

MINUTES OF SPECIAL EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD TO DISCUSS FUTURE HASTINGS BLOSSOM FESTIVALS - at Caferam Tearooms, Monday 12th September 1966 at 7 p.m.

PRESENT: Mr. H. B. Poppelwell presided over Messrs. W. Lambie, D. Bristow, H. Robertson, H. Robinson, G. Kearns, G. Aitcheson, R. Walker, T. Collingwood, R. Ingram, and J. Minty.

OFFICE ACCOMMODATION:

Mr. Poppelwell reported that he had talked to several Councillors in respect of the Council providing adequate office accommodation for our Secretary/Organiser. Mr. G. Kearns moved, seconded by W. Lambie, that we negotiate to stay in the present office as long as possible. The Secretary reported that the present officers were available only either until the end of September or end of October.

BLOSSOM FESTIVAL:

Mr. H. Robertson presented his proposals for future Blossom Festivals with explanations by the Treasurer attached (see copies attached) Mr. H. B. Poppelwell congratulated Mr. Roberts and Mr. Ingram for their efforts in bringing forward these proposals. He explained that most of the proposals had been thrashed out over the years. Originally the procession was held on Friday and then changed to a Saturday. The venue at this stage was Nelson Park. However, it was found that Nelson Park was too small.

To change the date of the Festival to Labour Weekend was not practical. Mr. Poppelwell said, "We must face up to facts." Mercantile and motor firms are honour bound to support the A. & P. Show, giving them a logical excuse why they cannot support the Festival. Also, we should consider the A. & P. Society. Mr. Poppelwell stated that we should concentrate more on improving our present Blossom Festival and set our sights on something realistic.

Mr. D. Bristow stated that he had been connected with the organisation for thirteen years and that some of the ideas of Mr. Robertson are frightening. Mr. Bristow would like to see a complete change. Hold the Festival on the third Saturday and turn the present Blossom Festival back to front, e.i. have final concert at end of Festival with the procession on the first Saturday. He also felt the Queen candidates when appearing at the theatre should be escorted by male companions. He suggested that each queen candidate could be presented on a float in the procession. Also, floats could be on display for say three days in an enclosed area such as Civic Square.

Mr. T. Collingwood said that when you make a complete change you can make a complete goat of yourself. We should discuss each point of Harold's suggestions. He would favour the date as suggested by Mr. Robertson, but does not favour the change of name. Suggestions for evening entertainment are practical and he is sure worthwhile. Windsor park should remain as the venue for our activities as we are going to have Fantasyland there, and that is where we would concentrate our efforts.

Mr. R. Ingram reported that he had contacted Mr. Arnold, Secretary of the A. & P. Society and tested out his reactions to the proposal of holding the Festival on Labour Weekend. Mr. Arnold's reactions were that it would certainly divide the support of the public and split the spending power, but had no real objections to the proposal.

Mr. G. Kearns stated that he had been in Hastings for four years next month and it was mainly through publicity generated by the Blossom Festival and Highland Games that helped influence him in coming to Hastings. He won't be told that the Blossom Festival should be disbanded. Before coming to Hastings he imagined that Greater Hastings was returning something to the City in the form of fountain, hall, or Fantasyland. He said that we must give something back to the community. "The President has stated the things that have been done in the past," said Mr. Kearns, "But we must be prepared to make alterations otherwise our organisation is dead, but we must be prepared to make some mistakes too." He said that Greater Hastings should be prepared to help other organisation in an endeavour to woo them to support us. He also suggested a national talent quest. "If we are prepared not to be scared, and have a lick, we are

bound to win," said Mr. Kearns.

Mr. H. Robinson stated that he was in favour of 75% of Harold's suggestions, which we should adopt some way or other. He does not agree with the change of name or time. Mr. Robinson felt that the Festival should be held in the third week in September and it must take on a new look. Mr. Robinson felt that Nelson Park is suitable for some activities, but suggested the racecourse as a better venue.

Mr. W. Lambie said that something must be done. Harold has a lot of good ideas. Mr. Lambie would like to see a change of name to "Carnival". He stated that a slight change of name could give the blossomtime a lift. He felt that all Queen candidates should be on a float in the Procession. The right approach, Mr. Lambie said, should bring in businesses and firms to sponsor candidates and provide a float. He felt that Windsor Park was too far away for our activities and that Nelson Park could be the answer. He suggested that we could run a proper night show. Mr. Lambie stated that the concerts should be built up with a personality artist to improve their presentation. This must be topline talent and not necessarily local. Mr. Lambie felt that the timing of the Festival in October was very good. However, he was sure that the Festival needed a "shot in the arm".

Mr. John Minty stated that he was not in favour of holding a Festival on a holiday weekend. He could see problems in arranging voluntary helpers at a time when everyone was on holiday, considering that we already took up one holiday weekend in the year with Highland Games. He was of the opinion that our activities should be confined to the weekend. Any activities such as closing the street, Paddy's market, etc., should be arranged by the retailers.

Mr. T. Collingwood suggested that the secretary get in touch with the Horticultural Society regarding dates for next year and inquire if it is too late to change from the 9th September.

Mr. H. Robertson stated that we are looking for better weather and a week later than present will not make any difference. He said, "We must go to October."

Mr. H. B. Poppelwell moved that the date for the 1967 Blossom Procession remain at 9th September. The motion lapsed for want of a seconder.

Mr. T. Collingwood moved, seconded Mr. W. Lambie, that the Secretary negotiate with the Horticultural Society to seek co-operation in changing the date from the 9th to 16th September.

Carried.

Mr. R. Ingram said that a steering committee was formed at a meeting two years ago. He asked could this steering committee be revived to help make a decision on future Festivals?

Regarding change of name from "Blossom" to "Harvest" or from "Festival" to "Carnival", Mr. Poppelwell stated that nothing would be achieved from this. He stated that posters are already in hand for the next three years. The meeting agreed that the name should remain "Blossom Festival". Mr. Poppelwell asked for the Secretary to inquire on the availability of Nelson Park for Blossom Day activities some time in September.

Mr. H. Robertson asked if we should have four concerts to select the Blossom Queen. Mr. Poppelwell stated that these concerts have proved lucrative and successful. He said that it is an insurance for income in case of wet weather, but there need not necessarily be four concerts. A sub-committee was formed consisting of Messrs. T. Collingwood, W. Lambie, H. Robinson, R. Walker, and J. Minty, to investigate the concert proposals.

Mr. Poppelwell said that our discussions of the evening should be regarding the future of Blossom Festival and not only Mr. Robertson's report. He stated that we must seek collective support and not by individual approach - we should use a method of applying weight to our organisation. His suggestion is that an approach be made to the Mayor of Hastings to call a meeting of people we want at a meeting to discuss the welfare and future of the Hastings Blossom Festival. This would

not be a meeting to decide whether we have a Festival or not, but a meeting to discuss improvements to our present activities. He also stated that we must get a basis for being assured ^{of} floats in future years. We must find out why the bigger firms do not put in floats. We must go into ways and means of building floats as that they are ready for firms requiring them. We must be prepared to arrange the building of floats. Mr. Poppelwell suggested that a special committee should be formed, not necessarily from this Executive, to arrange floats and sponsorship of floats. We must be prepared to provide a labour force to make our procession the best ever. Our aim should be a dozen excellent floats for the procession.

Mr. R. Walker stated that the idea of choosing our Blossom Queen on Procession Day was excellent and Nelson Park as the venue for our activities was a good idea. He asked, "Why won't the retailers take more part in the Festival?" Mr. G. Kearns stated that the Retailers' Organisation was prepared to meet this Executive and arrangements should be made for this to be carried out.

Mr. G. Aitcheson stated that he was sure that support from business people and others will be forthcoming in the light of criticism that has been levelled at them in the press recently.

Mr. G. Kearns moved, Mr. T. Collingwood seconded, that Clause 3 of Mr. Robertson's recommendations be adopted in principle.

Carried.

Mr. T. Collingwood moved, seconded Mr. H. Robertson, that the convenor of the judging panel for the Queen Contest be asked to provide any recommendations to improve the judging.

It was decided that a further special meeting be held at the Caferama Tearooms next Monday, 19th September at 7 p.m.

The meeting concluded at 12.15 a.m.