

LOVE HASTINGS

ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24

OUR ROLE

To deliver projects and offer funding and support that helps businesses in Hastings Town Centre

Managing and supporting the Business Crime Reduction Partnership

Providing funding to key local events that benefit the town as a whole

Providing festive lights and seasonal planting schemes

Providing an events guide for the town

Offering business support and training

2023/24 HIGHLIGHTS

BUSINESS CRIME REDUCTION

Since last year we have seen a reduction from 800 to 600 named offenders on our warning or exclusion database. This has come at a time when thefts and other offences have increased across the UK, however we have found this has been reflected locally in more offences being committed by a smaller group of people.

There has been a marked increase in arrests and prosecutions, with Criminal Behaviour Orders proving effective in many cases. More proactive policing with plain clothes operations has significantly helped in deterring persistent offenders.

We still have some 600 scheme members registered as being able to access to the offender database in order to help them prevent criminal behaviour taking place. Approximately 900 new incident reports were received and processed, roughly the same as in the previous 12 months.

The complete switch to the Zello network radio system has proved successful, and the old radio system has now been fully decommissioned.

IMPROVING THE LOOK AND FEEL OF THE TOWN

Christmas lights and maintaining the planting in our 100 troughs around the town remain our main means of keeping the area looking as attractive as possible. We have, however, spent a lot of time in the past year lobbying ESCC with regards the condition of pavements, and we have also been heavily involved in the £10m 'green corridor' project that promises a complete makeover of the central section of the town centre.

Although long overdue, we have been promised that the worst paving sections will be re-laid early this summer, and we've had it confirmed that the proposed de-pedestrianization of Queens Road and the area used by the market will no longer be a part of the Green Corridor scheme.

Many local events, such as Pride, Coastal Currents, Fat Tuesday, Bonfire, Pirate Day, and several worthwhile smaller community projects rely heavily on our support, and we invested over £85,000 in grants this year. Our social media reach is growing, and our Facebook account reached almost a third of a million people over these twelve months.



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We have been successful in obtaining grant funding from the central government Levelling Up fund, and this will hopefully enable us to purchase a cherry picker that can be made available to member businesses who may need to do work at high level to their property frontages. It should also reduce our costs for things such as Christmas light installation and removal.

SUPPORTING BUSINESSES

In the previous year (2022/23) we saw the last few months taken up with trying to understand the January flooding incident, and we began to explore the options for businesses seeking compensation at the same time as trying to work with ESCC, Southern Water, and HBC to come up with plans to prevent future incidents.

The October floods were, however, even worse, and many questions continue to be asked about why action wasn't take earlier to carry out essential works identified several months previously.

After the flood in October we helped many businesses successfully claim compensation from Southern Water, some of whom had been unaware they were eligible, and others who had had claims turned down previously. This generated many tens of thousands of pounds in payouts that would have otherwise gone unclaimed. As we move into the new financial year we have already been faced with a further challenge regarding the loss of water supplies to the town, and this issue will be high on our priority list for 2024/25

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

TOTAL INCOME £255,484

BID levy income £178,000

Other income £24,600

TOTAL EXPENDITURE £253,328

Project costs £120,691

Staffing (£74,185) and office/other (£28,210) costs £102,395
(VAT liability £30,242)



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