

hastings trust

issue 32 Summer 2010

news



The main focus of Mel Bonney-Kane, the Trust's Executive Director, for the last year has been the **MyPlace** project, the £4.25m conversion of the beautiful and historic St Mary-in-the-Castle into a state-of-the-art youth hub.

Mel and the other members of the Trust team – Jodie Taylor, Youth and Community Engagement Worker; Carol Biggs, Assistant Director – are working intensively with the architects Jonathan Dunn Architects Ltd (www.jdarchitects.co.uk) on this ambitious project. Subject to final confirmation of the Myplace funding, this iconic grade 2* listed church will be converted into a vibrant and exciting youth managed arts and cultural facility which will create opportunities for young people whilst ensuring its continued operation as a community venue for the rest of the population. Young people themselves have been the driving force behind this exciting project and it is

hoped that we will be on site by the end of the year. See the illustrated proposals above and on the next page.

The projects for the last year build the Trust's aims as a **community anchor** (see page 3 for a diagrammatic representation): MyPlace strengthens community development and capacity building and improving the quality of community life, as does Creating Futures at **Linton Road training centre** and the training at Cambridge Gardens (page 4). A new project, **HELP**, that assists local jobseekers (page 8) and an expansion of the already successful **Innovative Finance** project (page 7) strengthens the commitment to providing routes out of poverty and worklessness.

Future Jobs Fund

Working with so-called NEETS (the Government acronym for young people Not in Employment,



Education or Training) is part of the Trust's commitment to community development and youth engagement. Hastings Trust is participating in Future Jobs Fund, a government scheme primarily aimed at young people under 25 who have been unemployed for 6 months; it provides them with experience of paid employment to help them secure more permanent jobs in the future. The Trust began with four Future Jobs placements working with Carol Biggs at Cambridge Gardens – Sam, Brendan, Grant and Joe (see page 4). A further six have since joined: a Volunteer Support officer Nick Calcott-James; two administrative support officers, Paul Ashdown to work with Mel and Lorraine Wrightson with HELP; and two Gallery Assistant posts based at the F-ISH Gallery. All posts are at national minimum wage and for 25 hours per week for a fixed term of six months.

Funding

The challenge of funding for the third sector has been increased by the knock-on effects of cuts elsewhere in

the economy. The Trust is seeking more entrepreneurial ways of raising funds: the training centre at Linton Road Arches has received accreditation as a training centre by the NCFE (Northern College of Further Education); and **Oasis** (Ore Advice Support Information Service - help to the residents of Ore Valley in Hastings) has taken one further step towards independence with funding from the Tudor Trust (see page 6).

Inspire

As part of supporting young enterprise, the arts and asset based development the Trust is triply happy to welcome **Inspire** at the Trust's 34 Robertson Street property. Inspire is, to quote the gloriously named Aaron Hosannah, one of its prime movers, 'a Social Enterprise dedicated to Artists and the growth and vitality of Arts and Culture in Our Community'. Its classes include clothing design, experimental art, 3D modelling, cartooning, illustration, ceramics, life drawing, poetry, oil painting.



A view of the public exhibition of the MyPlace project held at the F-ISH Gallery 5th–19th November 2009

The Hastings Trust is a Community Anchor, built on foundations of financial sustainability and excellence in governance and management. On these foundations are erected five building blocks that guide Trust strategy – all have grown stronger in the last year.

The five building blocks of a community anchor:

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Asset acquisition, development and management | 4. Quality of life – environmental, social and cultural regeneration |
| 2. Routes out of poverty and worklessness | 5. Lobbying, advocacy and partnership development |
| 3. Community development, cohesion and capacity building | |

The diagram below indicates how the building blocks are being strengthened. One of the enduring powers of the Trust is its ability to create links across what in more bureaucratic organisations remain compartmentalised. The diagram can only indicate the weave of connections.



Mel & Simon



Mel Bonney-Kane and Simon Hedges – the Senior Curator and Director of the close to the Trust F-ish Gallery – celebrated their wedding on February 5th this year. The reception was on Pelham Beach before St Mary-in-the-Castle.

A personal thanks to everyone who came to help us to celebrate our special day with fish, chips and champagne on the beach in true Hastings style... even the weather was kind to us, with the warmest February day I can remember. A most memorable culmination to the most romantic engagement which started with Simon proposing to me last year down on one knee in our favourite lunch-time venue, Harris in the Old Town.

Heartfelt thanks to all xxx

Mel

Skills2Build

John Denham, Secretary of State for Communities, Michael Foster MP and Carol Biggs at Cambridge Gardens



12 Cambridge Gardens on the market

After much hard work the eco refurbishment of the neglected Victorian Terrace property Cambridge Gardens has now gone on sale. The four-flat conversion is carried out to a very high environmental standard. Natural lighting through sun pipes plus highly efficient heating and appliances have been installed to show how carbon emissions could be greatly reduced in much of the existing housing stock. Running costs are guaranteed approximately 75% less than equivalent flats so helping in the fight against fuel poverty. Local tradespeople and suppliers have been used wherever possible.

The basement flat is nearing completion after the hard work of volunteers from Creating Futures, trainees and the Future Job Fund employees (see page 1) under the guidance of construction trainer Eric Moore.

John Denham, Secretary of State for Communities, accompanied by Michael Foster MP, dropped into Cambridge Gardens during their visit to Hastings on 25th March. They spoke to the Future Jobs Fund employees, three young men who helped to complete the conversion and renovation. The Secretary of State enquired about the schools they had been to, their job prospects and whether this scheme was helping them to gain new skills for a better chance of longer term employment. On the whole, the trainees are finding that they are learning a lot and enjoying the job but remain anxious about the lack of work around at present and just wish the scheme could last for a longer period.

Pathway to Construction

For the fourth year running this festival-like event celebrating the range of career opportunities in construction will be taking place on 5th June in Alexandra Park. As in previous years, a number of schools in and around Hastings are busily working with

local contractors to design and build their entries to the School Construction Challenge. Bands are being signed up to provide the music, so far *Rich Lown* and *My So Called Life* are strong possibilities.

The environment will figure strongly with a solar powered dome for workshops and displays, the EcoFab international project involving sharing heritage and environmental building skills with local and French partners teaming up, and other displays of renewable energy. Local contractors work hard throughout the year with us, the college, and HBC to make this an event that has something for everyone.

Courses at Skills2Build

Finally we are able to open our doors to the public and offer courses run by other organisations. Parity EcoSolutions, the organisation that planned and managed our eco-refurbishment are running a series of energy awareness sessions at our training centre in 1, Linton Arch, Braybrooke Terrace. Parity Projects has developed the first nationally accredited courses for low energy refurbishment available in the UK. Some places are free if you are unemployed.

Carol Biggs, Assistant Director



Resource Centre



The Resource Centre is becoming an important hub for all those seeking to improve their employment opportunities: the Centre functions as a regular drop-in for JobCentre Plus; HELP (see page 8) offers careers advice on Thursdays as well as the weekly Monday Club with full assessments and interviews available to help jobseekers increase their self-confidence and improve prospects; and the latest job vacancies are posted in the window of the Resource centre.

The Credit Union continues to use the Centre as a collection point and Innovative Finance also offers a regular drop-in. See the diagram on page 2 for how all these streams flow into aiding the Trust strategy of

combating poverty and worklessness

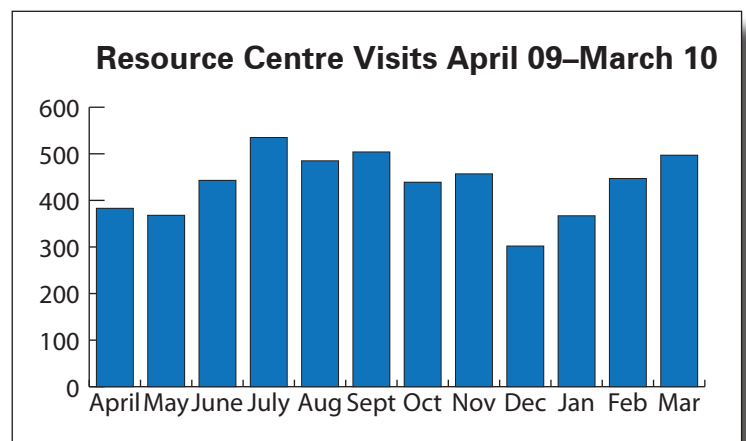
The Centre maintains its offer of inexpensive colour printing and internet access 10am to 4:30pm Monday to Friday and visitor numbers are high (see graph).

Volunteers & Future Jobs Fund

As part of the Future Jobs Fund, volunteers will be getting extra help thanks to the Future Jobs Fund with a paid Volunteer Support officer and, for the first time in the Resource Centre's history, a paid receptionist, Matt Nolan. Volunteers in the Centre put in over 3700 hours of time between April 2009 and March 2010.



The Resource Centre offers display space to local artists and photographers. Above, one of Heather Hookey's paintings from the last show themed on the derelict Observer building.



OASIS

Oasis is a one-stop shop providing community support, advocacy, individual support, information on health, activities & a community venue for residents of Ore to use for courses, social networking meetings, group activities & educational classes. Below, an Oasis outing.

New Premises, new beginnings

The Oasis Project moved from Malvern Way shops in January of this year, to its new location at the Broomgrove Community Centre 85 Chiltern Drive and is now a new community organisation the **Oasis Community Project- East Hastings**. Committee members and local residents feel this is a positive move forward for the Project. We feel there are new opportunities available for us to work with the Broomgrove Residents Association and other local organisations, perhaps, affording opportunities to do joint funding bids together.



The establishment of the 'Oasis Community Project -East Hastings' has already been very successful with funding applications, enhancing and developing our networks with local organisations, and exploring through residents surveys and feedback from our members who live in the East Hastings area, what other issues and needs that local residents feel that are not currently met.

Project funding

We have been successful in securing a grant for £60,000 from The Tudor Trust, this is for a two year period and this will cover the salary costs of the post holder 'Oasis Information and Communication Project Worker', and related costs to enable the post holder to be effective in this role.

Feedback from the Tudor Trust regarding our application was that their Trustees felt that the Oasis was doing much needed work and were impressed by the clear awareness of members needs, and by how the project creatively responds to the differing interests of the local community. They also made comments on the way we maximised our effectiveness by working well with other local organisations.

We are pleased that we have been successful with our funding bid and look forward to a positive future, and see the positive comments by the Tudor Trust as an endorsement of the work we do with the local residents from a community setting.

Other funding success from June of last year to present date has been; Awards for All, small grants from local authority, and a grant from Amicus Horizons.

Graham Butcher
Oasis Information and Communication Project Worker

A few statistics on the users of Oasis services from April 2009 to April 2010

- 30** Number of different outings and events that we were able to secure funding for
- 695** Approximate total of people that attended these outings from April 2009 to April 2010
- 450** The number of health related information requested and given out
- 280** Users of the Fruit and Veg project at Oasis on Tuesday Mornings
- 48** Number receiving advocacy and support
- 749** Visitors to Oasis for other services we offer
- 719** Number of BME students attending English classes
- 328** Meetings/groups

This is just a short summary of our user figures

Innovative Finance

Innovative Finance is the Trust's Community Development Finance Institution, which originally started granting small loans to Social Enterprises, but now offers loans to individuals who are unable to obtain finance through the normal channels i.e. the banks. The loans have been backed by the Department of Works and Pensions and in the previous years, but we are now using the recycled capital to continue the scheme.

In July last year we successfully made a bid to the Department of Work and Pensions to extend the affordable loan scheme into the Shepway and Ashford area of Kent. This enabled us to take on an extra two full time members of staff, Rhonda and Jeff.

The bid produced extra capital to lend and associated revenue.

During the last year we:

- Received 601 applications, of which 217 have been agreed. Last year it was 534 applications of which 150 were agreed
- Lent a total of £92,498.48 compared with £77,120 last year.

The 'Return to Work' loans to assist those in returning to full time employment are still being requested.

During the year we have agreed 2 loans totalling £1,740 from applications received. (Last year it was 4 loans from 4 applications amounting to £4,640.)

Three Money Advice course on behalf of the Fellowship of St Nicholas that were run last year have now finished as we now provide one to one advice when the client is interviewed, which enables the advice to be more tailored to the clients needs.

We continue to work very closely with Citizens Advice 1066, referring clients for whom a loan may not be the best option for their circumstances.

Other organisations we work closely with are Hastings and Rother Credit Union, HARC, East Sussex Credit Union, and KentSavers

Funding for the project has come from Hastings Borough Council via the Area Based Grant and also the Department of Work and Pension.

Brian Tanner, CDFI Manager

America Ground festival



A limited edition CD compilation of songs from America Ground Available on Independent Day.

The American flag was raised early in the 1800's as a symbol of independence from the Crown on an area of land reclaimed from the sea and outside the jurisdiction of the Borough. Claimed by the Crown and cleared in 1835, the land was developed by Patrick Robertson and number 35, the HQ of the Hastings Trust, was one of the first to be built.

Hastings celebrates Independent (*sic*) Day on Sunday July 4th. The Trust is member of the White Rock and America Ground Business Group hosting an event honouring the 1000 or so people who declared independence some 200 years ago. A stage in Robertson Street, outside the F-ISH Gallery will have live music from 2:00pm to 7:00pm. Acts so far include The Beachy Headbangers; JoLee; The Two Bob Band; Dave Sharp (The Alarm) and Eric Faulkner (Bay City Rollers) will be performing acoustic sets. Other events will be a Cheerleader Troop, Parkour Free Runners, a vocal group singing for Haiti, stalls, art exhibitions. The music will continue later in local venues. Come along and join in the fun. www.americaground.co.uk

A new Trust project – Hastings Employability Link Project (HELP) – builds links with local businesses and other organisations to develop tailored work placements for local people looking for work.



HELP began last year as a pilot scheme of Hastings Borough Council's Area Based Grants programme – its brief was to get 50 people into work placements with 25 employers. Eligibility criteria is broad: you can enrol if you are not economically active and living in the borough of Hastings; recommendation can be by an agency such as JobCentre Plus or you can apply individually through, for example, the Trust's Resource Centre in Robertson Street where HELP is clearly advertised. Once enrolled, you can have a 'taster' – a one day tryout at a potential work placement before committing yourself. Age is not a barrier: HELP is unique in its 16+ age range with no upper limit. HELP also offers organisations offering placements – small businesses and third sector in particular – help with health and safety assessments, funding first aid courses and training opportunities.

HELP is run by the Trust training and development co-ordinator Heather Smith with two new members of staff Ben Browton and Steve Shonk (see insets). The acronym HELP the publicity leaflets and the forms that monitor all aspects of the project were originated entirely in-house. Since the setting up period, HELP has placed 19 clients and, at the time of writing, seven have found jobs, with six

volunteering where they had done their work placements. Feedback from clients and the agencies HELP works with has been very positive. Eighteen employers have so far offered work placements. The carefully structured and supervised process allows clients to assess their own strengths and weaknesses through feedback from employers (time-keeping, team working, communications, initiative, etc) and by diary keeping. HELP also offers guidance on training and support to those who need it.

Monday Club

The Monday Club grew out of the local needs that were encountered in setting up HELP: from 2 to 4pm every Monday, a drop-in hosted by Steve and Ben aided by the experienced volunteers Martin Shillam, careers advice, and Hetty Austen development support. They offer a friendly welcome to all jobseekers and can help them enhance their self-confidence, improve employment prospects and create or upgrade their CVs.

For more HELP details go to www.hastingstrust.com and click on HELP.



Heather Smith, Training and Development, has a role that gives her a wide range of responsibilities. These include overseeing the running of the Robertson Street Resource Centre, monitoring training for staff and volunteers, ensuring the wellbeing of the volunteers and, since the end of last year, managing HELP. All this often involves exceedingly detailed work, much form filling, knowledge of current legislation and sustaining good links with local agencies.



Ben Browton (Personal Advisor) has an interesting CV, covering a wide-range of micro-employments over thirty years from hospital theatre porter to Exhibition Assistant to TV Presenter to vendengeur to Punk singer. Being an artist, he is especially aware of the need to be extremely flexible in the employment market, and to learn new and transferable skills in order to be attractive to potential employers. He has brought this wide-ranging knowledge of work to HELP, along with counselling skills which help him to listen objectively to the needs and the demands of clients in their search for meaningful employment.



Steve Shonk, is HELP's Employment Liaison Officer. As part of a previous role at the Prince's Trust he was adept at finding work placements and felt that this was an area he could develop. The liaison is with employment and other agencies, those offering placements and those

to be placed. This needs local knowledge, risk assessments, psychological understanding, patience and diplomatic skills not to mention a fund of vintage jokes.