

Friends of Hastings Pier First Ideas for 'Content'

Background to this document

As a new local resident to Hastings and St. Leonards (with the pier forming part of my daily view) and having had some experience managing piers, it seemed a natural fit for me to get involved with the Friends of Hastings Pier. Here in Hastings we have an award-winning pier but no specific content to fulfil its purpose, generate revenue, and therefore sustain its up-keep and on-going future.

Who am I ?

I founded an entertainment consultancy, Openwide International in 1989. Under my leadership within eight years we had become Europe's largest entertainment consultants - employing 50 full-time staff and up to 600 performers a year working in 30 venues, in 15 countries across Europe.

We provided entertainment and consultancy to **Tour companies and Hotel chains** (*Thompson, First Choice, Tui, The Sheraton Group*), **Cruise lines** (*Airtours, Sunwing, Carnival*), **Resorts** (*Butlins, Haven, Sandals - Jamaica, San Antonio - Ibiza*), **Attractions** (*Eurodisney, The Royal Armouries in London and Leeds*), and tourist destinations Also winning the contracts to manage the failing Cromer and Bournemouth piers both of which are now self-sustaining and profitable.

I sold the company in 2005 and enjoyed being a freelance consultant specialising in 'start-up' and re-branding operations, creating "live" experiences to either communicate - or to simply increase footfall and/or profit. Highlights were working with the Odeon cinema chain to revive the brand, at SKY TV, I re-vamped three Travel channels - increasing sales from £750,000 to £1.2m a week. In 2008 I was head-hunted out to Dubai to be the Creative Director of an \$850m theme park, 'Global Village', where I was fully responsible for every interaction between the park (*including content, rides, entertainment, story-telling, retail and staff training*) and the visitors.

This was followed by two years with Guinness World Records as Global Creative Director, a new post for created for me :- developing new ways of monetising the World-famous brand (*from 4 offices in London, Tokyo, Beijing and New York*). This involved anything that was *not* to do with the famous book; TV shows, 'Live' Roadshows, Theme Parks, Computer and arcade games, Brand tie-ins, PR activity for 3rd parties ... and on-line activity with record breaking mechanisms.

Since then I have fully retired and have any number of projects which keep me occupied

Summary Overview

In this document I have applied my over 40 years' experience to devise a highly commercial approach to the Pier. With an emphasis on looking forwards rather than backwards and using hosts to 'animate' the pier in a fully developed Entertainment Programme designed to complement the various F & B offers and the incredible award-winning architecture.

There is a need for responsible investment in the pier's entertainment facilities, but no need for 'bling' or tacky sea-side tourism. Instead here we have new creative twists on the emotional content of traditional aspects of 'pier-life' ... including leaving the very popular wide-open spaces of the 'sea' end of the pier available for special events and 'pop-ups' - but otherwise empty for well-being, fresh air, looking at the views and simple everyday romance.

Friends of Hastings Pier Ideas for Creative Content

“A modern take on an old tradition”

‘Blank Plank’

- The biggest job is done The pier for now is saved and refurbished
- We intend to ‘grasp the nettle’ to ensure its continued success
- An amazing opportunity to re-invent the 21st Century version of a pleasure pier
 - We have a brand new contemporary pier
 - Let’s look forwards not backwards ...
 - Nostalgia is an emotion not a set of inanimate artefacts
 - Let’s reimagine the experiences we know and love
- **A modern take on an old tradition**

The Brief

- To create a mixed use concept for a 21st Century pier
- To become profitable and self-sustaining after three years
- Enhance and build on the reputation of “The People’s Pier”
- Appeal to ALL demographics
- Become the epicentre of the local community
- Combine the best of both Hastings and St. Leonards
- Encourage a large volume of repeat visits from locals - to make it sustainable
- Encourage large volumes of tourists and ‘out of towners’ - to make it highly profitable
- A target of 350,000 visits within two years (450,000 three years after that)
- Integrate the tourism/entertainment offer with the rest of Hastings and St. Leonards
- Take advantage of Hasting’s rich history from 1066 onwards

What is Our Vision ?

- What will ensure survival ?
 - Separate the ‘top’ from the ‘bottom’
 - The ‘Bottom’ is owned and maintained by the community
 - The ‘Top’ is rented and operated by an independent contractor (*or run by HPC2?*)
- What is important to us and the Community ?
 - Sustainable
 - Profitable
 - Focal point for the people of Hastings, St. Leonards and environs
 - Forward, rather than backward, focus
 - Contemporary / modern. Compatible with the existing award-winning design ethos
 - Ecologically sound
 - Keep the far “sea end” of the pier open, flexible and free from clutter / wellbeing and romance!
 - Dramatic / Bold / Breath-taking
- Emotional Content
 - Focus on the “essence” of a traditional pier
 - Provide the emotions we recognise from our childhoods at the sea-side
 - Find a 21st Century way of evoking and recreating all of the above !

Content Ideas - Possible profit centres for any operator

I. A Carousel

This could well become a centrepiece and symbol for the new pier. The concept is to re-imagine a fairground classic – The Carousel – and bring it kicking and screaming into today's world.

It shouldn't lose its mystique, its joy or form - which should be instantly recognisable. But by replacing the traditional horses with contemporary designs and by housing the whole kit and caboodle in a modern indoor/outdoor building to allow for the capricious weather, we have an opportunity to create something modern, unique and really special.

We should commission an artist, or series of local artists, to reconceive what traditionally would have been horses into a modern metaphor. Sea creatures, wondrous vehicles, fantasy animals perhaps fashioned using reclaimed materials from the sea-shore ... or beautifully crafted from plastic waste gathered and recycled from its toxic presence in the sea, and finally put to good use.

Ask local artist Quentin Blake to develop his Jerwood exhibition: "The Only Way to Travel" into the carousel ride vehicles. His quirky drawings lend themselves well. It would be awesome !
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WCnimEq8crY>

Jane's Carousel in Brooklyn, New York is an incredibly beautiful experience, and the carousel is almost irrelevant in itself ... the setting, the ride and the building all combine to create magic, and in our case we can match all components, as well as add that 'something special' with the content.
<http://www.janescarousel.com> https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jane%27s_Carousel

2. Entertainment Programme

As we put together any form of public park, fairground, pier there needs to be a balance of things to do. Things that are free alongside those that one should pay for. Cruise Ships, resorts and holiday camps understand how to appeal to ALL demographics of guests, and move them around from venue to venue where they are encouraged to spend money ... whilst at the same time being entertained. This keeps people in *our* venues, in *our* bars and restaurants. The aim is to give the customers enough to do to stay on the pier, spending money for the whole day.

It is often a case of 'software' versus 'hardware'. Cruise Ships, big hotels and resorts don't necessarily have a lot of room for rides or need for expensive capital expenditure - they circumvent this by having a comprehensive Entertainment Programme run by hosts who have been trained to 'read their audience' and respond accordingly. This is not a matter of performing 'at' people as in old "Hi-di-Hi" days, but a much more sophisticated process of good formatting of events and giving people what they want through charm, story-telling and understanding their needs.

As on a Cruise Ship, this 'Live Programme' would start first thing as the pier opens ... and run throughout the day finishing well into the evening. There would be published programme and of course the website would keep people informed of 'What's On'. Everything from sports and yoga, through to several kids clubs, comedy, light entertainment formats, quizzes, competitions, party nights and any way we can conceive to keep the pier animated during its opening hours! There would also be regular weekly and monthly events so the locals get used to the timetable, and are encouraged to plan their leisure time around activities and events on the pier.

Resorts / Hotels / Cruise Ships

ANY of the items below could be delivered to our visitors. A whole DAY spent spending on the pier !

Why do people choose a holiday ?

Sun
Relax
Specific activities (*cycling, music, climbing etc.*)
Immerse in culture
Being outside 'al fresco'
Hire cars/bikes and explore
Food and Restaurants
Drinking and bars
Music
Free entertainment
Shows
Bands / groups ... *musical genres*
Comedy
Light Entertainment / Game shows
Disco / Night Club
Sport
Spa / Wellness / Massage – *to be pampered*
Inter-activity
Group activities
Quizzes
Games
Dancing
Baby-sitting / crèche
Children's supervised activities
Kids Clubs (3 – 7, 8 – 11, 12 – 15, 18 – 30 !)
Cookery demos
Food and Wine tastings
Midnight buffet and afternoon tea
Local arts and crafts (*glass-blowing etc.*)
Educational holidays (*Art, music, architecture*)
Bingo
Guinness World Records attempts
Secret Cinema
Team Building
Fancy Dress competitions
Late night 'blue' shows (*Strippers, pageants*)
Celebrations (*Anniversaries, birthdays*)
Weddings
Conferences
Photography, social media and selfies

Themed Weekends - ideas

Music weekends – *all styles and genres*
'Summer of Love weekend' etc. etc.
Historical themed weekends
Murder Mystery
Theatre workshops
Comedy Workshops
Holistic - Wellness
Exercise / yoga / gym
International festivals
One single country as a base
Learn a language weekend
Food Festival
Pagan Festival
Craft fairs and workshops
Dressing Up to a theme
Recreate a Pleasure Garden (Tivoli)
Yummy Mummy
Gay Pride
Comicon
Community Projects and initiatives
Skate-board / BMX bikes
Fishing
Live theatre festival
Fishing
Antiques Roadshow
Art / Painting
Flowers / Horticulture / Gardening
Open air dancing
Morris Dancing
Ballroom Dancing - 'Strictly Hastings'
Dog Show
Pets Show
Village fete
Geocache
Camping on the pier
Pierienteering (*engineering visits ?*)
Photography, social media and selfies
Car Boot sales
Darts – *lots of champions live here*
Get away from it all - *but still need wi-fi !*

Here is the Ents Programme from a Cruise Ship ... We can do substantially the same – and more.

https://help.carnival.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/4228/~entertainment-and-activities

The secret is to appeal to everyone at various times throughout the day, and keep them engaged and entertained somewhere on the pier, whilst they are waiting for the next event to come along.

3. Fairground Stalls and Rides

As with the Carousel, we also have the possibility of re-imagining the traditional fairground stalls. Inviting either local or international artists to come up with variations on the games we know and love so well.

Fairground Stalls

Hoopla	Ring-a-bottle	Aunt Sally
Coconut Shy	Hook-a-duck	Rifle Range
Cans off the shelf	Spin-the-wheel	Cork pop-guns
Test-of-strength / ring bell	Beat-the-goalie	Lucky Dip / Bran tub
Balls in clown's mouth	Ball in a bucket	Ball in goldfish bowl
Horse race / Kentucky Derby	Flying Frogs	Unrideable bike
Water-pistol balloon burst	Darts into balloon	Mechanical Turk

As with the Carousel there would be a charge, and hopefully the 'essence' of all the fun of the fair is retained whilst our visitors try out new ways of using old and familiar skills, as they happily spend their money !

Imagine if someone like Grayson Perry re-imagined 'Aunt Sally' or any of the above. With an intriguing curatorial discourse he might possibly be enticed to join us. He is well known for embracing strange and quirky projects

<https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2015/may/15/grayson-perry-house-for-essex-uk-short-breaks>

The Art-on-the-Pier 'Fairground Stalls' Show, would probably start as a temporary exhibition lasting three months and if it were successful could be replicated annually with new games, or the most successful retained and more added.

The idea would be to create a 'street' of booths for the games, which could be either outside or inside, which would then be repurposed with each changing its game. The hardware remains the same but is 're-purposed' with its changing form or function.

With intelligent planning, a sound root concept and a 'star name' from the art world - this could be a joyful antidote to Banksy's hugely successful 'Dismaland'. [150,000 visitors to Weston-Super-Mare paying £3.00 a head over five weeks in 2015]. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dismaland> But even without 'star-power', and a marketing budget to match, the core concept is sound enough to generate pleasure (and profit) on its own terms - as our visitors play again the games they have known for generations.

Fairground Rides

Dependent on budget it would also be possible to re-invent 'modern' and equally unorthodox versions of classic fairground rides. This list should inspire the creative juices !

Carousel	Dodgems	Big Wheel
Waltzer	Tea-cups	Wild Mouse
Chair-o-planes	Ghost Train	Bucking Bronco
Helter Skelter	Haunted Swing	Rotor
Flying Carpet	Drop Tower (over sea?)	Octopus
The Whip	Cakewalk	Pirate ship

4. 'The Entertainment Hub' - 'Margaritaville'

The concept is to build a flexible 'chameleon' bar/restaurant/entertainment space capable of adapting to many different purposes throughout the changing day. Using video screens, dividers and different seating configurations it will be able to reconfigure the space to morph from sporting venue to jazz dive, from ballroom to comedy club.

At the moment there are very few music and 'live' venues in Hastings large enough to meet demand. The pubs and bars are over-crowded and St. Mary's in the Castle has its own entertainment programming – which is often not totally accessible for the mainstream 'punter'. The 'Entertainment Hub on the Pier' would be an unashamedly populist venue, aiming squarely for the highly profitable mass market, in all its many iterations.

The seating would be able to configure 'Theatre-style' (500 capacity) or 'Cabaret-style' (350), and there would be a stage and central dance floor for use for ballroom dancing, night club/disco - or for smaller sporting events Boxing/Wrestling ... even chess ! As well as the many smaller video screens (*as you might find in a sports bar*) there would also be the capacity to show on the BIG screen, sporting events (*Rugby, Football, the Olympics*) as well as live streaming from any of the many events (*including sports, theatre and opera*) streamed from around the World.

As well as live music, the stage and auditorium could also be used for comedy, quiz nights, charity events, light entertainment formats, party nights and of course for lucrative corporate events and private hire. A top-of-the-range sound and lighting rig is taken for granted to ensure this venue is absolutely the leading 'Entertainment Hub' of Hastings.

Start-point of the inspiration was Margaritaville (*but then I went a LOT further!*), here is a link :- <https://www.margaritavillenashville.com/groups-and-events> I like the idea of incorporating the pier web-cam creatively too ! <https://www.beaming.co.uk/company/hastings-pier-webcam/>

5. "Ocean's Edge" - Mid-range dining to complement the Café

Along with the Café, the existing Visitor Centre is ready to become a thriving profit centre one end, and an even more thriving asset to the Community the other.

Logistically I would move the shop into the new building by the front gate (*more of this later*). I would let out half of the visitor centre space to an independent restaurateur who could open it up to an inside/outside reasonably fine dining experience. Of course the operator could run it themselves if they have the capacity for creating a fine dining experience. Not my call !

Doors would need to be 'knocked-through', and glass screens installed to protect against wind but the investment could create a stylish and popular 70+ covers restaurant.

At night-time those views will be sensational and no one is currently maximising the potential of 'sea-side dining', either on the pier or in Hastings generally. It would of course make sense for it to be a fish restaurant given the freshness of catch from the largest beach-launched fishing fleet in Britain.

Perhaps Rick Stein would like to increase his empire to take in the east South coast ? <https://www.rickstein.com>

6a. Carnival Centre and Pier School – *taken from Friends Plan Doc*

Local events company 18 Hours are looking to establish a Carnival Centre in Hastings, using the Carnival Network South approach, linking with local parades such as Hastings Storytelling Festival, St Leonards Festival, Jack in the Green, and Hastings Bonfire Society to create a shared centre for carnival facilities, resources, training and good practice.

As well as collaborating between established venues and events, the Carnival Centre would be an easy entry point and process for new producers of events and cultural activities, acting as an incubator for events & cultural businesses. It would also become a centre for cutting edge research, including links with carnival hubs from Rio (Embaixadores de Alegria), to London (Sunshine International Arts), to the Isle of Wight (VIVA).

A proposal was developed last year for a ‘Pier School’ to nurture ‘in-grown’ talent, tap into the great human assets of Hastings & St Leonards and support the commercial needs and community aspirations of its many cultural organisations. This would link key individuals in this creative town who have ‘learnt on the job’ to other local people who may otherwise be unlikely to benefit from either the employment or cultural opportunities.

This work is being taken up by 18 Hours who are confident they could finance a lease on the Ground Floor of the existing central building and convert it into a Carnival Centre, collaborating with others nationally and internationally. This would include a MakerSpace, storage, office, events space, and the Pier Carnival School, offering learning and employment opportunities in catering and hospitality, events management, marshalling, carnival production and retail. Target participants would be primarily adults, particularly those facing barriers to employment.

By explicitly seeking to buy and share local skills, the Pier School would support the local economy and particularly the vibrant but fragile economy of freelancers. The training and work opportunities would make a critical contribution to turning around individual lives while reinstating the pier as a cultural and economic anchor for the town. We anticipate interest from CHART (Community Led Local Development EU funding), the Coastal Communities Team (access to Coastal Communities Fund), the Work & Health Programme and the Local Enterprise Partnership.

6b. “The Hastings Anchor” - Community Centre

To ensure that we live up to the epithet of ‘The People’s Pier’ we need to make sure that the pier is at the very heart of the community and is being used heavily by the residents of Hastings and St. Leonards. To this purpose half of the Visitor Centre could be given over as a venue to promote ALL aspects of local life.

As part of the Entertainment Programming we should also include local Groups, Societies and Clubs to meet and showcase their areas of interest, with open meetings, demonstrations, workshops and exhibitions appealing to a very wide and eclectic range of the population.

As a first pass I have identified many such groups (*next page*) and we know there are many more wanting to have a permanent space dedicated to proselytising their various causes and passions.

Local Societies, Hobbies and Special Interest groups

- Jack in the Green
- Pirates Day
- Fat Tuesday
- Gay Pride
- Victorian Promenade
- From Pier to Eternity
- Albany Taxi Run from London for Underprivileged Children
- Hastings Bonfire Society
- Bike 1066 May-Day bike run
- School field trips and 'Schools liaison'
- Sports Clubs and sporting Events

A selection of some local groups which might 'fit'

Vintage vehicles (The MG Club)	Hastings and St L. Country Dance Club
1066 Lacemakers	Hastings Juggling Club
Hastings Shipwreck Heritage Association	Priory Machine Knitting Club
Hasting Trolleybus Restoration Group	Tai Chi Group
Ghostwatch (Haunted Hastings)	Strange Phenomena Investigations
Hastings Writers Group	Hastings Electronics and Radio Club
Book clubs	Hastings Geological Society
Gardening groups	New Riviera group – visual arts club
Drumming Groups	Hastings model flying club
Art and painting groups and teachers	Rother Diving Club
East Sussex Arts Club	Hastings Needlecraft Group
Angling and fishing groups	R.N.L.I
Sea Swimming	Regency Dance Club
'The Source' for Skateboarding	Hastings Floral Decoration Society
'Here and Now' – environmental group	The 1066 Spinners (and weaving)
Roadrunners – Motorcycle club	Hastings Scottish Country Dance Club
Hastings Athletic Club	Hastings Townswomen's' Guild
Hastings Archaeological Research group	Hastings and St. L Cage Bird Society
'Meeting Point' - Arts and Crafts Club	Ore Camera Club
Hastings Wargames Society	Hastings and St, L. Dog training Society
Ore Flower Club	1066 Jazz Club
Hastings Community Circus	Blue Stars Marching Band
Sailing and yacht clubs	Hastings RSPB Members Group
Lindy Hop group	Hastings Floral Decoration Society
Falaise Sequence Dance Club	1066 Tug of War Club
Brewing society	Monday Art Club
Ukulele group	Old Town Parish players
Morris dancing	Hastings Greenpeace
Hastings canoe and Kayak Club	Hastings Old Town Carnival Association

The space should be kitted out with full a/v support for better communication and to allow it to be hired out for corporate day-time meetings and events.

What could be better A temporary, leasable office for meetings - with an amazing view !

7. '1066 Live!' - A walk-through interactive experience

I find it extraordinary that one of the most glaring omissions of the current Hastings tourism offer, is any emotional contact with what the town is most know for "The Battle of Hastings"!

This world-famous, and unique to Hastings event is hardly acknowledged and yet could provide the most tremendous attraction and draw – both Nationally and Internationally. Picking up on the excitement which will be generated by the arrival of the Bayeux Tapestry to the UK in 2022 (*realistically probably to the British Museum*), we should be ahead of the game and create a historically accurate learning centre and walk-through experience – which in turn could amplify aspects of the national curriculum and be an attractive schools visit.

I believe it would be worth contacting both The Royal Armouries and The Imperial War Museum to see if they would be partners in this venture. I have worked with the Royal Armouries before setting up the format and rules for 'The National Jousting Championships' and found them to be very supportive in finding new ways of bringing 'living history' to a wider audience. I think both would find a foothold in the South of England an attractive proposition to augment their various other outposts dotted around the country. They are both looking to diversify.

Either museum (*and/or possibly English Heritage*) works hard to bring history to life and could lend us genuine artefacts and weapons from their vast range in store, and between us I believe we could create an exciting and unique experience. We could absolutely take our audience back in time to meet the people of 1066, see the context of the invasion, compare Saxon with Norman, and delve into their everyday lives ... what did they wear, how did they live, what did they eat (*even have original dishes as an option in the café!*).

A Royal Armouries story-telling exhibition:- <https://royalarmouries.org/event/legends-robin-hood/>
Imperial War Museum:- <https://www.iwm.org.uk>

8. The Climbing Wall and 'Freefall' into the Sea !

The building of a brand new two storey building on our pier with the possibility of a three-story Helter Skelter on its 'land/shore' and 'look out to sea' corner ... offers a first-rate opportunity to capitalise on the popularity of climbing walls as an activity for children and families, especially since it will become an Olympic sport from 2020. On the outside sea-facing wall (*towards Hastings Old Town*) we will create a series of wacky wall challenges - blending the fun of climbing with learning activities to engage visitors of all ages !

The 'Clip and Climb' external wall will be able to accommodate five climbers side by side and gives us different combination possibilities for maximum flexibility. We will have a retractable shelter for wind and rain defence ... but at the end of the day this is an 'outdoor' activity ! Once the climbers have reached the top and had the opportunity to gloat from the roof of 'The Hub' Entertainment Centre - they are then faced with a thrilling set of choices. They can walk down the stairs, they can abseil back down the wall, they can ride the Helter Skelter back to deck level ... OR ... they can take the 'Free-fall Sea Plunge' for that Ultimate Adrenaline Rush !!

Two trap-doors can be opened on the apron of the pier to reveal the raging sea below ! Still in their harnesses, the participants now take part in a white-knuckle ride to rival any other ... They go into a 40 foot free-fall through the trap doors towards the waves below ! Just short of a watery grave, they are then winched back to safety with a memory and a great photo opportunity!

9. 'Neptune's Lair'

Underneath the pier is a whole mysterious world of water, seaweed and Victorian engineering. It is within this topsy-turvy subterranean lair that the sea-god Neptune has created a series of challenges to test the most resilient and daring of today's adventurers !

To reach the hidden Sunken Treasure there are a series of tests of balance and nerve, as participants (*in harnesses*) make their way round the fiendish obstacle course set by the 'King of the Deep'. Wobbly bridges, intricate crossings, net walls, high-rope bridges ... and a death defying Tarzan rope swing - all combine to make a one-off experience not available ANYWHERE else in the World. This would be a unique 'World-first' exclusive to Hastings Pier.

A zip-line bike hanging below the perimeter of the pier would also be a 'never-before-seen' attraction which would not only be an enormous adrenaline rush for the participants, but also make another of one of the most amazing photo opportunities for visitors to Hastings.

It's a 'go-ape' tree-top adventure, close to water: <https://goape.co.uk/adventures/treetopadventure>

This is the sort of attraction to make incredible 'word-of-mouth' publicity - and a series of photos which would be utterly irresistible for Facebookers, Tweeters or Instagram aficionados ! It's a win/win by ALL criteria.

10. Corporate and Private Hire

The Pier is ready-made for Corporate and Private hire exploitation. At Bournemouth Pier it makes a steady addition to the cash-flow. With some refurbishment to the visitor centre and with the Entertainment Hub, there would be a series of spaces well suited and fully equipped to meet corporate needs.

Tying in with hotels such as the White Rock opposite, would mean that we could offer attractive packages for away-days or 'company retreats', and well as build up a thriving business in hire by-the-hour. This would also particularly help 'flatten out' the revenues in our quiet seasons.

The marketing department would need to have this within their remit and given a marketing budget to ensure they reach the right market-place, and can be listed in the various national databases. Attracting significant overnighting 'out of towners', would be good for Hastings as a whole and would deserve HBC co-operation to attract more revenue to the borough.

With proper forward planning to avoid timetable clashes, weddings could also add significant revenue to the pier operation. <http://keywestbournemouth.co.uk/weddings/>

11. The Shop

The Shop and new visitor reception and information area would probably be better placed near the entrance to the pier. As a source of revenue its contents could possibly be more imaginatively sourced and perhaps feature more local information and local history. Retail is always more effective when combined with story-telling and a degree of interactivity. For me, this would be a relatively 'quick fix'.

12. Entrance Fee and a 'Pier Passport' Loyalty Card ?

I am very much aware that this will be one of the most contentious items in this proposal. Everyone supports the idea of a pier that is free and open to all. But if we keep an open mind there are also tremendous advantages to making a nominal charge, both in the short term financially and in the long-term for building up repeat visitors with a loyalty scheme.

Let's examine one possible scenario :-

- We charge £1.00 for **an annual pass** to the pier (*In Bournemouth: £1.20 adult, 80p child*).
- Visitors are signed up (*voluntarily*) and we take contact details
- They are issued a 'Pier Passport' – a bar-coded plastic, credit-card sized loyalty card
- There are turnstiles at the entrance which allow anyone with a card free access to the pier
- When making purchases or attending events we can swipe their cards and they earn points

Also if the pier has a packed entertainment programme with free events and activities throughout the day, no one could consider this one-off fee as expensive. For locals (*and for 220,000 people within our 30-minute drive catchment area*) after they have paid once ... for the year it is free !

ALL that content, all that activity, all that space, the events, those breathtaking views - for just £1 !

Why a 'Pier Passport' Loyalty Card ?

Loyalty cards are much misunderstood because they are not used imaginatively by the companies that issue them. Far too often they are used merely as a marketing tool, rather than to actually enhance the visitor/customer experience. **Data capture per se is useless - unless used effectively.**

Loyalty cards CAN work if the customer perceives value in them. The trick is to make them count, give them a purpose, give solutions to problems and the user 'something for nothing'.

1. They have been proven to increase growth

As a marketer it has been proven time and time again that loyalty programmes have been successful in many industries, often being used as the sole model for growing a company.

2. Retaining Customers

One of our goals is to increase repeat visits to the pier. *Forbes Magazine* calculates that keeping an existing customer is 7 times cheaper than finding a new one. Once we have details and people have an incentive to return, it is MUCH easier to bring them back.

3. Build a Community

By having a group of people bound together by the pier and their hopefully happy experience on it, it is much easier to build a community, both on-line AND at pier events. The visitors become members of a club, start to feel ownership and hopefully share word-of-mouth their experiences, which again is a terrific way to build repeat business and brand loyalty. Nothing sells better than success.

4. Increase Sales by making 'Special Offers'

Loyalty Programmes can provide added incentives for making purchases or repeat visits, we can make '2 for 1' offers, offer double bonus points, we have a very powerful marketing tool if used sensibly and where the customer/visitor perceives increased value.

5. Flatten out 'Peaks and Troughs' of seasonal visits.

By using the loyalty programme we can entice visitors back at times which might help us flatten out the seasonal graphs of 'peaks and troughs'.

6. Product market research

We can use the data captured to instantly see what products and events are successful.

7. A swiped-card provides crucial on-going Incentive Research

Throughout the year we will begin to see a pattern of the sorts of incentives which fuel the desires of our clients. We can see which promotions work and which don't for the various demographics. We can hone in on the specific rewards that are most appreciated and attach the most sought after rewards to the products with for example the highest margins.

8. Being Valued and feeling Exclusive makes Customers Happy

With a properly managed programme we send a positive message to our visitors that we are not only after their money but that we have a mutual relationship with benefits for both of us. Acts of goodwill can only ever improve the outlook of our guests.

9. Social Media

We can also use the incentive of rewards to encourage loyal visitors to spread events on Social Media; facebook, Instagram, Twitter, SnapChat etc. Viral dissemination is free to us and helps us exponentially reach a much wider market than we could ourselves.

10. It's FREE !

Offering rewards and incentives for people to return doesn't actually cost us anything. It might marginally effect some short term gain, but it is not costing us 'money out' v. 'money in'. Offering rewards, exclusive parties, events or 'pre-openings' need cost us nothing, but they would have perceived value in the minds of our customers.

It is no secret that customer loyalty programmes are effective marketing tools. Properly conceived and used intelligently - they increase growth, help retain and encourage repeat visitors and also help improve and build our brand's reputation. These are quite compelling arguments for their use towards our on-going success

13. An Extended 'Friends of Hasting Pier' Loyalty scheme

The 'Pier Passport' above would be the equivalent of a 'Bronze' loyalty membership for casual pier-goers and people 'dropping in'. It would be insane, however, not to capitalise on the extraordinary affection that residents have for the "People's Pier" - and there should be a range of other ways that supporters can show their commitment to the future of this remarkable focal point of the community.

Platinum, Gold and Silver levels of 'sponsorship' or membership would further help build the strong cohesive family which has already grown up to protect and look after the pier. Various rewards and 'exclusives' can be devised for both individual and corporate sponsors to ensure longevity and ongoing participation and support.

14. The Open Sea End

The beauty of the plans we have devised so far mean that by containing the commercial activity on the apron and central building - we have retained the glorious spaciousness of the 'Sea End' of our 21st Century Pier. It is a blank canvas open to the elements and ripe for some exciting 'pop-up' activity to be factored into the overall Entertainment Programme.

It also can be used to creatively foster stronger ties to the local Business Community with them organising events, product demonstrations etc. - to help promote their various businesses.

Some Examples in the Hastings Business Directory

Any of the following could be encouraged to participate in some sort of 'pop-up' interactivity

Antique Dealers	Arts and Crafts
Bike Shops	Boats and Fishing
Book Shops	Camp Sites
Car Dealers	Carpenters
Catering	Clothes shops
D.I.Y. Shops	Estate Agents
Florists	Garden Centres / shops
Hair and Beauty	Health and Therapy
Hotels	Jewellers
Motorcycles	Pet shops & services
Photography	Pubs and Bars
Restaurants	Sport, fitness and gyms
Travel Agents	Wedding Services
Wine Merchants / Vintners	Fishermen's outlet
Organic growers	'Farm to fork' suppliers
2 nd hand clothes	2 nd hand bric-a-brac

People who offer services :

- Yoga
- Pilates
- Massage
- Dance classes (Tango/Salsa)
- Meditation etc. etc.

15. The Local Celebrity Resource

Whilst not exactly a 'profit centre' ... there are some local celebrities who might be able to offer either cash or their PR services to help sustain the longevity of our "People's Pier".

Some Examples of Local 'Celebrities' / Business leaders

Hastings Direct	Saga
David and Sarah Kowitz	Eddie Izzard
Jo Fairley (<i>Green and Blacks</i>)	Craig Sams (<i>Green & Blacks</i>)
Kim Fuller (<i>brother of Simon Fuller</i>)	Paul and Stella McCartney
Jo Brand	Suggs
Quentin Blake (<i>Cartoonist</i>)	Mark Benton (<i>TV actor</i>)
Andy Bell (<i>Erasure</i>)	Maggie Alderson (<i>author</i>)
James Blackshaw (<i>Guitarist</i>)	Darren Boyd (<i>TV actor</i>)
Liane Carroll (<i>jazz musician</i>)	Tom Chaplin (<i>'Keane' lead singer</i>)
John Digweed (<i>DJ / record producer</i>)	David Hare (<i>playwright</i>)
Alex Lester (<i>BBC presenter</i>)	David Tibet (<i>poet and artist</i>)
Charles Moore (<i>newspaper editor</i>)	Neil Ruddock (<i>footballer and Actor</i>)

Tail-piece

Thanks SO much for hanging on in there !

I must emphasise that this is intended to be a 'shopping list' of Pier possibilities based on my experience of developing entertainment for tourism over the past 40 years. It is very much a 'first pass' and needs rigorous discussion and looking at the various practicalities of delivery - and of course the return on investment.

I have taken into account staffing levels and concentrated on keeping the operational team 'lean'. Items where 'Health and Safety' are involved (*The Climbing Wall* and *'Neptune's Lair'*) are always more labour-intensive and need a certain volume to be able to become viable (*weekends only ?*).

I believe every element here can be cost-effective, feasible, profitable and deliverable.

The strength of FOHP

The other major positive in my approach, is that it has been developed with the full participation of YOU - the people of Hastings and St. Leonards. The Friends of Hastings Pier make a strong set of allies for ANY operator wanting to commercialise and make profit from your own People's Pier. You guys have fought SO hard to retain ownership and be at the centre of the ongoing journey.

Your passion, the swathes of volunteers you can summon to help, the positive way you can affect the way forward HAS to be listened to by anyone contemplating the successful operation and future of the pier I believe it is fair to say that it can't happen without you.

Closing Thoughts

Please accept this document in the spirit in which it is offered ... an answer to your brief that the pier doesn't need to revert to tawdry "kiss me quick" and gaudy sea-side paraphernalia to survive. The past and future designs from Alex de Rijke at dRMM prove that the future is here and now.

If we can recreate the essence of the sea-side, the feelings, the experiences, the sheer fun and the emotional nostalgia then we can succeed with this 'modern take on an old tradition'.

We can build on that magnificent award-winning and beautiful structure a world-class attraction unlike any other – and which genuinely can be profitable *and* sustainable, creative and very proudly **"A People's Pier" for the 21st Century and beyond.**

Onwards and Upwards !

Yours,

Adam

END