

Hastings Furniture Service

This excellent charity aims to alleviate poverty by providing second-hand goods at discounted prices to low-income families. It reuses 300 tons of furniture per year, thereby contributing to environmental sustainability. It also creates opportunities for people who are out of work to gain skills, confidence and qualifications through employment-based training.

The challenges during 2020/21 have included: -

- A change at senior management level as the former Chief Executive who built up the successful charity departed to take up a full-time paid position with the Green Party. The change has worked seamlessly with the new Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive having complementary skills and working effectively together.
- The impact of lockdown on the operations of the two retail outlets in Hastings and Bexhill as well as on collections of donated items from households. The reopening of the shops has been handled with scrupulous attention to detail in accordance with Covid guidelines concerning the quarantining of furniture, cleaning requirements, adherence to social distancing, the wearing of face masks and staff training.

The charity has a solid financial base and pro-active Trustees. It has survived the loss of retail trade while its shops were shut with flexible furloughing, the acquisition of a range of grants from the public and voluntary sectors as well as some work for Rother District Council in furnishing temporary accommodation. A retired Chartered Accountant has recently joined the Trustees to further sharpen its commercial know-how.

Paul Courtel
Rother District Council representative