



HOYLAK VILLAGE LIFE

2011 ANNUAL REVIEW

Background

Hoylake Village Life (HVL) was formed by a small group of residents in late 2009 out of concern about the number of empty shops in Hoylake. However, in order to tackle the problem effectively, it was clear that it was more sensible to address the causes of this decline rather than the symptoms. In 2009, Hoylake had the fifth highest vacancy rate and was the lowest performing town centre in Wirral. However, it was believed that Hoylake had untapped potential to reverse this trend, that a strong sense of identity could be developed to recapture pride in our town and to make the most of Hoylake's many excellent assets to secure a more prosperous and more sustainable local economy. In order to put HVL's status beyond doubt, we became a non-profit making Community Interest Company on 6 May 2010 – Registered No 7246081.

This report records progress to 31 May 2011.



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6 Market Street
Hoylake
Wirral CH47 2AE

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Hoylake Village Life is a Community Interest Company
Registered in the UK. Company No. 07246081

Brand

A 'Hoylake Village Brand' was designed and produced which consists of a set of logos and a colour palette. The logo is applied to all HVL produced materials in order to present a professional image. The design costs were met by the Directors of HVL who had relevant professional branding and design experience. The cost of printing window stickers was met from the proceeds of website advertising.

Website

www.hoylakevillage.org.uk

Only 18 months after launch, the HVL website attracted over 35,000 unique visits per month. The website is an excellent tool to help promote Hoylake locally and beyond. Every business and organisation in Hoylake is listed (currently over 200) with contact details and website links. All local businesses and organisations receive a free listing. A further option to 'display advertise' was made available at a cost of £10 per month. To date, approximately £1000 has been raised from advertising. Advertising income has been used solely to support other HVL projects and events. Costs of developing the website and licensing fees have been met by the volunteer members of HVL.

Other organisations have benefitted from HVL's skills as websites have also been produced free of charge for the Hoylake Conservation Area and Hoylake Community Centre.

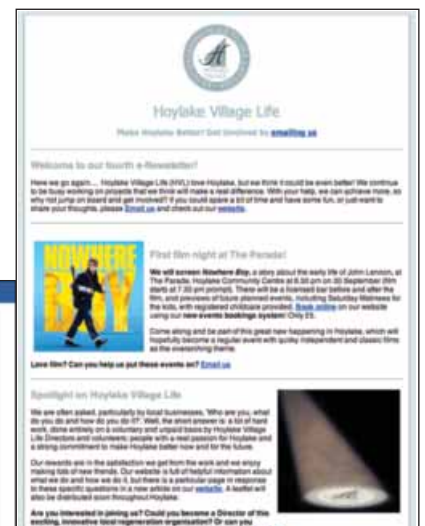
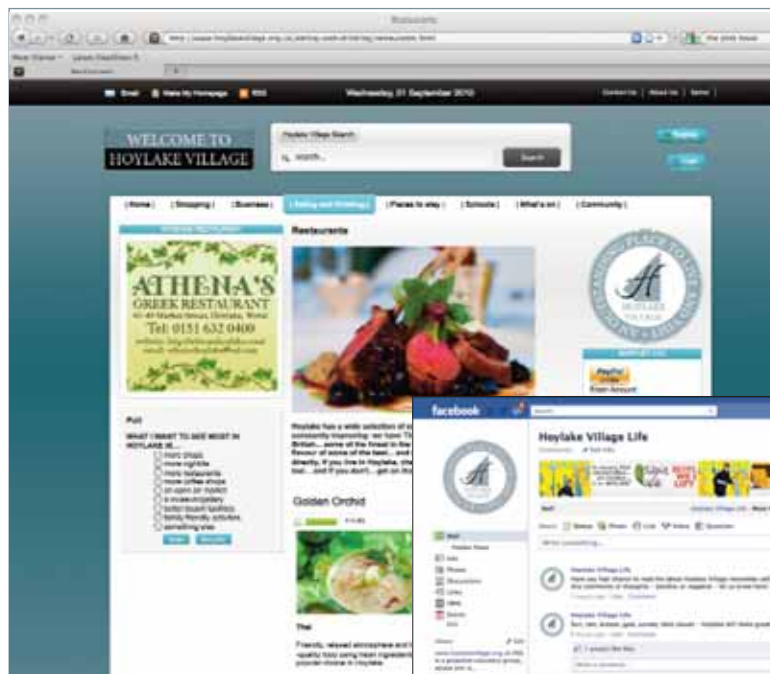
Engaging the Community

An HVL e-newsletter has been sent out at regular intervals and currently reaches over 400 households with a constantly growing contact list. It includes news, reviews and promotion of events organised by HVL and other organisations. This has allowed HVL to identify interested parties and pass volunteer enquiries to other organisations in Hoylake. The HVL Facebook page gained over 360 'likes' in its first year. It connects to a Twitter feed that has over 180 followers. By these means, news about local events and activities has been disseminated quickly and effectively – particularly to the younger residents.

Advertising income has been used solely to support other HVL projects and events.

Support for Businesses

HVL has assisted incoming businesses with planning advice. It has brokered and attended meetings to resolve complex issues surrounding planning



Our website, regular e-news and Facebook page are highly effective mass communication tools

applications thus supporting businesses that would perhaps otherwise not have been able to open in Hoylake. This is an entirely free service offered by HVL which boasts significant professional planning experience among its Directors. The closure of the HSBC bank, the only high street bank in Hoylake, had major impact on the ability of local businesses to do everyday business banking. As a result, HVL made representations to the Independent Commission on Banking, and wrote to MPs, Cabinet Ministers, the Campaign for Community Banking Services to promote the concept of Shared Banking. To date, however, there is no positive result to report. HVL produced an inward investment 'pack' for key businesses.

Support to Shopkeepers

HVL embarked on a 'Use 'em or Lose 'em' campaign on the website backed up by A2 posters for display on Hoylake shop fronts. This was supported by repeated Facebook postings to

persuade Hoylake people to 'shop local'. HVL has persevered with this campaign as the importance of shopping locally is a priority even in the face of the recession and national decline in town centres.

Improving the Street Scene

With co-operation from Wirral Council, HVL initiated, produced, installed and maintained a set of 16 high-quality banners that added colour, interest and animation to the main Market Street. The banners were sponsored by local businesses. Production involved design, image research, administration, legal contract production, contacting sponsors, and liaising with the Council over planning, delivery and installation. All design, production and administration services were provided free by HVL Directors. In November 2010, disaster struck. The fixings, contrary to the specifications supplied by the manufacturer, could not withstand the harsh winds that Hoylake sometimes experiences. Replacement banners



Offering support to local businesses; 'shop local' campaign'; street banners; Shopfront design guide



went up in January 2011. Contracts with sponsors were extended to take account of this. Income from sponsorship covered printing and installation costs leaving a small surplus to support other HVL activities.

Shop Front Design Guide

HVL identified the clear need to improve the look of the main street by reducing the number of unattractive and redundant signs, reducing visual and pavement clutter and making the most of the fine Victorian and Edwardian buildings in the town. It is believed that, without improvement, there is disincentive to businesses considering whether to come in to the town as well as being distinctly unattractive to shoppers. Work has started on a comprehensive guide which will cover all aspects of shop front design with the aim of restoring original features and, where possible, reintroducing Victorian and Edwardian shop frontages combined with high-quality contemporary shop fronts and graphics. A particular colour palette will be proposed together with an advice service on signage and advertising. HVL believes that poor design must be tackled if Hoylake's fortunes are to be reversed.

Christmas Lighting

For Christmas 2010, HVL purchased 96 sets of white LED lights, which were distributed at no charge to all Hoylake Market Street businesses. This made a significant difference not only to the window displays of Hoylake shops, but also to the wider street scene. In addition, HVL took over responsibility for the management and installation of the 'traditional' Christmas lights for the first time. A full tendering process was held before the contractor was appointed. An innovation in 2010,

the Pasolini film, *The Gospel According to St Matthew* was projected onto the front of St Luke's Church in Hoylake. The initiative attracted favourable national and international press coverage. For the long term, HVL aims to plan for an 'alternative', more sustainable, more cost effective approach to Christmas lights. The renowned International Lighting Consultant, Graham Festenstein, visited Hoylake and gave his time 'pro bono' to advise on creative lighting.

Neighbourhood Planning

In 2010, we responded to a Council-commissioned 'Core Strategy' report by Roger Tym & Partners which recommended 'downgrading' Hoylake from town to a district centre on the basis that, in 2009, before HVL was formed, Hoylake was in 'terminal decline'. Such an action would have a considerable impact on the economic future of Hoylake and also on future planning decisions. HVL met with Council Officers and presented a 16-page response, which has been considered by the Council. HVL continued to research the wider evidence which needed to be considered in order to reverse the decision. Hoylake has enormous potential. Downgrading Hoylake would have many irreversible implications, such as the conversion of existing retail space into residential use. HVL has continued to argue that the report is fundamentally flawed in many respects and that its sampling base was narrow.

The forthcoming 'Localism Bill' promotes the adoption of 'Neighbourhood Plans', as part of the local planning framework giving local communities more say in their future. HVL applied to be

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Film projections at Christmas; a referendum will decide whether the Neighbourhood Plan is adopted

considered in the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)'s Neighbourhood Plan Vanguard programme. In 2010, HVL were nominated by Wirral Council and the DCLG accepted the nomination in May 2011. The process will involve a significant consultation in the community which will require the support and co-operation of local businesses, residents, community groups and organisations. An amount of £20,000 to cover the costs of this consultation process has been set aside by DCLG for this project. HVL has high hopes that the 'Vision' for Hoylake which will emerge from this important initiative will transform the town and its many assets for the long term benefit of all our residents.

Dealing with Congestion

Hoylake's main street is a ribbon development with high levels of through traffic and a commuter railway line which divides parts of the town. In 2010, HVL produced a document which explored the possibility of taking the railway line at Hoylake underground, thereby opening up Hoylake to the hinterland beyond to the long term physical and socio-economic benefit of future development in the town. This ambitious concept attracted the attention of Network Rail and Stobart Rail Infrastructure. In May 2011, HVL met with a Senior Director of Network Rail and the Managing Director of Stobart Rail to discuss options for crossing the railway, including the possibility of a bridge. Both organisations believe this to be achievable and funding sources realistically accessible. Hoylake might also benefit from charging a fee for carrying utility services across a bridge to Carr Lane Industrial Site and the proposed Golf Resort.

Golf

Hoylake boasts the world famous Royal Liverpool golf links which will host British Open Championships in 2012 (Womens) and 2014 (Mens). Prior to the return of the Open Championship in 2006, Wirral Council introduced the idea of a new Golf Resort as part of the BDP master plan for Hoylake and West Kirby. Since then, the global financial climate has changed beyond recognition, which has had an inevitable impact on the ambitions of local communities, including Hoylake. In addition, concerns about climate change have continued to grow and the way we tackle these challenges impacts upon every aspect of development and our society, including leisure and tourism. HVL supports the principle of a new Golf Resort near Hoylake but there are concerns in the community which we hope our deliberations will help to address so as to ensure that:

- the project will have a positive environmental impact
- the project will have a positive impact on wildlife and biodiversity
- the local community and economy will benefit directly and significantly
- visitors will find an attractive route into Hoylake town centre, unhindered by the railway crossing and without creating excessive traffic problems in Hoylake

With this in mind, HVL has embarked on preparing a proposal that the Resort incorporates a Wildfowl/Wetland Centre. Discussions have taken place with the Wildfowl & Wetland Trust Consulting, Liverpool University and other bodies about this project.



Stobart Rail infrastructure advising on railway crossing options; proposals to amend existing Golf Resort plans to incorporate a Wildfowl and Wetland Centre

Post Graduate Study

In 2010, HVL suggested a research project on Hoylake to Professor Chris Couch at Liverpool John Moores University. In 2010/11, 25 post graduate students conducted a one-year project on Hoylake on which HVL Directors consulted and attended three presentations during the course of the studies. Six diverse planning opportunities were identified. This gave students and HVL Directors a unique opportunity to see Hoylake from an outsider's perspective and helped inform HVL deliberations for the future.

Community Events

HVL staged a second annual Halloween party for the children of Hoylake at the end of October 2010. This popular event took place at the rejuvenated Hoylake Community Centre (HCC). Together with the support of HCC and other volunteers, the Main Hall and adjacent rooms were decorated, tea and cakes provided, competitions for scary outfits arranged as well as disco dancing to consume the youngsters' energy. A professional photographer took high-resolution images of the party which were posted on the HVL Facebook page and website for families to download free of charge.

Young People

HVX is a subgroup of HVL that was proposed in early 2011, to be run exclusively by and for local teenagers aged 13-19. HVL aims to provide support and advice and will assist the group if and when they wish to engage with the Council, police, community groups and others. HVX youngsters will be responsible for developing their own programmes, events and facilities. Hopefully, they will play a key part in making Hoylake better for the next generation.

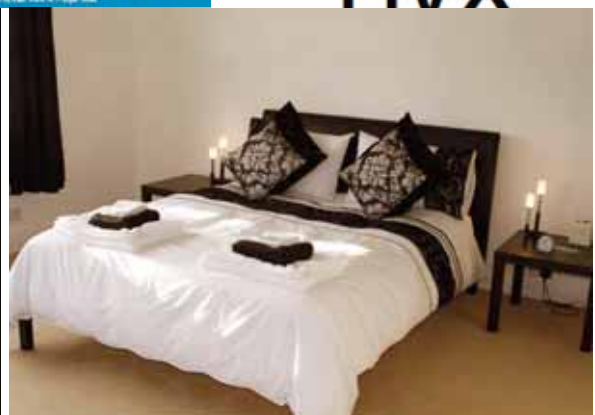
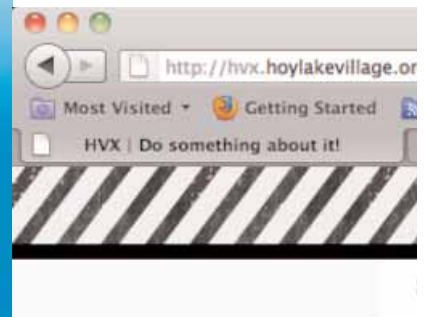
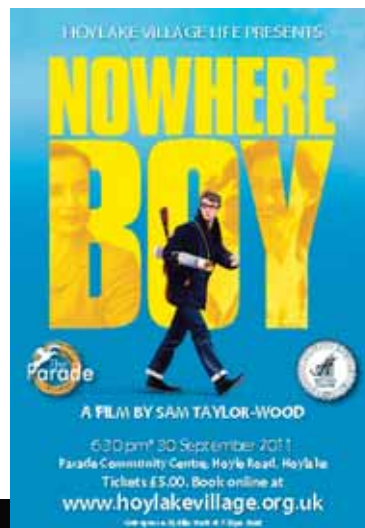
Film Nights

HVL have licensed The Parade, Hoylake Community Centre (HCC) as a venue for showing films. HCC have installed a high quality projector, screen and sound system which will enhance the viewing experience considerably. Our first showing will take place on 30 September 2011. A licensed bar will be available and tickets will be available booked online via the HVL website. It is hoped this will become a regular event. HVL also has plans for future Saturday matinee films supervised by qualified child carers so that parents can 'shop local' while leaving their children in a safe and entertaining environment.

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HVL Sub-Groups

HVL set up a group of Hoylake-based accommodation providers with the aims of anticipating the demands for major events and developing ideas for the joint promotion and marketing of Hoylake and its many assets for leisure and business visitors. HVL hopes to create



Community events; HVX website; film nights; Accommodation Providers' sub-group

other groups, each of whom will interact with others, to form a broad network of businesses that share expertise, knowledge, marketing and promotional opportunities. In this way, a co-ordinated effort will present Hoylake as a whole in the best light possible with a consistent and positive identity being promoted locally, nationally and internationally. HVL has good links with other organisations, including the Royal Liverpool Golf Club and Holiday Inn Express, which will develop into long-lasting relationships that will benefit Hoylake for years to come.

Support & Advice to Others

HVL Directors and volunteers have worked with many other Hoylake organisations to provide administrative support, fundraising, promotion, publicity and marketing, photography, website design and hosting and more. Organisations that HVL continues to work closely with are:

- Hoylake Conservation Areas Residents' Association
- Friends of Hoylake and Meols in Bloom

- The Parade, Hoylake Community Centre
- Transition Town West Kirby
- Friends of Grove Park
- Oxjam
- Various Big Lunch initiatives
- Hoylake Lifeboat Museum
- Hoylake Accommodation Providers
- Incredible Edible Hoylake

Any voluntary organisation in Hoylake has been invited to get in touch so that, within the capabilities of the group, as much professional expertise and voluntary time can be provided to support any local group whose aims we share.

Director's Remuneration

No Director of Hoylake Village Life received any remuneration or allowance in performing their duties on behalf of the CIC.

Certified Approved by HVL Directors on 10 January 2012

SUMMARY OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE for the period ended 31st May 2011

INCOME	£	£
Sales	3,036.61	
Grants	5,240.00	
Donations	2,132.35	
Miscellaneous Income	<u>129.41</u>	10,538.37
EXPENDITURE		
Services	7,592.26	
Printing and Postages	345.58	
Events	<u>239.67</u>	8,177.51
Surplus of Income over Expenditure		<u><u>2,360.86</u></u>
Balance Sheet at 31st May 2011		
Assets		
Cash at Bank		1,711.86
VAT repayment due		649.00
		<u><u>2,360.86</u></u>
Represented by:		
Accumulated Surplus		<u><u>2,360.86</u></u>

We have examined the records of Hoylake Village Life Community Interest Company without carrying out an audit. We certify that the above accounts are correct in accordance with those records.

Quality Accounting Services, 6th January 2012