

## Tackling Homelessness and Street Begging (the right way)

Cllr Richard Cooper kindly agreed to take part in our Question Time, but before he took open questions, we were enlightened by a panel of experts as to how Harrogate Borough Council plan to tackle the issue of street begging and homelessness.

First up to speak was Maggie Gibson, from HBC's Housing Options team, who explained that the genuinely homeless (of which there are only four in Harrogate) sleep rough and have no fixed abode, whereas street beggars ask for money but may have somewhere to stay. The Housing Options team help people get social housing and also help them stay in existing properties. Unfortunately, not everyone who needs it accepts help.

Liz Hancock, Chief Executive of the Harrogate Homeless Project gave details of what the charity offers homeless and vulnerably housed people, with particular reference to Springboard. This facility is open every weekday offering food, showers, a laundry service, and professional help to get the homeless and other vulnerable people back on their feet. Whether someone has problems with mental health, substance abuse, or debt, the charity will try to provide what is needed.

North Yorkshire Horizons offers a non-judgemental drug and alcohol recovery service for anyone who needs assistance, including the homeless and street beggars. Team Leader Dan Atkinson explained that specialist workers offer tailored programmes of therapy and aftercare, and that they work closely with other organisations and the Council.

Helen Richardson, Community Safety Officer for HBC introduced the Council's new initiative: Street Aid. Modelled on a successful scheme running in Cambridge, the idea is that people should use the contactless terminal points to give a small donation to a central pot, rather than give to the individual on the street. Giving directly to a beggar



or homeless person has been shown to keep them on the street, rather than give them sustainable help to get them back on their feet. They liaise with the council, police, Harrogate Homeless Project, and North Yorkshire Horizons. Helen told attendees that they would very much like to work with businesses. They've been looking at gaps in funding. Applications can be made for grants of up to £500 to be used for practical help, such as addiction therapy or a training course to help find employment. No cash, sleeping bags, tents, etc., will be given to the applicants. The scheme will help the Council monitor who's out there and to offer those who need it a long-term solution to getting street beggars and the homeless off the streets.

Cllr Cooper stressed that visitors and residents must be educated about the reasons why giving a couple of pounds to individuals will do more harm than good. By putting contactless sensors near the homeless and begging 'hot spots', people will be encouraged to donate to the fund.

It's hoped that postcards with essential numbers, such as the Harrogate Homeless Project, will be placed into businesses. It's also hoped that police officers and council workers will carry business cards with this information.

Hospitality businesses and prime tourist destinations need to educate visitors about the right way to help. This includes hotels, guesthouses and the Convention Centre. Everyone on the street can access help completely free of charge and the public need to understand this.

Richard Cooper then opened the floor to questions about any issues within the Council's domain.

A question was asked about when the Station Gateway project would begin, and Richard responded that they are still speaking to the various landowners.

Helen Richardson was asked how long an application for a Street Aid grant would take. They are aiming for a four-week turnaround, but will try to expedite this if it's an urgent request.

How are HBC working with businesses to help them reduce their carbon footprints? Richard told the audience that he had hoped by sponsoring the Harrogate Advertiser's Excellence in Business Green Award, more businesses would get on board, however they only had four entrants. He emphasised that businesses should showcase what they're doing to help the environment.

Another question was what specifically can be done at weekends to help with antisocial behaviour without criminalising the individuals? PC Sellers responded by saying that antisocial behaviour is a very raw subject. There's a youth element, street element, mental health issues, and substance abuse issues. All have different solutions. If you're talking about people begging, if there's no risk to the public, no arrests will be made. If it has a criminal element, then the Police should be called.

One guest wished to know if the homeless have been asked what kind of help they need, and Liz Hancock assured us the homeless are consulted. What they desire isn't always achievable, however, so they need to be realistic.

Will HBC increase its social housing programme? Maggie Gibson said that it's a case of looking at what land is available and how the Council can further develop existing housing. More social housing is currently being built in Ripon and the Council are doing all they can to help people living in a hostel to move to permanent housing. The 40% affordable housing target isn't quite being met; it currently stands at around 35%.

How can we be sure StreetAid will be used for what it's intended? Helen assured attendees that the scheme will have full transparency, and that they'll run Street Aid for two months before grants are given. Every penny will go to help people on the street, without any cost to Harrogate Borough Council. HBC will be talking to the people on the streets, and every single person will be looked at individually. The Housing Options team provide personalised housing plans. Street Aid will provide a tailored approach. Giving one person £100 will do more than giving 10 people £10.

The Harrogate Homeless Project's pop-up shop in the Victoria Shopping Centre made £1400 in three days and they hope to run it again.

What do you consider to be Harrogate's greatest opportunity, and what do we do to achieve it?

Cllr Cooper explained how seeing The Stray for the first time made a deep impression. Harrogate's unique selling points get visitors to keep coming back. The Convention Centre, hospitality businesses, and independent shops appeal to visitors. He would like to boost conference trade and work with organisations who have an interest in tourism to give a holistic approach. Town centre WIFI will be introduced within the next six months. Richard went on to suggest that as Harrogate has a reputation for hosting large cycling events, perhaps we could offer something brand new, such as a national cycling museum.

Richard was asked when The Local Plan would be accepted, and it's hoped that it will have been voted on and passed by the end of the year. Another public consultation is required.

# Get your game face on for our next meeting!

If you think our regular Business Safaris are great for getting to know people, our next meeting gives you the opportunity to gain real insight into prospective customers and suppliers. At our Games and Puzzles evening, small teams work together to accomplish tasks that require logic and agile thinking. There's a lot of laughter, and everyone is very supportive, despite the competitive spirits coming out! Will your team come out on top? Strictly limited numbers are allowed for this meeting, so don't delay in registering.

**Date:** Monday, 5th August

**Venue:** Harrogate Convention Centre (Queen's Suite)

**Time:** 5.30pm to 8pm



[Register here](#)

## Welcome new members!

Welcome to the following businesses that have recently joined us. You can find their full details on the Directory page of our website, or introduce yourself if you see them at an upcoming meeting. New members attending their first meeting will have the opportunity to introduce themselves and say a few words to the audience at the end of the meeting.

### Conduct Coaching

Nicki Eyre

[www.conductcoaching.com](http://www.conductcoaching.com)

Tel: 07921264920

### Iportalis

Kelly Hassell

[www.iportalis.com](http://www.iportalis.com)

Tel: 03308087569

### Monsieur K Clothing Alterations

(Robin) M Katiksiz

[www.monsieurkclothingalteration.co](http://www.monsieurkclothingalteration.co)

Tel: 07752081777

### Merrell O'Flaherty Dormer Ltd

Nicolas Jauncy

[www.mofd-architects.com](http://www.mofd-architects.com)

Tel: 07812666829

### James D Whitaker Design

James Whitaker

[www.jamesdwhitaker.co.uk](http://www.jamesdwhitaker.co.uk)

Tel: 07776333267

### MikeBest Accountancy Ltd

Mike Best

[www.mikebestaccounts.co.uk](http://www.mikebestaccounts.co.uk)

Tel: 07396 305806

# HIF: Harrogate Welcomes the World with the Carnival!

## CARNIVAL BE PART OF IT

### BEE PART OF IT

Dress up and join in with our fabulous Bee Lady, whether you're 2 or 102 we'd love to have you, bzzz.

### FLAG WAVERS

We are looking for people from across the District to take part and help bring the parade to life as flag wavers

### PERFORMERS

Play, dance or march—want to promote your local organisation then just let us know



On Saturday, 27th July, Harrogate will play host to an amazing carnival day that offers fun for the whole family, including a parade, workshops, dance, music, and even a 'theatre of food'. More information can be found on the website: <https://harrogateinternationalfestivals.com/harrogate-festival-presents/carnival/>.

## Financial Wellbeing: taking the stress out of money

AurumGold Ltd, in conjunction with NatWest and True Financial Design Ltd, will be running the above seminar on 24th July at Cedar Court Hotel. "Understanding how you feel, think about and handle money helps you better manage your personal finances and improve your wellbeing." More information can be found on the [Eventbrite page](#).

## Yorkshire 2019 Para-cycling International

Jackie Snape from Disability Action Yorkshire wants businesses made aware that because the above competition will run alongside the UCI World Road Championships in September, there will be a lot more disabled visitors in Harrogate. Businesses are urged to look at accessibility and to visit the [DAY website](#) for more information.

## UCI Road World Championships

If you want to know more about what's involved with this cycling event, visit the official website: <https://worlds.yorkshire.com/>. Tourist Information have maps with road closures and timings.