



Hastings and Rother Transport Action Group
Minutes of Meeting held on
Thursday, 29 November 2018 at Bexhill Town Hall

Chair: Cllr Ian Hollidge, Rother District Council (RDC)

Present:

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| Battle Town Council Transport Advisor | - | Bev Marks |
| East Sussex County Council (ESCC) | - | Andrew Keer |
| East Sussex County Council (ESCC) | - | Tessa Sweet-Escott |
| Hastings Borough Council (HBC) | - | Cllr Andy Batsford |
| Hastings Borough Council (HBC) | - | Katy Wiseman |
| Hastings Sustainable Transport Forum | - | Ian Sier |
| Rother District Council (RDC) | - | Cllr Ian Hollidge |
| Rother District Council (RDC) | - | Tim Hickling |

In attendance:

| | | |
|-----------------------------------------|---|-----------------------|
| Hastings and Rother Rail Users Alliance | - | Hugh Sharp |
| Rother District Council (RDC) | - | Marie Kennedy (Notes) |

Apologies for absence: Cllr Kim Forward, Hastings Borough Council (HBC)

SUMMARY OF NOTES AND ACTIONS

- 1. Notes and actions of last meeting – 15 August 2018**
 - a) HARTAG website communications – minutes of HARTAG meetings along with news items and publications may be found on the HARTAG website. Please access the website for minutes of this and future meetings: <http://www.hartag.org.uk/>
 - b) HARTAG public focus – Cllr Andy Batsford proposed that in order to influence and generate greater public interest, HARTAG would benefit more from being driven by way of other social media tools such as Facebook and Twitter. **NOTE:** Whilst RDC would be happy to lead on the management of the HARTAG website, it was anticipated that HBC would share in the management of other forms of social media on behalf of HARTAG.
- 2. Overview of work being undertaken in relation to transport in East Sussex**

Tessa Sweet-Escott was invited to give a presentation about the range of transport issues being addressed in terms of the Local Transport Plan, five yearly implementation plans, transport strategies, and funding applications. During discussion the following points and actions were noted:

 - a) By request, a copy of the presentation would be circulated to HARTAG Executive members. **ACTION:** Tessa Sweet-Escott to forward to Marie Kennedy for circulation.

- b) High Speed Rail update – progress had been delayed with this project due to a number of complications at Ashford Station. This had resulted in further work having to be undertaken. **ACTION:** Tessa Sweet-Escott offered to prepare a briefing on the current situation for HARTAG Executive members. **NOTE:** Members were reminded that the key issue in moving this project forward would be around funding.
- c) In terms of High Speed Rail, it would be imperative that the inclusion of safe rail crossings and upgrades to “access for all” at stations be reinstated into any future improvement plans being undertaken by Network Rail. Of particular concern were the Marshlink routes; installation of a safe cycle route from Hastings Seafront to Hastings Station; and safe access for all along the trackside lane from Hastings Station to the north of Hastings. **ACTION:** Tessa Sweet-Escott offered to raise all of the above issues at a forthcoming meeting with Network Rail.

3. Rail users areas of interest in Hastings and Rother

Hugh Sharp was invited to present a summary of the projects being supported by the Hastings and Rother Rail Users Alliance group, which comprises six local rail user groups: SHRIMP, OTG, BRAG, NBRA, and MLAG/THWART.

The group works to raise awareness of rail issues and concerns by way of influencing change and improvements for the benefit of both residents and visitors to Hastings and Rother.

The group’s input is invaluable in assisting with coordinating and influencing out-of-area providers.

4. AfA bid in support of Battle, and St Leonards Warrior Square Rail Stations

A number of stations had submitted bids for funding for step-free access and the installation of infrastructure improvements such as new lifts and footbridges to make them fully accessible. Following this meeting, a press release had been issued by Southeastern and Network Rail highlighting a total of 22 nominated stations where there had been a strong case for AfA funding. This information may be found on the HARTAG website.

Another area of concern is the future development at Blackfriars and access to Battle station. Planners need to ensure that in terms of parking and accessibility for all, that the views and requirements of the local community and focus groups are built into responsive planning processes. **ACTION:** Tessa Sweet-Escott and Andrew Keer offered to raise this with Network Rail.

It was noted that while both Hastings and Rother Councils had worked with colleagues at ESCC to submit letters of support to Network Rail on behalf of Battle and Hastings stations, there would be a need for better engagement and collaborative working on the part of the local authorities, Network Rail and focus groups in order for these and future projects to succeed.

5. Updates on items from last meeting

- a) Hastings Western Cycle Design Public & Stakeholder consultation update
 - o The route had been developed to a preliminary design and a road safety audit had been completed.
 - o Some initial discussions had taken place between HBC and local Southern groups.
 - o Further engagement with key stakeholders would be held in early December.
 - o Subject to the outcome of this process, a detailed design would progress during spring 2019 with implementation scheduled for autumn 2019.
- b) Major Road Network (MRN) consultation – outcome and final proposals from the DfT
 - o Results of the consultation are awaited along with proposals from the DfT on the preferred major network.
 - o ESCC’s main comment was the need to include other roads which should potentially be on the MRN. These would need to be A class roads and

accommodate around 20,000 vehicles per day. Whilst the inclusion of these roads on the MRN provides more opportunities to bid for funding, they are only reviewed on a five year basis. Subsequently, this creates challenges for the Combe Valley Way and the A269.

- o Transport for the South East – Economic Connectivity Review
HARTAG submitted a response to the draft Transport Strategy back in September 2018. The response had included issues raised about what was required in both Hastings and Rother. Confirmation was given that responses would be analysed and consultants would be commissioned to undertake the work up until the end of next year. This would be a substantial piece of work combining a number of associated work streams, including freight, SMART/integrated ticketing and the future of mobility.

6. Forward planning for future consultations and funding opportunities

As a group, HARTAG members were reminded about the need to identify and respond to consultations as and when they arise and to work collectively towards securing funding opportunities for the benefit of transport in Hastings and Rother.

Confirmation was given that the Hastings & Rother Rail Users Alliance group would be keen to be involved in working with HARTAG to identify and respond to future consultations. Likewise, HARTAG would be happy to work with other focus groups as a unit in order to provide support and weight for other transport related projects.

7. Any other business

- a) Bus lanes in Bexhill Road – traffic regulations and planned opening

ACTION: Andrew Keer offered to provide an update on the current situation.

- b) Road Safety Report

Cllr Andy Batsford raised concerns about a recent road safety report that identified the A21 corridor as being in the top 4 most dangerous roads in the country, while the A259 was listed in the top ten most dangerous. Members were asked to consider how, as a group, HARTAG might influence the implementation of safety measures along these routes. **ACTION 1:** Andrew Keer offered to request a written comment on the report about the current position from Brian Banks at ESCC's Road Safety Team. **ACTION 2:** Tessa Sweet-Escott offered to provide a quarterly A4 briefing in advance of meetings on current transport developments.

8. Date of next meeting

Katy Wiseman and Cllr Andy Batsford offered to arrange an agenda, date and time for the next meeting to be facilitated and Chaired by HBC. A calendar for next year's quarterly meetings at Hastings and Bexhill would be made available on the HARTAG website once dates had been confirmed.