

Westerham Town Council
 Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held
 on Wednesday 18th May 2022 at 7 pm
 at Westerham Hall

Present: Councillors: Helen Ogden (Chairman) Eddie Boyle (Vice-Chairman),
 Loretta Bird, Deborah Coen, June Davies, Bob Holt, Clive Pither, Keith Thompson

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

Cllr D Esler: Sevenoaks District Councillor
 35 members of the public

1.	<p><u>Apologies for Absence</u> Mrs L Trott MP. KCC Cllr N Chard SDC Cllr K Maskell</p>	
2.	<p><u>Minutes of the meeting held virtually on 21st April 2021</u> These were signed as a true record.</p>	
3.	<p><u>How the Meeting will work</u> Please take a look round the stalls and see what our community's organisations are doing to 'green' Westerham's environment. Pick up ideas: ask questions: add your own ideas. At the end of the Business items the Community stall holder will tell us about their plans and the questions you have asked and your inspirational ideas.</p>	
4.	<p><u>Chairman's report – Cllr Helen Ogden</u> The full Chairman's report had been circulated to the meeting. Cllr Ogden reported that 2020-2021 had been 'A year of several halves.'</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 April 2021: no indoor mixing between different households • 18 May 2021: 'Rule of six' • 19 July 2021: legal restrictions removed • December 2021 'Plan B' to deal with Omicron • Vaccines – schools – NHS – testing – travel - businesses • All of our community affected in some way • 'We never closed' <p>The priorities for Council had been chosen by residents and they</p>	

were:

- ❖ Keep Westerham a thriving, clean and tidy small town
Your Council has worked closely with Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) and you will have noticed the new sweeper which had made a big difference to the cleanliness of the town.

We were proud to keep our green spaces open during the pandemic: they were well used and are in need of TLC to preserve them for the years to come.

- ❖ Improve parking

The project to improve parking in Westerham had been completed with 70 extra spaces funded through WTC reserves, WTC CIL, SDC CIL. These are in Madan Road, Hartley Road, Costells Meadow car park and Crockham Hill Playing Field.

- ❖ Keep Westerham a safe town, from traffic and anti-social behaviour

After much lobbying of Kent County Council (KCC) the 20mph speed limit were completed from Vicarage Hill to Verralls Corner. The scheme included major feeder roads London Road and Croydon Road. This was funded by grant from County Cllr Nick Chard. A new one-way round The Green was also installed, a long standing request to KCC. In progress were speed surveys – comparing speeds now with pre project speeds and KCC will be putting up more 20mph signs to be put up. Speedwatch to restart will also restart and we were looking for more volunteers.

Anti-social behaviour – activities with young people had restarted, the Youth Bus; Free Food Friday and Boxing sessions. Work had continued with SDC Community Safety Unit.

- ❖ Support the community & the businesses which operate In Westerham

Businesses – we have set up a social media skills programme and 20 businesses took up the offer. We supported the government temporary relaxation of outdoor trading regulations.

Community – we organised and delivered Christmas 'Covid hampers and regular events were returning

Sadly we had to say farewell to our Community Warden: Thank you and happy retirement Steve!

There were also three unresolved planning issues affecting Westerham – the SDC Local Plan, Covers Farm and new legislation.

The day-to-day business of the Council also means

- ❖ we manage 3 allotment sites
- ❖ we look after Westerham's open green spaces: King George's Field, The Green on Granville Road, The Green, Ash Road, Madan Road
- ❖ we are consulted on around 120 planning applications each year

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ we own & manage many of the town's street lights & the project to convert them to LED lighting is almost complete ❖ we work with neighbouring councils and many other bodies <p>The Town Council's income is made up of the Precept (WTC's share of Council Tax) - £252,000, other income comes from rents, grants, leases etc - £118,081.</p> <p>WTC finances were available on the website and in the Annual Report.</p> <p>Looking forward we have the challenge of rising inflation; King George's Field redevelopment – an exciting project and making Westerham greener.</p>	
5.	<p><u>Sevenoaks District Councillor Diana Esler</u></p> <p>SDC Cllr Esler thanked WTC for supporting her events in her year as Chairman of SDC.</p> <p>Cllr Esler gave an update on the SDC Local Plan, stating that Net Zero was particularly important. The new issue of the Levelling up and Regeneration Bill had just been raised but not enough information was available yet. Although it appeared that CIL would be abolished and there would be a new Infrastructure Levy and there would be a lot of changes to the process of a local plan. SDC would continue to protect the Green Belt and look after residents. It had been a huge honour to be the Chairman and promote Westerham all over the district.</p>	
6.	<p><u>Questions on the Business items</u></p> <p>There were no questions.</p>	
7.	<p><u>Reports from stall holders on green issues</u></p> <p>Greensand Commons/Kent Wildlife Trust – working to help people with carbon off setting, setting up and managing volunteer groups to help with the works identified from public consultation on the Commons.</p> <p>Swift Project – encouraging residents to record habitats and species in the local area. Working with local church to re-introduce swifts to Westerham.</p> <p>Sea Cadets – taking inspiration from the Earthshot challenge, with young members coming up with ideas to help the planet – making eco bricks from non-recyclable plastics, recycling t-shirts and making tote bags.</p> <p>Westerham Town Partnership – restoration projects of the long and round ponds in Westerham. Working with the Church regarding rewilding the churchyard.</p>	

	<p>Keep Westerham Green – Lobbying to preserve the countryside around Westerham and litter picking.</p> <p>National Trust Chartwell – carbon zero by 2030, planting trees, recycling in cafes, coppicing and reducing water usage.</p> <p>Eco Church – re-wilding project of St Mary’s, Westerham churchyard, swift nesting project and becoming an Eco Church, toilet twinning, replacing lighting with LED and replacing old boilers.</p>	
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The meeting closed at 9.10 p.m.

Signed as a correct record

Chairman