



Minutes of the Second Annual General Meeting of the Westcott Village Association held on Zoom Thursday 24th June 2021 from 7.45pm

Minutes are recorded by Agenda item number as follows:

1. Opening & Welcome: Chairman Tim Way (TEW) opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and explaining the process and procedures for the evening using the Zoom meeting software including how voting would take place when votes were required.

The Agenda, Chairman's Report and Accounts together with the draft minutes of the 2020 AGM had been made available on the WVA website from early June for all WVA members and Westcott residents to read and review in advance of the AGM.

Before formal business started, TEW spoke about the following:

- 1) That the Street Stewards Group would be meeting on Saturday 26th June. Anyone interested was encouraged to come along. Stewards are still required for at least the following roads: Ashley Road, Furlong Road, Guildford Road East, Hole Hill, Riverbank, St Johns Road and Watson Road.
- 2) That volunteers are still needed to help at WestFest particularly to sell raffle tickets on the day and to donate prizes/promises for the Silent Auction
- 3) That the WVA would be running a bottle tombola at WestFest and that donations would be very welcome. TEW will write separately on this.

2. Apologies: Apologies were received from **James Leaver and Nick Lund**

3. To adopt the Minutes of the First AGM of the Westcott Village Association:

Murray Stephen pointed out that a word was missing with a suggested amendment as follows:

Replace*The Owner of the Cricketers has been offered potential parking solutions but has found any of them acceptable.*

with *The Owner of the Cricketers has been offered potential parking solutions but has **not** found any of them acceptable*

Including this amendment, the minutes were accepted as a true record of proceedings at the 2020 AGM, being proposed by Tim Gowing, seconded by Murray Stephen and unanimously approved by the meeting. A revised copy of the minutes will be placed on the WVA website.

4. To consider matters arising from these Minutes:

There were no matters arising from the Minutes. Bernd Ratzke (BR), Chair of the Working Party comprising Doctors from the Dorking Medical Practice and the Trustees of the Hut and

the Reading Room respectively, considering how to retain a surgery and develop community facilities in the village, read out the update that will be in the next village magazine. BR noted that representatives of the Working Party would be attending WestFest where residents will have the opportunity to ask questions and give their views.

All other matters arising have been dealt with specifically in the first part of the Chairman's Report.

5. To receive the Chairman's Report:

Instead of reading his report verbatim, TEW chose to summarise the main themes the WVA were dealing with. He expressed a preference for attendees to ask any specific questions under item nine of the Agenda unless they felt it necessary to raise them now.

He outlined what had been achieved in the eight months since the last AGM including making available a second defibrillator available to all in the village, donating five new laptop computers to Surrey Hills School, organising the Christmas tree and lights - with thanks to the Westcott Gardening Club and Surrey Hills School, - and organising and delivering Christmas Day meals provided by Westcott House. The WVA aim to repeat the Christmas activities in 2021.

TEW noted some progress on tackling traffic noise and speed approaching and through the village but recognised the problems are becoming more acute. There is a new speed warning sign approaching the village from the east and - following delays due to C19 and changes in police procedure requirements - the first group of trained SpeedWatch volunteers is almost ready to begin recording speeding vehicles and motor bikes in the village and it is hoped that this will have a positive impact. More volunteers are needed so that a significant presence can be maintained especially on sunny weekends. TEW posed a general question as to whether the blue triangle - Please Ride Quietly - signs were effective and whether / how to continue with them.

TEW noted that there is a growing problem with car parking provision in the village as residents' car ownership rates remain high, as does the attractiveness of the Surrey Hills and Westcott to visitors. He noted that potentially marked parking bays and or 'Residents Only' parking might need to be considered by the Council. He was disappointed that parking for visitors at Wolvens Business Park had not materialised as he had hoped.

TEW hoped that some funds might become available to the village from the Community Infrastructure Levy as a result of the Crown development but noted it would come with restrictions. He will update residents if and when these monies become available.

Questions and points raised concerning the 2020/21 Chairman's Report were as follows:

Alda Andreotti asked whether there was any opportunity to work with other villages along the A25 axis from Ryka's Cafe at Mickleham to the car park at Newlands Corner to collectively raise the profile of the fight against speeding and noisy motor cycles. TEW replied that he had hoped that a meeting with local council officials chaired by Councillor Tim Hall, attended by the Police and representatives from around Surrey Hills, would kick start this but it hadn't as it concentrated on Mickleham Bends only. Hazel Watson confirmed that the SCC and the Police say it is a priority to tackle the problem, but that there is no money available to fund any work.

Alda also stated that she was an advocate of signage asking motorists and motorcycle riders to slow down and drive quietly and she made a plea for the 30mph speed limit boundary to be extended particularly on the west side of the village.

Alan Reif made the point that the internet broadband service in Coast Hill and the west of the village was still poor and suggested that funding was available to improve this.

(Note that the WVA did investigate this following last years AGM but had very few expressions of interest and no volunteer to lead any worthwhile project. Nothing further is planned to be undertaken on this matter by the WVA.)

Bernd Ratzke asked about the origin of the 'Quiet Lane' signs in Balchins Lane. TEW explained that these were put up by the AONB as part of the signage they have installed to mark the Leith Hill Greenway.

Elisa Davey commented that a combination of speeding vehicles and poor parking by non residents often on double yellow lines - including too many parked cars - meant that there is an 'accident waiting to happen' at the Broomfield Park / Pointers Hill junction. She thought teachers from Surrey Hills, cars from Westcott Garage and cars of those working at the Crown site contributed to the problem and was concerned that when the Crown development was complete the problem would get worse with new residents and visitors continuing to park there. TEW pointed out that each of the Crown property units had two parking spaces on site but recognised the problem generally. ED confirmed she would definitely support a 'Residents Only' parking permit regime in Westcott.

6. To receive the Annual Accounts

Edwin Harland (EH) explained that the final WVA accounts for the period to 31st March 2021 had been approved by the WVA Committee and by Hugh Parry, Independent Examiner.

EH noted that expenditure exceeded income for the year. He indicated this was partly due to subscriptions and donations falling by 12 % compare to last year but mainly because of increased expenditure of a capital nature on key projects such as the defibrillator and Christmas tree lights.

As at the end of March 2021, the bank balance was nearly £8000.

EH noted his concern that subscriptions received to date this year are only half of what had been received at the same time last year and he encouraged all attendees to speak to their friends and neighbours and ask them to contribute what they could. He particularly asked everyone to consider 1) paying by Standing Order on or around 1st June annually, 2) electing to pay with Gift Aid where possible and 3) to encourage residents to come forward to act as Street Stewards where possible.

At this point, TEW thanked Hugh Parry for his support as Independent Examiner of the WVA Accounts.

The Accounts were then received and approved unanimously.

7. To elect the Officers, Committee Members and the Independent Examiner for the forthcoming year.

The following have put themselves forward for re-election as WVA Officers and/or Trustees:

Tim Way as Chairman, Simon Bradley as Deputy Chairman, Edwin Harland as Treasurer, Paul Goddard as Secretary, Sally Hewetson as Membership Secretary, Hugh Broom, Andrew Copeland, Sandra Ede, James Leaver and Nick Lund.

These nominations were proposed en masse by Edwina Gordon, seconded by Murray Stephen and unanimously approved by the Meeting. TEW reminded residents that anyone

who wants to stand for the Committee whether there are vacancies or not is very welcome to put their name forward.

(Note that subsequent to the Meeting on June 28th, Andrew Copeland decided to resign as a Trustee and Committee Member. He has kindly volunteered to continue to support the WVA website and communication process.)

Hugh Parry has indicated his willingness to stand as Independent Examiner for 2021/22. His nomination was proposed by Andrew Gordon, seconded by Alda Andreotti and unanimously approved by the Meeting.

8. To consider the proposal to change WVA Membership Criteria based on the written proposal circulated with the Chairman's Report. Reproduced for the record of the AGM as follows:

Proposed Resolution for a change of criteria for Membership of the Westcott Village Association:

Reason for changing the Constitution

The Trustees of the WVA propose the following temporary amendment to the Constitution **in order to encourage greater participation in the activities of the organisation**. This change is designed to remove the requirement to pay a membership fee in order to be able to vote at meetings on Village Association matters.

From the date of the passing of this resolution by open vote at the AGM on 24th June 2021 until the date of the AGM in 2023 when the change will be re-considered

- Membership of the WVA will be open to anyone aged 18 and over who is resident in the Westcott Ward and who has provided the Association with a valid email address in acknowledgement of membership. All members who meet these criteria will be able to attend meetings and vote on all matters considered by the WVA.
- Membership will not be dependent upon the payment of a membership subscription, but the Association will continue to raise funds for the financing of its work through voluntary donations sought annually and through funding appeals for specific projects.

Section 9: Admission of New Members.

Section 9.1 (a) Eligibility will read

“Membership of the WVA is open to anyone aged 18 years and over, who is resident in the Ward of Westcott, and who has provided a valid email address in acknowledgement of membership.

A member may be an individual, a corporate body, or an individual or corporate body representing an organisation, which is not incorporated.”

Section 9.5 Membership Fees will read

“The WVA will suspend until June 2023 the requirement to pay a membership fee, but instead will seek annual voluntary donations from members, or raise funds for specific projects by launching an Appeal for Funding.”

TEW introduced this item by confirming that it would require at least 75% of those attending the Meeting to vote in favour for the proposal to be approved. He went on to explain how the vote would be taken on Zoom.

TEW then gave an overview as follows:

- that the WVA was formed in 1974 instead of a Parish Council and that one of the key differences between the two is that a Parish Council can raise funds as a precept on residents' rates bills while the WVA can only request voluntary subscriptions and donations;
- that there has been - and may still be - a perception amongst some residents that the WVA is something of a club for a few in the Village though he believed action taken as a result of issues raised in the survey taken circa seven years ago had gone some way to dispelling this view;
- that participation and interest is also potentially influenced by the link between paying a subscription for membership which entitles a Member to vote at formal Meetings. (Note that a vote is the only entitlement. Anyone who is resident in Westcott can participate and receive communications, and can attend meetings and be heard whether they pay a subscription or not);
- the Committee have looked at ways to improve participation and interest and have agreed to put forward a temporary change as noted in the Proposal to break the link between paying a subscription and being a Member in order to emphasise that the WVA is important for every resident.

A summary of comments from meeting attendees on the Proposal included:

- maybe being a Parish Council is a better option as the precept would allow a paid Parish Clerk to be responsible for administration and management of village affairs. That being a Parish would also enable greater access to local sources of funding not available to the WVA. (Note that changing to a Parish Council was not a constituent of the proposal)
- whilst it is commendable for the Committee to want to encourage participation and for residents to voice their opinion, the fee should be retained to distinguish those who have paid to be a Member and those who have not. The fee was necessary to show that a resident buys into the WVA and therefore gives them the right to voice their opinions
- that collecting monies from residents should be based on an appreciation that the funds are used for good works to support and improve village life for residents generally rather than it being a membership fee so breaking the link is easy to do and reasonable to do, and in doing so, it would become easier to encourage residents to give money as a contribution for these good works
- that as the Committee and particularly the new Membership Secretary were in favour of the proposal that it should be supported
- that it shouldn't be assumed that residents will stop paying the £10 minimum currently suggested just because the entitlement to vote at a meeting didn't require any payment to be made
- During the discussion, it was made clear to attendees that the WVA is a completely separate organisation to both The Hut and The Reading Room with no formal links or influence over either of these two Westcott Charities.

After all comments had been made, TEW called for a vote, the outcome of which was that less than 75% of votes were cast in support of the change and therefore the proposal failed. The Constitution remains unchanged.

9 To answer questions raised by Members in advance of the Meeting:

There were no questions asked in advance.

10. To conduct any other business relating to the WVA:

The Chairman asked if there were any matters arising:

Picking up on Bernd Ratzke's comment that the District Valuer would need to assess whether the final proposals for the provision of a surgery and a Village Hall and probably housing developments were of sufficient value to for the Hut and the Reading Room Charities, **Helen Everett** asked how the 'wellbeing and social benefit value' of the proposals would be ascertained and assessed by the District Valuer.

BR answered that this was an important point and it was not clear at this stage how that would be done. However, it was important that given that all Westcott residents are the beneficiaries of both the Hut and Reading Room Charities, it is vital that all residents express their opinion when the time comes so their wishes can be taken into account.

Gordon Williams asked if there had been any further progress on the MVDC Development Plan. TEW confirmed it was still under consideration by the Council with the next step likely to be a publication for comments - but not consultation. It is not clear how the impact of the current pandemic will change or influence the plan. The Meeting was reminded by James Friend that Plan proposals were just that, and any developments would be subject to the normal planning application protocols when objections can be raised and considered.

Kevin Foo volunteered to be part of a Working Party to look at and consider how to attract younger people from Westcott to volunteer for community roles and for the WVA. TEW thanked KF for putting himself forward and suggested they plus James Friend meet to discuss and develop this theme.

AGM Conclusion:

There being no further questions and no further business, Tim Way thanked residents for their support in attending the AGM and expressing their views which helps to form the basis of everything which the WVA did on their behalf. TEW also thanked all members of the Committee for their time, effort and expertise as he looked forward to another year

The meeting closed at 21:31.

PRG

30th June 2021

AGM Attendees: As noted from Zoom screens.

Some potential mistakes and omissions given names used on Zoom. Apologies for those.

Alan Reif
Alda and Gill Andreotti
Andrew
Ann Baden
Bernd Ratzke
Clare McMillan
Clive Acres
Colin and Hazel Pilbeam
Don Rolt
Elisa and Ian Davey
Madelaine & Steve Brooks
Edwina and Andrew Gordon
Helen Exerett
Isolde and Roger Christian
Iain Grainger
Libby Witt
Imogen Merjuetbaker
Imogen Barker
Gordon Williams
Kevin Foo
Norma Hitchcock
Ruth Bergman
Elizabeth Watson
Richard & Judith Packer
Graham Laglee
Murray Stephen
Paul and Carol Morris
Peggy
Geoff Muge
Timothy
Veronica Lawton
Hazel Watson
James Friend
Tim Way
Sally Hewetson
Edwin Harland
Andrew Copeland
Simon Bradley
Sandra Ede
Paul Goddard