



WESTERHAM TOWN COUNCIL

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Chairman: Alan Wesley

Town Clerk: Angela Howells

Deputy Clerk: Debbie Marshall

Assistant Clerk: Deborah Rogers

Winnies Pre School, Westerham to close July 2016

Westerham Town Council is saddened and disappointed that it has not been possible to find an alternative site for Winnie's pre-school, following KCC's decision that it could not provide accommodation at Churchill School after the end of the summer term 2016.

It has worked with Winnie's to try and find alternative accommodation, or to secure a 'stay of execution' for it. Sadly, none of the options could be made to work in time for Winnie's to continue to operate in September.

We are very conscious of the effect this closure will have on the children, their parents, and the staff of Winnie's and we had hoped that a solution could have been found which would have enabled this valuable part of our town to continue.

A spokeswoman for Winnies Pre School said:" Despite our best efforts to find alternative accommodation there is to date nowhere suitable in Westerham to house our pre-school from September. We have informed both our staff and our families of this sad situation and have advised our parents to contact **Kent County Council** directly about alternative pre-school provision for their children."

We have had ongoing discussions with our partner agencies and are appreciative of Westerham Town Council and the Leadership of Churchill Primary School for their support. We have also had the opportunity to meet with Mr Michael Fallon MP about the situation for Winnies Pre School."

Winnies, judged as 'Good' in its last Ofsted report in 2014, has been on site since 1991 and was opened by the grandson of Sir Winston Churchill.

A petition to save Winnies pre-school has been set

up <https://www.change.org/p/michael-fallon-mp-save-winnies-pre-school>



Westerham Annual Town Meeting 13th April 2016

Chairman's Report including Financial Summary 2015 – 2016

Council Elections 2015

Last year's elections returned ten existing Councillors and provided three newcomers, Alex Bates, Loretta Bird and Anthony Holman.

Photographs of all Councillors are shown on the Elected Representatives leaflet available at the 2016 Town Meeting.

This leaflet also includes a summary of services available from each of the three Councils supporting our community.

Council strategy for the term of office to 2019

The agenda for this meeting has a separate item dealing with how we are establishing our four year strategy in order to prioritise the concerns of the community expressed in a recently completed consultation.

The revised format for this Town Meeting is also part of that strategy moving more towards a Community Information Event and away from formulaic reporting.

Government continues to reduce its financing levels to County and District Councils which inevitably impacts upon their services to the community and in turn affects our strategic priorities.

What we deliver has to be the cost effective use of taxpayers money.

Issues of concern

1. Youth antisocial behaviour and vandalism

This is commented upon in detail in the Committee report and is a problem we and the relevant agencies are finding hard to resolve.

At the same time our spend on the Youth Club over the year has not been value for money and is the subject of close scrutiny and competitive tendering.

2. Moorhouse Tile Works.

Whilst the planning application to develop the site as a parcel distribution warehouse was rejected by Tandridge District Council it is inevitable that further attempts will follow given the commercial opportunities that 21 acres of concreted brownfield site represent.

We take credit for a heavyweight formal planning objection as well as reversing KCC and SDC's initial acceptance of the application. Also



galvanizing our Surrey neighbours at community and Parish Council level into full awareness of the issues.

Credit is also given to our Town Partnership, Residents' Association and Westerham Society for their substantial input.

We expect there will be the need to repeat these actions in the near future.

3. Bypass and Housebuilding

I want to repeat my statement at the Town Meeting on the 25th March 2016 regarding Council's position on these ideas.

"we cannot give a recommendation because we have serious conflicts of interest as we are both a Planning Consultee (and therefore must not prejudge applications that might come before us) and secondly we own land that could form part of the fundraising to pay for the bypass and land which might be part of any bypass related development.

If we become conflicted we have to give up our consultee status in line with the Local Government Code of Conduct and cannot then represent the views of the community which is what we have been elected to do and want to do."

Any land that has been proposed for housebuilding as part of SDC's recent "call for sites" will appear, if deemed to be suitable, in a public consultation in December 2016 at the earliest.

Any planning application for bypass construction is unlikely to appear within the next six months and in both cases the community will have adequate time to consider the applications and if needs be referenda voting.

Neither of these development ideas are Council proposals or Council sponsored.

4. Gatwick Airport Development

If the key decision to proceed is taken this Summer; thereafter there will be a protracted debate **but only about detail.**

What is going on at present is that the Department for Transport is seeing how a new runway at Heathrow can be made compliant with the legal pollution limits and how the project can be made immune to judicial review that Gatwick have already warned they are likely to seek.

Allowing for the legislative approach Government are taking via a Parliament approved Policy Statement, planning approval should be achieved in 2019 plus a year or two for any Judicial Reviews from Gatwick or Stansted. Then the building process starts, although running through all this is the Transport Secretary's statement that there is no need for a new runway at either Heathrow or Gatwick before 2030!

(Primary source of the above is with acknowledgment to the Gatwick Area Conservation Campaign.)

2015 Report issues, progress

1. Policing

The tragic vehicle caused death at Costa and the man savaged by dogs at the Vicarage Hill property indicates that such serious events result in appropriate levels of police response.

We are still of the view that a more powerful response to youth vandalism and antisocial behaviour is possible and likely to be productive but so far without Constabulary support.

2. Dog faeces

See Open Spaces report.

3. Monuments, Memorials and Statues

Churchill and Wolfe have been cleaned and are looking good.

Restoration of the War Memorial is funded and contract awarded.

The Drinking Fountain at the side of the zebra crossing in Market Square has been vehicle damaged and repair work is imminent.

4. Broadband services from the Crockham Hill C.I.C

In 2012 the Council obtained a grant to assist the start of a local community broadband service. This has proved to be technically and commercially successful and now supports 300 installations with a widening catchment beyond Crockham Hill.

By the formation of a Community Interest Company to manage its activities, the popularity of the service has funded its first community donation providing a new wireless network into every classroom at Crockham Hill's Primary School.

Finance, Regulatory and Audit

1. Our precept for 2016-2017 will be £186,200 compared with £182,600 in the previous year, an increase of 2%.

As a result of positive rent reviews and price increases for our facilities, miscellaneous income has risen by 17% whilst our overall expenditure increased by 4%.

2. In the year ended 31st March 2016 Council activities and spending were within its authorized Budget and our accounts, financial activities and risk controls have been audited without qualification. In addition to routine audits, HMRC undertook a VAT "spot check" with no issues arising.
The Annual return for the year ended 31st March 2015 is published at the end of this report.
3. Council reserves remain adequate in respect of foreseeable risks and planned capital expenditure. In my 2015 report I expressed concern regarding the likely financial outcome of a Council tree stock safety survey. Whilst the survey results required work to be done, the costs are within our reserves and routine budget.

Westerham and Crockham Hill Councillors and Employees

Volunteering comes with little expectation of thanks and so I take pleasure in thanking my colleagues for their commitment to our community. I also thank our staff for their professionalism and routine cheerfulness.

Alan Wesley

**Chairman
Westerham Town Council**

April 2016

FORTHCOMING TOWN COUNCIL MEETINGS

May

Monday 23rd Annual Council Meeting
Thursday 26th Planning and Development Committee

June

Monday 6th Allotment, Playing Field and Open Spaces Committee
Thursday 9th Planning and Development
Monday 13th Youth and Community Committee
Monday 20th Highways and Lighting Committee
Thursday 23rd Planning and Development



Members of the public are very welcome to attend these meetings. The first ten minutes of every meeting are available for members of the public to raise any issues with Councillors. All meetings start at 7.30 p.m. - except Planning which is held at 9.30 am - in the Town Council Chamber in Russell House.

Visit our website westerhamtowncouncil.gov.uk for more information

Westerham Town Council have a facebook page where we providing details of Council Meetings and up to date information for our community. Please like and share our page. [Facebook.com/Westerham Town Council](https://www.facebook.com/Westerham-Town-Council)

