



# Big Local North-East Hastings

## Report for April 2022-August 2023

It's hard to believe that it's 10 years since Big Local North-East Hastings was created to spend £1 million improving the lives of people in our area. The period covered in this report has seen us continuing to actively support and encourage local initiatives and projects. Our final Plan was agreed in January 2023 giving us a total of £196,693 remaining for Big Local's final term.

### Resident-Led Partnership

The Resident-Led Partnership has met every month to oversee the spending ably supported by Jan and Lisa. Membership has remained small and stable comprising Richard Street (Chair), Jackie Gaunt (Vice-Chair), Martin Styring, Graham Hodgson, Karen Smith, Jim Breeds and Sue Leigh. RLP members enjoyed a Christmas Lunch at the Robin Hood pub in Icklesham in late November 2022. This small group of volunteers has continued to give time to Big Local and have done so for many years, demonstrating tremendous commitment. They deserve a very big "Thank You".

### Guest Speakers

We have been pleased to welcome a number of speakers to tell us about specific projects in the area to our meetings. In May 2022 Debby Anderson told us about the Food Network and the Ageing Better project; in February 2023 Rosie Leech and Pranesh Datta of HBC explained about the UK Shared Prosperity Fund investing £1million in Broomgrove over 3 years; in March 2023 Teresa Flower told us about the Hastings and St Leonards Men's Health and Wellbeing Project and in April 2023, Carole Dixon talked to us about the work of the Education Futures Trust at the Firs.

### Large Grants

We have awarded 4 large grants over the period:

Energise Sussex Coast started the Energy Crisis Support Project at the Ore Centre in June 2022. £12,500 was awarded. 79 Big Local households benefited, including 6 home visits to install energy efficient measures. An additional 42 households received energy saving kits.

HARC – Benefit Advice project started in November. £8087 awarded. 97 local beneficiaries After School club July 22-July 23 at Broomgrove and Downs Farm community centres. 61 children from the area were regularly attended along with 4 volunteers. We awarded £16,500. .

Oasis Summer Outings – 7 outings were subsidised for 50 BL beneficiaries. £4158 was awarded. Destinations include Tibbs Farm, Kent County Show, Drusillas, Old Town Day, Ten Pin Bowling,

### Small Grants (up to £1066)

There was one round of small grants held in 2022/23 as opposed to the two normally held in one year. This was due to the delays in the Big Local plan assessment from Local Trust. All remaining small grant rounds will now come from the new and final Big Local Plan. The small grant round was held in June 2022 with 6 grants awarded. The total grant money awarded for this round totalled £5,035. Details of grants awarded are in the Appendix document.

From the new Big Local plan the first round was launched in March 2023 with 13 grants awarded totalling £12,652. Five of the projects have now completed their projects and have submitted monitoring.

These grants have enabled local organisations to provide a wide range of activities for local residents including entertainment and practical activities for children as well as advice for people in financial difficulty and environmental projects. The full list can be found in the separate Appendix document along with some of the feedback comments received. We have been delighted with the feedback which shows that even our comparatively small contribution can make a positive impact on people's lives.

### **Infrastructure Grants**

Realising that our pot was coming to an end very soon, the RLP decided to invite those groups running community buildings within the area to apply for larger sums of funding to help them survive after Big Local has gone. In June 2023 we put aside a pot of £15,000 in total for this. The buildings concerned are Hastings & St Leonards Men's Shed, Ore Community Centre, Ore Community Library, the Adventure Playground and Broomgrove Community Centre. Full details can be found in the Appendix. These projects have just started. The first monitoring requirements will be due in December.

### **Community Involvement**

We have not restricted ourselves to overseeing the spending of the £1 million Big Local fund. We have also taken a keen and often active interest in things happening in our area.

- In January, we wrote in response to Hastings Borough Council's Budget consultation objecting to the proposal to delete the Ore Valley reserve fund of £250k (received for maintenance of green community space from a 2007 planning permission) and add it to the overall HBC fund. This change was deleted.
- In April/May, information supplied by RLP member (Jim Breeds) resulted in the Christchurch Ore defibrillator (funded by Big Local) being registered so that the emergency services are aware of it. Also it was identified that the Ore Community Centre defibrillator needed repair.
- In April 2023, our Community Development Worker (Jan) started working with the Marshlink Line Partnership with the aim of improving Ore Station.
- Our Community Development Worker now chairs the Operation Steering Group of National Literacy Trust's Literacy Hub contributing to local literacy work.
- Sensory Soft Play whose first grant application was to Big Local with support through that process from us has recently been awarded a 3 year grant from Lottery Fund.
- Our Chair and Vice-Chair are both members of the panel overseeing the UK Shared Prosperity Fund administered by Hastings Borough Council to improve life and well-being for residents of the Broomgrove estate.
- We have been very concerned about the loss of The Bridge Community Centre to the local community for several years and were pleased to learn recently that all issues have been resolved and the building has now been handed over to the Parchment Trust. Cllr Julia Hilton has been particularly active in achieving this. We will continue working with the Parchment Trust to ensure that the local community once again has access to this amenity.
- We have been pleased to support the Men's Shed with funding and advice over several years and look forward to them acquiring the building.
- The reopening of Ore Library as a volunteer-run community library has been a great success with nearly 1,000 members. Our initial funding enabled the project to get off the ground.

## **Looking forward**

As I mentioned earlier, we are now approaching the final year of Big Local North East Hastings. It is clear that our grants have enabled local organisations and facilities to provide activities for our residents and maintain community premises over the past 10 years and we really hope that they will continue to do so. Without our support, some well-respected projects in the area may have ended and our residents' lives been much the poorer. We intend to do an in depth review of what we've done with the money later on.

The Government has awarded Hastings Borough Council £3million from its UK Shared Prosperity Fund, also known as Levelling Up money. Those funds will be aimed at the Broomgrove estate and we hope that the funding will enable part of the Big Local Area to continue to benefit from significant investment

## **Accompanying Appendices**

**Appendix 1: Small Grants Information 2022/23**

**Appendix 2: Small Grants Round 1 New Plan 2023/24**

**Appendix 3: Infrastructure Grants Information**

**Appendix 4: Project Feedback**