



## **Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Westcott Village Association held at Holy Trinity Church 7.30pm Thursday 29th June 2023**

Minutes are recorded by Agenda item as follows:

**1. Opening & Welcome:** Secretary Paul Goddard (PRG) opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and making all aware of the requirements for the safe conduct of the evening.

PRG noted the Agenda, Committee's Report, Trustees' Report and Accounts together with the draft minutes of the 2022 AGM had been made available on the WVA website from mid June for all Westcott residents to read and review in advance of the AGM.

**2. Apologies:** Received from Gill Andreotti, Ann Baden, Rob & Liz Potter and Tim Way.

**3. To adopt the Minutes of the 2022 AGM of the WVA:**

No comments had been raised prior to this meeting or by those attending. The minutes were proposed by Al Barnett, seconded by Tim Gowing and unanimously approved by the meeting as an accurate and complete record of proceedings at the 2022 AGM.

**4. To consider matters arising from these Minutes:**

No matters were raised in the meeting arising from the 2022 AGM Minutes. The Committee have dealt with anything arising specifically in their Committee Report.

**5. To receive the Report of the Committee:**

PRG recommended that attendees read the Committee Report in full – available on the WVA website – if they hadn't done already, He used the report as the framework to summarise key activities undertaken and progressed in 22/23 by the Committee and also some key concerns. Committee members made additional comments and emphasised others. They also took questions from attendees.

The additional comments included the following:

- James Leaver noted committee concerns that the combination of the delayed Local Plan and MVDC housing land supply at less than three years instead of a mandated five years, will lead developers to take advantage as evidenced by the appeal lodged for Sondes Place against the refusal of planning permission early in June. This poses real and current concerns. The WVA are considering how to respond to this appeal in the fight to stop Dorking and Westcott merging and to stop green belt land being built upon. [Post Meeting: The WVA have sent a letter to MVDC recommending how the appeal should be conducted – see WVA website]
- That a representation on the AONB boundary consultation has been submitted by WVA to argue that land to the NW of Dorking should be included. This was completed with help from Clive Smith of the AONB and has been supported by our new Local Councillors.

- Nancy Lund spoke on behalf of Green Westcott / the Community Garden charting what had been done to establish the garden on land in the St John's graveyard. She said residents are welcome to go and help and chat every Saturday between 10am and 1pm.
- Jon Mears urged all residents to use the Community Fridge at St Johns – it is open at 2.45pm every Tuesday afternoon for approximately 15 minutes. He emphasised the CF is not a Food Bank but a scheme to divert perfectly edible, in date food that has 'fallen out of the supply chain' for a variety of reasons and would otherwise go to landfill. He noted that the more food taken by residents each week, the more that will be made available in future so no one should feel they are depriving others by attending and taking what they can use.
- Jo Astor asked that anyone not on the WVA email circulation list give the WVA their email address in order to receive Newsletters and any other WVA email communications. She thanked Andrew Copeland for his valuable support and asked for feedback on website content and any gaps or problems. Jo confirmed she was happy to receive help and advice on improving the effectiveness of WVA social media applications. She is very happy to tag posts from other Westcott organisations and groups or share news from village businesses so please feel free to tag the WVA social media pages or send details to Jo directly to share.
- Paul Goddard urged Residents to volunteer for Speedwatch as a priority - we need many more to give the checks more bite. Even two to four hours a month per volunteer would make a real impact. Please volunteer, or at least ask for more information on what it involves, by email [contact@westcottvillage.com](mailto:contact@westcottvillage.com)
- Paul also stressed that about £1 million of Neighbourhood CIL (Community Infrastructure Levies) were available now for capital infrastructure projects in Mole Valley – that is for new or repair of existing infrastructure – and that resident resource is needed to identify and document projects for Westcott specifically and then apply for funding and manage the project to a conclusion. The next deadline for submissions is 2<sup>nd</sup> October and it's vital that – in addition to the school project – other requests are submitted too. It is possible that another £1 million will be available over the next three years so it is reasonable to aim for an ongoing pipeline of projects.

On behalf of the Westcott Educational Trust, Peter Hewetson provided a brief overview of a CIL application made by the Trust on behalf of All Saints School for £63k to build a play-slope on some unused space within the school boundary. He commented that the bid is consistent with the current Westcott Neighbourhood Development Plan.

- Nick Lund noted that we need to ensure wherever possible the right balance between parking for residents and parking to support commercial businesses but that the WVA had no enforcement powers. He noted that an application has been submitted for double yellow lines to be marked on the top of Westcott Street by the A25 by Nisa to prevent dangerous parking. He understands this will be considered by SCC later this year. Outside the closed Balchins Stores, he confirmed plans are in place to reinstate the 20 minute waiting sign and associated road markings and he hoped the abandoned white van will be removed by police very soon
- James noted that the Westcott Neighbourhood Development Plan needs to be consulted on and updated by the end of 2025 and that housing and parking provision for residents and local businesses would be priority subjects to address.

- Highways and parking related issues were raised from the floor as follows:
  - Poor parking in the Burrell which hinders emergency vehicles
  - The danger of narrow pavements caused by a combination of foliage, tree roots, weeds and soil movement which compromise pedestrian safety – example of a mother pushing a pram on the pavement on the A25 adjacent to Westcott House / Faurefold where she had to put a wheel of her pram into the road to progress. It was noted that responsibility for rectifying problems was complicated by usually three parties being involved – Surrey County Council, MVDC and in this case the landowners.
  - NL suggested that in all cases, such problems should be reported to both SCC and MVDC via their web based reporting system so they can deal with matters potentially prejudicing public safety. Handy links are available on the WVA website under the Village then Report a Problem. He acknowledged that it was a difficult problem and one that needs to be tackled. [Post AGM note: the Committee will consider progressing a 'Westcott Pavement Review & Action Plan' when meeting for an AGM debrief on July 13<sup>th</sup>]
  - A resident who lives on the A25 commented that her house has started to shake when heavy vehicles go past. She says the problem had largely been remedied but road conditions have changed recently and the shaking has restarted. She agreed to discuss the matter with NL post meeting.
  - A resident commented on whether the Vicarage site development could be configured to provide parking / drop off space for school related traffic. Another questioned why the development hadn't started yet as the site was becoming a dangerous problem because of vandals and other trespassers. JL responded that the WVA were aware but this is a Guildford Diocese project and problem and it appears their Property Team is so woefully under resourced that progress is slow at best.

On behalf of the Westcott Village Hall Trust, (not part of, or the responsibility of the WVA), Bernd Ratzke confirmed that the WVHT trustees had approved the appointment of architects, a planning consultant and a valuer to enable an options feasibility exercise to begin for the Hut and Westcott Village Hall (formerly Reading Room) sites. He expected this to lead to a village consultation later in the year on potential development options that then could lead to a planning application. He called this Plan A and a plan that the Trustees could retain full control of. He also addressed the approach made by Rushman Homes to the WVHT whereby Rushman would build a surgery and community centre on land adjacent to Rokefield in exchange the ability to develop the Hut and Reading Room sites. This approach will be considered at some stage but he called it Plan B as it would involve outside parties and would give the trustees less control in achieving their objectives.

PRG introduced the Local Councillors recently elected for the ward including Westcott and thanked them for attending this meeting.

## 6. To receive the Annual Accounts

**Edwin Harland** (EH) confirmed that the final WVA accounts for the period to 31st March 2023 had been approved by the WVA Committee and by Hugh Parry, Independent Examiner.

EH noted that expenditure exceeded income for the year by just over £200. Subscriptions and donations fell by £690 or 21% offset partly by an increase of other income of 7% or £236 excluding the one off grant received in 2022. The two most significant items of expenditure

were on defibrillator cabinets at £1400 and £774 for advertising supporting the School Open Day in November 2022.

As at the end of March 2023, the bank balance was just less than £10,000.

EH encouraged all attendees to speak to their friends and neighbours and ask them to contribute what they could as probably just 20% of Westcott Households currently make a subscription/donation. 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 from anyone who pays tax – sent to [contact@westcottvillage.com](mailto:contact@westcottvillage.com)

EH thanked Hugh Parry for his support as Independent Examiner of the WVA Accounts.

The Accounts were then received and approved unanimously – proposed by Judith Packer and seconded by Tim Gowing.

EH also updated residents on a forthcoming village led 'Dog Waste project' that the WVA would be actively supporting. He hoped the project would start soon and ideas and actions would be published.

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

All seven current Committee Members / Trustees put themselves forward for re-election. No one else was proposed. All were re-elected unanimously by the meeting – that is Jo Astor, Paul Goddard, Edwin Harland, Sally Hewetson, James Leaver, Nick Lund and Jon Mears.

PRG noted that at least two of the current Committee including the Treasurer have indicated this will be their last year of office. To ensure continuity and resilience, new Committee members are needed as soon as possible.

Hugh Parry has indicated his willingness to stand as Independent Examiner for 2023/24 and this was unanimously approved by the Meeting.

### **8. To answer questions and comments raised by Members in advance of the Meeting:**

Questions raised were either addressed in the meeting with answers included above or replies will be sent after the meeting.

### **9. To conduct any other business relating to the WVA:**

Debbie Aston, Chair of Governors All Saints School Westcott, gave a brief overview of activity and progress at the School noting that the Good Shepherd Trust had recently given a long term commitment for its support. Debbie invited residents to a School Open Day on 7<sup>th</sup> July.

Heather Shakespeare thanked the WVA Committee for their time and commitment to the welfare of residents and the village as a whole. Generous applause followed! Thank you!

### **AGM Conclusion:**

There being no further questions and no further business, PRG thanked residents for their support in attending the AGM and expressing their views. The formal meeting closed at 21:05 after which refreshments were served.

PRG 30<sup>TH</sup> June 2023

END