

HEATHFIELD PARTNERSHIP TRUST LTD CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2016

Elected Members, Distinguished Guests, Fellow Directors, a very warm welcome to everyone attending this Annual General Meeting.

Once again we seek to conduct our formalities in the public eye. We very much appreciate the turnout at our Annual General Meeting of so many people who have worked with us over the past 12 months. It is important that this Trust Company properly records its activities publicly and its business and its accounts are presented for approval by the people we seek to serve. It is also the appropriate time to recognize the contributions made by our strategic partners in carrying out all of our duties, almost none of the operations are conducted in isolation. The collective value in Heathfield, of collaboration across the many parties involved in the community, towards shared objectives defines Heathfield as seemingly a one off amongst South East market towns and bemuses surrounding towns especially.

This report, hopefully more succinct this year, will be recorded on our website for the community to have access to and together with our Annual Company Report, the report to the Charity Commission and our Annual Accounts, will ensure a transparency not afforded by many such organizations. We also run an executive, Chaired by Director Colin Williams, which meets quarterly and engages with all the organizations in the Heathfield area and conducts its business with all the appointed representatives of those bodies to ensure all projects are open to scrutiny and constructive involvement. Those committee minutes are also published publicly on www.heathfield.net, the public community website.

The Annual Accounts which have been approved this evening were put together by a team of our Treasurer, Tim Hough, our Company Secretary John Tolley and Alan Staples our honorary Auditor. This is done with meticulous care and again I and I am sure both gentleman would acknowledge our gratitude to Alan for his expertise and generous time and guidance.

The end of our 21st year and my 14th report as Chairman. Heathfield is in a very different place to where it was in 1995. It wasn't derelict but it was run down. It had become tired, shabby and needed regenerating into the reinvigorated town we know today.

Le Marche was 20 years ago this August and perhaps only the French would acknowledge the substantial changes they saw each year over the 6 phases of development in the Town centre. For the residents of the parish it was a much less dramatic transition as projects materialized as funds were raised. A much gentler evolution by comparison to the eruption being seen in Uckfield this year or the changes now embarking in Hailsham. Indeed my colleague, County Councillor Chris Dowling, who sadly cannot be with us tonight and who represents part of Uckfield would acknowledge the difficulties seen. A year ago the town elections in Uckfield removed almost all of the councillors, so enraged were the electorate as to what was happening in their town; it is an angry Town Council who have overseen the changes being seen in the High Street. I was invited by BBC South radio station who did a day in Uckfield as a feature as one of their guests to do an interview late in August at the conclusion of the work that had been done. Mr and Mrs Dowling were away on holiday (Mrs Dowling is the other

County Councillor involved in Uckfield) and as I hold the responsibility for Economic regeneration across the County so stood in on their behalf. Now the work has been completed in record time I might add the brew ha ha has changed into peace, indeed most of the town retailers have remarked on their appreciation of the transition being seen. The interview went well except for a wine dealer who was still complaining, Chris immediately knew of that person and he had been a pain throughout. If the investment had not been made, Uckfield now with a thousand houses being built on the perimeter of the town would have reached stagnation. The mistake that Uckfield Town Council had made was that although they had put on a splendid exhibition in the town which was widely approved by those that went, what they had singularly not done was ensured the retailers were cognoscente of the proposals. As we know in our town getting retailers involved in anything takes meticulous care and effort. There was a backlash and campaigns were set out to remove the custodians of the Town Council. At stake was in excess of £2million investment paid for by planning gain. We and by this I mean Trevor Goldsmith and I had several public meetings especially with retailers about the various phases of the High Street development we were involved in and indeed made amendments based on that exchange. The timing was also consulted upon and so at the end no surprises and apart from the then owners of the delicatessen who kept rubbishing Heathfield in the local media, all were pleased about the end effect. Here in Heathfield the endeavours were supported by the Parish Council, the Chamber and all associates of the Partnership. The irritations of the work and its disruptions were soon forgotten and as I say the investment proved an insurance against the downturn in the economy not long after.

Le Marche

Reference to the French reminds me to remark on the outstanding Le Marche this year and the considerable efforts and ingenuity of its Chairman, Richard Ridley, and his excellent committee who delivered such a successful show for the town. Many of them are here this evening. I visited all the Heathfield shops who had taken the opportunity to open that day and promote their wares to a much wider customer base.

It has become a wonderful asset to Heathfield, the Chamber do a lot to promote it too as it draws in a huge audience from miles around.

Back to the 21 years. Over a £million was raised during this time to revamp the centre of the town and by being complete by the coming of austerity in circa 2008 we survived as a market town better than all surrounding similar towns. The shop vacancies were fewer and further between than those in other South East towns and there is a predominant vibrancy which appeals to retailers who seek to invest in Heathfield. The fact that some of our properties have unfathomable freeholds, leasehold chains and histories does get in the way on occasions as we all found out when trying to renew the Post Office.

Over the years the Partnership, especially under the stewardship of the Inward Investment Committee, have sought to promote developments in the town and surrounding parish which have been in the interests of the prosperity and wellbeing of all its citizens. To that end we have engaged with the planning authority or indeed the County Council when it has come to highways issues. It has been on every occasion that we have worked in harmony with the Parish Council, Chamber and of course College when it came to the swimming pool site.

The development site behind the Police Station was successfully promoted originally against the odds including appeal hearings but eventually with sound approval from Wealden District Council. We now still seek to get the potential of this site properly realized without too many amendments which are counter to the principles of the original concept. 48 affordable homes located in close proximity to Cross in Hand Primary School, adjacent to the town centre and bus routes is the very definition of sustainable planning. The more so when we had 115 Heathfield families on the housing waiting list (for affordable housing) when this issue was first examined.

The one development that we supported that has been completed is the former Dream Machine site. Now a much more impressive gateway into the town from the west; the retailers are already in on the ground floor and the apartments are being fitted out on the two floors above. The overly sharp lines will weather and over time this should help potential elsewhere. We had previously been influential in the creation of the local plan in getting policy to encourage developments to go up another story within the centre of the town in recognition of the difficulties faced in expanding outwardly. I have entered into discussions about the potential to open up a gateway site from the East and hopefully this will be expanded upon over the next twelve months. If it does come to something, proper consultation will be conducted.

In the summer we challenged Wealden's planners with regard to retaining our primary retailer, the General Store, Trading 4 You. This was under hostile attack from a developer who wanted to turn a further retail floor into flats but without any parking provision at all. Trevor and I went to the planning committee meeting to defend this vital commercial enterprise and we were both delighted to see the excellent and wholesome support from our Wealden District Councillors. That critical focal point for the town could have easily and carelessly been erased.

Looking forward Heathfield and the surrounding parish now know of Wealden's ambitions for housing development up to 2037. This stands at 1,200 new homes in the current plan and public presentations have not reassured the residents. Given we had so much trouble gaining permission for the Police Station site, a process requiring us to examine and eliminate all other sites in Heathfield to justify projecting a short way into the surrounding area of outstanding natural Beauty, here all of a sudden all previous planning considerations were apparently being thrown out. It is interesting to acknowledge the planner's recognition of the potential for Heathfield; our job will be to ensure it is sustainable growth.

I would refer here to the extraordinary number of planning applications currently descending on parts of Heathfield in a feeding frenzy. Wealden District Council, under severe government pressure to approve massive housebuilding numbers, were promoting scales of 1,200 homes to be built in the next phase in a town surrounded by Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. We were being informed that this former planning protection would not hold water under current government guidance. On top of that suddenly Heathfield Park came in with a development proposal in the estate of huge dimensions and a density of Hong Kong proportions. Whilst Heathfield had in effect attracted the attention of the planners, in the wide coming together of the community in supporting the development behind the Police Station which encroached slightly into the AONB and its stimulation of the sustainability of the town, there was suddenly a

supposition that Heathfield would open its doors to the full 20,000 development required on Wealden over the next 21 years. There was no strategy or infrastructure plan to compliment any such ambitions. I had sought a meeting with the Planning Director, Kelvin Williams, and indeed briefly discussed the proposal in another meeting last week. The meeting, now agreed, will take place with representatives of the Inward Investment committee and that is warmly welcomed (these will include representatives of the Parish Council and Chamber) but it won't be just yet. It is my understanding that huge amounts of land have been offered for development in the south of the district thereby reducing the levels previously sought in the North. Wealden will be publishing their draft proposals shortly and that will provide a more informed perspective with which we are seeking to deal with. The AONB has not necessarily lost its teeth after all.

One of the changes in scale might affect the possibility in drawing planning gain of the necessary volume to fuel the swimming pool development and so this will be closely watched. The other benefit being examined was a safe route to the Community College using the estate by student residents of the Green Lane Estate. We will look forward to the publication of the draft plan with considerable interest.

Post Office

One of the triumphs of the year and my thanks to Mr and Mrs Patel who have opened their refurbished Post Office store in the parade with huge enthusiasm. The odd combination of off-license and post Office does not seem to have caused any difficulty amongst our community, just relief to have got the service back.

An exasperating year from closure in March 2014 and the opening finally in May of this year. I had identified a problem being faced with the licensee at Christmas 2013 which was finally realized in March the following year and was already making representation to the appropriate authorities. Heathfield by working together and especially after the elections in May 2014 of Huw Merriman as MP and Cllr Andy Wooley as Chairman of the Parish Council there was a team to push, persuade and harry Post Office Ltd to deliver. It is interesting to note the protests now arising in several market towns, indeed the County Town, in East Sussex about either closure or relocations of main Post Offices. We were but the eye of the storm. A mark of appreciation to Derek Redmond and his family business at Broad Oak who handled the crowds queuing every day. The fact that he was threatened with all sorts of changes during this critical period of holding the fort was even more outrageous. The fact that the original site was recovered from its legal stranglehold and became available again and the COOP were willing, with my persuasion, to take it on but could not because Post Office Ltd had fallen out with the Manchester Head Office of the COOP was wholly unreasonable given the withholding of such a vital service to Heathfield; both citizens and its businesses. I have not forgotten the initiative shown by Wealden District Council to offer a temporary solution in one of their car parks. It was a further nonsense as to why that was not taken advantage of. I managed to get Post Office Ltd to back off from the threats to Broad Oak Post Office and Derek's terms and conditions have now been protected. However all peace and quiet now, the inconvenience to many of our most vulnerable citizens seems to have been inconsequential throughout the turmoil to Post Office Ltd. History now.

Policing

Back in 2001 Policing in Heathfield was the biggest issue or more realistically the lack of Police presence. We were policed as an outpost by Hailsham and the criminal fraternity knew only too well how to take their liberties. This extended to vandalism and the organization of youth gangs who were the bane of more elderly citizens especially those in social housing who were bombarded by pranksters and charity scams. Very early in my term as County Councillor I sought support from the Chief Constable to restore Heathfield's policing and indeed to recover the Police Station. Eventually this built to a Police team lead by a Sergeant and including two Police Officers and 6 PCSOs. The confidence in the community was restored and shopkeepers did not arrive in the morning to find their shop front in tatters. By getting in amongst the gangs the impact was nullified and of course the launch of "Heathfield Works!" made a huge difference in taking some of the gang's leading figures and providing jobs and hard earned income and more importantly promising futures. They then become influential leaders and drew applications to join from many current outsiders.

The new Chief Constable, Giles York, along with the Police and Crime Commissioner have been addressing the resources available for Sussex policing and have severely cut back on neighbourhood policing. I had several meetings with senior police officers including the Deputy Chief Constable whom I know well and corresponded with the Police Commissioner on many occasions using the experience of the early 2000s as primary evidence as to why this may be dangerous policy. We are, however, where we are being policed by Hailsham again. However the pressure I brought to bear proved useful as after a burst of 5 crimes happening in a short period of time, the new Chief Inspector through all his resources at the investigations and all perpetrators were tracked down and prosecuted. The Local Action Team currently chaired by Parish Councillor Pat Clark, which I set up in conjunction with a former Chief Inspector, Neil Honor, is still proving effective and the newly appointed Chief Inspector, Rob Leet, has agreed to continue attending on a quarterly basis. This ensures that all representatives of the community involved can have direct engagement with the senior police officer. I am extremely grateful to Pat Clark who continues to chair this committee and ensures communication remains open. I can think of no better way to concentrate the minds of our Police on the needs of our Community.

One issue of burning importance to our town is the continuation of free car parking. We market the town on the basis of frequency and convenience. Over the years I have established gentlemen's agreements with a succession of Chief Inspectors that the Heathfield Police Team would continue to deal with parking offences where especially safety was at risk. Nationally this is now rejected and further endorsed by the new Chief Constable and Police Commissioner. That inevitably leaves us vulnerable to the selfish and unthinking resident or visitor who cannot walk from the plenty of free car parking places available to their shopping destination. The Chief Inspector actually took time out after the LATs meeting to go and deal personally with a vehicle that was obstructing the visibility lines coming out of Streatfield Road. He is not going to send anybody in future. There will be pressure brought to bear by Sussex Police and indeed the County Council to introduce car parking charges by decriminalizing the parking strips in our High Street and Station Road. We have been indebted, as the pressure has grown on Wealden District Council and especially our District Councillors, for their courageous stance and their resistance and indeed for protection on their own car parks in the town. I have stemmed the

tide at County but cannot promise for how long, we should collectively be alert to any move to introduce car parking charges as it will in my opinion be the rapid death of our town. In the meantime as leaders in our community we should try our best to get citizens to act with intelligence and consideration when parking and be mindful of the disabled especially whom we try and attract to our town. Trevor and I try regularly to get our traders and their staff to park in the car parks thereby leaving spaces in the street strips outside their shops for customers. The supermarkets all continue to honour the requests that I have established to maintain free car parking even though they know this will include staff from other stores. The end result is a town open for business which benefits all. The moment some limitation is installed the agreements will be thrown out and it will be parking charges everywhere. I do not want to frighten everybody; it is not imminent but please be aware that we should remain on red alert.

Heathfield Works!

In the mid-2000s there was pressure to close the Youth Centre, a pressure that succeeded in many other Sussex towns. I managed to keep it open largely on the grounds of a lack of such facilities in the existing community and also the evidence of too many NEETS (those not in education, employment or training) lying dormant in the town and its surrounds. In conjunction with Beata Drury, the outstanding Youth Centre Manager at that time, we identified 35 young people in such a situation. The statistics had no concept of how wretched this situation had become. That inevitably also led to more minor felonies being experienced as the young had no access to legitimate money for alcohol, smokes or drugs they craved. With good fortune I was the Chairman of the County and had the honour to introduce the soon to be Baroness Stedman-Scott as guest speaker at a prestigious dinner. She was then managing Director of Tomorrow's People a national employment charity of huge success in urban communities across the larger conurbations of the UK. That evening we discussed the problems we were facing in Heathfield and whether Tomorrow's People were capable of working with the Heathfield Partnership to come to our aid. For Debbie this was an enticing challenge of entering into the rural scene, one not to be missed. She then set a patron of the charity to examine market towns of the region where this would be ideally launched. That examination concluded that Heathfield with the evidence already in place and the infrastructure provided by the Partnership was ideal and the programme began.

The first move was to employ a dynamic lady, Frances Conway, to come and research the territory and especially the businesses that may or may not be interested. In 2011 Frances and I set about seeking the £57,000 we calculated necessary to fund the first two cohorts without any evidence whatsoever, only a faith that we had researched the model well enough to be convinced it would work. It was a leap of faith for the early donors. Frances and I did many presentations to the potential funders and luckily convinced sufficient to fund the early stages. I should recognize here that Frances is not with us this evening as sadly once again she is unwell. We would all wish her well in her battles to regain her health.

The first two cohorts were magnificent and the evidence built up over the years we started getting attention of both national and local media and District Councilor Bob Bowdler made an inspirational documentary film. From September 2011 this has now produced a sensational history of over 200 young people realizing their aspirations and finding their purpose in life. Each setting an example to the next generation. Crime levels crashed and hence the

temptation under budget pressure to remove policing in Heathfield was more easily succumbed to as the statistical evidence had been erased.

Families re-adopted children that they had previously discarded; it created a great deal of warmth throughout the community. The funding was still a formidable challenge as the Partnership sought opportunities wherever they could find them and bids were written on a frequent basis. This helped sustain the national charity's backbone of funding and all seemed to be going well. The model was exported to a number of market towns throughout the UK not least Hailsham. I was at that time seeking funding from the County Council and this came good at exactly the time of the Hailsham launch. £75,000 was placed in both Heathfield and Hailsham for two consecutive years. Hailsham with far more resource as a town than Heathfield as a Parish was ever able to dream of also helped get them off the mark. All fine until this financial year where an annual contract between Tomorrow's People and the HSBC Bank fell through with complete surprise as talks were seemingly ongoing at the time. That backbone funding hit us hard and a pragmatic solution was sought.

The two schemes were in effect merged with the best of Hailsham, Carolyn Fogg, joining the retained Heathfield team of Tora Bowdler and under the management of Lisa Crozier. They have done remarkably well in the circumstances and now serve a wider Wealden territory than before. I am immensely proud that when the chips were against us the model has survived and continues to serve the wider community of Heathfield and Waldron Parish with excellent initiative. I would mark my particular appreciation of Heathfield and Waldron Parish Council who have supported this scheme throughout but have within the last year increased its grant when we were most in need. The relationship with the College has become exemplary and referrals take place naturally. I am so delighted to say that regardless of severe financial pressures the County Council has agreed to pledge another £20,000 this month towards the ongoing scheme. This should give Tomorrow's People time to find additional resources to keep this invaluable programme going. A meeting was held with our two MPs, Huw Merriman and Nus Ghani, together with Baroness Stedman-Scott from the House of Lords to ascertain which government department was most likely to find funding for a contribution to the rural problem. The Civil Service are still convinced this is exclusively an urban crisis. With good fortune we will make more progress on that front by this time next year. In the meantime there will be another graduation ceremony to be held on the 6th December at Punnett's Town Village Hall and all are welcome at that now grand occasion.

ICT

One of the initiatives launched in this last year has been "Heathfield About" brings us also onto our ICT programmes and a tantalizing drama in very recent times.

This last year our introduction of the Heathfield About Facebook and Twitter initiatives has been by and large a great success. The partnership between the College, Parish Council, Chamber and ourselves has been run in harmony throughout but I would certainly mark my appreciation of the contribution made by Parish Councilor Jean Holmwood who has tirelessly fed text to Kieran Karn, our executive producer of the two sites. One, the Facebook campaign has been glorious, the Twitter far less so. If other mediums prove useful we will extend. These of course make reference at all times back to the parent website, www.heathfield.net.

A great deal of work was undertaken by our programmers to make the website gadget, smartphone and iPad friendly as our research identifies the growing trend to access the site using such mechanisms.

Here the drama arose with the site of the domain name. This had been registered seemingly properly through our programme advisers 21st Century, a local firm who has served us so well. The relatively small fee was up for renewal but the American company we were registered with was finding it difficult to recognize any of our credentials. John Tolley spent hours on the phone on many occasions with the USA getting temporary holding agreements before trying to convince them of our company credentials and charity status. With again tremendous help from the Parish Council, holder of our registered address, John at the 11th hour managed to convince them of who we were and our legitimate status. The change to another site would have lost a great deal of investment work. Now properly recognized this should be a smooth process in the future. A disconcerting series of days when we were all on red alert.

A Major policy change is that all businesses in the Heathfield area who now wish to make a link to their own website will do so free of charge and this we hope will encourage more businesses to set up their own sites. It is one of the biggest challenges to get our retail businesses especially to do some marketing to encourage trade. It has been the bane of Trevor's life trying to get that sort of energy into the town. I attended a Chamber annual meeting where this was discussed and we hope this new offer will be warmly welcomed by the business community we have so thoroughly supported.

Farmer's Market

This year has seen a significant transition in the way we run our Heathfield Farmer's Market. One of our oldest standing projects was finding the costs were growing faster than the lets and a radical approach had to be taken. The first question was still whether this still proved a valuable asset to the town and increased its customer base on the third Saturday of the month. That was clearly proven and the COOP were able to prove this with their own data alone. They continue to support the initiative as it is so valuable to them. Secondly the storage was getting too expensive and so we changed to a new farm who offer the same service on improved terms and conditions and lastly the insurance where we will seek improved terms in coming years. Since October 2014 Joanne took over the management of the Farmer's market and Colin Williams now chairs the Committee using all of his profound experience. It has proven a very successful partnership and the project is on much sounder footing. Next year will see a small increase in letting charges and also the fee we charge for use of our stalls. We have extensively used the Heathfield About social media model to promote the market and that seems highly effective.

Inward Investment

The one project that did not make progress yet is the launch of our Incubator units at a newly devised Enterprise Centre. That is already behind us but the seeking of another site is still high on our agenda. The problem is the pressure being brought to bear by Wealden District Council trying to convert any cube of land into housing means a charity such as ours is going to get short shift from any landowner about trying to create an enterprise centre earning below market

price lets for small units. At that time we had secured £75,000 in two phases to create 22 units and it would not be beyond us to fund that finance for another opportunity. The key will be in the cost of the site and a financial package to run it. The value to start-up businesses would be invaluable with marketing and banking advice and camaraderie of a joint site with other entrepreneurs in similar precarious situations striking out into the real commercial world. When run well these are the real creators of jobs in any community. A sound start can frequently be the making of an enterprise. We are a County of small and medium sized enterprises. It will, of course, be part of our discussions with Kelvin Williams.

Swimming Pool

I referred to the Swimming Pool project in my references to planning development in and around the town. That project, although officially commenced in its building, has in effect stalled due to the massive reduction in funding opportunities becoming available. No real funding progress has been made since last year. The securing of the planning permission is still in place and the access to one of the London Olympic Pools is still possible. However funding of the scale we have been looking for ie £3.25 million is hard to come by. We will be examining the potential for planning gain or ISIL contributions to assess potential.

This has been a mad rush through the year and our various projects. Once again Heathfield working in remarkable harmony on all fronts with shared objectives and ambitions. That happens because of the close working relationships our organizations and institutions have in working together. It is not rocket science but it is common sense and the considerable efforts of a lot of people make that happen to the benefit of the whole community. Here I would make particular reference to the excellent efforts of the Rotary whose initiatives are of huge value to the community and I understand are to raise the town festival once more. We will look forward to hearing more of that project and supporting it where we can.

Christmas Festival

The Christmas event which I always publicise on this occasion is to run this year on Saturday 3rd December. It will officially begin at 1pm and Christmas lights count down at 4.30pm. There will be a grotto, stalls dotted throughout the town, primary school choirs, a shop window front competition and some entertainment. The Chamber have been brilliant again in organizing this but support from all partners would be appreciated as we promote the most important retail season for our businesses.

Productivity

Each year we, the Partnership Trust calculate the return in monetary value of our voluntary service plus the grants we secure and compare those to the outgoings incurred. This year was not so spectacular as some of those in the past but we still returned an impressive 614% increase on the original grant given by the Parish Council. We remain extremely good value at a time when all resources are strained.

Here I would publicly thank Sheran Crichton who has heroically helped administer many of our Committees, the executive and not least the Board. Later on this year she has stood down from the late nights of the Trust Board but I am delighted to say remains on the more civilised

meetings of some committees and the executive and I am grateful as she, of course, continues to record the minutes of the AGM.

Joanne Aldous continues to develop new skills and endeavours on our behalf. The sorting out of the Famer's Market is very much down to her initiative and creative thinking of themed markets, She was heavily involved in the chase of the website domain name, coordinating all responses, editing of the website is a huge responsibility and of course all bids need to be researched and Simmons chased for text. Chasing Simmons in the lead up to the AGM for guidance on direction of travel with regard to the annual report as she was creating the accompanying material for display on the screen above was frustrating as I was stopping and starting as other commitments kept getting in the way. Her patience is exemplary as I finally got a first version out by last weekend.

The fact that she acts as a discreet communication between the Chamber, the Board of Governors at the Community College (until very recently) and liaises extremely well with the Parish Council means that Heathfield as a town owes her a great deal for her integrity and sheer hard work on our behalf.

Trust Board

There have been changes to the Heathfield Partnership Trust Board this year with the adoption of Caroline Barlow, the recent principle of the Community College who has graciously followed in the footsteps of Alan Powell and Robbie Robinson as a Director. We should immediately acknowledge the extremely successful exam results produced for both A levels and GCSEs in this her first year. The new senior management team has set out to engage with the students in their exciting journey and the board of governors under Director Richard Karn's Chairmanship has engineered that strategic platform with finesse. New initiatives for career advice and guidance and work experience are being considered and that will also take things a step further when introduced. Director Trevor Goldsmith along with Caroline are keen to see that part of the programme coming to fruition. Judges, one of the county's most prestigious engineering companies is now working in association with the College to stimulate interest in career opportunities for its students. A very promising platform for future development.

We have also welcomed Peter Bailey a very well respected Lawyer who has his practice in the centre of the town and he will take over the duties of Company Secretary at the end of this meeting. This is important as it acknowledges the departure of John Tolley who with wife, Nancy, who has joined us this evening, are moving to the West Country. He will be sorely missed given his immense contribution over the last 20 years of service to his community. For us he has carried out two roles, that of Company Secretary but also Deputy Chairman, Trevor Goldsmith will take on that duty, again from the end of this meeting. Over the period we have worked together John's legal knowledge has been exemplary, the securing of Company status and then Charity status and assuring both the Charity Commission and Company House that we are conducting ourselves as should be expected has been invaluable. His experienced judgement has underpinned all of our activities and ensured we have remained on track in our execution. This will be his last time as master of ceremonies at the AGM.

His fellow Directors have sought to present him with something suitably fragile so that it will be endangered in the move and also to follow the precedent set in regard to Rosemary Mays-Smith at the time she was awarded the Queen's Award by the Lord Lieutenant in recognition of her founding of the Partnership, This is an engraved glass champagne bucket which we all hope Nancy will enjoy just as much. To start proceedings I would also add a bottle of bubbly, luckily in a presentation box to simplify the journey.

I would mark my own appreciation of John's wonderful support during my term of office as Chairman, his intellect, genuinely the brains of the outfit, his experience in legal matters and the so many conversations about decisions to be made that are all the more rational for the debate and his advice. His generosity in representing the Partnership at outside engagements where I was tied up with other commitments was also hugely appreciated. He could cover all the extent of our business as John made a point of attending all the working groups with only the Famer's Market an exception I think but even here he frequently helped with insurance issues. If I could not make the public Executive meeting his comprehensive knowledge could cover any ground questioned by our partners. It will indeed take two gifted people to replace him.

He has made a massive impact on his community and given generously of his time. His close family now draws him further west in this country and more often across the Atlantic to America. John, please come forward to receive your present from the directors with our warmest congratulations.

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

Rupert Simmons
Chairman
The Heathfield Partnership Trust Ltd
Tuesday 18 October 2016
Heathfield Community Centre, Sheepsetting Lane, Heathfield