

## **HEATHFIELD PARTNERSHIP TRUST LTD CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2014**

Chairman of the Parish Council, Cllr Patrick Coffey, Elected Members, Distinguished Guests, Fellow Directors, a very warm welcome to everyone attending this annual general meeting. As usual we have a number of requirements and formalities to conduct in the public eye for the Trust Company and very much appreciate these being witnessed by so many interested parties. Most of all it is the opportunity to account for all of our activities undertaken by the Partnership over the last year. It is also the right time to acknowledge the crucial role that our strategic partners contribute to the realization of so many objectives. The collective value in collaboration has frequently been at the heart of success and seems to be the envy of other Market Towns. This report will be recorded on our web-site for the Community to have access to and together with our Annual Company Report, the report to the Charity Commission and our Annual Accounts, that you have formally approved this evening; hopefully we are the very definition of transparency and accountability.

I should not pass by without thanking Alan Staples first of all for his generosity in being our Honorary Auditor and for being here this evening to take questions should any member of the Public or Board have the temerity to query any of our reported business this year. I have noted that he has generously assisted seemingly all the voluntary organizations in Heathfield and with his professional expertise provided them with invaluable guidance with their annual accounts. The Town needs to acknowledge this contribution to its wellbeing.

I would also like to publicly welcome our newly elected Director, Mr Richard Karn. He succumbed to our advances in February and will bring his expertise as a prominent businessman, Managing Director of the Courier Group in the South East and his association with the College as Chairman of Governors at the Community College. He has long been a member of the Sport & Leisure committee and has been a driving force behind that campaign. I will talk more about his new role later on in the report. We will also be conducting his formal approval as Director following the cycle of re-appointments that we do publicly every year.

In my current role as Cabinet member at the County Council, I am engaged in economic regeneration throughout the County. There are many different scales of development but frequently I hear complimentary remarks back about the way we go about our business in Heathfield. The spirit of cooperation is now set in practice and Heathfield continues to maximize its opportunities by working well together and where many Partnering organizations put aside egos to realize a greater good for the Town and its surrounding Parish. That is still not the case in many other Market Towns where component parts continue to be precious about their individual projects. Grant moneys are hard earned these days and ensuring

there is harmony of voice in their exploitation seems common sense to us in Heathfield.

At our core is the Parish Council and no matter how many voluntary organizations are invented to make a contribution we are dependent on a sound Parish Council. The journey this year has been a little rocky at times and reminded me of the importance of the solidity and goodwill of the centre piece of our structure. The Partnership was founded by the Parish Council in order to take advantage of grant offers not available to Councils. It has evolved over time through the steering group into a limited Company and recognition by the Charity Commission. The important link to remember is that it was set up by the Parish Council to operate as a distant link to the democratically elected body but always in Partnership. The alliance with the Chamber of Trade and Commerce has evolved through the necessity of coordination when we have been addressing the economy of the Town and its surrounds, one of the principle objectives of our charity status. The liaison with Rotary has again been one of common sense and mutual respect.

Our spirit of cooperation regarding planning matters has also been fruitful and most of the objectives sought have been agreed by the Wealden District Council albeit by various means of representation and persuasion. Those developments at Dream machines and behind the Police Station are now in motion and should realize a very positive asset, when completed, for the Town. Certainly an injection of energy for our retailers.

### Heathfield Events

It has been a Heathfield day today. I would start with the event earlier today "the Wealden or Heathfield Expo." This was magnificent and a credit to the Heathfield Area Chamber of Commerce who came up with this concept of promoting local business a few years ago and ran it again today. I was there for the opening, gracefully done by the Chairman of the Chamber, Trevor Goldsmith and he credited local businesswoman, Barbara Hibbert for the successful organization. I think that Joanne Aldous behind the scene was also instrumental in its triumph. The State Hall was packed with stalls and visitors. I met a number of influential People who attended from far and wide and that is a complement to our own Chamber and their initiative. I am told the turnout was sound throughout and hopefully this will benefit all those that took stalls. I would also acknowledge John Tolley's generous attendance at our own stand and the heroic efforts of the Heathfield Works! Team, Mentors and Graduates who helped put up all the stalls the night before.

I would mark our appreciation of the leadership of others in bringing prosperity to Heathfield. One of the great traditions has become the Le Marche event held on the August Bank Holiday Monday. This year beset by poor weather the organizers were heroic in putting on a magnificent show but as impressive, was

the huge number of People from the Heathfield area who stoically turned up to enjoy the stalls and celebratory music and arts that had been put on. This is a major drawing attraction for Heathfield and enables it to show off its wares to a much wider rural hinterland that surrounds the Town. Each year people are pleased to discover new shops and services available in the Town and they will return to take advantage during the rest of the year. We owe Parish Cllr Richard Ridley and his committee a great deal of appreciation for their hard work in taking this huge project on. We also owe Mrs. Gill Temple and her Twinning Association many thanks for their generosity in putting up the French Traders overnight as they come in to set up their stalls early on the Monday. How refreshing it is to see the increased number of Heathfield Shops who open their stores on the day to cash in on this invasion and advertise their products to a wider audience. The Heathfield Show, the largest Agricultural one day Show in the Country is again a prestigious event for the Town and its surrounds and is dependant on much cooperation from throughout the Community. This certainly helps put Heathfield on the map. Our Heathfield Works! Team again helped put up many of the stalls this year in foul weather. Miraculously the day itself went ahead under sunnier skies.

The Christmas Festival once again went ahead last November with huge collaborative spirit between the Partnership and Chamber and supported by the Parish Council. This is the most wonderful way of promoting the Christmas shopping season in Heathfield with colour and festivities and always one of our Primary Schools leading the way with Carols which draw a big crowd. Hopefully we have now found a way to control the number of Father Christmas's on parade. One year saw one at either end of the Town and quizzical children asking the inevitable question of the Parents.

The Tour de Britain whooshed through the Parish on September 13<sup>th</sup> and the peloton and its entourage of a convoy of bikes and cars and helicopters drew extraordinary crowds and a new fascination in neon coloured lycra. The television coverage may well entice people to visit this very pleasant area.

I noted that looking back at my files, this will be the 12<sup>th</sup> annual report that I have delivered as Chairman. I might steal a line from one of my colleagues at County, I have been a County Councillor for Heathfield for the whole of this century. I was endeavouring to make the report shorter but there is so much more to pack in. I am now going to lead into a brief summary of progress on our primary projects.

### ICT

10 years ago we launched our Public Information programme, noticeably before mobile phones and internet "gismos" became common place. Now the PIPs (Public Information Points) are no more, removed to recycling centers where they may be used for their component parts for the machines that have replaced them. The Heathfield web-site we launched, [www.Heathfield.net](http://www.Heathfield.net) has gone from

strength to strength. It too has had a major revamp to meet the ever evolving world of new gadgets, I pads and I phones which dominate the hits that we get, I think they now measure 75%. Joanne will be demonstrating the new look behind me on the screen as I deliver this report. We sought and secured just over £5,000 (from the lottery Fund) to revamp the design of the site and make it Ipad and I phone friendly in the way it is accessed. We have also added new photographic material promoting Heathfield and 21<sup>st</sup> Century are sponsoring a photographic competition at the College to achieve more beautiful landscape illustrations of our Town and its surrounds. We retired the Partnership mechanisms to a more background profile and highlighted news and current affairs in the Town. We have also separated all the Clubs and Societies from the Business listing so that they both can be more streamlined. We still need to help Heathfield Businesses promote their wares and services on their own web-sites. We can then make direct links to these sites and increase their hits dramatically. This is the modern way of being seen and our search engine access is second to none but it has not yet dawned on as many of our Commercial partners in the Town as we would have expected.

All in all, the whole site has had an uplift and hopefully can be much more dynamic in reaching the entire community that it serves. It has proven its worth for visits to the site from People planning to come to this part of East Sussex and researching their intended destinations. It is also the first port of call for Journalists seeking any reference to Heathfield which keeps us on our toes ensuring it is alive and up-to date.

One new innovation we are looking into is an APP on the College's new I pads for Students to have a direct link to the Youth Site which may well give that much more impetus. We are currently running at just under 7,000 hits a month and may well report on getting to just under 10,000 hits by next year.

The success has been the brilliant editorship of Joanne and the remarkable programming skills of Nick Potter and his staff at 21<sup>st</sup> century. A firm we lost to Uckfield because of poor broadband and are now hopefully winning back because they can re-establish on their original site in Cross in Hand with in excess of 80 megabits a second service. A very happy story for us all. .

#### Inward Investment

This Committee has taken on the role of the High Street regeneration and growth as well as dealing with our interests in development in the Town and its surrounds and bringing that together with the promotion of business interests in the community as a whole. We created the substantial economic case for the development now in motion behind the Police Station. We had long advocated the redevelopment of the Dream Machine gateway site and now that is in motion too. The Committee and all of its associates have defended free car parking vigorously on more than one occasion to ensure the lifeblood of the Town is protected. We should mark our appreciation of our District Councillors here

tonight who continue to protect that asset. We also have a visiting guest in District Councillor, Huw Merrimen who represents Rotherfield and who will know a great deal about local community Partnerships with the very successful Rotherfield St. Martins operation which is very much to be respected.

The Committee has sought finance for improved signage in the Town to assure visitors of easy pedestrian access to all parts of the Town and highlighting the car parks and numbers of spaces. In combination with Highway engineers it has created pedestrian crossings with disabled access provision and the mini roundabout that now makes smooth passage for all vehicles moving through the High Street and Station Road. It helped finance the hanging baskets and trees and street furniture that have made the Town look so much more appealing. We should acknowledge the fine contribution being made by the Parish Council in maintaining them. The Christmas lights are a fine investment in the winter months and this is a joint operation with the Chamber and again the Parish helped with the initial capital outlay. It has created noticeboards which are maintained in all of the car parks and in the centre of the High Street. These inform visitors as to what lies where and highlights news and helpful directions. The shoppers guide was created to promote all retail stores throughout the Town centre and to deliver these to all postal addresses in the Parish. These were also available to shoppers when visiting our stores. I think we created no less than three editions. This is updated and maintained on our web-site.

We have entered into the Wealden District Council "Streets Ahead" programme with enthusiasm and early assessment may see the promotion of social media promotion of the Town and all of its attractions through Facebook and Twitter or indeed a Town Guide App. Once again it will be only worth doing that if we are all going to cooperate. We have started those discussions with all stakeholders. Another ambition has been to raise an Enterprise Centre to help create new businesses opportunities with incubator units ideal for start-up businesses making their way in the commercial world. We had secured funding sufficient for two trenches of investment first £50,000 to open up a 10 unit ground floor development and a second phase of £28,000 to open up 12 units on the first floor of a central location in the Town. A very exciting "grow your own" businesses way of creating jobs.

The conversion of the building although already blessed with suitable planning permission now needed considerable building inspection conversion requirements which were alarmingly expensive. I would like to mark my appreciation of two stalwart experts who were adopted by the Committee for their professional expertise. Parish Councillor Patrick Coffey and his planning and building regulation knowledge and that of Horam Architect, Mick Stedman, Both generously gave of their time and guidance as a contribution to the merit of the programme in their community.

Whilst still wrestling with a solution to the various challenging problems which had delayed embarkation on this project the landlord was approached with a different proposition.

Many of you will now know that there is now an option to purchase the major retail premises of Goldsmith & Allcorn by the John Lewes Group in the form of a small Waitrose Supermarket. This is still subject to due planning process and with our association with the landowner, the Partnership will not comment on that consideration.

There is considerable irony that when the Budgen's franchise was failing and we had the central site to promote, I set out to entice interest in two Stores, Sainsburys and Waitrose. With help from Director Chris Macklin who knew the inside of the trade, I contacted both. One responded with interest, the other declined any response at all. It took a while to convince Sainsburys that we had the potential to justify their investment, I was keen to convince them that we had the naturally high disposal income shoppers, only at this time they were shopping away from Heathfield. If we could incentivize them back with a prestige supermarket, the footfall in the town would dramatically increase.

I was mighty relieved when Sainsbury's first quarters takings were well ahead of budget and they have been profitable ever since. What we had not envisaged was the arrival of Costa Coffee in the other end of Town. This later turned out to be as a direct result of the new Sainsburys, they follow the same marketing research. The number of meetings that now take place in Costas has ensured they are an integral part of the Town's Culture.

The Senior management of the Coop came all the way down from Manchester to discuss with Trevor Goldsmith and myself the implications for their store. We were quick to point out that we continued to support the Coop store, that they had been magnificent with support for the Swimming Pool campaign and all along had good relations with us with the Farmer's Market. We reassured the Manchester team that there was room for two, that they complemented each other and that the Heathfield Manager in post was doing a cracking job. It is important to re-iterate (as Manchester will be reading this report) that the Heathfield Partnership had no play in the Waitrose proposition. Now that Waitrose have woken up to the fact that we are a market deserving of their attention, now proven by the success of Sainsburys, the obvious question is whether we can cope with all three. Needless to say that I have been quick to protect two things if the proposition goes ahead, one protection of free car parking (although it may be time limited) and second as I did with Sainsburys ask for a donation to the Swimming Pool campaign. That is now being considered. Meanwhile, the Inward Investment Committee has sought alternative locations for the Enterprise Centre and has examined one unlikely to be realized and another which just might be successful on a smaller scale. I might use the pun "watch this space" with some justification on this occasion.

One of the longest standing projects this Committee, as opposed to the ICT Committee, have been involved in is superfast Broadband. Of huge importance to small and medium sized enterprises throughout the Parish. We sought and won a bid from the last remains of SEEDA to commission superfast Broadband in the west of the Parish and had got to the tendering process in conjunction with Wealden District Council. Although there was a fibre-optic cabling option the apparent winner was a wi-fi route. In a fast developing sector this would have been out of date before we had secured installation. It was not in the best interests of our businesses or residents to pursue this project especially as the County was now competing for the BDUK scheme. We reluctantly handed the money (about £50,000) back. The research we did with local businesses however paid a dividend when it came to the deployment of the BDUK scheme now with £16 million of County Money, £10.6 million of State money and matched funding from the winning contractor, BT. That identified the Heathfield exchange as the first priority in the County and we are now seeing fibre-optic cabinets going live as we speak in the Parish. Some engineering problems have delayed the opening of some of the cabinets but these will be put in motion shortly. In a competitive world this should give commercial premises in the Heathfield area a major attraction for inward investment. Some of our business sites on our Farms will also prosper directly from this initiative. Our Farms with an additional income will also become more sustainable and our precious surrounding landscape that much more protected.

### Farmer's Market

I started last year by paying tribute to Colin William's lengthy management of the Farmers Market. It was envisaged that by now we would have recruited his successor and that they would already have been well and truly bedded in. Colin had been happy to keep his involvement with the accounts and to provide advice and guidance but the energy on the day and setting up of the advertising sites was not unreasonably becoming a strain on his health. Our legendary ability to find new volunteers to help out was put to the test. Two separate people came forward and were interviewed and briefed on the role expected and one after the other seemed promising but disappointingly they fell by the wayside. The Market was the first project to be realized all those years ago and still serves its purpose in forming an attraction (just as the Le Marche draw) for People from a wider horizon to choose to shop in Heathfield on the third Saturday of the month, It also provides an opportunity for local producers to sell directly to the public, an age old tradition that encourages freshness and taste in its foods and craftsmanship in its gift products.

I am delighted to say that the Trust has underwritten the services of Joanne Aldous to step forward to ensure the management of the Market remains in good hands. All of Colin's good work will be sustained and the market should now have new drive and energy to flourish. Our relationship with the Coop and its Manager Karl Linsdale, is still very sound indeed and both parties can see the

benefits of the arrangement. Please may I remind you all that the Market is open for business this coming Saturday and we have a very healthy 24 stalls already booked.

### Heathfield Works!

On Friday 19<sup>th</sup> September we celebrated the completion of three year's success with this programme and already 120 graduates. It also marked the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our Partners, Tomorrow's People. Adding to the glamour of the occasion this year also marked the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of The Who and having Roger Daltrey present as an ambassador for the programme was indeed a privilege. From the early beginnings where Frances Conway and I were setting out our stall for a vision not seen before and with an employment market on its knees, this has now grown in stature as one of the great successes in the Country and schemes are now running in Hailsham and in Galashiels in the Borders and now one in Amber, Northumberland. Further projects are expected in Devon, Dorset and Cumbria. That this has been stimulated in Heathfield is something this community can be very proud of. Right at its core has been the triumvirate of Julie Kaye, Frances Conway and Tora Bowdler. Inspirational People who have evolved this scheme to suit the needs of local People be they the young People we serve or the Businesses we seek to involve. A fantastic team who complimented themselves in ensuring the safe and uplifting journey into more positive futures for our Graduates.

In February of this year after we had graduated 100 young People, Julie chose to step away. The stress of dealing with highly strung young people with various emotional needs was too much and with a young teenage family, no respite when reaching home. She has continued to help in the background as a consultant and was especially helpful to the Hailsham scheme in making progress. We soon welcomed Katy Roberts as Julie's successor and she has gone from strength to strength in taking the programme on. We need to be mindful of the welfare of our Mentors for they have been the backbone of our success story. We have so far raised over £384,000 to keep this programme going and donations have been received from the small to the substantial, all are equally welcomed. I would acknowledge the further backing from the Parish Council who have been steadfastly behind this project. The County Council who magnificently broke the backbone of our needs with two consecutive year's contribution of £75,000 a year. We need to be finding new sources all the time. We benefited from £5,000 from our Police Commissioner, Katy Bourne and she was with us on the 19<sup>th</sup> to present the cheque. An illusion as Tim Hough, our treasurer, had long since cashed it and made the funds available for the team to use.

One of the major challenges facing our young People is getting to their new found place of employment or college placement with an inflexible transport system in the rural environment. Much of the load on our Mentors is enabling

transport of our young People in their multiple new directions to their target locations. Early in my term of Office in charge of the economy of the East Sussex, I had championed a pilot scheme to overcome this very problem. The Wheels2Work scheme was to operate in conjunction with a private bike business to offer subsidized terms to needy young People with motorbikes, scooters and peddlebikes to suit their needs depending on the journey to work or college. This would be backed up with training, equipment, maintenance and insurance. The pilot was started in Eastbourne and I have now secured more money to spread the service out across the County. It was magnificent to see one of our graduates on the 19<sup>th</sup> get the surprise of a lifetime as he was presented with his bike in the company of his new employer. The Police Commissioner's money went towards that cost. We will explore more opportunities to ensure this solution is afforded to more graduates. It was also hugely appreciated that Roger Daltrey is trying to secure more funding through his national press contacts.

I have been asked many times whether there was still a need for this service in Heathfield. Sadly the need is still present as each year the production line continues to produce young People who are not sure of their future. Many leave school with the gist of a plan but when that proves unsuccessful have no fallback solution. Our rural idyll could be cruel with its lack of resources until we invented this oasis in a desert of turned backs and rejection.

### Swimming Pool

Talking of an oasis in a barren land leads me to the Swimming Pool programme. Having set a target that we should have secured sufficient capital funding to commence the commissioning of the Swimming Pool and associated dry leisure facility by June 2015, it would have been hoped that we would have been further down the track than we are at this stage.

A huge amount of effort has been put in by Rosemary Mays-Smith and her team with something like 60 funding bids having been made. 20 of these were successful but only one was substantial. Earlier this year, the Board chose to change tack. With liquid funds available in the region of £20,000 we secured the services of Mr Tom Hall a professional fund raiser for sporting venues. We maintained the support of Sport England, who have also pledged significant funding, for the Olympic Pool which still creates an exciting dynamic in our promotion. There were 9 pools on offer and only one has found a temporary home and to that end the heritage dimension of the Olympics 2012 has not been realized and further funding may yet be made available to realize the Governments directive. Progress has been made with a draft 125 year lease from the County Council for the development site and the Limited Company set up to deal with such matters, The Heathfield Area Leisure Centre Ltd will deal with that when appropriate. All concentration now needs to be on the securing of funds and to that end two new Chairmen have been appointed to pick up the cudgels and get us to that point of no return. Richard Karn will enter into a joint Chairmanship with Mr Paul Hamilton, a founder member of the fund raising

Committee. The idea is to amalgamate the Executive Committee and the Fund raising Committee into one driving force to back Tom Hall in chasing down any grant opportunity. A community shareholding scheme is to be examined as well. We need to create a positive platform in 6 month's time with which to extend our planning permission. I am indebted to Richard and Paul for standing up to the challenge and in doing so relieving Rosemary of the direct line responsibility that she has carried for so long. Rosemary will remain on the Committee and is still the spirit behind the project. I am delighted that Richard has already had meetings with the Santander bank whom we have complimented before in helping this campaign and they have re-iterated their wholehearted support for our proposal.

### LATs & Policing

The Police Local Action Team Committee under the chairmanship of Pat Clark continues to be the main mechanism of liaison between the public and the Police Team that serve this area. The Partnership has carefully invited representatives of all parts of the Parish with special reference to Neighbourhood watch and residents associations. This ensures there is a useful reference point for Sgt Ruth Hammerton and her team of Officers in choosing priorities for policing. The cooperation has led to very good communication and the Officer Team is held in high regard.

The CCTV scheme is now a very well run operation and once again the backing of the Parish Council has been invaluable. The maintenance contract has ensured reliability when other systems have been fractious. The no cold calling zone across the Parish has enabled more vulnerable residents to have the confidence to withstand the advances of the more avaricious breed of salesmen. We need to be careful about our Neighbourhood Policing in Heathfield. With savings needing to be made across the Sussex service and falling crime numbers (especially due to the Heathfield Works! Programme) in our community, there will be temptations to cut our Team. It is because we fought for a proper Police Team and the restoration of the Police Station that we currently have confidence in our community. We could easily be back to the beginning of the century where we were policed from Hailsham and the area was besieged with crime and anti-social aggravation. We have a LATs meeting tomorrow morning where we will find out more about the new arrangements for Police Officers.

### College

Possibly the most influential institution in the Community is the Community College. No less than 4 of the Partnership Directors are Governors of the Board. It is of critical interest to give our Young the best opportunities in life in an increasingly competitive world. This year's exam results at Heathfield Community College were outstanding and revealed the hard work put in by our Student population, their Teachers and the support Staff. The A level (A-E) results were 99% passed with 52% being A\*-B results, which is the highest ever recorded. The GCSE results matched their highest recorded performance in a year when

all marking was a tougher standard with 74% achieving A\*-C results (including English and Maths,) now the second highest attainment in the County by one point to St Richards Catholic School in Bexhill. There is much nonsense spoken of our young but these results speak of dedicated and able students who are not afraid of hard work. Even though Director Alan Powell is not here because he is unwell, I would suggest we mark our appreciation of Principle, Alan Powell and Chair of Governors, Richard Karn for their leadership at the College.

### “Transport”

In the rural environment Transport is a critical issue. The County Council is currently undergoing a significant piece of work of consultation regarding cutting some of their subsidized bus routes. The Transport Committee has had the opportunity to have the transport manager from ESCC come and explain the potential cuts and subsequently influence the critical retentions. With £1.68 million being needed to be saved, there was a need for realism and I am delighted to say the constructive attitude of the members of this Committee acted extremely well. We will hear the results of the consultation later this year. Our Friends from AGE UK Heathfield are fully paid up Members of the Committee and are in need of new Volunteer Drivers and we are endeavouring to publicize this essential service to all when the opportunity arises. We wish them well with their recruitment initiative.

The innovative “Youth Express” bus service was launched to enable youths in our community new forms of transport to gain access to events and engagements that their Parents could not get them to, centering on the Youth Centre itself. This has now run for a number of years under the stewardship of the dynamic duo of Beata Drury and Joanne Aldous. Initially a free use for the users and hassle free for the parents as proper trust was ensured in the service. A collection of Heathfield Partners came together to offer their vehicles which were licensed by ESCC and the voluntary drivers were CRB checked. Now Parish Councilor Brian Arnott, then of the Kings Church, earned his spurs in Public Service by being one of our best drivers. We won several bids to ESCC for funding and the Parish Council have also helped with the significant administration. This scheme won considerable acclaim from Transport Ministers for addressing the isolation of young People in the rural environment. I would report that the Youth centre is now under new management since the legendary Beata Drury is now deployed for more serious individual cases throughout the County and the system is less often used. The rarity of volunteer drivers has also limited our resources from earlier stages. However the offer is still in place and special expeditions are still envisaged.

We then extended to run a community group operation along similar lines but charging a subsidized fee according to base costs. All of this is still happening but the Community project has always been of occasional value. It may well be if the bus cuts are more severe that we will be in more demand.

We are in provisional talks with other community bus servers to try and see whether in connection with commercial services we can offer a more comprehensive offer.

### Productivity in Figures

In summary we are a voluntary organization and can calculate an input of £49,335 in value over the last financial year. This is a recognized formula which includes gifts in kind but not those regarding Heathfield Works! where the gifts in kind have been too many to calculate and nothing short of magnificent. We have also raised £104,034 grant income in the financial year 2013-14 but without the professional base structure we would not be nearly as effective. That is a total return of £153,369 from a Parish Council contribution of £10,388. That is a 1476.40% increase in productivity or gearing that should please the People whom we serve and impress those organizations that contribute to our causes. It was actually more than last year with 1469% and the year before with 1438% which I hope will indicate a consistency of performance year on year. It is of huge importance that we recognize the support of the Parish Council in their service level agreement which I am delighted to say has already been approved from 2014-2015 at the same level again. That will mean tightening our belts once more but has to be responsible in the light of all cutting back of public funds. Once again we have provided a quarterly monitoring report of progress to the Parish Council and all of our project Committees and the Executive have Parish Council representatives.

### Officer Team

In trimming our sales, the long serving Karen Cook has now stood down from her duties latterly with the Sport & Leisure Committee but before that with the Transport Committee and the High Street as well. We would thank her especially for her dedicated support for Rosemary and her drive for the Swimming Pool campaign. Sheran Crighton who is once again in charge of minuting this evening's meeting also takes charge of the Farmer's Market, the LATs Committee, the Executive and all Board meetings.

Then we come to the redoubtable Joanne Aldous our Coordinator. At the last Board meeting the Directors presented Joanne with a memento to commemorate the fact that she has served 10 years with the Partnership Trust. This was an engraved silver pen, the mark of respect in the academic world for someone who has made a significant contribution. Such is her regard in the Town that she now operates for the Chamber of Commerce and the Governing Board of the College. Her duties now cover editorship of the Web-site, organization of the buses we still run, completion of huge numbers of application forms for bids, chasing Simmons for the text, setting up press releases, chasing Simmons for the text organizing committee dates and times and chasing Simmons for options in diaries, covering minutes for the Transport Committee, the ICT Committee, the Heathfield Works! Committee, the Inward investment Committee and now the amalgamated Sport & Leisure Committee. All data research that backs up our

bids, monitoring reports where we have succeeded and enticing out of Directors, their contributions needed for the Company House report. Presentations at the Parish Assembly or the Heathfield/Wealden Expo earlier today will have been organized by Joanne, the Town noticeboards maintained with fresh information. The dynamics going on behind me this evening were Joanne's creative work. There are no doubt a hundred other things Joanne will do without fuss to keep the ship afloat and I would suggest that the Town let alone those present owe her a debt of gratitude.

### Directors

May I also mark my appreciation for fellow Directors, Trevor Goldsmith, Tim Hough, Richard Karn, Rosemary Mays-Smith, Chris Macklin, Alan Powell, John Tolley and Colin Williams. Their intelligent contributions to the thinking behind all of our endeavours, the professional business plans the constructive risk assessments are many hours of generous voluntary contributions. A special mention in dispatches for Tim Hough, our honorary Treasurer, who when maintaining ever tighter budgets has been meticulous in his detailed work. I would once again mark my appreciation of John Tolley the brains behind the outfit. Deputy Chairman and Company Secretary, his quiet and considerate advice has been the backbone and discipline behind our every venture. Our reputation with Company House and the Charity Commission is well and truly guarded.

### Christmas Festival

I started with events and will now promote our next with the running of the Christmas festival, now our 12<sup>th</sup> year. This will be on Saturday the 22<sup>nd</sup> of November and the Christmas Lights ceremony this year will be accompanied by the All Saints and St Richards School Choir. My thanks to Trevor and Joanne who have worked tirelessly and hopefully now secured all the light fittings throughout the main street and Station road and to the Parish Council for their contribution which helped us convert everything into LED bulbs. A fine spectacle to open up the Christmas shopping season, of critical importance to all of our Traders. I hope you will all do your bit to shop here if you can.

### Next year's Objectives

We should be conscious of the fact that in May next year regardless of our Political persuasion, and the Partnership is deliberately apolitical, we will have two new MPs covering the Heathfield and Waldron Parish. Both Charles Hendry and Greg Barker are standing down; both were elected in 2001 when I was first elected as County Councillor for Heathfield. I am delighted that Mrs. Nus Ghani the Parliamentary Candidate for Wealden is here with us this evening, taking an interest in the affairs of the east of her prospective division. We will need to build relations with our newly elected Parliamentary representatives in the interests of our Community.

In conclusion next year will hopefully see a number of projects coming to fruition. The Swimming Pool and the Enterprise Centre both need major steps forward. The smooth running of the Farmer's Market to ensure Colin's heroic work is not lost, the stepping up of the heathfield.net web-site to meet the needs of every Business and Resident in the Parish, the maintaining of the Youth Express as a useful vehicle for our Young in getting to purposeful events, the ongoing export of the Heathfield Works! model throughout the Country and the final triumph of getting central Government support for our young People in rural areas. That our businesses in the area grow and prosper and provide new work opportunities for local People so that the need to commute vast distances every day is less common place and that these People can spend more time in their community encouraging their young or helping with voluntary projects. That the Police Station site finally releases some of the pressure on homes throughout the Town where three generations are crammed in and new home opportunities are fulfilled for Heathfield families. That the Dream Machine site provides the gateway feature that we have long sought that may indeed inspire new investment in the Town. That most of all that all, the public bodies in the Town continue to work in harmony for the benefit of the residents whom we serve, that we do indeed continue to work in partnership.

Thank you for your presence this evening and your ongoing collective support.

Rupert Simmons  
15<sup>th</sup> October 2014 Goldsmith & Allcorn.