the next workshop then please contact:

*Adam Clamp, net:gain Project Manager*  
*Email: [netgain@hastingstrust.co.uk](mailto:netgain@hastingstrust.co.uk)*  
*Tel No. 01424 446373*

net:gain...

For more information on net:gain please visit: <http://ruralnet.typepad.com/netgain/>

# OASIS

**Oasis is a one-stop shop providing community support, advocacy, individual support, information on health, activities and a community venue for residents to use for courses, social networking meetings, group activities and educational classes.**

As the summer approaches with the glorious weather we have had recently, we have put together a summer programme of activities for local residents. These include ten pin bowling, health information sessions, social walks, pub lunches, chair exercises and visits to gardens and stately homes. The wide range of activities are designed to increase exercise and knowledge about particular health conditions, help residents make new friends and have fun days out.

We were recently successful in a bid from the Capital Learning Fund, which has enabled us to purchase new equipment that will help residents in their learning.

Items we can now purchase include new computers, dual language books, a portable hearing loop, portable wheelchair ramp and voice activated software package. These items will mean that students can have more resources to help them in their studies and that we can deliver computer and internet use. The hearing loop and ramp go towards increasing our accessibility at the centre.

The Oasis Befriending Scheme, which is funded by the Big Lottery, continues to help vulnerable residents in the Ore Valley. Residents on the scheme can look forward to phone calls and home visits each month, and can be accompanied to attend outings and activities.

*Jackie Gaunt, Co-ordinator*

# Green Team

Its full steam ahead with re-pointing masonry in the belfry thanks to a gift in the shape of scaffold. Now we proceed without the impediment of not being able to reach inaccessible areas. The poor state of walls is worse than observed from below; most damage has occurred by unceasing gales funnelling through gaps between the shutters. This erodes soft sand stone and coupled with salt accelerates its decay. With so little good quality stone face surviving the main thrust of our work is consolidating the most severely affected places. We seem to have intervened just in the nick of time!

Throughout the summer a great deal of my spare time was devoted to a fund raising exhibition at Hastings Arts Forum, where I joined ranks with Nigel Harvey to showcase a plethora of eye-catching photographs and paintings. A vast quantity of art was sold to help the cash strapped Green Team and a whopping £1655 was raised. The event reaped success in other areas such as promoting our projects and the Trust. We stirred interest in what we do through art and struck a chord with like-minded people who care for their environment. And we even made time to help Trade Paints spruce up their garden at 55 High Street in Hastings Old Town by refurbishing rusty railings and renewing benches and handrails. We were thrilled when they announced it was awarded best garden in Hastings in Bloom.

*James Rose  
Environmental Projects Officer*



***Deforested Jail*** by Nigel Harvey, James Rose's fellow fundraising exhibitor. Below are recent examples of James' own photographic work.





# hastings **trust** vision

'To create active partnerships between the public, private, voluntary & community sectors and to enable them to work together for the economic, environmental & social regeneration of Hastings'

The Hastings Trust, a registered charity, has these aims:

- To help those who live, work or visit here to care for the environment.
- To help the local economy to flourish in ways which won't spoil the place for those who come after us.
- To spread the word to all concerned about how best to regenerate the town and, at the same time, conserve all that's good in it.

If you would like to know more about the Hastings Trust, or would like to help in some way, please phone 01424 446373 or call in at our Resource Centre (open 10am to 5pm Mondays to Fridays),  
The America Ground, 35 Robertson Street, Hastings, TN34 1HT

# hastings **trust** membership

Membership of the Hastings Trust is open to both individuals and organisations.

Individuals - anyone aged 18 or over in the Borough of Hastings District or Rother or any other place at the Board's discretion. Organisations - any organisations at the Board's discretion. The Board of Management comprises up to six members elected by the Individual Members, up to six elected by Organisational Members, one nomination by Hastings Borough Council, one by East Sussex County Council, and one by English Heritage.

Membership benefits include:

- Entitlement to vote at Annual General Meetings to elect Board Members and determine policy
- Receipt of annual report
- Receipt of newsletter and other information on Trust activities
- Invitations to Trust events

I/We \_\_\_\_\_  
(name of individual or organisation)

of \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(address)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(telephone/fax)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(email)

apply to become a member of the Hastings Trust, a company limited by guarantee. I/We agree to be bound by the company's memorandum and articles of association

(available for inspection at the Trust's offices) and any rules made under these. In the event of the company being wound up whilst I am a member, or within one year thereafter, I agree to contribute such amounts as may be required, but not more than £1.00.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Position in organisation (if relevant) \_\_\_\_\_

Payment may be made by cheque or cash

Individual membership £10 per annum £ \_\_\_\_\_

Students, Senior

Citizens, Unwaged £4 per annum £ \_\_\_\_\_

Organisation Membership £20 per annum £ \_\_\_\_\_

Donation £ \_\_\_\_\_

Total £ \_\_\_\_\_

Payment may be made by cheque or cash:

I/we enclose a cheque for £ \_\_\_\_\_ payable to 'Hastings Trust'

I enclose cash totalling £ \_\_\_\_\_

I do/do not require a receipt (Please delete as appropriate)

Please return this form with your subscription to:

Peta McGarry, Hastings Trust, 35 Robertson Street,  
The America Ground, Hastings, E Sussex TN34 1HT

Tel 01424 446373 Fax 01424 436740

E [peta@hastingstrust.co.uk](mailto:peta@hastingstrust.co.uk)

# new digital printer service

The paper version of this Newsletter was printed and bound on the Resource Centre's new digital printer – more examples of colour quality below. We can copy from paper or print from disc. Paper with greater opacity produces superb results. We can produce centre stapled A4 & A5 booklets/brochures up to 25 pages.

Our prices are highly competitive

Prices per side (double-sided printing available)

A4 black and white: 10p; A3 black and white 20p

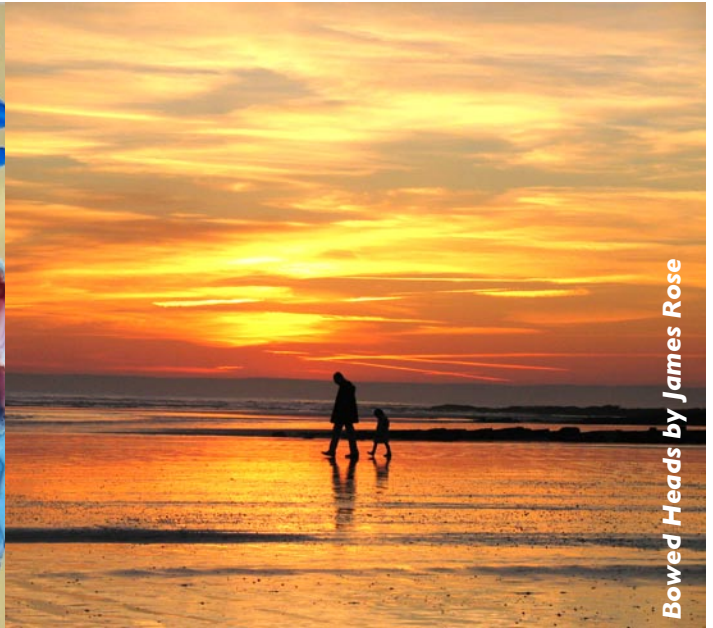
A4 colour: 80p; A3 colour: £1.60

**For our other Resource Centre services see page 4**

The Resource Centre is at 35 Roberston Street open 10am–5pm Mondays to Fridays. Ring 01424 446373



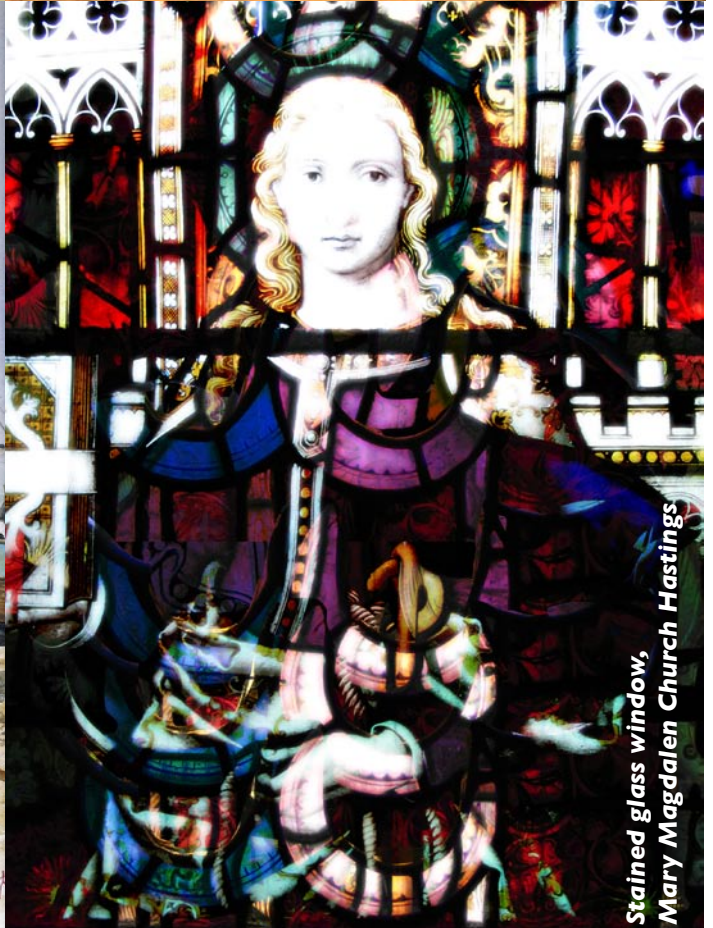
detail of flowers painted on perspex by  
Maureen Connitt



Bowed Heads by James Rose



Boats, Hastings by Nigel Harvey



Stained glass window,  
Mary Magdalen Church Hastings