

HEATHFIELD PARTNERSHIP TRUST COMPANY LTD CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2013

Chairman of the Parish Council, Elected representatives, Distinguished Guests, Fellow Directors, a very warm welcome to everyone attending this annual general meeting. We have a number of formalities to conduct in the public eye for the Trust Company but most important of all is the opportunity to report on all of the programmes being undertaken by the Partnership over the last year. It is also an opportunity to recognize the many Partners that are helping us in our many endeavours. 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 (heaven forbid) wish to query any of our reported business this year.

Heathfield continues to maximize its opportunities by working well together and where many Partnering organizations put aside Egos or ambitions of Empire to realize a greater good for the Town and its surrounding Parish. That very simply does not necessarily happen elsewhere in Market Towns across the South East and in times of financial hardship it makes even more sense that Tax Payers money or Grants competitively won, are put to good use with a harmony of objectivity and cooperation.

Planning

The best example of this spirit of cooperation is the planning applications for two very influential sites in Heathfield. The Parish Council, the Chamber and the Partnership worked hand in hand to persuade the planning authority of the merit of these projects.

The development behind the Police Station will realize 115 homes, 40% will be affordable housing to let. We currently have 115 Families on Housing waiting lists, this will be the best investment in their needs for over 20 years. It will also raise the economy of Heathfield by considerable sums over the next few years. The model calculation for the 115 Home development records £8 million in construction work (250 jobs) £5.9 -£8.6 million in GVA over the first year, £2.45 million GVA over the next 10 years and finally a net £150,000 per annum in council tax to WDC. The close proximity to the Town, its shops, its services, its Youth Centre, a Primary School and by East Sussex Terms, access to convenient Bus routes make this an ideal site. Development is usually met with a not in our back yard approach. It was refreshing to see, not here.

On the 25th September the redoubtable team of Cllrs Coffey and Simmons did their double act again and supported by all of our Local District Councillors, the Committee approved the principle for outline planning permission and this should be confirmed shortly. There is important detailed work still to do but the critical decision has been made. The small incursion into land covered by AONB was not dismissed lightly and a great deal of care was taken by the planning authority to ensure proper measures were put in place to both minimize impact and secondly to prevent a precedence being made.

Further endeavours of cooperation have lead to unanimity of voice on the re-development of the Dream Machines site where planning permission has just been granted for a single development with 4 retail units on the ground floor, 4 office units on the 1st floor and 5 two bedroomed flats above. There are a number of dividends from this development as well. Not least the life blood of flats and residents being in the Town centre of an evening but most critical it should raise both the architectural appearance of the Town especially in such an

important gateway site, but also it establishes a principle of raising the height profile of the Town. We are surrounded by Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and cannot expand outwards, here is a principle (lobbied for now over several years) being accepted of being able to expand upwards. Not for one moment are we talking about sky-scrapers but a modest lift could make a considerable difference to Heathfield's potential.

For the time being these are the only developments of significance that are likely to be realized in at least the foreseeable future. By making the most of them we have ensured that the Town is not stagnating. A little invigoration can go some way to maintaining the faith of our retailers in Heathfield and its potential prosperity.

Heathfield Events

Another event that brings huge credit to the Town and raises its profile is the now well established Le Marche. Once again this year's event was a triumph. Now under new management, Mr Richard Ridley has taken charge of this vital tradition and a magnificent way of promoting our wares to a wider market. The twinning Association led by Mrs Gill Temple are major contributors as well, with hosting of our French Guests. It was fabulous to see even more Heathfield traders open for business. The organization is in such good condition that the programme has become sustainable for many years to come.

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.

Agriculture on a smaller scale but nonetheless important was the Parish Council's triumphant opening of the Allotments. This created such enthusiasm that as the Chairman, Cllr Pat Clark was conducting the opening ceremony to the sound of the prestigious Heathfield Silver Band; allotment holders were oblivious in the background as they were digging with seemingly unadulterated joy! A huge amount of work has been undertaken by the Parish to bring this about and it has become a super asset to the residents of the Parish.

Farmer's Market

If I can stay agricultural for a while, then I will start this year's project reports with the Farmer's Market. The Farmer's Market has been running now for 18 years and under Colin William's management has done remarkably well. The Market run on the third Saturday of the month has managed to withstand much of the downturn in the economy which other Farmer's Markets in the South East have faced. Much of this has been down to Colin's considerate and meticulous style which has maintained a loyalty from the Stallholders and the Heathfield Market continues to outperform its immediate rivals in productivity per customer. Our good relations with the CO-OP are not least because of his careful liaison and they have come to realize the uplift in their turnover on Market Saturdays. Karl Linsdale continues to be a very helpful and cooperative Manager and that relationship adds prosperity to the Town as a whole.

I wish to take this opportunity to commend the huge contribution made by Colin to the Partnership as a whole. A Director, he has been our Executive Committee Chairman, our public face, a contributor to the intelligence behind the ICT Committee and the Heathfield.net web-site but most of all to the immense work behind the running of one of our oldest projects, the Farmer's Market. This has now been going for 18 years, most of them under Colin's

management and the time has come for a hand over to new Volunteers. Every third Saturday Colin will have organized the Stall holders for that week, the bookings, fee collection, poster signs, the setting up and taking down of the stalls, the storage and delivery of the stalls and generously the teas and coffees or soft drinks needed to keep the Stall Holders sweet. It has to be said that Sue or indeed his niece have been major assets when it comes to that side of things. A Family affair, as his son was a major contributor some time ago. His sound judgement as to who can be present and in what combination has been recognized as the wisest across the Wealden circuit. Health & Safety officers hold him in high regard. It has become my number one target to get Colin support that can take over and ensure his legacy is sustained into the future. He is a very hard man to replace and will be an even harder act to follow.

For our Local Farmers, having a direct retail opportunity is a wonderful asset but we need to recognize that prices for quality produce cannot compare with the mass production of supermarkets. The key is the flavour and freshness of the foods on offer, the unique selling quality that remains a draw for customers from some distance from Heathfield who once parked, stay to shop elsewhere in the Town. At the top of the report, I complimented Richard Ridley on the management of the Le Marche this year. A splendid effort but not on the same scale as Colin's every month for 15 whole years.

Heathfield Works!

The year has been a mixture of magnificent triumphs and some considerable frustration. Undoubtedly one of the triumphs has been the enormous success of the Heathfield Works! Scheme that we run in conjunction with Tomorrow's People. Now two years on and 80 graduates successfully now making headway with their lives. The applications for the 10 places on the new programme which started on Monday of this week was more competitive than ever. The graduation ceremony held on the 20th September was spectacular with both Roger Daltry and Jayne Torvile gracing the occasion with their presence. For those old enough to remember, hearing Roger Daltry and the Who singing "Teenage Wastelands" as the back up to a film in his presence was an exciting moment. It was also interesting that it then inspired him to make an extremely political speech about the lack of infrastructure in our County.

The success of this scheme is that it has evolved to suit its environment, its young people and also the Businesses of the area and their needs; the chemistry is now an efficient model attracting other rural Market Towns in the Country. It is worth noting that to date, we have not been excessively bound by restraints imposed upon us by funders or exacting monitoring reports which would have slowed our progress. I am enormously proud that something invented here in Heathfield has now started in Hailsham on September 23rd and is being taken up by Towns in the Borders and Northumberland. The project in Gallashiels starts this week and the one in Amber, Northumberland very soon. Interest is being researched in Cumbria and Devon. Even more special in the case of Hailsham is that one of the Mentors now being employed to run that programme is one of our earliest graduates, Kayleigh Loxley, who studied with us, accompanied by her young son, Harvey. Now that is a happy story.

Before we get too carried away it is not the only successful invention created in Heathfield, credit must also be given to Ruth Waller and the wonderful Street Pastors scheme which was modeled for this part of the world by the Churches Together in Heathfield Team and can now be found spreading like wildfire throughout the South East.

Back to the Heathfield Works! Scheme, this has required some £256,000 over the last 2 years and many more wonderful contributions in kind. The backbone for this financial year beginning in April is the first installment of two from the County Council for £75,000. A wonderful support which is proving invaluable and will help sustain next year as well. A note of caution is that we need to find that sum and more for the following year to ensure this now invaluable scheme does not fall flat on its face and let down our most vulnerable young People. We continue to strive for funding and have many irons in the fire. It looks increasingly likely that we will see funding from HSBC and a Local Entrepreneur from the Travel Industry making a contribution, from his Company profits, next year. It is helpful to have the most proven case on track record, rather than the battle Frances Conway and I had ahead of the start in 2011 when all was speculation.

When I spoke at the recent Graduation, I made it plain for all to hear that the simple reason that this scheme is the success it is, is the outstanding personalities and professional skills of Julie Kaye, Frances Conway and Tora Bowdler. This scheme is about People, the young people who have aspirations for jobs or career path education and those Employers, People who need personal attention to their needs as well. This dynamic trio make a point of paying attention to all of their needs with compassion, occasionally tough love and phenomenal patience. The Partnership and indeed the Town owe them a huge debt of gratitude.

Enterprise Centre

Another ambition to help create employment opportunities has been the Heathfield Enterprise centre. A wonderful project to enable the creation of 10 start-up business units in the centre of Heathfield. A provision for 12 more units in the year to follow. A provision of compact units with all communication connections, phone lines and broadband. A base reception service and shared meeting room for presentation to clients or customers. Back up marketing and banking advice from experienced professionals in their field would be hugely reassuring to the innocent making their first steps in the commercial world. The camaraderie of shared experience making entrepreneurship not the lonely place it might otherwise have been. We had hoped to have the whole thing operational by now. Sadly this has not happened as the building, which had suitable planning permission, has now drawn the attention of the building Inspector. The calculation for the conversion costs now seems dangerously inaccurate. Competitive tendering has reduced our first fears but there is now a significant margin of difference between the money raised for the project and the costs ahead of us. The project Committee are now considering revisions on the original proposal or an increased bid. At this point I would like to highlight two professionals for their generous contributions. Parish Councillor Patrick Coffey and his planning and building regulation knowledge and that of Architect, Mick Stedman, both of whom have given of their considerable expertise as volunteers. We look forward to making more progress on this important long standing objective for the Partnership in the near future. Small venturing into medium sized enterprises are the backbone of the East Sussex Economy and growing your own (a different form of allotments) is the best investment we can make in terms of future job opportunities.

Swimming Pool

Central to the year has been the Swimming Pool project. This has been our biggest challenge, one that would have made most voluntary organizations wince. Director Rosemary Mays-Smith has lead this from the beginning. At last year's AGM I reported the success of the project in securing one of the 9 Olympic Pools from London 2012. It is important to all that this

will commemorate not only the Olympic but the Paralympic Games that were the pride of this Country. Our history as a Town has been one of ensuring that we have the finest provision for disabled access throughout the town centre and in all of our new endeavours. This was central to the specification for the swimming pool design. How refreshing it has been in recognition of our best efforts, that the Company, Wealden Mobility, has located itself here this year in Heathfield, a centre of excellence for disabled equipment, which should enable such Citizens to enjoy a more amenable lifestyle.

I digressed and back to progress on the Swimming Pool and Dry Leisure facilities that have been our ambition for some time. We progressed in our working relationship with Wealden District Council, the Sport & Leisure Authority and at the turn of the calendar year, they made two important decisions which we very much appreciated. Firstly they agreed to become the Accountable Body to receive pledges or indeed grants from substantial organizations. That was beyond our means as a small Charity organization not registered for VAT. Secondly and as important, they agreed to maintain the current revenue stream currently servicing the existing leisure facilities. This will ensure the business plan still holds good.

During the year in March we created the new Company, the Heathfield Area Leisure Centre Ltd. The Directors have all been signed up and their duties so far have been to begin the consideration of transfer of the land from East Sussex County Council to the Company. One, I should acknowledge the extremely helpful approach from the County Council and their lead officers, Pauline Young and Sean Hambrook. A provisional lease has been targeted as being for 125 years. This again projects long term security for any would be grant body. The Company is designed to have 12 representative Board Members who cover the interests of the whole Community and will offer sound Governance on their behalf. We have two Parish Councillors, Cllrs Pat Clark, Chairman and Patrick Coffey, already mentioned in dispatches, two District Councillors, Cllrs Dick Angel and Nigel McKeeman, Two College Governors, Richard Karn, Chairman and Peter Bailey, two Directors of the Partnership in Rosemary Mays-Smith and John Tolley who again takes the duties of Company Secretary, Three independent Citizens who all bring attributes to the Cause, Ken Brewster, Roger Thomas and Andrew Russell who has become the Treasurer and finally myself, representing the County Council. If and when we have sufficient capital money it will be this body that commissions the build.

The existing Sport & Leisure Committee continue to project manage in the meantime under the direction of Rosemary and She has also raised a fund raising Committee of many laudable people with remarkable connections to raise the target capital. We were looking at in excess of £4million and this has been reduced with professional guidance to a more manageable £3.25 million and the kitty currently holds £606,000. Still a way to go. Rosemary and her Team have in excess of 100 bids on the go right now. That is a formidable task for a voluntary organization and professional assistance at this vital time is being considered by the Committee. This time last year, I set a target to commence the build by June 2015. That remains a reasonable prospect. Some mentions in dispatches in the year gone by. I think we are indebted to Sport England and specifically to Mr Kevin Mills for his undying support for Heathfield getting one of the Olympic Pools. His support, advice and guidance for Rosemary has also been appreciated. Mr Jeff Hart has retired from Freedom Leisure after many years service to this project. His expertise with the business plan has been one of the cornerstones of its success. His deputy, Mr Ivan Horsfull-Turner now stands up to be M.D. of the organization and will take Jeff's role in the project forward with equal vigour. I should

acknowledge Mr Ken Brewster's huge amount of investigative work on the project and Director, Tim Hough's intelligent and insightful contributions. Most of all I should cherish Jack Hampton's tireless energy and enthusiasm for new means of fund raising and ingenuity for publicity. I had the privilege of paying my respect to the COOP for their support for this campaign two years ago and they are still with us. Now we should also herald the arrival with a wonderful explosion of help from the Santander Bank. The whole team at the Heathfield branch plus the regional manager are full square behind this programme. Local Sponsors who also helped with the sponsored walk or the recent quiz night have been Mr Taylor's Fish Bar, Paul Clark's Pet Food Shop and Director Chris Macklin's Trading 4 You. Director Trevor Goldsmith and his wife Shelagh organized the quiz and refereed magnificently as spirits became quite competitive. The winners by quite some margin were the Womens' Institute, a formidable body at the best of times but peculiarly enhanced by Director John Tolley on their team. An unfair advantage if ever I saw one.

ICT

The ICT Committee has overseen a number of initiatives over the last 12 years. The adventurous bid for European funding to launch the Public Information Points throughout various locations in the community opening with the launch at the CO-OP in January 2004. This also came with a training programme to help those not acquainted with computers to be able to use E-mail, Web-search, Word and Excel programmes. I think we trained some 600 people and then launched these Dr Who like contraptions in tactical places such as Pubs, the Youth Club, the Library, A Post Office, Street Stores and a Biker's Café in Horam. They provided useful mechanisms for People who either did not have their own computers or were on the road to have access at most hours of the day to local services information. We have now reached the end of that journey as technology has moved on, everyone seems to have Ipads, Bluetooth or blackberry gadgets and are in 24 hour contact with a galaxy of information. Secondly the machines are tired, increasingly unreliable and most damning of all; the maintenance company has gone bust. There is of course still computer access for information being made available in the Library but the PiPs are being removed and the space is being made good in all remaining premises. They served their purpose and were especially an ideal model for gaining access to and promoting www.Heathfield.net our newly expanding community web-site.

This has now reached extraordinary levels of 6,500 hits a month and plays a fundamental place in the Community as a whole, be they local to find information on businesses or clubs or tourists to find information on places to stay or visit. 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. Keeping it pumped with new material is one of Joanne's masterstrokes. Some of the photographs being illustrated behind me come from those placed on the web-site during the last year. Helping Businesses to make the most of their own site takes a lot of Joanne's time but in turn helps promote the business community. We can identify all the site hits and which pages they looked at where the visitor was looking from and the time spent in doing so. All useful information to a business hoping to make an impact. They can also organize a direct link to their own web-site for a small contributory fee. The one disappointment this year has been the poor performance of the Youth Site, especially after significant investment in programming design. The young have moved on to a whole panoply of sites for their own communication, the obvious Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Skype and also the following that the Youth Council kindly informed me on:-tumblr, instagram, (how wonderful if that had been instagran, friendly communication with their doting Grandmothers,

instagram it certainly is not in reference to the lack of grammar in texting,) or snapchat, whatsapp (which appeals,) and kik, which might not! There are hundreds of others and they come and go out of fashion. Whether Parents are aware of some of the connections or material being seen would worry me. We had safety checks on material being carried on the Youth Site and maybe that was one of the reasons it has become "second class" in their eyes where instant is essential. The editorial was the charge of the Youth Council themselves and so it is to them we will turn to review the site and its future.

Whichever which way we are indebted to Nick Potter a Director of 21st Century who has put all the sophistication he could muster into our programming and accessibility of the overall site. A generosity of commitment way beyond reason. In the last 4 years we have recorded 222,076 hits to the site and 160,619 were unique visitors.

Broadband

21st Century were located in Cross in Hand before being frustrated by broadband speeds and moving during the year to Uckfield. They have not fared much better there, apart from finding better accommodation and are still frustrated by local speeds. For the last 5 years the Partnership has set about trying to get better Broadband for the businesses of the Parish. You will recall us winning a bid for the last remnants of SEEDA money to pilot a scheme in the west of the Parish. This fell down due to an inability to justify fibre-optic connections which quite clearly were going to be the modern mechanism. We were in danger of installing something that would have been out of date the moment we completed the exercise. By then we became aware of a national scheme known as BDUK to help the provision of superfast Broadband in rural parts of the Country. Ordinary market forces were taking care of the larger urban communities. We pulled out of the SEEDA scheme in favour of waiting for the BDUK programme. It has taken longer than anticipated, at first due to European regulations and frankly unnecessary interference from the European Commission. Finally in East Sussex we got the go-ahead. The State has put in £10.6 million and the County £15 million and these sums have been matched by the winning contractor BT. During the research for the promotion of our State bid, the County officers used a lot of information coming from the SEEDA Partnership bid about the implications to local businesses and the weakness of the signals in our locality. When we were awarded the State backing, it was the Heathfield Businesses that turned out to do radio interviews from dawn to dusk to herald the news. Ironically since May this project now comes under my Portfolio of responsibility as Cabinet Member and I have been briefed as to the best engineering way to cover the County from the BT Senior management at the beginning of this month.

I am very pleased to announce that the route to be used is to come in from Tunbridge Wells directly south with fibre-optic cabling to the Heathfield telephone Exchange and then spread out again with fibre-optic cabling from there. Street side cabinets will then supply connections to local premises, both business and residential where demand is made. The Partnership and the Chamber will be spreading the word to all potential customers to register their interest on the East Sussex Web-site. Please all go to the section entitled Go e-sussex and register your interest. This is not a commitment and it will inform BT Engineers where the highest interests lie. I am sure we will be promoting the information on the Heathfield.net, Chamber and Parish web-sites. Digging will commence either side of Christmas depending on weather conditions. 24 megabits a second as a minimum service will certainly attract businesses to Heathfield and that kick start should be a significant advantage for some time to come. The Partnership can take some considerable pride in this development and Trevor Goldsmith and John Tolley especially were major allies. The Enterprise centre will of course be a prominent target.

Car Park Review

One of our longest battles has been saving our free car parking for the Town. Seemingly we are challenged every few years and in all probability will be so for ever and a day. Once more Wealden District Council have commissioned a review but this time on On-street car parking. The proposal being considered is to de-criminalize the “policing” of this matter in all of Wealden’s Market Towns. Luckily we have been on our guard and the Chamber, Parish Council and Partnership have responded to the consultation. Be rest assured that the suggestion that this would be conducted without charge is not to be believed. Wealden already police their own car parks with uniformed officers and no doubt would be thrilled to pass the whole role of on-street and off-street car parking regulation onto a private contractor. Under these austerity measured times for all local authorities this would not remain chargeless for long. Meanwhile our Supermarkets would be pressured into introducing charges on their car parks to hold them in protection for customers rather than Heathfield Employees parking there all day. Our finest asset and marketing tool would have evaporated in one fell swoop. Sainsburys, when we enticed them here entered into an agreement to maintain free car parking, the COOP likewise over a much longer period. Our streets are currently very well policed by the PCSOs under the management of Sgt Ruth Hammerton and the policy contribution from the Members of the LATs. Ruth quite understands the importance of the status quo and will maintain the service.

I understand that this will now be considered by a Wealden District Council committee chaired by one of our own representatives, Cllr Jonica Fox and including members in Cllrs Dick Angel and Nigel McKeeman. Hopefully we can rely on their sound judgement.

LATs & Policing

The Police Local Action Team Committee under the chairmanship of Cllr Pat Clark has contributed a great deal in support for our Neighbourhood Police team. The interaction with the Public they serve with representatives from all quarters of the community is of good value to all parties. One of the triumphs has been the creation of the CCTV scheme. Funding found by the Partnership was massively added to by the Parish Council who have also picked up the responsibility of maintenance of the 4 cameras and the data bank in the Station. It has come to our notice that the contractor employed to carry out this technical support has been failing in their duties and some of the system is temporarily out of order. We need to work together to get this now invaluable and proven scheme back in full operating order.

Back in the summer , it must have been a slow news day, the more vulnerable in our Community were frightened witless by a presentation on BBC South early evening news broadcast announcing that the Police Commissioner was closing or moving all of Wealden’s Police Stations. I immediately challenged the Chief Superintendent for East Sussex who organized an immediate apology from the Deputy Police Commissioner for not consulting before going public and indeed explaining the plan better. I was given several pieces of re-assurance: - 1, The entire Neighbourhood Policing Team with Sgt Hammerton would remain in place. 2/ The entire CCTV equipment, cameras, cables, data bank et al, would be moved if necessary and re-installed at Police expense.3/ They might not need to move anyway and Partners might be considering sharing the location which made eminent good sense. I understand now that calm has been restored that a 5th camera is being assessed and we look forward to hearing about that in our deliberations next year. Before I close this section of the report, please can I acknowledge the contribution made towards Heathfield Policing by the

recently retired Chief Inspector of Wealden Policing, Dick Coates. His generous support for a number of initiatives, notably the Heathfield Works! Programme was invaluable. He is now being succeeded by Chief Inspector Gary Pike and we look forward to working with him. It is all change in the Police hierarchy as the new Chief Superintendent of East Sussex is Neil Honner, a former Chief Inspector for Wealden, who suggested the forming of the LATs Committee by the Partnership in the first place.

Youth

With our excellent Police Team in place, backed up by CCTV as unfailing eyes, our crime levels and civil disobedience figures have been kept very well in check. Another good reason has been the contribution of Beata Drury's heroic work at the Youth Centre. The energy to reach out to young People needing care, advice and guidance has been invaluable to all, Families especially. Then there has been the advancement of the Heathfield Works! Scheme which has turned around 80 young lives, all of whom now have purpose and pride in their journey.

There is another major factor which I would like to highlight. This year's exam results at Heathfield Community College were outstanding and revealed the hard work put in by our Student population. The A level (A-E) results were 99.4% passed, of real achievement were the 87% A*-C results, which is the highest ever recorded. The AS results were equally promising with 93% passes. The GCSE results reached new heights with 74% achieving A*-C results (including English and Maths,) the highest ever recorded and one of the absolute best records in the County. As I put in my local Newspaper comments, this was a wonderful achievement for the Students, the supporting Families and not least, the first class efforts of the Principal, and Director here, Alan Powell and his entire teaching Staff. Our Young have a lot to offer our Community and what a sparkling year of promise they have had.

"Bus Company"

The 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. A free service to 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 and volunteer drivers who were subsequently licensed by ESCC and CRB checked did the driving. We won several bids to ESCC for funding and the Parish Council have also helped with the significant administration. This scheme won considerable kudos for addressing the isolation of young People in the rural environment. This then was 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 with a small group of regular users and the Youth Express with a strange dip in demand. The management committee are trying to identify why the new generation are not taking this up as much but the introduction of a small fee of £1 a trip to ensure sustainability may have had more of an impact than first presumed.

During the year we were offered a 16 seater vehicle and indeed County kindly arranged parking for us up at the depot but this was thought a step too far and caution got the better of us.

Productivity in Figures

In summary we are a voluntary organization and can calculate an input of £63,644 in value over the last financial year. This is a recognized formula which includes gifts in kind. We have also raised £30,645.43 grant income in the financial year 2012-13 but without the professional base structure we would not be nearly as effective. That is a total return of £94,289 from a base budget outlay of £15,478 for that year. That is a 609.17% increase in productivity that should please the People whom we serve and impress those organizations that contribute to our causes. It was actually more last year and will already be so next year, the predominant factor being when the Grants were recorded in terms of financial years. It is very important that we recognize the crucial role that the Parish Council plays in contributing to that base budget structure.

Officer Team

Fine talking about productivity but as usual it is the People behind the scene who are the valuable ingredient. Firstly to acknowledge the huge contribution made by Karen Cook and Sheran Crichton in recording all business at all of our many meetings. The Executive meetings with reports on all of our projects are of course published for the public to see on our web-site which is a sound accountability. That and the Annual General meeting where the Public are informed and many are invited. This annual report is then made public throughout the year on the web-site and it was very interesting throughout recent years where various organizations have checked to see what I have said. Our meticulous care throughout our business starts with the first class efforts of Karen and Sheran.

Then there is Joanne who in reality manages the operation and without whom, I am sure, the productivity would be negligible. She succumbed to a cold the other day and I realized this was seemingly a first over many years of stoic resilience. Somehow, I turn up at the right meetings, minutes are checked and recorded, bids drafted and letters written, drafting monitoring reports, news columns, web-site updates with news stories and photographs, researched data, renewing material in the notice boards, running the bus service and recording all media activity. Minutes directly taken of the ICT, Inward Investment and Heathfield Works! committee meetings. The fact that she now does a similar role for Trevor and the Chamber and Richard Karn as Chairman of the Board of Governors at Heathfield Community College makes Joanne very straightforwardly, indispensable to Heathfield.

Directors

May I also mark my appreciation for fellow Directors, Trevor Goldsmith, Tim Hough, Rosemary Mays-Smith, Chris Macklin, Alan Powell, John Tolley and Colin Williams. The hours running and chairing their own project committees or sharing responsibility for the entirety has been and is magnificent. One amongst them curiously has not chaired one meeting but has been instrumental in almost all; with risk assessment and wise council on the breadth of operations and that of course is my Deputy Chairman and Company Secretary, John Tolley. Our objectivity as a Charity and Company, our Compliance with the laws and regulations of the land and our viability as an organization is dependant on John's meticulous scrutiny. His endeavours to set up the new Heathfield Area Leisure Company were extensive and place us on a sound footing. His friendship and willingness as a private sounding board are both invaluable and just as indispensable.

10th Anniversary

This marks my 10th year as Chairman of the Trust Company and my 10th delivery of the annual report. This year I passed the 60 mark and find that I am the youngest Member of the Board. John and I have started conversations about the sustainability of the Board and potentially bringing in new blood to ensure its longevity. We are fortunate that all Board members have volunteered to do another year and can build on a stable platform. We have begun a conversation with Board Members about potentially inviting new additional participants and maybe looking to do so in the next year. Some I hope will also chair project committees and with even greater fortune take some of the load from me. I currently deputize as Chairman for Colin on the Executive, Pat on the LATS and Chair the ICT Committee, the Inward Investment Committee, and the Heathfield Works! Committee and the Transport Committee plus of course the Board. My sustainability might need some new blood as well. The qualities needed for those particular projects may well create the invitations for new appointments to the Board.

Next year's Objectives

Next year will hopefully see the securing of Colin's successor and the onward prosperity of the Farmer's Market, completion of the first phase of the Enterprise centre, the realization of the capital required to start commissioning the build of the Swimming Pool, the recognition of the value of the Heathfield Works! Scheme by central government and in doing so a contribution towards its costs, it certainly runs in harmony with the Prime Minister's ambitions for those not in employment, education or training, the Heathfield .net web-site regularly passing 7,000 hits a month and the continued pleasure in working in partnership with the Parish Council, County Councillor Chris Dowling, our District Councillor Colleagues, the Chamber, Rotary, the College, our Police Colleagues and indeed all the Citizens of Heathfield. Pride of place for everybody in the Community.

Christmas Festival

I will finish as usual with a promotion of the Christmas Festival (now our 11th year) on the 23rd November and the Christmas Lights ceremony this year with the accompaniment of the Punnett's Town 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.

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

Rupert Simmons
16 October 2013
Goldsmiths & Allcorn.