

HASSOCKS PARISH COUNCIL, 11 September 2012.
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.

Catherine Cassidy of the Hassocks Rail Group reported on a meeting held on 7 September with rail representatives to discuss the Hassocks Station rebuild. Work on the new station and ticket office should commence in October/November 2012. The cost of the Access for All element of the project had risen to £1.8m, and work would commence in May 2013, after the station rebuild phase. When the funding for the new lift etc had been confirmed in November 2010, there was no TPO on the holm oak at the station. Subsequently a TPO had been placed on the tree. It would be necessary to remove the tree to carry out the Access For All work, but MSDC had recently refused an application to have the tree felled. The tree was not a native species, and did not have a high conservation status, but the refusal of the application was causing a problem for the project, which would be of great benefit to the village. Network Rail would be putting in a further application to have the tree removed, together with a landscaping scheme. If the application to have the tree removed was unsuccessful, this could jeopardise the funding for the Access for All project. It was hoped that the Parish Council would support the application to have the tree removed.

Dennis South said that the project for a new station had been 10 years in gestation, and that the request to have a TPO put on the oak at the last minute had been vexatious. He thought that the District and Parish council would be pilloried if the scheme was not allowed to go ahead.

Shaun Phillips said that she had written to MSDC to oppose the application to have the tree felled. The tree was an important visual amenity, and residents had been assured by the Rail Group that the oak, and the garden at the station, would not be affected by the station rebuild, and this had turned out not to be the case. She did not believe that alternative sites for the disabled access which did not involve the removal of the oak had been considered.

Shaun Phillips reported that the raised beds outside the Hassocks Pet Shop had been mown while a group of Autumn Ladies Tresses had been flowering. The plants were only in flower for six weeks, so she asked if the council could highlight the existence of the plants to avoid them being cut down while in flower..

Bill Hatton asked councillor Penny Wadsworth to progress this request as she was concerned with planting in the village, and could include an item in the Parish Council contribution to Talk About.