

WESTERHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Annual Report 2014/15

WESTERHAM TOWN COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEMBERS 2014-2015

Alan Wesley	Chairman of the Council and Chairman - Finance & General Purposes Committee
Helen Ogden	Vice-Chair of the Council and Member of Allotments, Playing Fields and Open Spaces and Youth and Community
Andrew McCormick	Chairman - Allotments, Playing Fields and Open Spaces Member of Youth and Community
Linda Rodgers	Chair - Highways and Lighting Committee and Member of Planning
Philip Ashley	Chairman of Planning and member of Finance
Nick Moore	Chairman - Youth and Community Committee and Highways and Lighting
Reg Buckley	Member of APFOS and H&L
Eddie Boyle	Member of Finance and Y&C
David Le Breton	Member of Planning and H&L
Chris Hanson	Member of APFOS and F&GP
Hannah Marsh	Member of APFOS and Planning
Neil Proudfoot	Member of Y&C and Planning
Stuart Wilkie	Member of Finance and H&L

Town Clerk: **Angela Howells**
Deputy Town Clerk: **Debbie Marshall**
Assistant Clerk: **Deborah Rogers**

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WESTERHAM TOWN COUNCIL (including Crockham Hill Ward)

Russell House, Market Square, Westerham, Kent TN16 1RB

Annual Town Meeting

**Tuesday 14th April 2014 at 7.30 pm at Council Offices, Russell House,
Market Square, Westerham**

A G E N D A

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the meeting held on 9th April 2015
3. **PCSO Simon Humphrey's report**
4. **"Improving NHS Services in Westerham & Crockham Hill"**
**Dr Nick Cheales and Mr Ian Ayers from the NHS West Kent Clinical
Commissioning Group**
5. **Chairman's Report — Councillor Alan Wesley**
6. Open Session

Please join the Councillors for light refreshments
following the meeting

Westerham Town Council
 Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held
 on Wednesday 9th April 2014 at 7.30pm
 at Westerham Hall, Westerham

Present: Councillors: Alan Wesley (Chairman) John Bryant (Vice-Chairman), Philip Ashley, Eddie Boyle, Reg Buckley, Chris Hanson, David Le Breton, Andy McCormick, Nick Moore, Helen Ogden, Linda Rodgers, Graham Shutter and Stuart Wilkie.

In Attendance: Town Clerk: Angela Howells
 Deputy Clerk: Debbie Marshall
 Assistant Clerk: Deborah Rogers
 SDC Cllr Kevin Maskell
 Steve Grange: KCC Community Warden
 PCSO Simon Humphreys
 Mrs Rose Briggs – Edenbridge Warden
 Mr B Orridge: Chairman of Edenbridge Town Council
 Mr A Turner: Chairman Limpsfield Parish Council
 15 members of the public

1.	<p><u>Apologies for Absence</u> Mr M Fallon MP, SDC Cllr Elaine Bracken, Mr S Walton - Westerham Junior Football, Dr A Skinner</p>	
2.	<p><u>Minutes of the meeting held on 16th April 2013</u> These were signed as a true record.</p>	
3.	<p><u>Guest Speaker – Mr Kevin Maskell – Sevenoaks District Councillor</u> <u>“What we do for Westerham”</u> Cllr Maskell stated that he had been a district councillor for 8 years and he worked closely with the whole community and there were a range of ways that district councillors supported the community. He worked with the Town Council and Councillors, the PSCO, the Town Partnership and Community Groups. He was on the SDC Scrutiny Committee which was a new committee that looked at the performance of SDC. He was also on the Economic and Community Development Advisory Committee. He was also a trustee with Mr Orridge on the Citizens Advice Bureau in Edenbridge and SDC had given a grant of £27k to enable CAB to operate, this was a vital service to the community and he welcomed WTC's support of the CAB. He had been asked to participate on the Westerham Safety Group which had brought together various groups that</p>	

	<p>supported community safety. Cllrs Ogden and Boyle were now taking this forward.</p> <p>Cllr Bracken was on the Standards and Scrutiny Committees and they worked well as a team.</p> <p>A big part of the work that he undertook for Westerham was planning; he listened to WTC's comments on applications and liaised with the SDC Planning department.</p> <p>SDC was responsible for street cleaning and he was keen to ensure the efficiency of the service.</p> <p>With regard to economic and business development he was working with WTC and WTP to look at a cohesive parking approach.</p> <p>There was a strong vibrant farming industry around Westerham and it was important to ensure that the green space is healthy and well looked after.</p>	
4.	<p><u>Chairman's report – Cllr Alan Wesley</u></p> <p>Cllr Wesley welcomed everyone to the meeting. All Committee Chair reports would be published in the Gazette and CH newsletter and would appear on the web site. The meeting agreed the 2013 Minutes and that any questions would be taken in the open session.</p> <p>Cllr Wesley thanked PCSO Humphreys for his report which was taken out of Agenda order due to operational reasons. Mr Wesley strongly urged residents to report all crime so that crimes were reflected in the statistics.</p> <p>Cllr Wesley also introduced the new KCC Community Warden Steve Grange.</p> <p>Cllr Wesley reported that in 2013/14 the Government Support Grant was £11,000 in 2014/15 this was nil. The amount was to offset a reduction of similar amount in our core precept. SDC were stating that they could not identify the money and as it was not ring fences they would not be passing it on. The Government had told SDC to pay up but they have refused.</p> <p>Anti-social behaviour was an issue in Westerham and WTC together with seven other agencies had held four meeting, the outcome had been a Plan but the results were negligible. The Police were undergoing another re-organisation, however Westerham and CH contributed £300,000 to police rates yet community policing was being cut.</p> <p>There were various problems area in Westerham such as trees, public toilets, the Westerham sandpit and the Library. The first two cost WTC a lot of money and there were concerns that the Library services were threatened.</p> <p>There was however good news, the Westerham Children's Centre was staying in Westerham. Superfast broadband was coming to Westerham soon than anticipated. A grant had</p>	

	<p>been received from Sport England to provide more football pitches. The Jubilee notice board had been erected on The Green. WTC worked closely with the WTP who had achieved a very good result on parking fees due to their comprehensive parking report.</p> <p>Government funding cuts to both SDC and KCC had been substantial over the last three years and this results in cuts in services to Westerham and CH.</p> <p>Cllr Wesley reported on the items in his tabled report that Westerham spent their money on.</p> <p>In 2013/14 WTC spent £310,000 in the community an increase from £256,000 in 2012/13, this large increase includes grant aid and money spent from reserves. Investing in the community £135,000 more than we received in our precept of £174,869 demonstrated that WTC was good value for money.</p> <p>In the year ended 31st March WTC operated within its agreed budget and the accounts, financial activities and risk controls have been audited with qualification.</p> <p>Council reserves are adequate and reflect the high cost of maintaining community assets which exceed £2.5m.</p> <p>WTC manages the Council's responsibilities through five committees with Council approving their actions; this involves 54 formal meetings each year. My thanks to my colleagues for their dedicated commitment to the communities of Westerham and Crockham Hill.</p> <p>Thanks to the staff for their support and competence.</p> <p>Cllr Graham Shutter joined Westerham Parish Council in 2000 and is resigning from the Town Council on health grounds. Fourteen years is a long stint and we all wish him well and thank him for his special expertise that has ensured that our major projects came to successful conclusions.</p>	
5.	<p><u>Community Reports</u></p> <p>i) PCSO Simon Humphreys reported that in the period 1st Jan – 31st March there had been a reduction of 25 reported crimes, year on year. There had been repeat crimes at the Co-op and the Wolfe garage but no particular patterns.</p> <p>There was a lot of useful information on the Kent Police website. If you put in your postcode you could access crime statistics, broken down for each road.</p> <p>The Police Contact point had been in Westerham, near to The Green, every two weeks between 12 noon and 1pm. These sessions had not been well attended and at the end of April there will be PCSO dedicated to a team who will go out with the PCP so he could spend more time on his dedicated patch. The location was also changing to the Wolfe Garage,</p>	

	<p>a location where crime occurs.</p> <p>Simon also ran online meetings and members of the public can sign up to e news with helpful information.</p> <p>Simon also held monthly public engagement meetings; the next one was on 11th May, 11.30am to 12 noon. He also hoped to have a crime prevention event, joining up with other agencies in the summer.</p> <p>There was another £20m of cuts needed and this was being worked through at the moment and as part of that on 24th June Kent Police would be launching the new policing model. There were not a lot of changes and response times should not suffer and frontline services would be protected. Cllr Wesley asked how this would affect PCSO's problem solving and Simon responded that he would be taken away from crime issues and get back into the community.</p> <p>ii) Mrs Jane Hunter – Westerham Town Partnership reported that WTP aims and objectives were to make Westerham a better place to live, work and visit. WTP was made up of volunteers who met monthly with positive and constructive meetings. WTP worked in partnership with individuals and organisations. They had an excellent web site, Visit Westerham and social media accounts. WTP was independent and democratic.</p> <p>iii) Mr Gordon Rodgers – Westerham Society – reported that the Westerham Society had a long established heritage as a cultural community group looking at the history and future development of Westerham. The Society worked closely with WTC, NT, WTP and other groups. The Society maintained a visiting presence at all WTC Planning Committee meetings and acted as a lobby group. They ran a programme of events with a broad range of topics and would like to expand on them as Westerham was a diverse town; these were open to members and non-members.</p> <p>The Society organized 'Beating the Bounds' and over 200 walked it last year; this helped raise money for the hanging baskets which cost £6500 a year.</p> <p>The Society had refurbished the Co-op memorial garden; it would be tidied up and replanted in the next few days. A commemorative stone had been added to make it more attractive.</p> <p>The Virtual Museum was in hand and a heritage grant was being applied for, this was a big project.</p> <p>The Society would be maintaining the telephone box at Verralls Corner and it would be painted soon.</p>	
6.	<p><u>2011/12 Activity Reports from Committee Chairman</u></p> <p>i) <u>John Bryant – Planning</u></p>	

	<p>Cllr Bryant reported that he had nothing to add to his report; he thanked the Committee members for their attendance and would welcome members of the public to Planning meetings. It would also be good to see more applicants at the meeting to explain their application.</p> <p>Cllr Bryant commended the report to the meeting.</p> <p>ii) <u>Linda Rodgers – Highways and Lighting</u></p> <p>Cllr Rodgers had nothing to add to her report and there was no date for the opening of the M25.</p> <p>She had undertaken a Lorry Watch yesterday and saw three lorries illegally driving down London Road, she had spoken to the PCSO and the Police were going to hold a joint speed and lorry watch on the road outside Flyers Way. WTC was still looking volunteers for Lorry Watch.</p> <p>Cllr Rodgers commended the report to the meeting.</p> <p>iii) <u>Nick Moore – Youth and Community</u></p> <p>Cllr Moore thanked his fellow committee members who all contributed at the meetings and by representing WTC at meetings.</p> <p>WTC was trying to provide play provision regularly in the school holidays as a support for local families. WTC was still running the Youth Club and was trying to link up with other young people activities.</p> <p>Cllr Moore commended his report to the meeting.</p> <p>iv) <u>Andy McCormick - Allotments, Playing Fields and Open Spaces</u></p> <p>Cllr McCormick reported the Committee ran three allotment sites and water was a serious cost in each.</p> <p>The Sport England project had gone well on KGF despite terrible weather and it will provide fantastic football facilities for Westerham.</p> <p>Work was being undertaken to improve Grange Island and the Committee had a duty to protect the trees and the structure.</p> <p>Dog waste was an issue, more bins had been provided but this then increased the cost due to the emptying required.</p> <p>There were issues with drainage on CH field and this was being professionally assessed.</p> <p>Cllr McCormick commended the report to the meeting.</p>	
7.	<p><u>Open session</u></p> <p>Q. Jane Hunter asked why SDC and put up Sevenoaks District signs with the Olympics on them?</p> <p>A Cllr Maskell replied he would find out but presumable to promote the work of SDC in the Olympics.</p>	
	<p><u>Close</u></p>	

	The Chairman brought the meeting to a close by thanking all those who had attended the meeting and inviting them to join the Councillors for refreshments.	
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The meeting closed at 9.00 p.m.

Signed as a correct record

Chairman

Chairman's Report including Financial Summary 2014 – 2015

Government Support Grant for Town and Parish Councils

I reported last year on the refusal of Sevenoaks Town Council, (SDC), to pass on Government funding for Towns and Parishes in respect of local council tax support. In 2013/14 this amounted to £11,000 for Westerham and Crockham Hill and was ring fenced within the overall £3.3 billion of Government support.

SDC's refusal to pass on to us and all other Towns and Parishes in the District the 2014/15 support, intended by Government to come to us, was challenged by Westerham Town Council, (WTC), through the Judicial Review Process.

The outcome of this challenge was an agreement by SDC to reconsider their decision at their 13/5/14 meeting but the voting result was unaltered with a "no ring fence, no money" outcome.

Turning to the 2015/16 position, a decision not to pass on intended Government support to Towns and Parishes has already been taken by SDC.

This decision has elicited the following response from Kris Hopkins the Minister for Local Government.

"I have noted that the Sevenoaks and Swale Councils plan not to pass down the Local Council Tax Support funding to town and parish councils. That is why I wrote to the leaders of the councils on 24 October to advise them of the Government's strong view on this matter. We expect each billing authority to agree an appropriate level of funding for each parish or town council based on local circumstances. The Government has made it clear that billing authorities must work with parishes to calculate and pass on the appropriate level of Local Council Tax Support grant."

Sevenoaks District Council were not influenced by this exhortation.

We are the tier of local government closest to the community and need to work with SDC to secure the best outcome for local tax payers. The effect of withholding the money earmarked is damaging to this working relationship and double taxation for the taxpayer.

2014 – 2015 Activity Summary.

In this Annual Report you will find Committee reports which outline our important issues. To these summaries I would like to add a few more topics and updates and some extra emphasis to concerns already expressed.

1. Consultations.

We have seen a massive proliferation in consultations where we believe our response is necessary. We reply, usually in considerable detail, after Committee or Council consideration to about one every week.

One of the consequences of local authorities having to deliver their services from smaller budgets is the resultant growth in these consultations regarding the alternatives under consideration.

Some of the consultations are tokenism, some ineptly constructed and many with excessive detail, designed to confuse.

We have invested considerable time, for good community benefit, in consultations affecting;

Childrens' Services

Westerham Library

Westerham Community Warden

Airports Expansion

KCC Budget reduction

Parking

Planning

Licensing

2. **Policing.**

We do not seek routinely foot patrolled streets but we do seek a prompt response to reported problems. Reliance upon a shift rostered PCSO, however diligent he may be, is a less than minimalist approach to Community policing.

Recently the definition of anti social behavior has seemingly been amended to exclude noise based disturbance adversely affecting the working of our Doctors' surgery.

Council tax payers contribute £300,000 to the Police rate and we are not getting value for money.

We will try harder to improve this position with the new area Commander.

3. **Dog faeces.**

This is a rapidly increasing problem, particularly affecting King George's Playing Field.

Dog fouling is unsightly, unpleasant and can lead to toxocariasis in humans. It usually affects young children and we have some 400 youngsters on KGPF each weekend in the football season.

Toxocariasis or Roundworm can cause permanent loss of vision.

Despite the mindless vandalism to our dog poo bins we have replaced and increased their numbers, run awareness initiatives and increased Dog Warden patrols and we are participating in a National publicity campaign.

We ask the community to take a greater interest in persuading owners to be more caring about disposal of faeces.

4. **Monuments, Memorials and Statues.**

We have awarded a contract to clean the marble base of Churchill on the Green and point all slabbing.

Based upon results we will fundraise for Wolfe's base cleaning.

5. Squerryes Sandpit.

Restoration work is now expected to start April 2015 with a conclusion October 2015.

Finance, Regulatory and Audit.

1. Our precept for 2015 – 2016 will be £182,600 compared with £177,200 in the previous year, an increase of 1.98%.
2. We plan to spend in the community £250,000 plus any grant aid we raise for projects under consideration.
As we will spend in the community some £67,000 more than we receive in council tax, I submit that we are good value for money.
3. In the year ended 31st March 2015, Council operated within its agreed Budget and our accounts, financial activities and risk controls have been audited without qualification.
The Annual return for the year ending 31st March 2014 is published at the end of this report.
4. Council reserves remain adequate in respect of foreseeable risks and planned capital expenditure with the possible exception of the tree reserve where we are undertaking a safety survey of all our tree stock in line with recommended practice and insurance requirements.

Main Areas of Expenditure.

Budget 2015 – 2016.

1.	Street Lights and Lighting	£24,000
2.	Youth and Childrens' Services	£18,000
3.	Toilets	£8,000
4.	King George's Playing Field	£22,600
5.	Allotments	£16,000
6.	Graffiti and vandalism	£5,000
7.	Property and open spaces maintenance	£13,000
8.	Crockham Hill and garden	£13,000
9.	Business rates	£8,500
10.	Insurance	£8,500
11.	Grants	£5,000
12.	Professional fees and subscriptions	£4,500
13.	Payroll costs	£75,000
14.	Office costs	£12,000
15.	Reserving for repairs and contingencies	£8,000
16.	Contingencies	£7,500

Westerham and Crockham Hill Councillors and Employees

Council works through five Committees, their actions and decisions being ratified by full attendance Council meetings. This involves 54 formal meetings with each Councillor being expected to sit on two Committees.

The Town Council is represented on 15 outside bodies and Councillors attend numerous meetings with service and finance providers in the hope of improving Community facilities and services. It is an uphill struggle and the gradient becomes steeper each year.

I take pleasure in thanking my colleagues and Council staff for their commitment to our community and remain astonished at their continuing cheerfulness.

In Memoriam

We report the deaths of former Councillors David Jewitt and Graham Shutter. Both delivered to the Community a high standard of professionalism and enhanced this Council's reputation.

We are saddened by their passing and commiserate with their families.

Alan Wesley

**Chairman
Westerham Town Council.**

April 2015

Allotments, Playing Fields and Open Spaces Committee (APFOS) - Annual Report 2014-15

My thanks to all the members of this committee for their hard work and advice over the year. Their dedication has been especially appreciated as I am making this report as acting Chairman, a role I took up when Cllr McCormick began a six month sabbatical in Autumn last year. It has been a particular pleasure to welcome two new councillors, Hannah Marsh and Neil Proudfoot to the committee following their co-option to the Council. Their 'new eyes' and constructive contributions have been invaluable.

And no thanks would be complete without recognition for the team who 'make it all work', our Deputy Clerk, Debbie Marshall, together with Tom Buckley and Don Edwards. Without them there would be nothing to report!

This Committee not only has the longest name, but also one of the widest remits and largest budgets, covering Westerham's three allotment sites, playing fields at both Crockham Hill and King George's Field and an increasing number of community open spaces including our iconic Green.

Allotments

- The Council owns and manages the allotment sites at Farley (30 plots) and Currant Hill (64 plots) and manages the Bloomfield site (32 plots) which is leased from the Squerryes estate. At all sites, despite extensive advertising, many full and half sized plots remain vacant. A great deal of maintenance work is required to control weed and other growth on vacant plots, a source of irritation to those who work their plots and a deterrent to those who might take one on.
- One plot was, with the agreement of the Secretary of State, transferred to an adjoining house owner. The funds realised by this sale will enable improvements to be made to allotment sites. Along with this year's rent reviews a consultation letter went to plot holders seeking their views on possible improvements. The results of this consultation are being analysed and meetings with allotment holders are planned for late Spring /early Summer to agree how best to use the funds. It should be noted that the rent rebate for pensioners is being progressively removed in line with other local councils.
- Concerns continue around security of the sites and about the increasing level of water charges (both Bloomfield and Currant Hill sites are metered). The Committee continues to monitor these issues.
- The Committee was shocked to see the results of unauthorised tree lopping on the Farley site and is pursuing this as criminal damage with the appropriate authorities.

King George's Field (KGF)

- The main regular user of the Field continues to be the Junior Football Club who now have some 400 junior players. The additional pitches created with the help of the Sport England grant are now in full use and the Club continues to thrive and grow.
- The Committee discovered the law of unintended consequences when it responded to requests from the Junior Football club and erected a fence along the south side of the football pitches to prevent footballs and more importantly small footballers, falling into the Darent. The compromise solution now allows dogs and/or children to access the river at a relatively safe place.
- The major activity this year has been the initial stages of proposals to update the tennis and basketball area of the field and the adjoining pavilion used by the Council funded Youth Club.

A special thanks must go to Jane Hunter, Lesley Moore and Debra Edwards of the Town Partnership, with whom Council is working on this project, for their creativity and hard work. Extensive consultations were carried out with a variety of groups, including Churchill School over the summer period. Topping the wish list was a multi sports surface which would enable a wider variety of sports including football, netball, and tennis to be accommodated. In consequence the pavilion would need to be altered to allow greater use by the community. The full results have been published on both the Visit Westerham and Council websites and in the Westerham and Brasted Gazette.

One suggestion which is already moving forward is for the establishment of an "outdoor gym". The Town Partnership made a successful application for funding from SDC's Big Community Fund for an item of equipment and this will be the first tangible sign to appear.

The focus is now moving to establish what is feasible and fundable. Advice from Fields in Trust who are responsible for ensuring our field is used principally for outdoor sport, play or recreation has been sought and Bond Bryant are generously giving their design advice. Sources of further funding are being explored. So watch this space!

Open Spaces:

The Committee works to ensure that the open spaces in the town are kept at a high standard so that they may be enjoyed by both residents and visitors alike. Over the year the Council has taken over the ownership and/or maintenance of a number of areas previously maintained (though not always to our satisfaction) by KCC or SDC. Verralls Corner, the open space in Granville Road and others fall into this category. We have now developed a maintenance schedule to proactively manage open spaces around the town.

- Work continues to improve Grange Island, with the replacement of a dead tree, resurfacing and replanting.
- Planters have been placed at Verralls Corner.
- The paved area around the Wolfe Statue on The Green has been extended prior to the installation of a new picnic bench.

Vandalism and Dog poo:

It is sad to report that these continue to be a problem in the town, with funds having to be spent on replacing vandalised litter and dog poo bins as well as picnic tables which have been mindlessly destroyed. This is money which could well have been more constructively used.

And while the majority of dog owners are responsible and clear up after their dogs, we suffer from a minority who do not, which has been a particular problem of late. This results in unsightly and unhygienic mess which does nothing to enhance our town and poses a serious health risk of toxocariasis to children playing in King George's Field. We will be participating in a national publicity campaign to address this.

Legionella:

The Committee has contracted with Water Wise, a local company, to carry out water testing in both King George's Field pavilion and in the pavilion at Crockham Hill, to ensure that it meets its legal obligations to provide a safe supply of water.

Crockham Hill:

It is heartening to see both cricket and football played regularly on the Crockham Hill Playing Field. Extensive work on the Field has been necessary to enable this.

- We are grateful to Oxted and Limpsfield Cricket Club for the work they have done to bring the cricket square up to standard.
- The drainage work to the field is going ahead which will result, we trust, in fewer fixtures (mainly football) being cancelled due to waterlogged pitches
- Work to repair the fencing and surface of the tennis courts has been carried out.

Helen Ogden
Acting Chair

Highways and Lighting Annual Report 2014 – 2105

Lorry Watch

This has not been as successful as we had wished due in part to a lack of volunteers and a lack of action by the police on the information collected.

Lorry Signage

We have installed “Unsuitable for HGV” signs at both ends of Hosey Hill which has been very successful. This has unfortunately moved the problem to Goodley Stock Road. We have had a meeting with Kent County Council where it was agreed signs would be placed at both ends of this road also. KCC Councillor Parry has agreed to match our donation from his members fund to pay for the signage.

Speed Watch

Our volunteers for this were trained by Sevenoaks District Council. They performed a number of observations during which time 71 people were tracked speeding and their details passed to the police. Of these 3 received cautionary letters. We anticipate more Speed Checks will be organised in May and June.

Road Repairs

This is still an ongoing battle and any damage advised to us or seen by us is reported to Kent Highways. At the end of 2014 Beggars Lane had to be closed for repair due to the heavy lorries being used for land fill at Westerham and Cherry Hill Golf Courses. We have spoken to KCC and they are aware that once work has finished at Westerham Golf Course the A25 needs remedial work and the cats eyes replaced or repaired. We are now assured that completion of the work is proximate.

Parking

This remains a contentious subject in Westerham.

Consultations were carried out in November 2014 regarding four areas in Westerham. The Committee responded to these after the public consultation, speaking to local people and taking their views into consideration. We responded stating our objections and those of residents to the proposals for Farley Gardens, Black Eagle Close and The Green. These objections were overruled by SDC but after we involved SDC Cllr Kevin Maskell and KCC Cllr Richard Parry we were successful in having the Farley and The Green proposals withdrawn. However the request to leave a gap in the parking around the Green for disabled access and pushchairs was allowed, which was in line with the Committee’s recommendation.

G20 speed limit campaign

This has been implemented in a pilot scheme along Rysted Lane. We intend to put more signs up on London Road and Croydon Rd to get drivers to slow to 20mph around the Churchill School although this is below the published speed limit. We hope this will make our roads safer for our children.

Lighting

We have ordered two new lights one for Oak Road and one for the footpath at the back of the churchyard which have yet to be installed. The one in Oak Road will be an LED light as requested by the residents. We are using this as a test to see how they perform for brightness.

In line with KCC we are looking at changing all the High Street and London Road lights to LED, as they are the ones which are on all night. This alteration can be made to the existing lighting and we believe will recoup the cost from electricity savings over three years.

Our existing electricity supply contract has been renegotiated by competitive tender resulting in a transfer to EoN, saving 10% as compared to the existing supplier. A 36 month contract has been entered into following independent advice.

Linda Rodgers
Chair Highways and Lighting

Planning Committee Annual Report 2015

It remains the responsibility of the Parish Council, through its Planning Committee, to review and opine upon local planning applications in line with current central and local government policy, law and guidelines. Our aim is to protect the fabric of our community whilst promoting its continuing regeneration and renewal to make it an attractive and enjoyable place to live and work.

Gatwick Consultations

The major development concerning our community in the last year is the consultation process to decide on which of Heathrow or Gatwick would be chosen to lead the expansion of air traffic in the South East. Whilst the final decision has been delayed until after the May election the consultation process closed in February 2015. The objectors to Gatwick now include KCC, Sevenoaks District Council, West Sussex Council, as well as the various community pressure groups including GACC. Westerham Town Council responded to the consultation process with strong objections to both the likely increased volume of planes over our Parish as well as the changes proposed to the flight paths.

The Town Centre

On a more local note your committee continues to focus on the sustainability of the Town centre retail use. Greater flexibility now allowed by government in the user classes for business premises thereby seeking to halt the decline of the traditional high street means that we will be confronted with potential changes to our own Town centre. The closure of the Nat West bank will lead to a new use, which is as at the time of writing unclear. A petition to keep Hunters and Entre Nous open in the face of a change of use application to a financial services office is another example of the challenges the Town faces.

Local Development Framework

Over the past five years local planning authorities have been working towards the adoption of a new planning framework to replace the Sevenoaks local plan which time expired in 2007 but subsequently extended under a set of saved policies. Under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) set out by Central Government, Sevenoaks District Council as the local planning authority, developed its strategies under a policy paper called the Local Development Framework (LDF).

Following on from this the development plans were formulated and set out in the Sevenoaks District Allocations and Development Management Plan. This plan was passed by the Planning Inspectorate and finally adopted as the replacement to the old saved policies on 17th February 2015.

The core to the new plan is to promote the sustainable development of the District to meet the projected demands for additional housing, increased employment and improvement to the environment through to 2026. The plans can be viewed on the SDC web site.

In future all planning applications referred to Westerham Town Council will be considered in the light of the new adopted "Local Plan".

There are further supporting policies either agreed or to be adopted including Gypsy and Traveller plans, neighbourhood plans and the adoption of Community Infrastructure Levies. Westerham has one significant residential site identified under the ADMP known as the old School site on the London Road, together with two smaller sites for limited development.

It is considered unnecessary to seek a neighbourhood plan at this time but we will keep this under review.

Finally, I would like to thank the members of my committee who have served diligently throughout the past year.

Philip Ashley
Chairman

Youth and Community Committee Annual Report 2014 -15

This year saw changes in personnel of the committee with the retirement of Councillor Bryant and the absence of Councillor McCormick for part of the year. Councillor John Bryant led on many items for the committee as well as the wider council and is much missed. Councillors Boyle and Ogden continue to be stalwart members of the committee. Two newer councillors Marsh and Proudfoot have made contributions as the year has progressed. I am grateful for all of my colleagues' hard work, wisdom and support during the year.

One of the key themes this year has been working out our response to proposals linked to the need to make savings put forward by Kent County Council (KCC) and by Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) as detailed below.

Community Warden

During the year we were faced with the proposal that we would lose our community warden as part of a significant reorganisation to make savings. Following a considerable lobbying both from the council and from the community in response to a formal KCC consultation, we have been able to keep our warden Steven Grange, (albeit he now has additional responsibilities outside the Town Council boundaries).

We are particularly pleased as our warden is effective in many different parts of the community and we receive very positive feedback about his work. We wish to thank Steven Grange for all his efforts during the year in what must have been worrying circumstances personally.

Westerham Library

We remain concerned about the future of our local library and await the outcome of the most recent KCC consultation. This sought views on an option that Kent libraries would be moved from Council ownership to a charitable trust arrangement.

The County Council "hopes" that these arrangements will make it easier to access other forms of funding currently not available. However, with considerable savings to be found in the next few years it is unclear whether these notional extra sums will materialise and if they will be enough to cover any shortfall in funding from KCC.

Fullers Hill Toilets

We took over the toilets from SDC some years ago when they wished to close them. The Town Council was keen to ensure that there were publicly accessible toilets in the town. Since we have maintained the toilets they have had to be closed for significant periods due to both vandalism and the need for costly running repairs.

Community Defibrillator

We are pleased to report that the Community Defibrillator is now in place. This is located in the former BT phone box in Market Square, where it is available at all times. We are grateful to Westerham Rotary for funding the maintenance of the phone box.

Currently we are investigating the feasibility of installing a further defibrillator at King George's Playing Field.

Food Bank

Westerham now has a functioning food bank, run by volunteers. We are grateful to Westerham Hall who have agreed to be the distribution venue and to provide storage. Funding has been provided by St Mary's Church, Westerham Town Council, the Rotary Westerham, Biggin Hill Lions and through the Big Community Fund and Sevenoaks District Council.

The Rotary collect the donations weekly and Referrals have been received from the Childrens' Centre, Age UK, Citizens Advice, Kent Social Services and Sevenoaks Food Bank. So far the Food Bank has supported up to a dozen children and their families and more recently have had several single people referred. The collection points are Waitrose, Biggin Hill, The CHYPs Hospice shop, Wolfe Garage, NISA, the Library, St Mary's Church and the Congregational Church should you wish to make a contribution.

Thank you to all who have supported the Food Bank since it opened.

Play Provision and Family Fun Days

We continue to provide school holiday play provision for families. Whilst this is only a few days throughout the year, these sessions are well attended and feedback is very positive. This year we provided four sessions in the summer holidays and a session in the October half term plus one session in the Easter holidays.

We are grateful for the support we receive from Westerham Hall and Westerham Sports Association to support these days in case of bad weather and in providing refreshments which help to make them a great success.

The Youth Club

Councillors are continuing to work closely with multiple agencies to engage with young people in Westerham thereby tackling anti-social behaviour and providing support to young people who need it. We have received constructive support from Kent Youth Services with their Youth Bus and the Kenward Trust with drug related issues. However, we wish to constructively engage with a small group of young people in the town who are causing a number of issues, to identify how we can support them and effectively change their behaviour (though not all anti-social behaviour in the town can be laid at their door).

The Youth Club has been successful at engaging young people in participating in activities, socialising and offers an alternative to anti-social behaviour. However, the club has been less successful at attracting meaningful numbers in recent times.

In response to our concerns, Playplace, who we fund to deliver the youth service, have changed their management arrangements, service provision at the club and data monitoring. We will see if this attracts more young people.

We are grateful to Kent County Councillor Richard Parry for his continuing financial support of the Youth Club.

Policing and Anti-Social Behaviour

There continue to be issues with young people and anti-social behaviour around the Doctor's Surgery and the Town Council Offices together with some particular incidents around the Crown building in London Road. In previous years, the Village Hall has been the target though this is less the case currently.

The police presence in Westerham and Crockham Hill remains low. It is difficult to see how further reductions in resources will support the tackling of local crime.

We have good links with our PCSO Simon Humphreys who is the primary police presence for Westerham and Crockham Hill. We would encourage local residents to report all crime as the allocation of police resources is closely linked to reported crime.

Christmas Lights

The Christmas lights this year became a victim of its own success. It has grown over the years from a fairly modest affair to more comprehensive coverage over the Town. The Christmas Late Night Shopping evening has become one of the highlights of the year where the whole town appears to turn out for the "switch on".

This year however there were a number of issues with the electricity supply and installation timetable.

Fund raising for the Christmas Lights goes on all the year round. This year, two of the leading fund raisers are stepping down after many years valiant service. We are currently reviewing the scale of the event for the coming year and will be visiting all local businesses as part of this review.

If you are interested in fund raising for the Christmas Lights for this year please make yourself known!

Nick Moore
Chairman

Westerham AGM 2015: Kent Community Warden Service (KCWS)

The Kent Community Warden Service (KCWS) provides a public facing, frontline service for the residents of Kent.

The Kent Community Warden Service is well represented by a highly effective Team covering a wide range of communities across Sevenoaks District. Established over ten years ago, the over-riding objective of our work remains 'to create safer and stronger communities'.

As we are often reminded, a Warden's uniformed presence helps build community confidence and reassurance by reducing crime, the fear of crime, deterring anti-social behaviour, improving access to local authorities and fostering social inclusion.

The role of the Community Warden, however, is ever evolving and developing. This is largely in response to the changing needs of our respective communities and other strategic requirements placed upon our frontline Service.

As a demonstration of KCWS' joined-up work with / on behalf of other operational units within Kent County Council (KCC), we continue to work closely with colleagues addressing a wide range of matters, for instance:

- Flood warning and response activities.
- Troubled Families Programme.
- Emergency Planning exercises and associated training.
- Conducting welfare visits with or on behalf of Adult Social Care.
- Delivery of Trading Standards' 'Stop the Scammer' project which identified and supported vulnerable households from repeat scam activity.

The Kent Community Warden Service works closely with agency partners, responding to issues arising across the district. Recent Warden involvement in partnership activities includes:

- Channel / Prevent – which tackles radicalisation.
- Support community safety campaigns and events *e.g.*, road safety; acquisitive crime prevention and reduction activities; participation in Themis tasks (ASB management system).
- Multi-agency referrals and associated support *e.g.*, domestic abuse; hate crime; E-safety; reporting welfare concerns and arranging specialist assessment of needs.



- Special events *e.g.*, Horsmonden Horse Fair.

Kent Community Warden Service: A Service Review / Public Consultation Update.

On the 28th January 2015, following public consultation, KCC Cabinet agreed with the recommendation to go with the preferred option (as set out in *KCC's Community Warden Service - Public Consultation Report*). This essentially protects the current level of frontline operational Wardens.

Service redesign and an assessment of operational practice will invariably follow, however, the most important outcome of the Review is confirmation that current uniformed staffing levels across Kent will be maintained.

Steve Grange: Westerham

Whilst not given to boasting about my multifarious activities, this is a timely opportunity to highlight my diverse activities and successes achieved whilst working across communities, including Westerham, over the past year.

- Supported households affected by repeat scam activity; wider public awareness about rogue trader / doorstep crime.
- Provision of intelligence to Kent Police and CSU colleagues.
- Project development including Food Bank and Memory Café.
- Participation in a number of Westerham events including Westerham Remembers 1914; Remembrance Service.
- Presentations and property marking at Churchill School.
- Multi-agency operations *e.g.*, road safety event in Seal.
- Activities with pupils, from various primary schools across the District, at Cobham Hall as part of the 'Safety in Action' programme.
- Applied SmartWater / Selecta DNA technology as a crime reduction tool.
- Regular reassurance visits to vulnerable members of the community to monitor welfare, provide advice / support, and, facilitate agency referrals when required.



The KCWS website is a useful resource I would direct you to if you are interested in further information: **www.kent.gov.uk/communitywardens**.

I attend regular meetings within the communities I cover. Alternatively, I am easily reached by telephone and email (**steve.grange@kent.gov.uk**) if there is a matter that you wish to bring to my attention.

Finally, may I reiterate my thanks to all of you who have made me feel valued in my role as Community Warden for Westerham.

Steve Grange | Kent Community Warden Service | Sevenoaks District | Mobile: 07813 712760 | steve.grange@kent.gov.uk | www.kent.gov.uk/communitywardens

**WESTERHAM TOWN COUNCIL
ANNUAL RETURN 2013
Year ending 31st March 2014**

BALANCE B/F	£187,021
PRECEPT	£163,862
TOTAL OTHER RECEIPTS	£71,847
STAFF COSTS	£75,486
LOANS	Nil
TOTAL OTHER PAYMENTS	£155,527
BALANCE C/F	£191,717
TOTAL CASH AND INVESTMENTS	£190,085
TOTAL FIXED ASSETS AND LONG-TERM ASSETS	£2,010,581