

# Brighton West Pier Trust

## Newsletter to Members

### 1. Introduction

After thirteen years of working for a future for the West Pier and its site, I remain enthusiastic and positive but patience is being tested; and patience is what is currently required.

The prospect of creating a future for the pier that reflects and matches the architectural beauty, the innovative engineering and the cultural/social usages of the original is real; it is just that external circumstances have delayed its implementation by a few more months than was expected last year.

### 2. The Brighton i360

Most members will know that most major construction projects have been frustrated, or at least delayed, by the international credit squeeze. The i360 is no exception but to a much lesser extent than most (partly because it is not related to the housing market).

The majority of the funding for the i360 is in place and Marks Barfield Architects (MBA) are confident of achieving the final tranche soon. So confident that all of its planning and preparations remain based upon the Eye opening to the public in spring 2010, despite the current delay. Some members used to seafront works might fear that if the i360 construction doesn't commence this summer it will be put off until next spring; not so, the works are not seasonally dependent, they will commence 28 days after MBA confirms the funding regardless of the time of year.

I stress the commitments and preparations already made by MBA. Several million pounds has already been expended or is committed in orders for the materials. The management plans (eg Section 106, Construction & Environmental Plan, Site Waste Plan, Traffic Management Plan) have been agreed with the public authorities. Contracts are ready, and tenders received for demolition and dismantling, sewer diversion, foundations and sub-structure, tower and cladding, pod and drive system, building and external works etc. All of which evidences MBA's determination not only to create the i360 but to have it open to the public in spring 2010.

### 3. Trust Work for the i360

The officers of the Trust are working closely with MBA but in terms of the formal obligations of the Trust:

**3.1 Heritage** The General Manager is deeply involved in the design of the West Pier heritage content in the i360.

**3.2 Rock Shop and Cafe** Despite reaching agreement in principle last December (after three months of exchanges) the tenant did not surrender the old leases and sign up to the new ones until 28<sup>th</sup> February 2008. The new leases were agreed with MBA and meet its requirement for trading to cease on its timetable; and do not involve the Trust in any compensation costs.

**3.3 1930's Lease to the Council** The work in the text of the deed of surrender of the 1930's lease and of a new lease to the Council of the lower esplanade road was delayed by the significant time consumption under 3.2 above. However, the texts of those documents have now been forwarded to the Council.

**3.4 Artefact Storage** The Trust met last autumn its obligations to provide an off-site location for the artefacts currently stored on site; with MBA paying the rental (at least for the first year). The delay to the commencement of the i360 works has meant inaction on the relocation of those artefacts. However, the latter has had the advantage of the teams involved with the i360, the Council land either side of the pier and the proposals for the sea-based pier having easy access to the artefacts as they developed the detail of their various proposals.

#### **4. Heritage Zone**

Last year it seemed that the Council land either side of the pier would be landscaped and used in ways not reflective of the heritage of the West Pier. It is gratifying that the emerging plans now focus on that heritage, including the re-siting of artefacts and the re-erection of an 1866 kiosk. The Council, the Trust, MBA and English Heritage appear to be in harmony over the basic focus of those plans.

#### **5. Sea-Based Pier**

All parties are agreed that the i360 needs to be fully secured and under construction before the Trust considers proposals for the redevelopment of the sea-based pier. Thus, given the delay to the i360, the Chairman and I acted on behalf of the Board in extending the period of the exclusivity agreement with the Parkridge/Regan partnership up to September 2008.

The evolving scheme is based upon the same combination of heritage and innovation as the i360 area.

#### **6. Finances**

I recall some members of the Board resigning four years ago, when the HLF and English Heritage withdrew their interest, on the grounds that the Trust could not remain a going concern financially. Since that time we have kept afloat by paring running costs to the bone, maximising commercial income (especially the market) and identifying a new backer (MBA).

#### **7. Conclusion**

We are on the verge of an exciting and dramatic future for the West Pier and its environs, which will live up to its history and provide the city with an iconic stimulus.

Geoff Lockwood  
Deputy Chairman and Chief Executive

14th June 2008