

## West Pier Trust Newsletter – September 2002

### **1. Introduction**

I am tired of telling members that we are ‘almost there’; but if I didn’t believe it when I state it, then we would not be ‘almost there’! Confidence and conviction, determination and dedication are key to our success. John Lloyd and Bryan Spielman would expect no less of Sir Lindsay and our team.

As it happens, we are almost there. The debilitating delays caused by opponents (the Noble Organisation and Save Our Seafront campaign) lost over a full year through taking us into slow moving legal and bureaucratic machinery necessary to handle their complaints and challenges.

Hopefully, we are now through that period of delay; the opposition will continue but it should from now be snapping at our heels as we move forward rather than blocking our path.

### **2. Partnerships**

It is important to stress that despite the problems and delays over achieving the restoration of the West Pier, the key partners in the endeavour (the Trust, St Modwen, the Heritage Lottery Fund, English Heritage and Brighton & Hove City Council) remain totally in support of the principal aim. One or other of them might have problems about aspects of the plans from time to time or might seek to adjust the detail of the plans, but they all wish to see and participate in the restoration. It is a complex consortium, but it has a single aim of the sustainable restoration of the West Pier.

### **3. State of Play**

**3.1 The Restoration** It is expected that in the next few days the Heritage Lottery Fund, St Modwen and BWPT will sign a development and design grant contract of £1.2m (75% HLF 25% St Modwen) for the work necessary to bring the project upto the stage of going out to tender for the main restoration works. This phase will take until early next summer to complete. The HLF then needs a period to assess the outcomes before committing the remainder of its £15m grant. It is just possible that the main restoration will commence in 2003 but early 2004 is more likely. St Modwen is estimating around two years for the completion.

**3.2 Emergency Works** The physical state of the pier continues to give cause for concern. The loss this summer of our illuminations (the pier being too unsafe for the Seeboard electricians to maintain them) is a clear signal of that state. Tenders have been received for emergency preservation works and they are currently being assessed.

**3.3 Enabling Development** Following year long consultations with the public and the statutory bodies, St Modwen’s architects (KSS) have adjusted the design in the light of the comments received. The re-design has now been submitted to the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment, Brighton & Hove City Council and English Heritage. The revised model is on display in the Trust’s office.

It is hoped and expected that planning permission will be granted before the close of 2002.

St Modwen is also completing an environmental impact statement for the Government of the South East. This procedure can take up to six months, and was requested as a result of the Save Our Seafront campaign.

**3.4 Harbour Revision Order** The text of this Order, which amends Victorian legislation to allow BWPT to grant a long lease of the deck of the pier to St Modwen, has finally been agreed by the lawyers, parliamentary agents and officials at the Department of Transport. The issuing of the Order is now being delayed by one objector (the owners of the Palace Pier) but we are optimistic that the objection will soon be overcome.

### **4. Conclusion**

There is every reason for members to be confident that the restoration of the West Pier will be achieved. On the basis of the past seven years’ experience, further hurdles will appear but the will of the partnership consortium is strong enough to clear them. As usual we cannot make promises about timetables but it would take a major catastrophe to now prevent us achieving the restoration of the West Pier.

27<sup>th</sup> September 2002

Dr Geoff Lockwood  
Chief Executive

### **General Manager's Information**

Enclosed with this newsletter are details of our 2002 Christmas card. The design can also be seen, in colour, on the Trust's website ([www.westpier.co.uk](http://www.westpier.co.uk)). The cards can be bought from the office or by mail order using the enclosed form. We still have plenty of copies of 'Walking on Water', Professor Fred Gray's history of the pier, and of 'The Murmuration', the video of the starlings roosting over the pier. These are always popular Christmas presents and can also be ordered using the Christmas card form, over the phone, or bought from the office.

As mentioned above, sadly the pier's lights are extinguished for the time being. However, during the Paramount Comedy Festival from 8<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> October, from dusk the pier will be illuminated with the Paramount blue. This will be Paramount's main PR stunt for the festival and should be extremely eye-catching, drawing welcome attention to the pier.

The West Pier market has flourished this summer and thanks to our extended planning permission operated seven days a week through July and August. It's back to weekends now, but in fine weather the market will be open up to Christmas.

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