



Bold Alliance

Two Hastings charities extend the hand of friendship

Caf Fean, Jess Steele and Kate Adams

Heart of Hastings Community Land Trust (HoHCLT) and Project Art Works are two pioneering local charities who share core values and possess a driving passion for positive social change. The former has been working to create a community that is acting to change its immediate environment and build a new space for living and thriving in Ore Valley. The latter gives people with complex needs a channel through which to express themselves and to create high quality works of art. We spoke to the founders of each organisation, Jess Steele and Kate Adams, to find out more about this unique partnership.

"We declare an alliance between Project Art Works and Heart of Hastings Community Land Trust, based on shared values and overlapping goals.

The two organisations, and the many individuals within them, will work together to learn and share each other's worlds, to challenge themselves and support each other, and to take practical joint action that has positive outcomes, both tangible and intangible."

Project Art Works and Heart of Hastings Community Land Trust

What was the motivation behind a partnership between Heart of Hastings and Project Art Works?

JS: HoH's vision is for 'affordable spaces, diverse communities, inclusive neighbourhoods'. Project Art Works' focus on inclusion and neurodiversity fits perfectly with that vision. As soon as we met, I felt that Kate Adams had a rare integrity and energy that could hugely enhance our work. I hoped that our approach to community ownership in perpetuity could add something to hers. The more we get to know each other's organisations, the more connections we find.

KA: Project Art Works is always looking for radical models of inclusion and advocacy. Heart of Hastings motivates, invites and supports people to take control of the forces that impact on their lives. This is what Project Art Works does through creative activity.

What sort of projects do you imagine will emerge from this partnership?

KA: Integrated housing, community integration, stronger relationships, different models of care.

JS: We are already working together on two projects. We have spent the last year developing a detailed partnership proposal for a Community Asset Transfer of 12 Claremont (next to the Library). In our vision, the ground floor will be a new showcase gallery space for Project Art Works, while upstairs the HoH Community Land Trust will offer affordable live-work units, plus workspace for creative enterprises. We see this as an integrated project with each partner bringing their core expertise.

In Ore Valley, where HoH is supporting the bottom-up development of over 60 homes, plus workspaces, jobs and community facilities on the derelict former power station site, we aim to create a 'nurturing neighbourhood'. This is inspired by conversations, not just with Project Artworks but also with Probation Service and NHS Mental Health who all say that while their clients need shelter, what they need more than anything are relationships. We are building the relationships in from the very start and Project Art Works is helping us to imagine how that will include people with complex needs.

How did you meet one another?

JS: They have been around a long time. Project Art Works was actually born in 12 Claremont when Kate was based there with the late John Cole. They have a



PIC: HOH & PAW

The hand of friendship doesn't judge, assume or label

great 'sanctuary' site at the Braybrooke Road arches where I'd visited a few times over the years but in the last 18 months we've spent much more time together.

KA: Someone suggested that we would be interested in what Jess is doing in Hastings. And they were right!!

What do you particularly like about one another's approach?

JS: I love their absolute commitment to quality as well as inclusiveness. I love the optimism and warmth that seems to flow through the organisation. There's a saying that partnership is 'the mutual suppression of loathing in pursuit of cash'. This is not like that! We share fundamental values.

KA: Their profound commitment to people, ordinary and extraordinary people trying to live their lives. A belief that given the right support, people can make a difference to their own lives and communities.

What are you most excited about for HoH and its future?

JS: So many things! I believe in 'self-renovating neighbourhoods', bottom-up open approaches to regeneration that bring people together to make improvements

using an approach called the Organisation Workshop. The theory is simple: a group of around 100 people felt to be excluded from every-day life are handed the land, 'means of production' (equipment, materials, access to expertise) and a set of contracts. The only thing missing is organisation which they must create themselves. And in that process they not only transform the land, making assets for the community, but the individuals themselves are positively changed through growing friendships, networks and enterprises. The approach has been used all over the developing world and was piloted in the UK in 2015 with great success.

■ For more information please visit the charity websites:

www.projectartworks.org and www.heartofhastings.org.uk

■ Note: Neurodiversity is the diversity of human brains and minds – the infinite variation in neurocognitive functioning within our species.

<http://neurocosmopolitanism.com>

■ The bottom-up approach means that local actors participate in decision-making about the strategy and in the selection of the priorities to be pursued in their local area. www.elard.eu



You are warmly invited to join Hastings Quakers for two events to mark "Quaker Week 2017".

Saturday 30th September, 3pm

Coffee/tea and cake, and a chance to chat. If you've ever wondered about Quakers, come and ask. Or just come for the cake...

Saturday 7th October, 6pm

When times are turbulent... Quakers bring people together. Come and hear speakers representing Transition Town; Global Justice; Fossil-Free Hastings and Quakers, who will share how they are working in our local community. Refreshments provided.

Both events will be at the Quaker Meeting House, South Terrace, Hastings. If you would like any more details, please ring 01424 460878.

