



Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Westcott Village Association held at Holy Trinity Church 7.30pm Thursday 26TH June 2025

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, 2024/25 Committee Annual Report, 2024/25 Trustees' Report and Accounts together with the draft minutes of the 2024 AGM had been made available on the WVA website for all Westcott residents to read and review in advance of the AGM.

2. Apologies: Received from Alda Andreotti, Gill Andreotti, Tony Astor, Richard Packer and Cllr Hazel Watson.

3. To adopt the Minutes of the 2024 AGM of the WVA:

No comments had been raised prior to this meeting or by those attending. The minutes were proposed by Tim Gowing, seconded by Tim Way & Judith Packer & unanimously approved by the meeting as an accurate and complete record of proceedings at the 2024 AGM.

4. To consider matters arising from these Minutes:

No matters were raised in the meeting arising from the 2024 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 and residents read the Committee Report in full – available on the WVA website – if they hadn't done already. The report summarises key activities undertaken and progressed in 24/25 by the Committee including responding to several public consultations during the period.

One such consultation was by MVDC on the Dorking Masterplan which originally included a proposal to pedestrianise West Street which was rejected but replaced by a proposal to divert HGV's away from West Street and the High Street. Councillor Leah Mursaleen-Plank, in attendance, confirmed there was considerable opposition to this proposal and she hopes to have a more positive update on this matter in due course.

There was a discussion about how to explain, particularly to new Westcott residents, the role of the WVA and to encourage all residents to continue with their annual donations.

6. To receive the Annual Accounts

Maghesh Ramakrishnan (MR) confirmed that the final WVA accounts for the period to 31st March 2025 had been approved by the WVA Committee and by Hugh Parry, Independent Examiner.

MR noted that expenditure exceeded income for the year by £513. Donations were marginally better than the previous year +7% although in themselves they were -15% lower

than the year before. The most significant item of expenditure was a £3,000 donation to the Westcott Village Hall Trust to provide financial support for the work to submit their planning application. As at the end of March 2025, the bank balance was just over £12,289 with no significant outstanding commitments.

However, it was noted that the WVA had committed £6k to the Westcott Village Forum to fund the work on the Westcott Neighbourhood Development Plan (WNDP) in lieu of a future Central Government grant to cover the costs. However, in the latest Spending Review, Central Government have withdrawn such grants so specifically, they are no longer available to local communities wanting to implement a Neighbourhood Development Plan. Therefore the meeting was informed that the cost of updating the WNDP will now fall solely to the WVA and will not be recoverable – at least not in the current circumstances.

MR encouraged all attendees to speak to their friends and neighbours and ask them to contribute what they could to the WVA. Or they can consider making physical donations to WVA activities such as the Bottle Tombola.

There was discussion about increasing awareness of the role of the WVA and reminding people of the need for donations to support its work.

MR 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 Bernt Ratzke.

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

Four of the current Committee Members / Trustees have put themselves forward for re-election and in addition, Jane Betterton and James Croft were both proposed as new Trustees with the full support of the Committee. No one else was proposed. This follows the decision by James Leaver not to seek re-election and to stand down as Trustee at the AGM.

All six nominees were elected unanimously by the meeting – that is Jo Astor, Paul Goddard, Nick Lund, Magesh Ramakrishnan, Jane Betterton and James Croft.

James Leaver was thanked by the Committee and all in attendance for his significant contribution to the WVA whilst in office and for his continued efforts to support the updating of the Westcott Neighbourhood Development Plan in the future. His support for a variety of village activities and organisations was noted. James acknowledged that he will conclude the ongoing matters he is still involved in and would remain available for advice if required.

Hugh Parry has indicated his willingness to stand as Independent Examiner for 2025/26 and this was unanimously approved by the Meeting.

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

No questions were asked in advance of the meeting.

Brenda Hemus asked if the Committee knew what was happening to the property of Richard Wallace. Tim Way commented that there was no update as the property is in private ownership. The Committee wished Richard well.

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

There being no further questions and no further business, PRG thanked residents for their support in attending the AGM and expressing their views.

PRG finished the meeting by reminding everyone how important it is to complete the **Community Survey** and if relevant the **Housing Needs Survey** before the 20th July 2025 deadline. These are both currently available online with paper copies if needed also available at Holy Trinity, Riverbank Surgery, The Village Hub and the Prince of Wales. The results will be used to inform the updated policies of the Westcott Neighbourhood Development Plan 2026 to 2036.

The formal AGM meeting closed at 2000hrs

Immediately following, our two local Councillors Abhi Magesh and Leah Mursaleen-Plank presented on the status of **Local Government Re-organisation and what this could mean for Westcott**. A copy of their presentation slides will be available on the WVA website together with presentation material from the AGM.

A public consultation has been launched by the Central Government, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) on the proposed changes to the organisation of Local Government and residents are encouraged to make their views known as part of this process. The consultation can be found by following this link

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/local-government-reorganisation-in-surrey>

The consultation period closes on at **5pm on 5th August 2025**. The WVA will be formally replying to this consultation but as with all consultations, high numbers of respondents helps confirm opinion so all residents are urged to respond.

The presentation was well received and several pertinent questions and observations were made. Our Councillors emphasised that they – that is MVDC - were trying and would continue to try to safeguard existing local services as far as they are able.

James Leaver made the point it seems likely that the interpretation of what constitutes Grey Belt land may well lead to infill development between Westcott and Dorking. Cllr Magesh responded that Planning Officers were working to Central Government guidelines with little room to manoeuvre

Abhi and Leah were thanked for their time & refreshments were served.

Thanks are due to Holy Trinity Church for hosting the meeting.

JA/PRG 29th June 2025

END

Those Attending: 28 in total as follows:

Colin Pilbeam, Bernd Ratzke, Judith Packer, Francesca Leaver, Brenda Hemus, Katie Lewis, Andrew Lewis, Nancy Lund, Tim Way, Cllr Abhiram Magesh, Jane Betterton, Olga Kurushina, James Croft, Tim Gowing, Simon Mabley, Cllr Leah Mursaleen-Plank, Abi Mabley, Edward Wilde, Ian Hughes, Helen Everett, Heather Shakespeare, Mark Shakespeare, Rob Alloway, Jo Astor (WVA), Magesh Ramakrishnan (WVA), James Leaver (WVA), Nick Lund (WVA), Paul Goddard (WVA)