

HEATHFIELD PARTNERSHIP TRUST COMPANY LTD CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2011

A very warm welcome to everyone attending this annual general meeting. We have a number of formalities to conduct in the public eye but most important of all is the opportunity to report on all of the initiatives being undertaken by the Partnership over the last year and to recognize the absolute importance of the contributions being made by our many Partners. The Partnership is neither designed to nor should it operate in isolation and that the bringing together of similarly minded organizations with shared objectives is its "raison d'être." This is not because it is warm and cuddly but that it is the most efficient and productive way of bringing about a resolution of benefit for the community that we jointly serve. The nation, the Region, the County, Police & Fire Services and most definitely Health are all dealing in Partnerships these days, very probably on a different scale but for the same logical reason, making the Public purse go further.

This Partnership although starting as a steering group set up by the Parish Council in 1995, becoming a formal Partnership, then a limited Company and finally a registered Charity in 2003 has managed to achieve quite a lot over that 16 years and in doing so has raised well in excess of £1 million over various schemes. Much to our Treasurer's relief, only a very small percentage has gone through our books as you will have seen with our annual accounts presented and approved earlier. The very idea of being required to deal with VAT is motivation enough to ensure we stay shy of the minimum requirement when it comes to turnover. When it comes to VAT that does occasionally require some engineering and more of that anon in my report.

I am delighted that we have with us this evening the Chairman of the Parish Council, Cllr Peter Newnham, His deputy, Cllr Bob Bowdler, Parish Councillors:- Mike Woodhouse & Jean Holmwood. Mrs Diana Francis, Senior Officer to the Parish Council, PCSO Geraldine Thurston representing the Heathfield Police Force Team. Beata Drury in charge of our Youth Centre. I would also thank Alan Staples of Manningtons who acts as our Auditor, He is also here this evening and his professional advice is very much appreciated. The President of Rotary, The Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce, Director of the Partnership Trust and our host for this evening, the dynamic Trevor Goldsmith, not necessarily a holy trinity but a moment to recognize his wholehearted contribution to his community and the soul of the vital continuity across primary Partners in this Town.

This evening we are going to introduce some of our new toys and to lighten up a fairly long report from yours truly, we are going to add some pictures. I spent getting on for 8 years trying to improve the literacy of the County but as a publisher I do recognize that a break up of solid text with suitably placed photographs or illustrations can be refreshing. With that in mind I thought we would start with an illustration of my colleagues in crime, the Directors of the Trust Board and here they are in glorious technicolour.

In charge of the toy set this evening is Joanne Aldous, our Coordinator. Earlier in the year we managed to win a grant from Awards for All to provide for some technical equipment to assist us in our communication with the public. A digital camera for use on the web-site, a Dongle to enable us to get wi-fi access on presentations, although this evening we are using projection equipment also provided, some computer programmes and the software to

enable the Chamber to publish "Heathfield First." All of this was extremely useful and much has certainly brought a new vitality to the web-site.

A word on behalf of our Officers, Joanne Aldous and Sheran Crichton, both here this evening. Sheran has now taken responsibility for the minutes for the Board meetings, the Executive meetings and all of the committees except for the Sport & Leisure, still the responsibility of Karen Cook who is not with us this evening and Joanne who helps by taking the ICT and Inward Investment Committees. Sue Roche who helped us with the editing of the web-site for a number of years stood down in June. We were extremely grateful for her help but as with all other organizations have had to trim our sails in these restricted times.

Joanne's contribution has again been remarkable; the greater heroism has been in coordinating me. Her calm professional composure in ensuring that I have written the right text for application forms or letters on time, signed the right documents and ensured we are up to speed on all fronts and that meetings are set into my diary which is perhaps her biggest challenge is worthy of much sympathy and also I would suggest much applause. The new dimension of photography and the creative research and design of the Web-site have also flourished. I will refer to a number of other antics she gets up to as we move through the report.

This year I will start with the headlines of the year with the more dramatic developments in some detail before giving a summary of ongoing business for other projects in an endeavour to edit back the length of the report.

Sainsbury's

Most recently Sainsbury's opened literally one month ago and have already made quite a splash on the local retail market. We became aware of the possibility that the Family who had the Budgens' franchise were considering withdrawing. It has long been our ambition for inward investment to get a quality supermarket into the centre of our Town. For far too long our high disposable income shoppers have been shopping away from Heathfield drawn by Supermarkets in Tunbridge Wells, Eastbourne, Crowborough even Hailsham. That has drawn a lot of energy away from our Retailers in the Town. A few years back there was a plan for a development up at the market site adjacent to the Crown Pub. We fought against that as it would have drawn the energy out of the centre of the Town. Location was crucial. The disadvantage was that none of our central sites were quite big enough to attract natural interest. With Director Chris Macklin's help we identified the relevant person in the hierarchy at Sainsbury's and I began broad discussions. I made much of the potential market and less of the lack of space. Early on I established agreement on the principle of free car parking, essential to our appeal as a small Market Town. All further discussions were on lay-out to maximize the space and planning approval for the car park and signage. Helpful consultation was then set up with colleagues at the Parish Council and Chamber. The planning proved an interesting challenge at short notice but was overcome with sensible interventions. Cllr Dick Angel helped me make the appropriate connections. An open event took place at the Kings Church and all talk was about free trade and prices. Sainsbury's said that they were pleased, I was nervous. They launched on Tuesday 13th and were overcome with demand and sales. They re-stocked three times in those first 5 days and I was hugely relieved. One month on and they are significantly above budget on their returns.

I have since introduced the Manager of Sainsbury's to the Manager at the Co-op and that relationship seems to have got off on a good footing. Both stores are of value to Heathfield and will play a part in the success of the Town. We will not forget the cooperation of the Co-op when it comes to the Farmer's Market sited on their grounds every third Saturday of the month. It is very much acknowledged that it is of value to them as much as to us and the relationship is important to both. The Coop's stoic support of the swimming Pool campaign is warmly remembered, Sainsbury's have now made a contribution too. I will come back to the Swimming Pool shortly but in the meantime Sainsbury's have offered to participate in a new development.

Heathfield Works!

I reported at last year's AGM the early discussions regarding a partnership with Tomorrow's People, the National Employment Charity. At that time the proposal was to examine running a work place experience programme in the rural community and Wadhurst and Heathfield were being considered. I am sure that Wadhurst has a need but Heathfield were able to prove an immediate enthusiasm and more importantly an infrastructure already in place with the Partnership. Crucial contributions were made at an early stage by Beata Drury from the Youth Service who knew the young people, Director Alan Powell, Principal of the College, Director Trevor Goldsmith, Chairman of the Chamber, Peter Newnham Chairman of the Parish Council, Directors Rosemary Mays-Smith and John Tolley, Sgt Ruth Hammerton of the Police and with interesting foresight Julie Kaye the Connexions Officer at the College. We were also being offered generous help by Mark Mathews, Division Commander of the Wealden Fire Service.

In late October last year a funding stream that was the premise of the scheme was cut by the Government. It has been a scramble ever since to get here.

Here is two weeks into the first programme of "Heathfield Works!" The new brand name for our joint programme, two schemes are now scheduled to be completed in this financial year. Tomorrow's People have taken on Frances Conway and Julie Kaye to run the programme and I am delighted that both are here this evening. There were 9 competitive interviews for very experienced people in this field and these two ladies are the successful appointments. They both bring outstanding qualities to the table. Julie knows the young People with her own professional experience, in many cases she knows the family backgrounds as well which can be important factors to deal with in the life chances of these young People. Frances came to the AGM last year and has spent the whole year researching for the project and getting to know Heathfield, the young People and more importantly the Businesses which were to take part in the scheme. Her own professional experience with Tomorrow's People programmes in London and the urban communities of North Kent enabled her to win the trust of the Companies and Businesses in the community. She has done much more in the intervening time in trying to seek the funding that we now so badly needed. We stripped a budget down to a requirement to find £107,000 a year to run 4 schemes a year. We now have a commitment to find £53,500 for our first two programmes serving 24 People. Frances and I now think we have secured enough to do just that. County produced £19,000, the Police in the person of Wealden Chief Inspector Dick Coates, has made a commitment that will be forthcoming, Parish Council, Rotary and individual sponsors have or are making significant contributions. Tomorrow's People have made substantial underwritings. Roger Daltrey, Lead Singer of the Who now living locally with properties in Burwash and Cowbeech and who some time

ago donated the land which has since become the Community centre and sports field has become a Patron and has sponsored one of the candidates on his own. Jane Torville at his invitation has also become involved.

Behind me we can now show you a group photograph of the young People that have won a placement on the first scheme. They all started at 9am on the 26th September. They are all aged between 16 and 19, are a remarkable combination of personalities with very different talents and abilities but they share one absolute similarity, they are keen to work and to find a job! They want to make something of themselves and that positive energy is essential for the mentoring Team that will help them into their work placements. I am thrilled that so many of our Business Partners in the Town and surrounds have made placements available. They are providing a kaleidoscope of options in business types and they will be selected dependant on the personalities of the young people we are serving and their ambitions, aspirations, interests and capabilities. Some are also getting additional literacy, numeracy or ICT training and all are getting CV instructions. Quite a number of additional candidates are also getting some advice and support on the sidelines to help them into employment. Once word is out on the street we imagine the programme to become one almighty employment agency.

The first priority is serving the young People selected to the best of our ability to improve their life chances. Many when they came to us had lost any self esteem, all confidence and were floundering trying to get interviews, let alone jobs. Over these ten weeks they will have a purpose every working day, learning the skills they will need to build their ability to find work and enjoy their careers. They will have learned the disciplines of the work place, timekeeping and pride in their appearance, personal money management and some may even have found their job by finding their feet right away. For others they will have something of real value on their CV and references to take with them. For Employers they will have no need to take on expensive advertising for job placements. They will have a recruiting agency on their doorstep and a free and non-committal trial with a prospective candidate. For the working Group with Abi Levitt as our Chairman we need to prove the value of this programme as it is the only rural pilot of such a scheme in the Country and we are responsible to other market Towns to ensure we prove our case to this Government.

This morning we heard announcements that the Youth unemployment levels had now gone over the 1 million mark. As has become already proven, the civil service is convinced this is an urban problem, regardless of the new Government and all data statistics indicate that as well. We have unearthed a real need and we will become responsible for the evidence that goes to Secretaries of State, Ian Duncan-Smith and Eric Pickles at the end of these first two phases. That documentary evidence is perhaps the most important role that Frances and Julie will have. As a Governor at the Community College and two of our Primary Schools I am hoping to use some of the lessons learned here to benefit the generations of students to come. That we do not wait to 16 to find someone struggle to find a way forward. It is important that I emphasize that the College did extremely well again with its GCSE, AS and A level exam results as it has done consistently over the last few years. The problem is addressing those not engaged and losing their way. They are ultimately a problem for us all and this initiative cannot pretend to be the answer to everything but it can make a damn good contribution. I am perhaps more proud of this scheme than anything else the Partnership has initiated in its already distinguished history.

High Street

That is a remarkable statement given the complete regeneration of the Town with disabled access to every property, new paving, new crossings, street furniture of many guises and trees, hanging baskets and Christmas lights. 6 long haul phases and hopefully calm on the High Street for the foreseeable future with mercifully not a blink from any of the utility services. Rotary and the Parish Council led the Town sign schemes at both entries to the centre of the Town and also the wonderful Town Clock. It is a Town now which is almost unrecognizable from the drab, tired, run down place it was in 1995. The Hailsham Road has had some sparkle added too. On reflection the mini-round-a-bout has been a joy, with traffic movement much smoother. We said to Highway's doubters it could be achieved and evidence has proven it a great success. We finally got the bollards in to ensure safe passage for pedestrians, especially the disabled on the Banks stretch. It is quite extraordinary how having fought to save free car parking in the Town over several battles in the last 10 years, put up signs indicating free parking and number of spaces, people can be so gratuitous about parking up on the pavement which is a safety obstruction for others. The cash machine is of itself a useful asset, the laziness of its users was nothing short of iniquitous until the bollards of sufficient numbers were installed.

In theory at least the Town regeneration programme is complete. 15 years in the making involving Wealden Planning officers of several generations, Innumerable contributions from East Sussex Highway's Department staff many of whom have retired, such was the duration. The Parish Council have been wonderful, with support from the Chamber, creative help from Rotary and extraordinary determination and perseverance from members of the Partnership. Legend would have it that the idea started with a coffee shop meeting between Rosemary Mays-Smith and Patrick Coffey, then Senior Planning Officer with Wealden District Council now Parish Councillor. Both can be proud of the realization of their dream.

Broadband

The biggest battle this year and by no means resolved has been the SEEDA bid for Broadband Enhancement for part of our territory. Well, we won the pump priming money from the last vestiges of SEEDA resources to the tune of £45,000 but that turned out to be the easy part. There is absolutely no doubt that the primary concern of all the business interests across the whole Parish is the weakness of our Broadband service. Here was a chance to do something about that with a pilot scheme but it had to be justified against the strictest of criteria.

Earlier on in the year we having won some grant moneys from AIRS, commissioned a small operation to do some work for us in identifying all the businesses in the Parish for our business web-site. This included ordinance survey locations and we were therefore able to pin-point all business interests. We then overlaid a map of all the Broadband strengths in the Parish and revealed the profound weakness in the east, of Broad Oak and Cross in Hand/Waldron in the west. The overwhelming concentration of businesses in what was to become known as Heathfield West was the deciding factor and approved by SEEDA. Wealden District Council were appointed to be the facilitators in the programme. Wealden need to accredited for their help at this stage in the bid which also involved Isfield and Upper Dicker. We went out to tender. At this point John Tolley joined me as we interviewed candidate companies. Not one of the major players was interested in such a rural community and certainly not BT.

We soldiered on and ended up with a short list of two very new companies in this field. The products they were offering were however substantially different. One was for a wi-fi ASDL solution offering just about 2 mgs service but not necessarily across the whole area and to the furthest trading estate. Trees and hills could well be obstructions and the upload and download speeds were not that exciting. Nice people and faster execution guaranteed. The other was fibre-optic with superfast Broadband assured and not only that, two conduct pipes being laid with a second for phone lines and digital TV. Wealden's commissioning criteria selected the Wi-fi option, John and I chose the Fibre-optic option. The first of many differences of opinion. To ensure we were not sticking our neck out for something our customers did not want, we arranged a meeting with a presentation to all the Businesses on two trading estates, one in Waldron who hosted the event at Silveroaks Farm, and the Family owners are with us here this evening, the other in Cross in Hand. Trevor Goldsmith represented the Chamber, Cllr Jean Holmwood represented the Parish and Richard Fisher an expert on ICT from the County Council who had been an observer throughout the tendering process came as the independent presenter. The conclusion was a unanimous "no brainer" and support for Fibre-optic. We went back to Wealden and they could not facilitate that. After much negotiation with the senior heirachy of Directors the solution was to go out to tender with new criteria. 3 months later we are back seeing interviews but with the same two companies only this time with new criteria. Fibre-optic won. Later it transpired that Wealden would not commission this company and back we went for another confrontation meeting. The conclusion either wi-fi or nothing. I have since been in negotiations with ESCC to see whether we can find a solution still favoured by DEFRA who have now taken over from the demise of SEEDA and which does not cause a risk to ESCC. I was hoping this investigation would have born fruit by this evening but we are still not there.

In the background ESCC are set to execute a Countywide Superfast broadband provision in a scheme known as BDUK with substantial government funding. That is exciting but it could take 10 years to complete and sure enough, rural will be last. Of course it is important that both our pilot and the BDUK schemes will be compatible and that will surely be the case with fibre-optic the finest medium on the horizon and capable of expansion according to customer's needs whether business or residential. Wi-fi could be old technology before we installed it! Indeed if it is installed, it could prove a deterrent for the BDUK scheme coming to Cross in Hand and Waldron. In terms of motivation it is demonstrably proven that we will raise the prosperity of our businesses dramatically by giving them this 6 or 7 year advantage and when we are trying to create jobs, nothing could be more interesting to our young students seeking employment near where they grew up than sophisticated ICT small or medium sized enterprises. If somehow we do succeed then we will role out the programme from Heathfield West through Heathfield central and then out to Broad Oak, Punnett's Town and Old Heathfield. The revenues from the pilot should fuel the extension without the need for additional capital sweeteners.

Subject to the Board's approval this evening, John and I will be meeting with BDUK Officers to try and resurrect this pilot scheme and maintain the capital resource that we originally won. I have already had two meetings to identify the potential and basically to go the last mile without admitting defeat. We have agreed a meeting with the Chief Executive of Wealden at the end of next week to discuss this new model which ironically might bring

BT back into the picture. At deaths door a more optimistic picture but by no means resolved as yet.

Swimming Pool

After that trying to raise the capital for circa £2.3 million for an indoor swimming pool and dry leisure facilities at the College site may seem like a doddle. A meeting last week seems to have inflated it to £2.8 million. This time last year, I set a target that the planning application would be in by this AGM. That has not happened. Only by the skin of our teeth have we secured the formal contracts in principle for the commissioning of the consultant firm, Saville Jones, before this evening. The printed documents will be signed by both parties shortly. This agreement will take us through all the stages to planning permission. After very successful tendering procedures by the committee we are most fortunate to have secured the services of the best organization in this field. Saville Jones have a very high reputation, appear already to be good to work with and as there is only going to be one shot at this, need to be and are the best firm to maximize the opportunity. Through Ken Brewster's sound negotiations we also have secured a guarantee of maximum cost for the commission over which it cannot go. It is common in such planning exercises for there to be many supplementary reports required, all at short notice and additional cost. There may well have been some on this occasion but we have dealt with that risk. Also I must pay my respects to our Partners here in the Community College. They have with support from the Full Board of Governors and much imaginative leadership from Alan Powell as Principal and Loraine Alford as the Business manager, managed to ensure this commission does not go through our books and immediately put us over the VAT limit but to take that responsibility themselves. A saving of 20% on such a commission is not to be sneezed at. Quite rightly all risk will fall on the Partnership which is exactly why we were so careful with the contract.

Throughout the year most activity has been in the raising of the necessary sum to make the commission in the first place. The Sport & Leisure Committee set out to raise £30,000 and found they needed another £6,000 during the year. Generous contributions have been made by our own Parish Council and by setting the example other surrounding Parish Councils have followed. Applications for support from the Nat West Bank Community Scheme brought a winning cheque of £3,000. The Coop set out their stall to make this project their charity of the year and all of the staff from top to tail entered into the spirit of the promotion. In all, that contributed £5,000. The big event was the lottery for the Vauxhall car that Trevor Goldsmith generously put up at Trade price. £1 a ticket, winner takes all captured the imagination of the general public, drew huge goodwill from all parts of our community and flattened the committee and all known friends of the committee who have been battered by howling gales, torrential rain, snow, ice and blistering heat to sell the necessary tickets at thousands of occasions. The campaign was designed with military precision by Jack Hampton with the car itself always on parade and Jack, Rosemary and Ken almost ever present and every member of the Partnership doing shifts all over the place with Joanne, Sheran and Karen there with equal vigour. This finally culminated in a quiz night in January where the draw would be made by the gracious Beverly Thompson. Of all the tickets to win it was perhaps disappointing that it was a retired couple from Bodle Street who live half of the year abroad in the sun. The potential for a gleeful response from somebody in the audience that evening was certainly missed and Jack had to work hard to get a photograph for the web-site a couple of months later. A monumental effort across the year and not quite the triumphant result the sentimentalists amongst us would have wished

for. However all that endeavour did get us to the brink of making the commission and we are there now. I may be unwise to set new targets but the application should be submitted by the end of this financial year leaving an anxious summer next year awaiting the result. I will warn again that this is by no means a given, no matter how well Saville Jones conduct their research and consultation exercises. Should we be successful we will then set up an independent limited company with all suitable Partners to take us to the next stage of raising the capital and building the complex. One dimension that may well be exciting is that the Committee has put a bid in for one of the 9 Swimming Pools that are located round the Country for the training camps of the national Teams to be competing in the Olympics next year. The issue of legacy is of critical importance and the inheritance of such a swimming pool would be of much value in that context particularly when it comes to raising the capital required. Specialists from the Amateur Swimming Association have already met with the Committee to help with advice and guidance on this bid.

Website/ICT

One target we have reached is that www.heathfield.net our community web-site is now getting 5,000 hits a month. This is richly rewarding and now the life-blood of our Community for all ages and all interests. Up behind me will come a fly-by of images of the various sections including the home page news items, the police section, and the Business section promoting all legitimate businesses in the whole Parish. Some are beyond if that service is not available within. The history of the area, a growing tourist section, clubs, schools, churches and an access to advice and guidance section for those in need as a citizen, a Family or a business. This year's newly appointed Youth Council are setting out new ambitions for the Youth Site, this last year we succeeded in providing live platforms for 3 Bands or singer songwriters. With the new generation there will be a fresh vitality and a voice for the 1400 students aged 11-18 who live in the area. The Chairman of the Parish Council and I were invited to the AGM of a revitalized Age Concern Heathfield at the end of last month and we are to carry their regular newsletter. We have been promoting regular drivers for some time and now will feature regular editorial articles and publicize what events are available. Thus ensuring we are carrying material of interest to all generations. We will be doing some further work to support the Children's Centre shortly as well. Joanne now our creative editor with new digital camera in hand has brought new life to the web-site with photographs wherever possible.

During the year the ICT Committee has sought to ensure all the search engine trigger points and key word references are to the best of our capability. You will remember that 83.5% of the hits to our site come through Search engines. John Tolley has also organized a risk assessment of our site to ensure our liabilities, on the material we carry, are protected.

A huge debt of gratitude to Nick Potter and 21st Century who continue to be an inspiration behind this programme. A live web-site with fresh material, literally on a weekly basis, is a formidable challenge and no mean feat to run. It is immensely satisfying to see it become so successful.

Another responsibility is the PiP programme which launched Computers in Public accessible locations throughout the Parish. These are free to use and used to be funded by mobile phone top ups or digital photo prints. The technology since January 2003 has moved on and in hard reality these are weary machines. We have stripped out the

gimmicks to ensure they are more reliable, we have removed the least used ones and the remaining models are now being backed up with usable spares from those withdrawn. The Committee is keeping a close eye on the maintenance contract while experimenting with one model offering wi-fi which will undoubtedly be the future.

Inward investment

First things first, it was magnificent to attend the Chamber's Heathfield/Wealden Expo at the Kings Church yesterday. Full stand allocation all in place well in advance and brilliantly organized by all concerned. I understand that there were 400 visitors recorded during the day. I sincerely hope that all who attended whether they were presenting or coming in of interest enjoyed the experience and were stimulated to think "Heathfield for Business" in the future.

The Inward Investment committee has been well behind the challenge for Broadband enhancement and the attraction of Sainsbury's but has been doing some detailed work behind the scenes. This specifically to deal with Wealden District Council's Local Development Framework which ostensibly would set planning development perimeters for the next 20 years. Our remit was far more regarding commercial development potential than Housing. The Committee included the Chairman of the Parish Council and also then Chair of the Planning Committee, the Chairman of the Chamber of Trade and Director John Tolley, who has a vast experience of economic regeneration in other parts of the Country. My degree and my first job included planning as a specialist subject.

During the fulfillment of the plan we made regular contributions in written representations or at consultation meetings. We were essentially looking for more capability for jobs in the Town and its surrounds. We remain extremely disappointed by the lack of provision for commercial development within the confines of Heathfield and even angrier about the loss of previously designated sites to housing. This is by no means a nimbyist reaction to housing where we do have profound needs. A vast proportion of our working population commutes to work over considerable distances every day with a very poor transport infrastructure taking long hours. That is a drain on the vitality of the Town with parents unable to support their Children at School or in their hobbies or interests. The Town then becomes nothing more than a dormitory with little engagement with what is going on. It is of critical importance that we find resources to ensure our current young have potential opportunities for career and Family options in this part of the world. We cannot control a market or design our incoming companies but those that can pay a remuneration package capable of sustaining a mortgage on a property in this area are highly desirable. Medium size enterprises with sophisticated ICT skill requirements are the most probable contenders and that takes us back to superfast Broadband and its importance for us. Needless to say Broadband enhancement was one of our strongest recommendations for infrastructure planning gain in the new Development plan.

John Tolley has been invited to and taken a place representing the Heathfield Partnership on the newly formed East Sussex Economic Development Partnership structure. He has already earned much respect for his input in the importance of investment in the rural economy. John also represents us on the WARR Partnership which has access to some rural regeneration funding in Wealden and Rother. I have been appointed as one of four Directors to the new East Sussex Energy, Infrastructure and Development Company which is taking over the remains of the SEEDA assets and we will be endeavouring to energize

economic regeneration projects across the County. Either which way the Partnership is punching above its weight in terms of representation.

For our future plans we will be considering a revised “shoppers guide” in the forthcoming year, there are many new ideas and concepts. Attention has been given to tourism in the nearby surrounds of Heathfield and this investment is certainly being made on our website.

We continue to run very stylish notice boards at entry points to the Town and right smack in the middle as well. These provide up-to-date information on all the retailers in the Town, what they do and how to find them with ancillary information to ensure anyone visiting the Town is at an advantage in knowing their whereabouts. The one designed to be across the road in the Cuckoo Trail Car park is still intended for its permanent location but resides temporarily on the side of Goldsmiths & Allcorn workshops at the entrance to the Trading Estate.

Long term we still have an objective to create a start up business incubator unit where we would provide the communication system and reception facilities for say 8 business units. Flexible 3 year contracts below market prices are models elsewhere in the County that have encouraged new entrepreneurs to get a helping start. Only worthwhile, of course, if we have the sites for such enterprises to move on to when they succeed and need to expand.

On a shorter horizon there is concern that the only Pub in the centre of the Town, the Prince of Wales, has closed due to financial difficulties. For Sgt Hammerton that just might be a blessing but as an asset for the Town, it is disappointing.

Police LATS

The Partnership support Committee made up of every component part of the community:- Traders, Elected representatives of all levels, the Chamber, Neighbourhood watches, Street Pastors, Housing Estate Associations, the elderly, the young and of course our Police Officer Team. Much was achieved in the last year with the implementation of a three camera CCTV system which provides 24 hour coverage of strategic positions. All data is held and inspected by Police officers and is available for live or retrospective usage. The combination of Police presence and this coverage is of huge re-assurance to the Traders and Residents in the centre of the Town. During the year a 4th camera has been added in a newly identified pinch point and behind me should be revealed the location and its 4 dimensional view points. The clarity of image and depth of vision is impressive and a very useful tool for our Police Team. After some persuasion we have had two contributions from Police Funds but most of all, the effort and commitment of the Parish Council has been stunning. Diana Francis and Niki Lee-Marshall have put a huge effort into the project bringing about camera installation connections, broadband communications back into the necessary equipment back in the Police Station. The contribution of the Parish Council in terms of capital and revenue has been both significant and essential.

At a time when our Sussex Police Force is facing considerable redundancies it is hugely re-assuring that our Chief Inspector Dick Coates is maintaining his Neighbourhood Policing Team lead by Sgt Ruth Hammerton in Heathfield.

Another initiative across the Parish of a “No cold calling zone.” has now been in place for a year and gives the most vulnerable in our community the authority to turn away those who may be intruders or fraudsters. The essence of all of this work including supporting our Police with their Quality Streets initiatives is to be seen to be supportive of our Police and to keep them informed of concerns not necessarily reported. It is a good partnership.

Transport

This committee is multi-dimensional in its responsibilities. The most obvious and prominent being the running of the wonderfully successful “Youth Express” This initiative has appeared on promotion videos and DVDs and was prominent in the Transport Minister’s recent speech about Community Transport. Joanne and I had pump primed Norman Baker on request for a briefing. It is a vital link in ensuring that Teenagers from the rural hinterland of Heathfield, have opportunities for activities run by the Youth Service in the Youth centre or on expeditions out to such things as swimming pools, cinemas and bowling alleys, none of which we can currently offer locally.

We need to understand that the background to youth services in East Sussex took a dramatic change from the beginning of this financial year when 80 of 90 funding streams for youth activities were cut from national grants. Almost all of the Youth Centres have gone and we faced a serious crisis in resources for our Young people and very probably the negative impact on the surrounding community. Three years ago I had lobbied hard to save the youth centre under a previous review and drew recognition of the outstanding performance of the centre, its value for money and most especially its manager, Beata Drury. This time it was even more severe and ironically the lack of provision for youth and the impending Tomorrow’s People alliance gave me just enough ammunition to save our centre. It is now the only surviving one in Wealden and serves the whole of the region. I have no doubt that the value of the centre and its programmes has been enhanced by the “Youth Express” The Parish Council also help with very important contributions to the administration costs which are very timely. Recognition should most certainly also be given to the Parish Council who have done splendidly in their own initiatives, the creation and then regeneration of the skate park which is truly valued, they make contributions to theatre groups and sports clubs but without the centre and its Officers, the Town would have looked a barren place to our Young. Most of all the credit for the “Youth Express” lies with the outstanding double act of Beata Drury and Joanne Aldous. Praise must also be given to our most reliable Drivers, Brian Arnott and Geoff Thomas. Both of the Kings Church, they have excelled themselves with generosity of service They have both taken special driving courses and got new CRB checks to match the ones they already had and still they come back for more and more. Magnificent. We have another bid in which I presented yesterday for a contribution towards the excellent “Youth Express” from a Community Transport fund administered by County. This time the additional dimension will be the provision for the Heathfield Works! Programme. Hopefully that will keep us going for the next two years.

The Community Group Bus service offer has drawn a small but loyal band of users. It is not the free service on offer to the young and their parents but it does come in under market value. After the initial comprehensive survey conducted for us by AIRS it was thought of critical importance to do something for the more isolated in our community who had been so readily identified. As Age Concern Heathfield were one of our Partners it ensured we did not have overlap with our colleagues, indeed some of our enquiries go straight to Age

Concern Heathfield as it is now known. One factor has been observed to have had an impact on both organizations and that is the advent of the bus pass for over 60s. Advocates are arguing that the Bus pass should be usable on charity services as well and were that to happen, it may well bring this service to life.

The other significant factor is the dramatic improvement to our commercial bus services. Through this committee we have lobbied hard for additional services in peak times and the re-introduction of Sunday programmes. We had meetings with all three Bus Company senior executives along with ESCC Transport Officers and better schedules and timings were achieved. Briefly we even had late night services coming back from Tunbridge Wells on Friday and Saturday night. That sadly has fallen away but it was very poorly advertised which seemed wholly counter productive. In all of the lobbying that took place the close connectivity of the Parish Council and Partnership was of extreme value and I pay particular mention in dispatches to John Kerby former Parish Councillor and now the Employer representative on the Committee for his dedication to those who need such services.

Farmer's Market

After the drama of all above we now come to the ongoing success story that is the Heathfield Farmer's Market. It is one of our two founding projects that 16 years on is still flourishing. It is run with meticulous care and attention by Director Colin Williams with wonderful support from his wife Sue and their efforts on that Saturday come rain or shine are magnificent. Colin first ensures that all the regulations regarding health and safety are properly adhered to and any Trader who is not behaving properly is removed. The key values are local produce presented fresh on the day with real flavour which has not been frozen out on the journey. Colin then provides wonderful back-up to all the Traders on the day and they are cherished with care and attention and teas and coffees so that they do not have to leave their stations.

Colin takes a lot of trouble to promote the market and takes time out with his committee (made up of Traders and a Parish Councillor) to review new ways to spread the message. He also takes a great deal of time in seeking out new Traders who may offer a new range of products. The regular presence now of a fishmonger providing fresh fish and seafood caught that morning in either Hastings or Eastbourne is brilliant.

There is no doubt that the downturn in the economy is being felt by the Traders who exhibit their wares every third Saturday of the month. Fresh local produce is of tremendous value but when compared to national supermarket chains, appears more expensive. The inherent production costs of a small scale Farmer are much higher per unit than any larger conglomerate. Feed, veterinary charges, abattoir costs, butchery and then independent sales are all more expensive to the pound. In tougher economic times, the Family purse may well look elsewhere. In some of the surrounding markets this has happened quite drastically. Due to Colin's positive imagination this has not dramatically hit the Heathfield Farmer's market. To the huge credit of the Committee and primarily Colin, the Heathfield market outperforms the other three Wealden Market in terms of sales made. Another of Colin's initiatives was to bid to Wealden for some funding and he succeeded where all other Partnership bids had failed this last year. This was £2,000 on behalf of the 4 market cycle, Uckfield, Crowborough, Hailsham and Heathfield. Colin being the most experienced Manager took the lead but all were delighted with the outcome until the

freedom of choice as to how to use it became a problem. The bid was for marketing programmes, in the end Wealden produced a scheme for all, using the money supposedly granted. Helping People help themselves is usually a good premise, devolving responsibilities to local organizations was the new catchphrase, especially the very competent and able Farmer's Market Committee who have lead by themselves over these past 16 years.

The market is up and running again this Saturday, all the marketing material has been up and around the Town this week and I hope all of us will be there on Saturday morning.

Conclusions

Having set out to thank everybody and all bodies that have made a contribution, I have probably left out important contributions from People who have given of their all to the Partnership during this last year and that is unforgivable. I have however endeavoured to edit the length of this report and bring it into some form of containable summary of the past year's activities and that may well have induced an oversight or two. We have introduced photographs to lighten the load and thankyou especially to Joanne for that.

I hope that you here this evening and those that read the report on the web will think that the extraordinary variety of programmes that I have reported on have been of positive benefit to the people whom we serve. It is in reality a group of like minded people who have volunteered to contribute to their community and through their efforts make a positive difference. The fact that the Partnership is so wonderfully supported by its Partners brings a harmony to all of its objectives and Heathfield is the beneficiary of that no matter which organization takes the lead.

I need to pay a particular appreciation to the Parish Council. All of our Committees are served by one Councilor at least, sometimes several as the Chairman and Vice-Chairman now have a rolling brief. That ensures a democratic connectivity. We provide a quarterly report on all of our projects to the Finance and General Purposes Committee so that an account is recorded on a regular basis. Incidentally all of the Executive Committee meetings are public ones and the minutes are published on the web-site.

What has become clear is that with the reduction in funding within the public sector, grants are harder to acquire. We are still more successful than seemingly most voluntary organizations but that is for specific projects. Earlier this year we had several meetings with Adam Chugg and his team at 3VA, the leading voluntary organization serving Eastbourne, Lewes and Wealden, hence 3VA. We were primarily looking for advice on new sources for additional base budget funding. One suggestion was to evaluate all the voluntary contributions made to the Partnership to assist in its work as well as the grant moneys secured. Joanne, John Tolley and I set out on this investigation for the complete financial years 2009-2010 and 2010-2011. It is fair to say that most of the research fell on Joanne and we thank her for her inscrutable diligence. The conclusions paint an interesting picture for would be grant authorities. In the 2009-2010 year we ended up with £12879.65 worth of base costs against a budget of £13,500. £620 under budget. For that we secured £55,792.92 worth of voluntary contributions (all following recognized European formulas) and £36,139 worth of grant. A dividend return of 717.77%. The following financial year we accrued a base cost of £14,051.61. £551 over budget but secured £76,244.23 in voluntary contributions and £125,956 in grant funding, a dividend return of 1438.98% which probably makes us the most productive voluntary organization in the country. Ideal for a Carlsberg

advertisement. In view of that we are good value to the tax payer's purse. Our Honorary treasurer, Tim Hough can be proud of that, I am proud of that. The Parish Council have stood by us in helping with our base costs through this year and that is deserving of our absolute appreciation and I would hope the returns on that investment over recent years will be seen as wise investment by our Elected Councilors.

One final thankyou for someone who has been a stalwart supporter of my endeavours since I was appointed as Chairman 8 years ago and that is my Deputy who also carries the responsibilities of Company Secretary. In this last year particularly, we have worked together on several projects where certain care or risk assessment has been crucial. John's advice, guidance and wisdom in the creation of contracts for the Swimming Pool programme, for the tendering process with Broadband, protection for the web-site and for the wider dimensions of economic regeneration have been outstanding and are a substantial part of the reason that the Partnership is creative, successful and sustainable. Joanne and Frances will be handing out leaflets this evening helping people nominate the Heathfield Works! Programme for a Nat West Award. I have been advised that the web-site where you place your nomination is currently malfunctioning but please do vote to support this invaluable scheme. The Nat West Bank is sorting their web-site out but do please take a leaflet and make your nomination.

It only leaves me to look forward to the Christmas festivities on Saturday 26th November where the lighting ceremony will take place at 4pm on the platform outside of Trading 4 You (with kind permission of Chris Macklin) to promote the Christmas season for our Colleagues in the Town. Jane Torville will be there to switch on the lights and is booked to do an interview for the crowd that turns up with Trevor. I hope you will all join us for that occasion, I know that Trevor Goldsmith and his team have worked hard to organize everything again and that Jack Hampton will be on hand as Master of ceremonies once more. A great occasion for the Town.

In the meantime I can only hope that everybody who has been associated with the Partnership continues their alliance and will be there for our endeavours in the following year where no doubt we will have new adventures to tell. Thank you.

Cllr Rupert Simmons.
12th October 2011 Goldsmiths & Allcorn