

Chair's Report AGM 2020

The last few months have proved more challenging and difficult than any of us could have imagined with the Covid situation that descended upon us since March. It has brought many changes to our everyday lives.

Discussions regarding a long term lease and agreements have been ongoing with BFF over the course of the year. The economic repercussions of the pandemic however had a significant effect on BFF's business and consequently the ferry service was suspended in April. We were delighted to see how successful BFF crowd fundraiser proved to be. This only emphasised the support within the community for the Ferry and underlined how both parties, HPHA and BFF share mutually dependent goals, to preserve and restore our pier and railway whilst creating a vibrant community hub which will support and increase footfall for the ferry.

The Covid situation has also meant a cancellation of all community events since March, in particular the Spring fundraiser as well as the upcoming Rock the Pier in August.

Although there has been no public action in lockdown, things have been happening behind the scenes. Early on in lockdown, Goddard and Partners, our appointed architects, were able to safely conduct a Feasibility Study of the pier and associated structures. This was essential in order to examine options for the extended use of the pier and look at work which will be critical to the success of the project. Our plan was, and still is, to share this work with you at a public meeting, to gather your thoughts and advice. We look forward to being able to do this.

At last year's AGM, we introduced Paul McDaid who was employed on a year's contract as Project Coordinator. Paul made many positive contributions to the project over the course of the year. He built valuable and positive links between HPHA and BFF, strengthened community links and was invaluable in promoting Allan Fairhead's Hythe Men's Shed at the Pier to the group. He also was responsible for setting up meetings and liaising with architects, consultants and various other parties connected to our business plan. Paul's funding finished in March of this year and we were unable to continue to support this role. We are grateful to all of the co-funders of this role, including Hythe and Dibden Parish Council, for their support.

Last year's major fundraising events were well attended and supported by our community. Thank you! The presence of New Forest rangers at May's Spring into Action was a very welcome partnership. The Grease sing along on the Marina was the second significant fundraiser of the year. This was organised thanks to the Hythe Marina Association and Hythe Marina Village. July saw our major event of the year, Rock the Pier 2019. This was the second year we had staged this musical extravaganza at the pier and it was clear from the number of people who attended on the day and the funds it raised, that Rock the Pier was here to stay in our future fundraising plans. Unfortunately, this was not to be this year, but we already have bands happy to commit to a date 2021, so we remain positive.

This year has also seen other changes to the membership of the Board. In the Summer of 2019, John Greenwood, one of the founder members of the group stepped down as Director. His contribution to our heritage objectives were considerable and we thank him for this. John also set up our first website and gave us an online presence. In October, Tina Brown, who had recently moved into the area joined the Board. She had a particular interest in our unique railway and quickly became involved in researching a possible Railway restoration project. This project has continued to grow and now involves an outside consultant and is supported by members of the Men's Shed (at the Pier). In January, Peter King sought funds towards this project and was successful in being awarded

£10,000 from the Beaulieu Beaufort Trust. At around this time, Anthony Smith kindly agreed to join us as a co-opted Director. His IT, GDPR and policy guidance have all been invaluable. The beginning of the year saw the appointment of pier historian and author, Alan Titheridge to the Board. We are grateful for the guidance that his vast knowledge of the history of the pier and ferry brings to the Board. He has already supported school visits to the pier and written articles for the local press as well as contributing to our newsletter. Jenny Bithell, a founding member, our Company Secretary and Treasurer also leaves the Board at this AGM. Our thanks go to her for her work and commitment to these roles over the last few years. We almost must announce Peter King's departure from the Board. He has been the driving force of HPHA since its inception and again one of the founding members. His presence will be sorely missed. He has had quite a challenging year, since moving away from the area, having to travel long distances for meetings and events. Hopefully he will keep in touch and keep an eye on progress.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank each and every one of our members and volunteers who give their time so willingly in many different ways to support our project. Your continued support and enthusiasm makes us look forward to when we can all resume our normal activities and meet up at the Pier.

Best wishes

Jill Gower

Vice chair