

Westerham Town Council  
 Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held  
 on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> April 2018 at 7.30pm  
 at Westerham Hall

Present: Councillors: Alan Wesley (Chairman) Helen Ogden (Vice-Chairman),  
 Philip Ashley, Alex Bates, Loretta Bird, Eddie Boyle, Michael Craig, Anthony Holman,  
 David Le Breton, Neil Proudfoot, Sharon Sheen

In Attendance: Town Clerk: Angela Howells  
 Deputy Clerk: Debbie Marshall  
 Assistant Clerk: Deborah Rogers

Cllr N Chard: Kent County Councillor  
 Cllr D Esler: Sevenoaks District Councillor  
 Steve Grange: KCC Community Warden  
 100 members of the public

1.	<p><b><u>Apologies for Absence</u></b>          Mr M Fallon MP, WTC Cllrs Boyle and Proudfoot.</p>	
2.	<p><b><u>Minutes of the meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2017</u></b>          These were signed as a true record.</p>	
3.	<p><b><u>Chairman's report – Cllr Alan Wesley</u></b>          Cllr Alan Wesley welcomed everyone to the 6th Annual Meeting of Westerham Town Council and its Ward of Crockham Hill.          The full Chairman's report had been circulated to the meeting.          Cllr Wesley further reported that the WTC current precept, funded from the annual council tax payment, was £206,000. In addition to this WTC received £157,000 from its share of the Community Infrastructure Levy paid by developers of Linden Homes and Croft Road housebuilding. This WTC would spend on infrastructure projects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WTC priorities were parking improvements which had been designed and priced in Madan and Hartley Roads, Costells Meadow and Crockham Hill Playing Field.</li> <li>• WTC had contracted to replace Fullers Hill Public toilets at a cost of £48,000; this was a substantial amount of money but responded to the clear need expressed in public consultations.</li> <li>• The Darent Bridge was falling into the river and WTC were currently seeking installation permits and Environment Agency approval but the new bridge should be in place by the summer holidays at the cost of £22,650.</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WTC were keeping Westerham attractive as an on-going priority with grant aid of £10,800 for the very smart bollards around The Green. The grant coming from our County Councillor Nick Chard.</li> <li>• WTC had raised £33,000 in grants to replace the playground equipment in Crockham Hill. This comprised £29,000 from a BIFFA Landfill Communities Award, £2,000 each from the Crockham Hill Broadband CIC and KCC Cllr Nick Chard's Members Fund. In addition £8,000 would come from the Playing Field Trust which was funded by WTC and £8,000 from WTC.</li> <li>• The Westerham and Crockham Hill Design Statement would be a vital document in considering any future development and would be a guide to help WTC to consider any future development, so £7,000 well spent.</li> <li>• WTC had been partners in two projects since 2016, firstly to extend the Darent Valley footpath and cycle path from Chipstead to Westerham and the Sevenoaks Greensands Commons project to open up and better use our Commons. WTC had committed financial support for a five year period to both projects. Other contributions enabled the release of sizeable lottery funding and supported our "improving green spaces" priority.</li> <li>• WTC had invested £7,000 in a portable CCTV unit and our lampposts in suitable locations were being altered to provide bases for electrical attachment.</li> <li>• The level of anti-social behaviour had increased and on 23<sup>rd</sup> May the SDC Community Safety Unit would be holding an event for residents to have their say. Please report all incidents to the Police as the community anger and concern we hear was not reflected in the number of reported incidents.</li> </ul> <p>I would now like to introduce KCC Cllr Nick Chard.</p>	
4.	<p><b><u>KCC Cllr Nick Chard</u></b></p> <p>KCC Cllr Chard talked about his first year in role as the County Councillor and thanked everyone for their support.</p> <p>Cllr Chard reminded the meeting about his Members Fund and how it was used in the District and to contact him in the first instance to request a grant.</p> <p>Cllr Chard talked about KCC responsibilities roads, drainage, flooding, education and social care and his collaboration with the District and Town Cllrs and planning issues. He stated the KCC position regarding a relief road/bypass and that this could not be considered in isolation as it was inextricably linked with the restoration of Covers Farm and the proposal to build some 600</p>	

	residential properties.	
5.	<p><b><u>Sevenoaks District Cllrs Diana Esler and Kevin Maskell</u></b></p> <p>SDC Cllr Maskell spoke to the meeting regarding SDC Green belt policy and the SDC Cllr role in the process. The main factors in producing a draft Local Plan were:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That data provided by both sides of the argument were rigorous</li> <li>• Assessment processes were robust</li> <li>• The validity of the plan and proposals</li> </ul> <p>Cllr Maskell provided details of the timetable for producing the draft Local Plan.</p>	
6.	<p><b><u>Local Plan from Town Council Perspective</u></b></p> <p>Cllr Wesley stated that WTC's policy was and always has been to preserve the Green Belt and had always opposed applications to develop in the GB. In addition the Kent Downs AONB covered both the surrounding countryside and Westerham itself.</p> <p>All of WWC proposals were for development in the GB and AONB. In last year's vote 741 households voted which was 37% of the 12016 households, 86% were against. Of the 105 in support many were qualified. The SDC survey recorded 73% opposed to the WWC concept.</p> <p>Cllr Wesley talked about:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The assessment of land availability</li> <li>• NPPF exceptional circumstances</li> <li>• AONB</li> <li>• Housing permissions already granted</li> <li>• Air quality</li> <li>• Parking</li> <li>• The relief road</li> <li>• Covers Farm infill</li> <li>• Timescales</li> <li>• Financing and liabilities</li> <li>• DPD and Moorhouse</li> </ul> <p>Cllr Wesley stated that the Westerham Design Statement had been approved by SDC. It had been written and researched by the local communities with only advisory input from the District Council and so represented a community view of how new development should be designed in order to retain a sense of place.</p> <p>The Town Council had engaged a planning consultant and identified a transport consultant in respect of any DPD developments and to respond to Westerham issues in the draft Local Plan.</p>	

7.	<p><b><u>Open Session</u></b></p> <p>The panel to answer questions were the speakers plus WTC Cllrs Helen Ogden, Vice-Chairman and Philip Ashley, Chairman of the Planning Committee.</p> <p><b>Q</b> – How many properties does Westerham have to provide for the overall district figure? Where does 600 come from?</p> <p><b>KM</b> - Housing figures were not required per town. There had been a large number of applications from across the district. 600 was a figure from WWW not the district.</p> <p><b>DE</b> – WW will have to provide a business case as how 600 properties were arrived at.</p> <p><b>Q</b> – Who commissioned the traffic figures for the needs survey?</p> <p><b>AW</b> – The figures were submitted and commissioned by WWW.</p> <p><b>NC</b> –When a planning application was received then KCC will independently look at traffic figures.</p> <p><b>Q</b> – Could we not provide our own figures?</p> <p><b>NC</b> – That could be helpful however all three proposals, SDC Local Plan, Covers Farm and Moorhouse would need to be considered.</p> <p><b>Q</b> – I am confused by the traffic movements of 9500 a day? The potential housing figure is not 600 but over 1000 when you look at the total of potential, this will be 40% extra traffic movements.</p> <p><b>NC</b> – I understand your frustration but there is no planning application at the moment. KCC believes that Covers Farm restoration and WWW were linked.</p> <p><b>Q</b> – I have concern about the liability to restore Covers Farm?</p> <p><b>AW</b> – There will be an analysis of whether the applicant can deliver what will be proposed and you can comment on that.</p> <p><b>Q</b> – What is meant by Country Park at Covers Farm?</p> <p><b>AW</b> – This was just an idea that residents had expressed.</p> <p><b>Q</b> - A big thank you to WTC team, the letter was excellent. I am concerned about the liability transferred to a company with limited assets?</p> <p><b>AW</b> – I cannot add any more at the moment, the situation will evolve and we will need to wait for the planning application.</p> <p><b>Q</b> – KWG – Thank you to WTC and SDC Cllrs, the letter was well researched and represented many of our concerns. The deadline was tight, were there any costings for WWW?</p> <p><b>DE</b> – There were not any costings, were the 600 houses justified?</p> <p><b>Q</b> – How was data from WWW going to be validated?</p> <p><b>NC</b> – The traffic data commissioned by WWW would be challenged by KCC and SDC, we would not be taking the information from WWW on trust.</p> <p><b>Q</b> – I have lived in Westerham for 30 years, the bypass is all smoke and mirrors. Do you feel the bypass will benefit Westerham; will there be jobs provided, affordable houses? There were no transport links</p>	
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	<p>and no junction to the M25 or train station.</p> <p><b>DE</b> – We would need a complete concept and costings for a bypass.</p> <p><b>NC</b> – Bypass or relief road, there was a big difference, they would have different functions?</p> <p><b>Q</b> - There is a shortage of development; wouldn't it be better to increase density?</p> <p><b>PA</b> – Government Policy was to increase density.</p> <p><b>Q</b> – Please place the slides on the website?</p> <p><b>AW</b> – yes certainly.</p> <p><b>Q</b> – The housing development in Farley has a modern frontage and slate roofs and was more like the Eden project?</p> <p><b>PA</b> – SDC Officers felt this was appropriate.</p> <p><b>Q</b> – There was no affordable housing in the Croft road development?</p> <p><b>PA</b> – WTC put forward an argument for affordable housing but SDC could waive this and did so.</p> <p><b>Q</b> – If planning was granted and there were planning conditions, what was the recourse if conditions were not met?</p> <p><b>PA</b> – SDC Enforcement became involved if planning conditions were not met. Once planning consent was granted WTC played no further part in the process unless there was a breach of planning.</p> <p><b>Q</b> – If WWW went ahead would there be monies for a new school and GP surgery, could WTC guarantee money would be spent on Westerham?</p> <p><b>AW</b> – CIL money from developments was paid to SDC and WTC get a 25% share, there were rules on how this was spent and it should be on relevant infrastructure. SDC build up a CIL pot with the 75% and you can apply for it to be spent in your community. It does not have to be spent in the area it was generated from.</p> <p><b>Q</b> – WWW was misleading us?</p> <p><b>HO</b> – We share your frustration and are doing our best to answer, all we can do is be factual with the information we have. We will continue to share any information we receive.</p> <p><b>KM</b> – We have to go through the process fairly and appropriately due to the inspection process.</p> <p>I would like to thank you all for your attendance and the stall holder for their patient involvement.</p>	
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The meeting closed at 9.30 p.m.

Signed as a correct record .....

Chairman