



Minutes of the Third Annual General Meeting of the Westcott Village Association held at Holy Trinity Church Thursday 30th June 2022 from 7.30pm

Minutes are recorded by Agenda item number as follows:

1. Opening & Welcome: Chairman Tim Way (TEW) opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and making all aware of the requirements for the safe conduct of the evening.

TEW noted the Agenda, Chairman's Report, Trustees' Report and Accounts together with the draft minutes of the 2021 AGM had been made available on the WVA website from mid - June for all WVA members and Westcott residents to read and review in advance of the AGM.

2. Apologies: Apologies were received from Nick Lund, Sally Hewetson, Edwina & Andrew Gordon, Andrea Gabb, Madeleine & Steve Brooks, Ted Wilde, Jacki & Jon Moss.

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

No comments had been raised prior to this meeting or by those attending. The minutes were proposed by Tim Gowing, seconded by Alda Andreotti and unanimously approved by the meeting as a true record of proceedings at the 2021 AGM.

4. To consider matters arising from these Minutes:

No matters were raised in the Meeting arising from the Minutes. The Chairman has dealt with anything specifically in the first part of his written Report.

5. To receive the Chairman's Report:

TEW referred to his report and did not read it verbatim. He summarised the year as one of some progress across a number of important areas in Westcott but perhaps not quite as much progress as he would have liked. He singled out the positive feedback received relating to the Christmas tree and carol singing on the Green as a notable highlight. A summary of the recent application of annual subscription income is attached as an appendix to these minutes for information. It is also on the WVA website.

TEW asked attendees if they had any specific questions – none were asked – then confirmed any questions or comments could still be raised under item nine of the Agenda.

TEW then commented on three specific strategic matters he personally felt it important to outline - as follows:

- i) **CIL monies are available** to fund projects that improve the village but that there is a risk they will be lost unless ideas and proposals are submitted by Westcott residents soon. This is not least because MVDC are making changes to the way CIL is allocated such that even

though building developments in Westcott generate funds, they can now be allocated to eligible projects in other parts of Mole Valley if the Council decides. TEW emphasised project proposals need to benefit the village but cannot be Highways based. He suggested they are orientated towards families and young people to help attract families which in turn would help to safeguard the future of village facilities such as the school and sports club. Any ideas can be notified to the WVA by email – contact@westcottvillage.com - or directly to the Chairman.

ii) There are opportunities for us to think bigger about what the village offers, and he quoted the following examples:

- Future opportunities for the Hut and Reading Room sites
- Huge opportunity to reinvigorate the sports facilities
- Future of Riverbank surgery
- Empty retail outlets could be opportunities for new offerings
- The new vicar is young and very community oriented presenting a new opportunity for community projects

But he emphasised that whilst these are opportunities, they can only be realised if those living in the village are prepared to use their considerable expertise and talents to help. It needs time, effort and energy to be committed to get things done.

iii) Maybe it is time to reconsider whether Westcott should have a Parish Council:

He noted that the WVA had been formed in 1974 but that much had changed or is changing which might influence residents to consider how best to serve and administer local matters in the village 'to get things done' including:

- a) Proposed Boundary Commission changes which will lead to three Councillors taking responsibility for a significant area including Westcott which is likely to severely reduce their effectiveness to pursue important village matters on our behalf
- b) Local government changes which would create a Unitary Authority for Surrey instead of local councils such as MVDC
- c) that it is clear that residents associations such as the WVA are weaker and have less influence locally than Parish Councils so are treated less favourably
- d) that it is becoming harder to encourage active participation in voluntary village institutions – people who will do rather than just proffer advice or ideas. A Parish Council would have a paid clerk to take on administrative duties

TEW told the meeting that he is convinced it is time to reconsider a move to becoming a Parish Council. It will involve time and effort, but he believes the future of Westcott as an independent village would be better served if a Parish Council was formed which would have elected representatives for all parts of the village and take on responsibilities the WVA does not have. He committed that the WVA would consider the idea further and asked for volunteers to come forward to help in the assessment process as it is very unlikely the WVA Committee could take on this task without support.

Heather Shakespeare asked if there were any plans for new occupants of the two vacant shops suggesting that a village café might be an idea. TEW replied that both units were privately owned, and he wasn't aware of any plans. Jon Mears indicated that there might be some news on a new café in the village before the end of the year.

Car parking provision for residents and visitors was raised – again – as a real and ongoing problem. Whilst there was some discussion, no solutions were forthcoming.

6. To receive the Annual Accounts

Edwin Harland (EH) explained that the final WVA accounts for the period to 31st March 2022 had been approved by the WVA Committee and by Hugh Parry, Independent Examiner.

EH noted that income exceeded expenditure for the year by some £2200 though subscriptions and donations fell by £300 or nearly 9%. Gift Aid of over £450 was received in the year from about two thirds of those subscribing. WESTFest 2021 income was nearly £1000 which is expected to be matched this year too following a successful Tombola and Treasure Hunt last week. Expenditure of a capital nature in support of key projects is significantly down on last year though this year the cost of a new notice board less a Surrey Council grant arranged by Councillor Hazel Watson is included. EH thanked Hazel for arranging this.

Some discussion took place concerning how many households make a contribution to WVA funds. EH estimated this to be about 25% of Westcott households.

As at the end of March 2022, the bank balance was over £10,000.

EH encouraged all attendees to speak to their friends and neighbours and ask them to contribute what they could. He particularly asked everyone to pay by Standing Order on or around 1st June annually and where eligible to pay with Gift Aid. He stressed that it is no longer necessary to physically sign off a Gift Aid form. An email confirming it can be claimed is sufficient.

EH noted that where existing Street Stewards were prepared to continue to knock on doors and collect subscriptions by whatever means the resident wishes to pay, this would continue but given the lack of interest generally in performing the Street Steward role, the effort needed is to persuade all residents to pay by Standing Order wherever 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 – proposed by Simon Bradley and seconded by Tim Gowing.

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, Edwin Harland as Treasurer, Paul Goddard as Secretary, Sally Hewetson as Membership Secretary, Jo Astor, James Leaver, Nick Lund and Jon Mears.

These nominations were proposed en masse by John Gabb, seconded by Isolde Trenter 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. In addition, he would encourage residents to take part in sub-committee activity if possible.

Howard Walden offered to rejoin the Committee. TEW welcomed this and said the appointment would be considered and voted on at the next Committee meeting.

Hugh Parry has indicated his willingness to stand as Independent Examiner for 2022/23. His nomination was proposed by Simon Bradley, seconded by Alda Andreotti and unanimously approved by the Meeting.

8. To consider the proposal to change WVA Membership Criteria based on the 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:

To consider the proposal to change WVA Membership Criteria as follows:

- The Trustees will suspend payment of membership fees for two years as a trial – 22/23 & 23/24 – and will reassess the position for 24/25
- All Westcott residents aged 18 and over will be eligible to attend, speak and vote at any WVA meetings at which a vote is called, and will be encouraged to participate in village activities as Members of the WVA

The reasons for this proposed change were outlined to the Meeting by Paul Goddard - see Appendix 1 for the full text of what he said verbatim – in essence the change is to encourage greater participation and interest in the activities of the organisation.

Prior to any discussion or questions from the floor and a vote being taken on the proposal, TEW explained that only paid-up Members of the WVA could vote and that it would require at least 75% of those attending to vote in favour for the proposal to be approved. He also said that given there were many non-Members at the meeting, out of interest, after the Members vote, he would also take a non-binding vote of every one present.

Richard Packer suggested that the proposal be amended from 'suspension of payment' to 'setting a nil payment' which has the same effect but reflects Trustees powers within the Constitution. The meeting accepted this amendment without further discussion. No other comments or concerns were raised prior to the Chairman calling for the vote.

The result of the Members vote was unanimous with a recorded 29 voting for the proposal with none against and no abstentions.

When all meeting attendees were asked their preference, the count of probably over 50 heads in the meeting was again unanimous with no one opposing or abstaining.

There followed some discussion prompted by comments from some non-Members who recounted a situation some 20 years ago when the WVA gave them no backing or assistance as they sought residents' support for council funding for playground equipment and a skate park. TEW wasn't aware of this situation and in conclusion, assured those raising these concerns that the WVA of today would have been positive and very supportive in similar circumstances.

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

Two questions were raised in advance of the meeting:

1) could the emergency services – particularly the Fire Brigade - be prevented from reaching an emergency in Westcott's narrow roads Answer: They will do whatever is necessary to get there plus they are aware of narrow streets such as Parsonage Lane and will send a small tender instead and

2) with the proposal to suspend subscriptions, where will the WVA source its funds for projects from? The answer to this has been covered within the presentation in point 8 of the Agenda

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

The Chairman asked if there were any matters arising:

A Resident asked about the status of the application for Double Yellow Lines to be marked on the top of Westcott Street by the A25 by Nisa to prevent dangerous parking. As noted at the Open Meeting in March, this matter is with Surrey Highways who work to their own prescribed timetable. Attempts will be made by the WVA to establish the status of this application and the likely timescales to completion.

A Resident noted how fast and how noisily traffic often came through the Village and queried what traffic calming ideas had been suggested. TEW confirmed that a raft of ideas had been submitted to Surrey Highways, but all had been rejected so Speedwatch activity was vital in demonstrating to the police, at least the high levels of speeding vehicles the village experiences.

Alda Andreotti commented that she still believed it was worth trying again to extend the 30mph boundaries beyond their current position.

Another Resident suggested parking cars on the A25 within the village to act as a traffic calming measure as this would slow up traffic. TEW confirmed the WVA would work with the Resident to explore the legality and practicality of this idea given it is an A road.

Note post meeting: As there are double white lines in the centre of the road, parking is not permitted under the terms of the Highway Code where the resident was proposing to park cars.

On behalf of the WVA Committee, PRG urged more volunteers to come forward to train as Speed Watch activists. Recording speeding vehicles is anecdotally leading to decreased speeds at least when the volunteers are on the streets, and at the moment is an excellent way to provide data to the police to demonstrate there is a real speeding problem in the Village. The police use the data to communicate to offenders and also probably to determine how often and where to place their mobile speed traps. The existing volunteers are stretched – we need many more to give the checks more bite. Please volunteer, or at least ask for more information on what it involves, by email contact@westcottvillage.com or get in touch with Nick Lund direct on nlund74@gmail.com

Note post meeting: one person has come forwards – thank you. More volunteers are urgently required please.

A Resident suggested that installing an Electric Vehicle Charging Station in an appropriate location in the village where owners of an electric vehicle had no immediate off street parking available to provide their own facility could be a CIL Project idea.

Note post meeting: the WVA is discussing this idea with MVDC.

Bek Taylor made two points to the meeting

- 1) She pointed out that the WVA had provided much needed funding for the Westcott Ladies cricket team to buy equipment when they formed a few years ago. She wanted to thank the WVA again for this.
- 2) She asked if the WVA would be prepared to support, promote and possibly fund in some way a Fireworks / Bonfire night on or around the 5th November as a village community event. She indicated the Sports Club were not confident of staging this without support.

The Chairman suggested that Bek prepare a written brief and attend the WVA Committee meeting scheduled for 1st September to discuss this idea further, but he warned that it would require volunteers and support from residents other than the WVA Committee for this idea to have any chance of success.

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 formal meeting closed at 21:05 after which refreshments were served.

PRG

20th July 2022

AGM Attendees: As noted on sign in sheet and observation – some potential mistakes and omissions for which I apologise.

Alda and Gill Andreotti, Andrew Lewis, Ann Baden, Bernd Ratzke,, Colin Pilbeam, Don & Sue Rolt, Elisa and Ian Davey, Isolde Trenter, Roger Christian, Richard & Judith Packer, Hazel Watson, James Friend, Simon Bradley, Sandra Ede, Paul Goddard, John Gabb. J Shipton, Nick Jordan- Moss, Jakki & Rob Phillips, Bek Taylor, Simon Mabley, Edward Bennett, Tim Gowing, Edward Harris, Ben Fisher, Anita & Daniel Dudley, Bud Collins, Dominic Babdela, Tony Winch, Howard Walden, Andy Johnson, Heather Shakespeare, Martin Finnis, John Clachan, Tim Way, Edwin Harland, Paul Goddard, James Leaver, Jo Astor, Jonathan Mears.

Appendix 1: Full text of the presentation by Paul Goddard under item 8:

Good evening everyone:

Those of you who attended last year's AGM on Zoom will recognise the essence of this proposal - it wasn't voted through.

Those of you who attended the open meeting in March will also recognise it. I presented at the meeting so we could gauge the mood and seek feedback - knowing that the Committee was minded to put forward a proposal at this AGM.

No vote was taken at the open meeting, but the comments and feedback were very positive and so we have decided to table a proposal this evening.

So – why?

Because the Committee fervently believes it is appropriate to allow and encourage, all adult Westcott residents to be members of the WVA and to actively participate and contribute in anything the WVA do – whether it's a meeting with a vote or any other activity – especially given all WVA charitable objectives listed in the constitution are for 'the public benefit' of all residents of Westcott.

Currently, membership of the WVA is open to those who pay a household subscription of £10 as determined by the Trustees. Only Members can vote at meetings. Some have said £10 is a small

price to pay but for some residents it is a deterrent, both as a cash outlay of £10 and - possibly more so - for the principle of paying to have a voice in a charitable organisation set up for 'the public benefit'.

The WVA already strives to represent all residents, and in return, the Committee wants all residents to take an interest, feel included and wherever possible to contribute and participate with no barriers. Greater participation will make the WVA more effective so if payment of a subscription in order to be a member is a potential barrier, then we want to remove that barrier.

Some of you will be thinking that a trial suspension of subscriptions will be detrimental to WVA activities:

Well – please let me reassure you otherwise:

The WVA currently has about £10,000 cash available to spend

As you can see in the accounts, spend in the last year - net of the notice board grant - was less than £3,000.

Whilst we are actively looking at whether, and how, to finance a refurbishment of the bus stop roof, and the dovecote, we don't have any other costly projects in the pipeline.

If projects do come up that are beyond our financial means, then as Tim has pointed out already, we can apply for the CIL monies or maybe even launch a 'crowd funding' exercise with residents if we can prove the worth of the idea.

But.....we firmly believe households currently paying a membership fee will continue to pay their standing orders and bank transfers as donations, with gift aid, and continue their financial support for the WVA. We urge you to do this please if the proposal is adopted.

If anyone has paid their 22/23 subscription but wants it refunded if the proposal is voted adopted then, in confidence, please ask the Treasurer.

The availability of CIL monies was discussed at length at the March open meeting and the relevant slides are on the WVA website. It is a live source of funding and is something we urgently need your ideas and help to access.

So..... while we are not saying that raising cash is not important, the Committee feel that right now, doing everything we can to encourage greater participation in the WVA and Westcott activities is more important.

Hence the proposal that has been put forward – which every Committee member supports and will vote for.

I commend it to this meeting.

END

Appendix 2: Your annual subscriptions to the WVA have been used

In the last 18 months to:

- Purchase laptop computers for Surrey Hills All Saints Primary School
- Install a second Defibrillator in Westcott Village, and organise the monitoring and ongoing maintenance of these
- Launch the Speed Watch monitoring patrols in the village, including the purchase of equipment and training of volunteers
- Run a “stop / control dog fouling” campaign installing new Dog Poo bins and signage in the worst affected areas
- With financial support from Westcott Gardeners Club and Westcott 100 Club, purchase, erect and decorate a Christmas tree on The Green
- Organise a carol singing evening with the Holy Trinity Church Choir around the Christmas tree
- Organise what hopefully will be an annual litter pick in the village plus sign cleaning and clearing vegetation around traffic signs
- Provide seed funding to the Green Westcott group

In the last 5 years to:

- Install new benches on Westcott Heath
- Sponsor Achievement Awards at Surrey Hills All Saints Primary School
- Purchase cricket equipment for the Westcott Sports Club Ladies team

Working with Surrey County and Mole Valley District Councils, the WVA has:

- Represented Villagers’ views on planning matters and the draft Local Plan
- Continued to press the owner of The Cricketers / Indigo Spice to put forward a meaningful planning application which complies with the Westcott Neighbourhood Development Plan
- Installed a new electronic 30mph speed warning sign on the A25 by Milton Avenue
- Erected a full-size goal on Cradhurst recreation ground
- Purchased a new village notice board, sited next to the bus stop on the Green after successfully applying for 75% of the cost to be funded by Surrey County Council

Prepared by the WVA Committee – June 2022