

# Sussex Trug Heritage Centre News



**Sussex Trug Heritage Centre Ltd., Magham Down, Sussex, BN27 1PN**  
**Mission: To save and protect the craft of Sussex Trug Making**  
**194 Years of Making the Famous Sussex Trug Baskets**  
**Supporters' Newsletter – July 2023**

Dear Friends,

A lot of things have been happening in recent weeks as our project to create the Sussex Trug Heritage Centre inches forward towards reality.

The students of East Sussex College Surveying and Planning Department have agreed to accept producing a CAD design for the proposed centre as their summer project in order that we can move forward to obtain quotations for our two buildings. During our inaugural meeting at the college in Eastbourne, they already put forward ideas that will add to the functionality of the proposed buildings. They expect to be able to present their design in September upon returning to the college from their summer holidays. Once received we will be able to obtain estimates for suitable buildings.

One of our volunteers, Sam Dowdeswell, has put forward a draft management plan for the proposed woodland team, as part of the project is to find our own woodlands in order to ensure regular supplies of chestnut for the Royal Sussex Trug making. This has some imaginative ideas included and allows for us to make the team self-funding by producing timber for, and actually making, chestnut fencing of various types, using timber harvested that is not suitable for making Trugs. Sam has made a great job of the draft plan.

Another Volunteer, Paul Young, has agreed to produce artwork for interpretation uses in the new centre when it is created. This gives opportunity to find lots of old photos in order to give historical record of our world renowned traditional craft and to celebrate those that worked in it in the past.

A recent meeting with Emma Wray of Wealden District Council Economic Development was very fruitful in bringing the council on board and our next step will be to meet with the new portfolio holder in Economic Development, Councillor

Paul Coleshill and, when the college pass on the designs to us, the WDC Planning Department for inaugural advice on the overall project.

Colin from Roadways has generously spent time in preparing a quotation for the car park and will soon be letting us have quotations for the lighting needed in the car park. We would also hope to partner with a supplier of fast charge electric charging points. Thanks to Colin & James of Roadways for their support.

Locate East Sussex has been supportive right from the outset of my meeting with Emma Dean, the External Funding Officer of East Sussex CC and Brett Pearson Director of Locate East Sussex back in late January. We are working to produce the finance plan with Locate's Jim Fletcher and expect to have the first draft plan available late September.

I met again with Brett for a meeting in Eastbourne this week and he has lots of ideas on which we can work for the project and he has offered help in putting us in touch with interesting people and organisations that can help achieve our goal.

On Monday 24<sup>th</sup> July the Lord Lieutenant of East Sussex, Andrew Blackman, made an informal visit to the Thomas Smith's Trug Shop workshops as he is interested in both the Sussex Trug Industry and our project to preserve and re-populate this traditional Sussex craft. Mr. Blackman was given a tour of the workshop at Thomas Smith's and spoke individually to Caleb, Sharon and Lewis, our colleagues. We look forward to working with the Lord-Lieutenant and his office on this exciting project.

More things are going on behind the scenes, such as, where shall we build the centre and where shall we obtain funding. We even have a lady in Australia considering working with us on some social media marketing on a voluntary basis as it doesn't matter where in the world volunteers are located as we can instantly contact each other via the wonderful Internet! A lady in Belgium has also offered to help on a paid basis for European Union Marketing.

Now we seek volunteer directors with legal, accountancy and entrepreneurial expertise to join the board of directors.

More news next month!

Robin