

Minutes of 2019 AGM Westerham Town Partnership

Grasshopper on the Green, 12 December 2019

Present: (For WTP CIC) Bill Curtis (BC), Stuart Merrylees (SM), Nick Tonge (NT) Diana Esler, Jenny Cowan, Gordon Rodgers, Christina Cusick, Daniel Sillitoe, Hannah Crane, Elaine Merrylees, Eddie Boyle

Apologies: Jane Hunter, Marril Gibson, Henry Warde, Merl Rowe, Debra Edwards, Nicola Alderson, Mike Humphrey, Barbara Humphrey, Harry Planche

1. Minutes of last meeting (19th Sept 2018) were formally agreed. There were no matters arising.

2. Directors Report for last 12 months. BC reviewed the major events since the 2018 AGM most of which were listed in the "WTP Newsletter November 2019.

In November 2018, to acknowledge the centenary of the end of WWI, the WTP commissioned Aylesford Pottery to make handmade ceramic poppies to commemorate each of the 50 Westerham men who did not return home. The poppies were installed outside the church with individual plaques giving name, regiment and place and date of death, as a display of remembrance. They were put on display again this year in St Mary's Catherine Chapel. As we must now commemorate another 29 men from WWII, we plan to offer the original 50 fire-glazed poppies to current residents of the houses where the men lived, as a mark of 'coming home'. BC has researched and recorded all the addresses and we will be asking for volunteers to join us to help make this happen.

The May Bank Holiday event which for some years has been collaborative venture between the Westerham Society and the Town Partnership was amalgamated with the Rotary Fair with the help of Edenbridge and Westerham Rotary chair Zena Belton. The day began with *Beating the Bounds* (walking) and by midmorning there were a record number of stalls and charities represented, followed by Maypole dancing from Churchill School, lots of live music acts in a big marquee and an abundance of food from the Westerham Sea Cadets and Westerham Scouts. We look forward to repeating the 3-way collaboration in 2020 on the second weekend of May (Sun May 10th)

In September, WTP organised a traditional Country Faye in conjunction with the Westerham Horticultural Society who were kindly given permission to use St Mary's Church for their Autumn Show. Outdoors on the Green there was a double sized marquee (thanks to our Town Council for sponsorship) with food by the Courtyard, musicians, an extremely popular 'ball pond' for tiny tots and as many stalls as we could find room for, including Punch-and-Judy for all ages, sponsored by the Westerham Society.

We recorded our thanks to Viv Sheffield who had been running the weekly column **What's-On in Westerham Chronicle**, and to Valentine Seymour who had kindly taken over this weekly task back in June.

For the second year running, **Late Night Shopping and the Christmas Light Switch-on** has been organised by the Town Council. This year, WTP organised a shop window quiz trail to encourage families to move around town and peer into shop windows and claim their prize at the church where they would be able to see the annual festival of Christmas Trees. We also helped sponsor the new acrobatic acts that WTC had engaged to roam around town.

The Greensands Commons project on Farley Common and Crockham Hill Common, run by Kent Wildlife, had had its ups and downs, but the problems had now been resolved and the Community Service Team organised by WTP will be back at work before Christmas. Thanks to WTC and Westerham Society for helping us to fund tools for this work.

The VisitWesterham website was upgraded during the year.

3. Director's resignation and new Steering Committee Members

Jane Hunter is continuing to spend more time abroad and has resigned as a Director of the Town Partnership but will continue to run the event calendar on the website and all of our social media communication. Her work with the Proud to do Business scheme has given the WTP a regular income and her nourishment of Facebook and Twitter have given the town a substantial following.

We welcome to our Steering Committee Christina Cusick, Katy Secombe and Gordon Rodgers. Since its inception the WTP has always had a flexible Steering Committee which helps the core team to engage with experts and enthusiasts as the world around us changes. The three Directors remaining are BS, SM and NT.

4. Treasurer's Report NT reported that the accounts for the period April 2018-March 2019 had been audited by Smart Accounting and WTP had a balance of about £5000 in the bank. We are very grateful to businesses and organisations who pay us £10/month for which they get a listing on our website. We recorded our thanks to Smart Accounting and of course to Nick himself, who does such a good job of looking after our finances and lodging documents at Companies House. The income from PDB allows us to run the website and take a bit of a risk when putting on events.

5. Thanks to our sponsors throughout the year. BC thanked the Town Council, Sevenoaks District Arts Council and the Westerham Society for their sponsorship of specific events during the year, and St Mary's Church and the Heritage Trust for their help in staging various events in the town.

And we all thanked everyone who had been involved in helping to run events in Westerham in the last year.

Looking forward :

WTP is talking to WTC and SDC about solving whatever problems prevent better use of the Darent overflow car park during winter daylight hours.

AOB

Action BC to remind Christina to check for weddings on Saturday 12 Sept 2020.

Diana Esler will be chair of SDC next year and would like to feature Westerham on that year's Christmas card.