

Westerham

Village With A Past – Town With A Future



**Westerham Town Partnership
Action Plan
December 2009**

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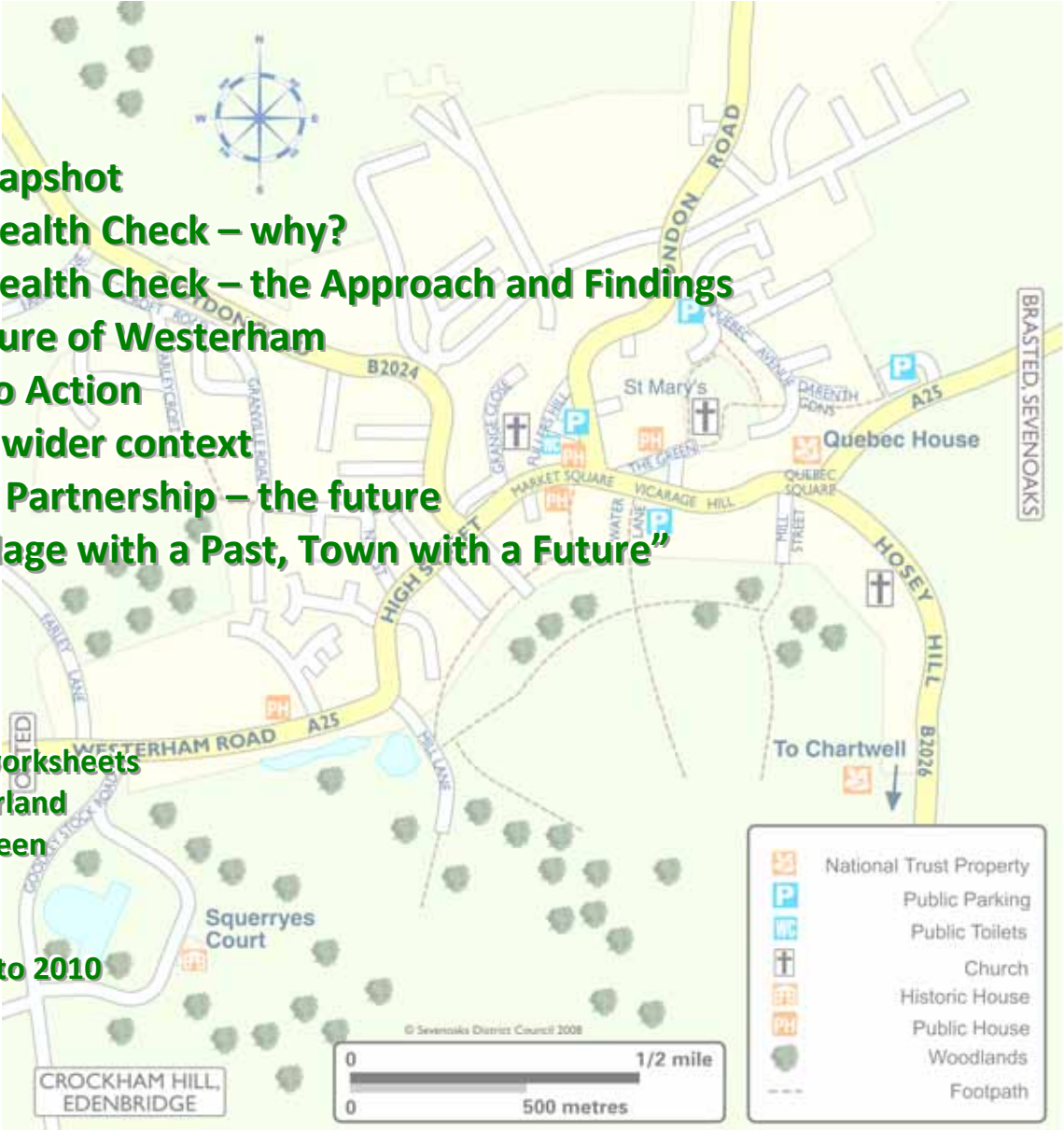
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Westerham – a snapshot



The village of Westerham has been documented for more than 1000 years with evidence nearby of a Celtic fortification (c2000 BC) and Roman road. It has evolved from "Domesday and Pilgrims Way to Motorway", into the town it is today. Ten miles to the west of Sevenoaks and five miles to the east of Oxted, it is situated on the Kent/Surrey border of the A25 and enjoys the flow of the River Darent, which formerly powered three watermills. Close to London, just south of the M25 (famous for our Clackett Lane!), Gatwick airport and Ebbsfleet International train station, Westerham is nevertheless isolated, privileged as it is to be surrounded by woodlands and open space, designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Special Landscape Value. Synonymous with Churchill, General Wolfe, Pitt the Younger and many other important historical characters Westerham gives you a feeling of being somewhere unique and special.



Westerham is:

- ❖ A place to **Escape** from the grind of everyday life, with its great countryside and relaxed atmosphere.
- ❖ A place to **Experience**, with its wealth of history, attractions & activities.
- ❖ A place to **Indulge** yourself with some great food and drink and a spot of retail therapy.
- ❖ A place to **Do Business** with its easy access to motorways and airports, being at the crossroads of the South East.
- ❖ A great place to **Live** with its beautiful historic properties



The Westerham Town Partnership is now building upon the report written by the Westerham Society in 1974 and the Village Design Statement written in 2000, samples of which can be found at www.visitwesterham.org.uk. The economic, social, community, transport and environmental issues that affect all residents, visitors and traders, now and into the next decade and beyond are being examined.

The Westerham Health Check – why?

Back in August 2008, Westerham Parish Council in conjunction with ‘Kent Rural Towns’ (part of Kent County Council) invited people who live and work in Westerham to get involved in a ‘Health Check’ process for our town. This was in response to government policy to increase active community participation in local plans. There is guidance for us from various agencies, and potential financial support from the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) and other funding organisations.

WESTERHAM
PARISH COUNCIL

Kent
Rural Towns

A small group of new volunteers and Parish Councillors held a public launch meeting in October where we talked about the process and dragooned a few more to join the ‘health check’ team.

We began, as other towns e.g. Edenbridge, Hawkhurst, Faversham and Paddock Wood, have done before us, by undertaking a series of surveys and consultation exercises using a format provided by Kent Rural Towns.



The detailed information and evidence we collected will enable us to apply for grants and other funding to take forward the areas identified for new development. The resulting steering committee included a representative from the Parish Council and representatives from business, residents, youth and tourism in the town. The group and project was called:

Your Westerham – The Future which has subsequently evolved into the new **Westerham Town Partnership.**

Our Aims:

- ❖ state how Westerham sees itself developing over the short and medium term
- ❖ identify challenges and opportunities
- ❖ identify specific actions and approaches
- ❖ identify groups and individuals to work together to achieve the town’s goals
- ❖ develop relationships with and influence government agencies and their policies and outside organisations
- ❖ develop and take The Westerham Town Partnership Action Plan forward



The Westerham Health Check - the Approach and Findings

Our healthcheck process started with a public presentation in October 2008 at the Village Hall in Westerham to “drum up” enthusiastic volunteers. The volunteers split into four groups to gather detailed information about the ‘health’ of Westerham’s:

- ❖ Economy
- ❖ Social & community arrangements
- ❖ Transport, and
- ❖ Environment

(See Appendix 1 for our findings from the four groups)



The steering group identified Westerham’s Hinterland, i.e. the people it needs to reach and influence and their relationship to the town, (See Appendix 2). It also devised a communication strategy as it was recognised that communication with the Town was key in keeping support going.

Initial findings were presented at the Annual Parish meeting. Interested parties were also given an invitation to two consultation events in May on the Green in Westerham (See Appendix 3 for our findings) and in June at a local Pakistani restaurant, Kinara (See Appendix 4 for our findings). We also kept the local press informed of progress to ensure that we received the maximum publicity for our activities. A summary of all our findings from the workgroups and the events was used to create a SOAR analysis (See Appendix 5).

Given feedback from the Business Forum and the difficult economic conditions prevailing in 2009, the steering group felt it was important to pursue a website early on in the project. We would like to acknowledge the website help given by Hidden Britain, particularly James Turner. The website was designed to provide information to residents and the community, our hinterland, to tourists, to the business community and be a vehicle for local news and comment. The dual names www.visitwesterham.org.uk and www.westerhamkent.org.uk were chosen to attract worldwide visitors to the site.

Calendar of Events

- ❖ **11/10/08** - Public presentation
- ❖ **22/10/08** - Worksheet groups kick off meeting
- ❖ **30/10/08** - First meeting of formal steering group
- ❖ Monthly meetings of steering group
- ❖ Regular worksheet group meetings
- ❖ **22/04/09** - Presentation at Annual Parish Council meeting
- ❖ **9/05/09** - “The Green” event
- ❖ **10/06/09** - The “Kinara” event
- ❖ **Jun – Nov 09** Analysis of findings and initial projects started
- ❖ **1/7/09** – Launched [Westerham website](http://www.visitwesterham.org.uk)
- ❖ **Dec 09** – Westerham Town Partnership Action Plan agreed.

Visions for the future of Westerham

Much great work took place in between group meetings, led by the volunteers with energy and enthusiasm to make things happen. Important new connections between local organisations are being established and the advantages of collaboration between individuals, small organisations, public bodies and private businesses are already being enjoyed and put to good use.

Marrying up the findings from the worksheets, the consultation process, and collating enthusiastic individual ideas has led us to the following short to medium term visions for Westerham.



- ❖ ***A new Town Partnership Arrangement where all key stakeholders take part, collaborate and communicate with each other.***
- ❖ ***Improved Leisure facilities for the youth and community eg King Georges Playing Field and a Community Internet Cafe.***
- ❖ ***Improved traffic flow and better transport links that support the community and help improve the environment.***
- ❖ ***A tourism strategy that encourages more visitors to the town e.g. further development of the Westerham website and “The Green” as a focal point for events.***
- ❖ ***A business development strategy that encourages more businesses to set up in town.***

Turning Vision into Action

This plan is ever evolving and is used at each Steering Group Meeting to keep on track.

Visions	Specific Actions	Led by	Current Progress	Funding required
Town Partnership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - detail and agree constitution of new arrangements - agree Key Stakeholders and who should be involved - regular stakeholder events - Clerk for Town Partnership to liaise, coordinate and support marketing processes on behalf of the town - supporting the collaboration that takes place within the community - encourage Business Forum and Business Breakfast Club to become part of Town Partnership 	LM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Draft has been circulated - Agreed in December - Add clerk to next agenda 	
King Georges Playing Field	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - research terms of Trust agreement in order to understand the potentials and possibilities for development. - scope out possibilities for improvement 	LM	LM & DE meeting with Chris Hanson	
Community Café	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - solicit already established interested parties 	JH	Possible venues - The Kings Arms; The Courtyard - need help in purchasing computers. Spar opportunity – now sold being developed by Karrisons.	

General Tourism and Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - promote the tourism working party to encourage more integration and attendance from key stakeholders who have a specific interest - integrated marketing processes and structure to ensure all distribution channels are used - create a new brand identify for Westerham - establish a list of businesses in Westerham for promotion and funding opportunities - establish points around Westerham to act as tourist information points - improve notice boards for local events - find a volunteer as a “graphic designer” in residence 	<p>EB</p> <p>TWP</p> <p>DE</p> <p>PC</p> <p>TWP</p> <p>TWP</p> <p>EB</p>	<p>Branding guidelines and logo created.</p>	
Westerham Website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - continued development of website as a tool to attract visitors and act as a community tool for residents 	<p>SM</p>		<p>Volunteers being sought to help existing team: paid help is a last resort</p>
Walking and History Trail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create to preserve history of Westerham and encourage more visitors to the town. 	<p>PC</p>	<p>Pre-funding application has been submitted to Lottery Heritage Fund</p>	<p>Yes. £15K approx.</p>

Farmers Market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Farmers Market – was running at the Grasshopper in Moorhouse during 2009, but was too far outside the town for passing pedestrians and it relied on passing cars 	SM	Market Plan has been put together – to be held on parking spaces outside George & Dragon. Aiming for start of 16 th May. Application to be made to KCC for some start-up funding.	Yes – for start-up.
The Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - identify possible events that could be held on the Green - investigate electricity and insurance issues - Events Calendar - Food and Drink Festival 	PC		
Traffic and transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - consider the effects of redirecting traffic around London Road and the Green to improve Air Quality - investigate parking issues in Westerham e.g. how to make the Darenth car park more attractive, make the walk into town less of a challenge, especially for older people. Investigate funding for eco-toilets in the Darenth car park. - coordinated and improved bus services - consider how to slow traffic down in Westerham - monitor developments that may create opportunity for an HGV bypass 	PC		

Business Development Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - promote Westerham as a place for business - lobby for improvement in broadband and mobile speeds to make it easier for businesses to operate - consider ways of operating “shuttle bus” to and from Sevenoaks and Oxted - local produce for local people - opportunity for businesses to come together to recycle – Town Partnership to support and facilitate. 	<p>Jenny</p>	<p>Businesses have been actively encouraged to register with BT for a new high MB service</p>	
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Westerham – in a wider context

Westerham is aware of the wider strategies and opportunities around Kent and further afield and the impact these might have on the town. These include:

❖ **Regional Economic Strategy, Local Development Framework and The Green Belt**

The LDF is derived from a full review of the National planning policies required when the previous plans expired in 2007. The key National Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) have been agreed. From these policies regions developed their own Regional Spatial Strategies. These are long term policies and strategies which need to be developed over long periods as they involve macro economic trends and forecast changes in society requiring significant investment at all levels of Government. It is wholly appropriate, at this level to develop a twenty year view (hence from 2006) in broad conceptual terms giving guidance and direction to local policies and actual future development in a coherent manner. From this Regional Plan the Local Development Framework can be constructed and is currently being completed before review by the Government Inspectorate and adoption in 2010.

Under the Regional Spatial Strategy the South East is required to deliver a level of new housing deemed to be required to ensure the continued health and well-being of residents in the South East. From this, infrastructure and social services will be planned and delivered. The demand for affordable housing which meets future demographic change is high and given the constraints of the Greenbelt on developable land, has proved challenging for Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) to meet their obligations. The planned delivery of housing has been met from the three major conurbations in the district, Sevenoaks, Swanley and to a lesser extent Edenbridge. There will be additional windfall development in the remainder of the region including Westerham. For details see the LDF draft plan on the SDC web site.

❖ **Kent Rural Towns (KRT)**

KRT is a partnership programme providing support and advice for small rural towns (including larger villages/parishes) plus help to carry out a HealthCheck. KRT/SEEDA funding is only available for selected eligible towns for economic regeneration projects. The average grant awarded has been between £100,000 and £150,000 with 50 percent cash match required.

SEEDA recognises the vital role that small towns play in rural areas. The SEEDA Small Rural Towns programme provides funding towards the County Co-ordinator's work, as well as direct support for eligible towns, to the value of £7 million across the whole of the South East region.

❖ **Transition Towns**

There is an emerging groundswell of opinion for Westerham to become part of the “green” movement. [Transition Towns](#) is a national movement established to respond to the impacts of climate change and peak oil in a positive way, by stimulating a transition from our fossil fuel dependence to a much better and pleasanter way of living, relocalised and resilient against rising energy and food prices.

Westerham Town Partnership – The Future

As well as ensuring our visions are realised, The Westerham Town Partnership has set its aims out as the following:

- Facilitate the voice of residents and businesses of the town
- Campaign to improve and enrich the future of the town
- Co-ordinate activity in the town
- Complement, promote, publicise and support the work of local organisations and activities
- Champion and act with others on the issues that matter
- Channel and source funding opportunities



Our approach will be collaborative and complementary, working with local stakeholders, i.e. Parish Council, Westerham societies, Squerryes, clubs, community groups, commercial, tourist/visitor based, retail businesses, young people and people from all sectors and communities within the town.



Our vision is:

“To enrich the development of the town by enabling a dialogue among people and organizations, encouraging debate and promoting important issues.”

Westerham – “Village with a Past – Town with a Future”

Situated on a coaching route to London and on a major east-west road, Westerham was for centuries a significant Market Town, that status being conferred by Henry III in 1227. In truth, it is a very long time since Westerham has been a Village but today we still like to think that something of a village atmosphere and charm still survives.

Perhaps Westerham strives to be a bit “off the beaten track”. In the 19th century, local opposition delayed the arrival of the railway until 1881 when it became a commuter town. Cars began to make railways uneconomic and our station was closed in 1965. In 2010, Westerham finds itself busier than ever but still surrounded by green fields that help to secure its identity.



Many aspects of the way we conduct life on the planet are now being questioned. Apart from climate change (man-made or otherwise), finite resources like oil, gas, water and precious metals are being used up at an alarming rate. The production of food and energy and most goods, once local, is now global and the skills that were familiar to our ancestors are now almost dismissed as quaint traditional crafts.

Westerham and its surrounding towns are fortunate to have retained a wealth of shops, a strong business community, rich farmland and much countryside of outstanding beauty that attracts many visitors. We would like to think that Westerham is well placed to encourage the development of modern skills and local employment and continues to evolve as an example of a resilient 21st century Market Town.

APPENDIX 1 - SUMMARY FINDINGS FROM THE WORKSHEETS

Detailed worksheets for each category can be found at www.westerhamkent.org.uk.

Environment

The Environment study group led by Debra Edwards, was assisted by John Pearch, Robert Merrylees and Stuart Merrylees. Westerham has a wealth of lovely buildings set in wonderful countryside which is well-policed as Green Belt. A [Village Design Statement](#) was produced in 2000 to record the pertinent features which characterise Westerham and its many listed buildings. A [Westerham Conservation Area report](#) was also commissioned by Sevenoaks District Council in 2003.



Traffic = Poor Air Quality

The town's main problem is traffic. The east-west traffic on the A25 becomes unacceptable when there is a problem on the M25 motorway, typically from

accidents on the Clackett's Lane stretch. To quote the Village Design Statement (2000): *a hiccup on the motorway equals a thrombosis in the town*. Westerham is a bottleneck. The volume of traffic therefore becomes the single most pressing issue for the environment of Westerham. Quality of air is very poor and particulates in the air are well above Government guidelines. The point where the London Rd joins the A25 is deemed to be the most polluted area in Kent .

There have been feasibility studies for a Westerham bypass, most recently in 2003 but public funding has never been available and private funding would probably require a significant expansion of new housing to fund it. Local people often discuss the problem and make suggestions, e.g. Make

London Rd one way (North) and send South-going traffic via Beggars Lane where there should be a roundabout on the A25. Lorries should be excluded from the stretch between A25 and Quebec Ave. London Rd could have a width restriction like a chicane.

Public toilets

These have been a controversial topic in the town. The funding of public toilets has been a real concern since SDC withdrew funding. Westerham Parish Council has now taken over the responsibility as public toilets are essential to a tourist town.

Recycling

More recycling could be done within Westerham. Businesses find it difficult to do so because of the limitations on recycling set by Sevenoaks District Council and the fact that recycling companies are not prepared to come to Westerham for small quantities of material.

Transport

The Transport group was led by Dan Mahoney.

Local transport - a review was carried out to assess car and bus journeys to nearby towns, review timings and quality of routes. Bus and connecting train times were compared highlighting the inconvenience of using more than one mode of public transport. A review of adequacy of public transport for school trips, shopping, social and leisure use was also carried out. Special focus was given to the transport needs of elderly and disabled people with comparisons against neighbouring towns and counties.

Cyclists – There is a complete lack of cycle routes despite the popularity of the town with cyclists and also a lack of cycle storage in town. Comparisons were made with the facilities provided by Surrey County Council on the A25.

Road safety - was assessed looking at the A25 and key junctions through town. A comparison of traffic volumes, times of day and the consequent pollution levels were made, together with a review of accident types, vehicle types and



blackspots. A lack of safe crossing points and too many narrow pavements were discovered. These findings counter those of KCC who found the A25 through

Westerham to need no traffic calming measures as it is such a

"safe" stretch of road.

Parking – there is a lack of adequate convenient parking in the town. Darenth is the biggest car park but is located at the edge of town and is virtually inaccessible for the elderly and disabled people. There is also a lack of parking on the West side of town. It has been suggested that we could make the Darenth car park more attractive to passing visitors and that the (sometimes steep) paths from the car park into town could be made more accommodating (maybe a handrail or a bench) and generally better signed.

Walking – there are a huge variety of walks on offer in Westerham but they are poorly signed and ramblers cannot get by without a map. There is a need to republish local guides and maps and erect new signs.



One silent success - Churchill School's WOW - Walk on Wednesday - being awarded the "Best Walkers" in the Tonbridge, Tunbridge Wells and Sevenoaks areas. This highlighted the difficulties of getting people to accompany the children to school.

Economy

The Economy group was led by Eddie Boyle (Chairman of the Business Forum) with support from Wendy Evans and Peter Cashmore (local business people).



Retail

Westerham currently enjoys a wonderful selection of shops, restaurants and pubs. Indeed, as a resident of

Westerham all of one's daily needs could be satisfied within walking distance.

Westerham lies on the east-west A25 and is within a few miles of junctions to the M25 at Godstone and Sevenoaks. There are also North-South routes through the town which carry traffic from Croydon, Biggin Hill and Bromley to Edenbridge and Crockham Hill. All of this traffic makes the world aware of our attractive town, however in the current economic climate, the town's shops need even more support from local visitors and tourists.

There is a Business Forum in Westerham which is predominantly made up of retailers who come together on a

regular basis – recent achievements include raising money for new Christmas lights.

Commercial

In addition to shops and restaurants, there are about 60 commercial companies operating in Westerham which together employ about 1000 people, the biggest being Aqualisa, who employ over 200 people. There is 115,000 sq feet of office space which is currently under-occupied by approximately 30%. More could be done to help fill the spaces and position Westerham as an attractive, convenient spot for business owners to run their companies from.

Broadband in Westerham is at best patchy although BT is planning fibre optic by 2012 and ADSL currently runs at up to 8mb.

A Business Breakfast club is held at Squerryes and is well attended by Westerham businesses and also attracts businesses from surrounding areas and the Hinterland.

Tourism

There is no official tourism office or strategy for attracting more visitors to the town – more needs to be done to promote Westerham as an attractive place to live, work and visit.

Social and Community

The Social and Community group was supported by Malcom Basing, Jenny Smith, Ken Cowan and others.

Population

With a population of 4,388 (including Crockham Hill [CH]), it is estimated that more than 75% of people live in the village and surrounding areas as opposed to the wider Hinterland. Approximately 20% are of retirement age which is slightly over the national average. 21% are between the ages of 0-15, again this is slightly higher than the national average.

Westerham and CH have a higher proportion of people in professional and managerial groups than the SE of England. In the semi skilled, manual and unskilled group Westerham and CH is about the same as the SE and very slightly below England.

Housing

Westerham has a broad range of housing available including private and social housing and a rental sector. These range from flats and small houses to very substantial detached houses. It is worthy of note that the area has an outstanding stock of old and listed buildings as well as modern developments but there is a shortage of 4 bedroom detached

houses for families. People buy smaller properties and then start a family and when it grows they cannot find such properties in the town and have to move elsewhere. There is a waiting list for social housing and a need for more affordable housing.



West Kent Housing Association predict as the population increases in age, there will be more need to provide person centred support either in their own homes or in places of care. They have a formulated a 5 – 10 year strategy dealing with the needs of an ageing population.

According to SDC figures only 0.88% of homes have been empty for more than 6 months. We would expect Westerham to outperform that percentage. Westerham is an expensive and desirable area and private homes are usually too valuable to leave empty.

Transport

Public transport services to outlying areas are poor. Buses run hourly along the A25, half hourly along the A233 and only twice a day to Edenbridge. Most people not within walking

distance will use a private car, taxi or in some cases a volunteer driver.

Westerham experiences significant traffic noise and air pollution from the A25 and M25. Two pinch points in town increase congestion and when the frequent problems on the M25 bring diverted traffic with additional HGVs, Westerham suffers from serious congestion and pollution. Even rush hour unloading of vehicles in Westerham, Brasted or Sundridge can cause serious tailback problems. The town centre (High St, Vicarage Hill and London Rd) is a designated Air Quality Management Area(AQMA 11).

Culture and Community

Westerham is an historic Market Town surrounded by beautiful countryside and within easy reach of many **sites of cultural and historic interest**, the closest being:-

Chartwell- Family home of Sir Winston Churchill, outside



Westerham

Squerryes Court ,Westerham–Home of the Warde family since 1731



Quebec House ,Westerham– Home of General Wolfe, conqueror of Quebec in 1759.



Biggin Hill Aerodrome- WW2 historic site and host to annual International Air Fair

Down House – Home of Charles Darwin

St Marys Church -parts of which date back to the 12th century. John Fryth, son of a Westerham inn keeper, martyr and Protestant reformer, who helped Tyndale translate the New Testament, was christened here.



Knole House with its 1000 acre deer park (site of SSI) Sevenoaks.

Hever Castle - childhood home of Anne Boleyn

Penshurst Place- one of England’s oldest family homes

Chiddingstone and Lullingstone Castles

Other famous local figures include:- Pitt the Younger, Hansard, Nissen, Octavia Hill, Gladys Aylward. World War 2 associations include: Biggin Hill RAF Guinea Pig Club (Brasted, East Grinstead etc). Westerham is twinned with Bonneval in France.

Currently the town enjoys a good range of **art, drama, historic, social and nature societies** with healthy memberships. This reflects the talent and dedication of a number of key individuals. Local societies include:-

At the Westerham Hall

Westerham Society
Westerham Amateur Dramatic Society
Westerham Fine Arts Society
Horticultural Society
Fleapit Cinema Club
Westerham Beekeepers
Women's Institute
The Inner Wheel Club of
Westerham
Stragglers Social Club



At Other Venues :

Congregational events at the Churches in Westerham:

- ❖ St Mary The Virgin
- ❖ Westerham Hill Baptist Church
- ❖ St John the Baptist
- ❖ Westerham Evangelical Congregational Church

The Wolfe Society
Crockham Hill Village Society
Westerham Art Group
Partners And Communities Together
Royal British Legion
Westerham Scouts
Beavers, Cubs, Explorers
Westerham Brownies and Guides
Westerham Sea Cadets
Brasted & Toys Hill CC
Westerham Chess Club
Westerham Ramblers

Westerham Baby & Toddlers @ Churchill School
The Rotary Club @ The Kings Arms
Biggin Hill & Westerham Lions Club
Kent Wildlife
Westerham Mens Club @ Fullers Hill
Westerham Youth Club @ King Georges Pavilion
St Mary's Youth Group
Bat Conservation Group- Hosey Hill bat caves
Westerham Business Forum.
Bonneval Association

Examples of Annual/Regular Events

Summer Charity Fair – Rotary Club
Remembrance Day Parade
Christmas Carols on the Green and Day of Music organised by
St Mary's
Summer fetes at Churchill School and Valence School
Two theatre productions – Westerham Amateur Dramatic
Society
18 Film evenings – Fleapit Cinema
Wolfe Weekend.



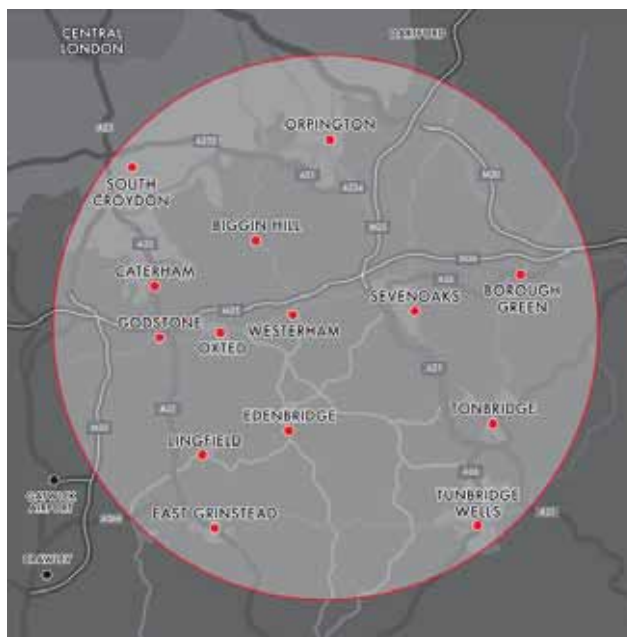
More could and should be done to promote Westerham and its jewels including greater use of the Green.

APPENDIX 2 – WESTERHAM’S HINTERLAND

For Westerham to thrive and to be sustainable, it needs to market its goods and services outside of the town and put itself “on the map”. Situated in wonderful countryside just outside the M25, Westerham enjoys many weekly and monthly visitors from 10-12 miles in the upper semi-circle of the map but less frequent visitors from residents from the lower semi-circle. With its many historical associations, Westerham attracts visitors from all over the world.

The hinterland is the catchment area beyond the Parish boundary from which visitors and services arrive. It will mean different things to different people depending on their business interests, their leisure pursuits and how far they are prepared to travel: walking distance, a bus-ride away, a day out or maybe a weekend break.

People come to Westerham to work, go to school (primary and special-needs), to the doctor or dentist, play sports, buy antiques, visit unusual shops, restaurants and pubs, or enjoy numerous events in Westerham Hall.



The shape of our hinterland is different for daytime as compared with evening/overnight visitors.

But for people who live in Westerham, there is another sort of hinterland which describes how far they must travel to reach goods and services not available on their doorstep. Oxted and Sevenoaks have good rail links; with Biggin Hill they provide many good supermarkets, a vast variety of shops, secondary and adult education, cinema and theatre, DIY and building materials, car showrooms and bicycle-repair shops. We do not have to travel far for most things and there is always Bluewater.

Public transport (or lack of it) will somewhat constrain the shape of our hinterland. And although the A25 and M25 make the town accessible, they have the ability to spoil its charm. Perhaps we need to have regard for how far goods (especially food) have to travel? In the 18th century our hinterland was very different. In the 21st century, we will try to ask how it might change, should more food be grown locally, are there new businesses which would help Westerham to flourish and are there opportunities for these changes to enrich our community.

Map kindly provided by David Robinson of Karrissons.

APPENDIX 3 – Findings from The “Event on the Green”

The Green Day on the Green – an event on 9th May 2009 that gave **Your Westerham The Future** the combined opportunities for us to promote, consult and increase involvement, with opportunities for local residents and



businesses to contribute their ideas about the issues and priorities for Westerham.

Issues	Agree	Disagree	% in Agreement
Renewed collaborative town	60	3	95.24
HGV Bypass	64	9	87.67
Slower traffic	68	4	94.44
Encourage more visitors	60	10	85.71
Greater use of recreational spaces	56	8	87.50
Clearer signage	48	14	77.42
Better communication	58	5	92.06
Tourist office and info sites	57	13	81.43
More public parking	56	13	81.16
Improved local public transport	62	6	91.18
Local produce for local people	64	4	94.12
Allotment sharing, recycling, more trees	55	8	87.30
Improved youth facilities	64	3	95.52

Other issues and ideas which came out on the day included:

- *The youth of Westerham are our future -how can we do more*
- *Slowing down the traffic*
- *Co-ordinating and increasing information for residents and visitors alike*
- *"Can we have a baker?" - rather than empty shops*
- *Better public transport to Sevenoaks and Oxted*
- *More facilities for young people, indoors and outdoors*
- *Tourist leaflet, which ties everything together with a map*
- *Better signs on the approaches to town and in the town*
- *Better coverage in local newspapers, especially in Biggin Hill, Hayes, Orpington, etc*
- *A Film Festival*
- *Improving access for wheelchair users*
- *Website for Westerham*
- *More allotments*
- *Improve the appeal of the car park at the eastern end of town*
- *Pedestrian crossing on A25 at the west end of town*
- *Mini roundabouts to keep the traffic moving and ease pollution*
- *An annual festival of 17/18th century life, like Rochester does for Dickens*
- *More accommodation for tourists, hotel and B&B*
- *Ensuring the town stays as it is!*



The research and consultation on that day unearthed a range of issues from the very possible to the practically impossible and the most popular are highlighted in red in the table above. Where appropriate this information was used to back up our findings in the worksheets and to form opinions on the priorities for the town.

APPENDIX 4 – Findings from the “Kinara” Event

The event at Kinara on the 10th June 2009 was attended by over 60 people, representing a cross section of the community from residents to traders to community interest groups. It was facilitated by the group’s Chair Lesley Moore.



The purpose was to:

- Consult the town about the key issues arising from our survey data
- Consider the priorities for our town
- Agree the ways in which we could take them forward together
- Showcase our newly emerging website – an activity that had been gathering pace since the healthcheck process started

This was a wholly participative event with attendees asked to work on the following activities:

- ❖ **The idea [yours/others] that most captures your imagination**
- ❖ **Favourite thing about Westerham**
- ❖ **Two wishes for the future**
- ❖ **Using ideas & answers above create images in small groups based on the following hypothesis:**

“It is now 10.6.2010. Our new Town Partnership arrangements and state of the art website connect us in previously unimaginable ways. All our great ideas and everything we wished for in June 2009 are now happening. What does it look like?”

At the end of the event offers of help, invitations, commitments and requests were captured.

The event was such a success and well received – and participated in – that it was noted if this could be an effective way forward for the Town to come together on a bi-annual basis to agree priorities.



The ideas and visions coming forward from the event included:

IDEAS & REQUESTS	
Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Youth volunteering: Youth in Action offering services ❖ Bridge the Gap between each generation – and especially between young and older generation – Pass knowledge/skills down through generations -> more dialogue ❖ Better transport for young people – especially evenings ❖ Greater awareness of existing youth activities
Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Heritage centre/museum
Traffic/Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ HGV bypass [not a bypass for everyone] to help improve traffic flow
Shops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Better range of shops – especially food – more local produce/bakery/deli/ Market within the town
Activities/Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Make better use of spaces/venues e.g. Churchill school – ask KCC for more access ❖ Events & Activities & Village Hall/Church etc listed on website. Requests for people with skills to run classes e.g. Flower arranging, sewing, yoga ❖ Village Festival: Food, duck race, soapbox derby, Jazz, Theatre open air. ❖ Football tournament – BR + EB ❖ Bridget Rowe & Carol Bowers inter-village football tournament ❖ Wolfe Weekend 12th – 13th September can kick start with activities
Parking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Raise all day parking charge at Westerham Hall Car Park [to move all day parkers to Darenth]

Communications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Use Westerham & Brasted Gazette more
VISION FOR WESTERHAM	
Transport and Travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Community Bus (subsidised) – responsive to demand – linking Sevenoaks, Riverhead, Brasted, Sundridge, Westerham, Limpsfield, Oxted and linked to rail services at Oxted and Sevenoaks. ❖ Better transport between Squerryes and Chartwell. ❖ Tram lines. ❖ An HGV Bypass ❖ One way London Road – down from A25. ❖ Free parking at Darenth Carpark.
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ What's on in Westerham- E-bulletin.
Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ All young people making full use of the facilities in Westerham including: Bowls, Sea Cadets, Youth Club, British Legion, Sports, Scout Hut, School. ❖ More youth facilities including opportunities for sports, social activities and volunteering.
Coffee Shop/Bakery/Deli – Community Café	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Run as a social enterprise ❖ At the old Spar ❖ Selling local produce ❖ For old and young to network/share.
Childrens' centre for under 5s and parents bringing together:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ School for family support, family learning and use of facilities ❖ Parent Support: emotionally, parenting skills, education and social ❖ Health: Post and ante natal; baby clinic; sleep clinics; doctors ❖ Local orgs including Rotary/Lions; Housing; WI; Churches; doctors; SDC; Parish Council ❖ Older people: links with young parents and young children – x ages; volunteering opportunities; social opportunities

The Green	
❖	Regular markets on the Green – local produce.
❖	Monthly events – eg: “Jazz on the Green”, Beer Festival (inc. WB), Open Air Theatres (WADs), Italian/French markets
Events	
❖	More of them.
❖	Coordinating/networking events taking place to gain better communication between the various groups such as Westerham Society, Youth Clubs, Business Forum, WADs, British Legion, WI, Scout, Sea Cadets, Open Door, Churches – celebrate and share in one another’s interests; more brains on the job to solve common problems; non duplication of services.
❖	Westerham Food Festival.
Others	
❖	Smarten up street cleaning.
❖	Churchill school – leisure centre, swimming pool.
❖	Exploit Westerham Brewery.
❖	More classes and activities at Village Hall.
❖	Tennis club in Westerham.
❖	Traffic screens to absorb the noise - Beggars Lane & M25

Again, where appropriate this information was used to back up our findings in the worksheets and to form opinions on the priorities for the town. Most importantly any plan put forward had to match the energy of the volunteers



APPENDIX 5 - The Westerham Health Check – SOAR Analysis

Our research and findings [See Appendices 1 – 4] culminated in the following summary of Strengths, Opportunities, Aspirations and Results desired for Westerham.

<p>STRENGTHS</p> <p>An active Parish Council Local Health Services Public spaces – Great Location Diverse: – Heritage & historically famous people e.g. Pitt, Wolfe, John Fryth, Churchill Buildings & local attractions to visit, Retail, Pubs & Restaurants, Countryside, Business Parks Attractive self policed green belt Local employment A25: Transport route + through traffic High % of young people Low % of juvenile crime High % of highly qualified, educated & affluent people Wide range of cultural/social activities Airport Motorway connection</p>	<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <p>Tourism being pulled together by joint working group Enhanced & increased use of recreational space – e.g. through development of more sporting activities Library & Kings Arms use as tourist information points The Green – space for public events WEBSITE – use for early advertising, public diary and information Public notice boards Heritage Trail interpretation boards Hidden Britain Advice service Co-ordinated process for marketing, communications & Information (local and tourism focuses) Transition Town – to pull together transport & environmental issues Event(s) [e.g. On the Green, & In the Village Hall] – pull together community groups + our consultation and volunteer drive</p>
<p>ASPIRATIONS</p> <p>The feeling is great: <i>Esprit de Corps</i> A renewed collaborative town culture in which people share information, co-ordinate and support one another’s activities. HGV bypass Traffic that goes slower & gives us less trouble Greater ‘footfall’ Greater & more diverse use of recreational spaces Clear signage across the town Enhanced & effective communication – within & without Tourist office & information sites More public parking Transition Town Local produce for local people.</p>	<p>RESULTS</p> <p>Deadline for worksheet completion has been met Tourist information sites up and running across the town & along the heritage trail Suite of marketing materials is available and accessible Website with info re:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular bulletin system working for both volunteers driving the program + public • Tourist information • Local information about local activities + diary system to enable co-ordination • Advertising local traders <p>Community events [e.g. on the Green] involving all groups + our promotional/consultation activity Regular footfall survey taking place re visitor numbers/activities [via school?]</p>

APPENDIX 6 – Westerham – 1975 to 2010

In 1975, the Westerham Society published a study of Westerham – both ancient and modern – that contained an appendix listing shops, restaurants and industries in existence in the town. Thirty-five years later it is interesting to repeat the exercise and show how life has changed. Given that the pace of change is accelerating (but that Westerham tries not to hurry innovation – we have no internet café), the reader may like to speculate on how things might change in the next ten or fifteen years. Or even make a guess at 2045!

Here in 1975, but gone by 2010

Baker (1)	Cobbler (1)	Corn Merchant (2)	Dairy (1)	Optician (1)	Electric Appliances (1)
Fish Shop (1)	Grocer (6)	Sweet Shop (3)	Ironmongers (2)	Launderette (1)	Paint Shop (1)
Coal Merchant (2)	Garden Centre (1)	Police Station	Labour Exchange	Off License (1)	

Repair shops (of almost any sort) have disappeared.

Still here in 2010

Antiques (from 8 to 4)	Banks (2)	Bookshop (1)
Building Society (1)	Butchers (from 4 to 1)	Carpet/flooring (from 1 to 2)
Chemist (1)	Clothes (from 9 to 8)	Estate Agents (from 3 to 4)
Dry Cleaner (1)	Flowers (1)	Gift Shop (from 1 to 3)
Greengrocers (1 to ½)	Hairdresser (from 5 to 4)	Jeweller (1)
Newsagents (from 2 to 1)	Picture Gallery (1)	Shoe Shops (from 3 to 1)
Travel Agent (from 2 to 1)	Turf Accountant (1)	Funeral Parlour (1)
Dentist (1)	Doctors Surgery (1)	

Garages (from 3 to 1)

Public Houses (from 7 to 4)

London Rd Service Station and Caffyns have closed.

The Crown, Royal Standard and The Old House at Home have closed.

Eating Houses 11 restaurants and cafés in 1975.
20 restaurants, pubs-with-food and cafés in 2010.

Churches (4)

Schools **Now closed:** several nursery schools; Hosey Hill (boys) and St Mary's (girls) primary schools; Croft Hall; The Hill School. Churchill School has ceased to operate as a mixed Secondary Modern but is now a flourishing Primary School.

Arrived since 1975

Charity Shops (2)	Modern furnishing (6)	Supermarkets (1)	House Cleaning (1)
Health,Gym,Physio. (3)	Retirement Home (1)	Alternative Medicine (1)	Electrical retail/wholesale (1)