**WESTGATE-ON-SEA TOWN COUNCIL**

**ANNUAL REPORT**

**2017 - 2018**

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Westgate-on-Sea is a seaside town in north east Kent, England, with a population of 6,996 at the 2011 Census. Within the Thanet local government district the town has two sandy beaches which have remained a popular tourist attraction since the town's development in the 1860s from a small farming community.

In 1894, when the Local Government Act set up parish councils more than 190 residents petitioned for Westgate to be classified as an urban community, Westgate had the largest rateable value in Thanet at that time however the decision was taken to become a civil parish. In 1935 Westgate came under Margate Borough Council.

In 2015 an order was approved to create Westgate-on-Sea Town Council following a community governance review where residents of Westgate supported the creation of its own Town Council.

**WESTGATE-ON-SEA TOWN COUNCILLORS JULY 2018**

 ** **

 Cllr M Pennington Cllr H Page

 Chairman Vice Chairman

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Cllr J Cornford Cllr T King Cllr R Nightingale Cllr P O’Connor

****

Cllr R Rolfe Cllr H Scott Cllr M Scott

**COMMITTEES AND MEMBERSHIPS JULY 2018**

Westgate-on-Sea Town Council operates its powers and duties through a committee system. The Council and its committees make the policy decisions of the Council, the Town Clerk carries out the decisions of the Council and has some delegated powers under Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 to ensure the smooth day to day running of the Council.

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| **Finance and General Purposes Committee**Reviews the financial performance of the Council and considers monthly expenditure and budgets |  | **Events and Tourism Committee**Considers the organisation of events and how to increase tourism in the town |
| Cllr T King (Chairman) |  | Cllr R Nightingale (Chairman) |
| Cllr J Cornford |  | Cllr J Cornford |
| Cllr P O’Connor |  | Cllr T King |
| Cllr H Page |  | Cllr P O’Connor |
| Cllr M Pennington |  | Cllr M Pennington |
| Cllr R Rolfe |  | Cllr M Scott |
|  |  |  |
| **Human Resources Committee**Considers matters relating to staffing and policies |  |
| Cllr J Cornford (Chairman) |  |
| Cllr P O’Connor |  |
| Cllr H Page |  |
| Cllr M Pennington |  |

**COUNCIL ASSETS**

As the Town Council is still relatively new it is yet to acquire any substantial assets. It is currently negotiating with Thanet District Council to obtain Lymington Road recreation ground.

**EVENTS**

Westgate-on-Sea Town Council is committed to building and maintaining open communication lines with the residents of the Town. The website, Facebook, and Twitter pages are constantly being developed and all meeting documents are available from the Town Council’s website. The Town Council has plans to organise and support many community events throughout the year including: Putting on summer shows – Punch and Judy by the Sea; Remembrance Day Parade and Beacon Lighting; Pancake Day Races. For 2019 the Council is proposing Westgate-in-Bloom – supporting the Royal Horticultural Society community planting scheme to transform towns; the town will see more planting of flowers and a Westgate Day event.

**SERVICES**

Westgate-on-Sea Town Council now employ an operations team that provide a ‘top up’ cleansing service to that delivered by Thanet District Council. The team perform additional cleaning, litter picking and fly tipping removal services in Westgate and also support schools, groups and community organisations to improve the appearance of the town.

The Council has launched a Westgate Speedwatch Group and should be active very soon once the practical training has been undertaken.

The Council operates a Saturday Surgery every third Saturday of the month and if this is not convenient we can arrange a visit to the Council offices by prior appointment.

**ANNUAL REPORTS 2017/18**

**Cllr Thomas King, Chairman of the Council and Finance and General Purposes Committee**

The Council has provided various services to the Town such as weeding, sweeping, disposing of fly tipping and resident contact at Council offices with Town Clerk. The Allotment Working Group have also undertaken their first meeting with 3 tenants from the allotment gardens sitting on the Group. The Council also engages with outside bodies such as the Greek community to form ties and assist with fund raising. The Town Council are registered as a good cause for the Thanet Community Lotto, this can be accessed online via the Thanet District Council website. The Chairman takes part in the Thanet Area Committee who meet every 6 weeks, they report to Kent Association of Local Councils who report to National Association of Local Councils and ultimately to the Local Government Association who feed directly to the Government ministers. The Chairman feels strongly that joint working is the way forward for local councils, particularly as principal councils face a reduction in funds. This will assist with shaping how we live in Westgate, it is anticipated that more services will be enhanced by the Town Council 4 members of staff. As a result of the Annual Town Meeting a list of priorities and a programme of works will be drawn up to try to deliver what the local community deem as important issues for the Town.

**Cllr Roy Nightingale, Chairman of Events and Tourism Committee**

The Events and Tourism Committee is involved with community events.  Last year a Punch and Judy Show was provided for 3 days in August with over 800 people attending.  The Remembrance Parade was well attended last year, and it was particularly welcomed that Manston personnel were invited and involved in the event.  The Westgate Christmas Lights was another well received event and it was appreciated that the two cleansing operatives were able to assist at this one with the Westgate Against Rubbish team.  This year the Pancake Races were a success despite a couple of buses interrupting proceedings.  This year it is proposed to have another Punch and Judy event, Remembrance parade and the Beacon Event on 11th November 2018.  In respect to Tourism there have been improvements at the train station in the Town, there is now an attendant from 6am until 11am and this has resulted in a cleaner and tidier station as well as improved security.

**Cllr Hannah Scott, Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group**

The Westgate-on-Sea Neighbourhood Plan (WoSNP) Steering group was set up by the Town Council. They organised a meeting at the Pavilion and then a community survey in 2017 to gauge residents’ views.

The feedback showed that residents love the beaches, the heritage and green spaces of Westgate and want to protect and enhance these features. With regards to the development, residents were concerned about the use of the agricultural land and over development of the town, without proper infrastructure.

It was realised that, unfortunately, the Neighbourhood Plan did not have the power to reduce the number of houses planned in the Thanet District Council draft Local Plan, so the WoSNP Steering Group had to think of ways to ensure that the town achieved the best outcome given the circumstances.

The group are trying to ensure that any affordable houses built are offered to Westgate residents first and that any development includes the following stipulations:

1)    Limited use of grade 1 agricultural land.

2)   To not encroach on existing residents.

3)  Extensive natural green spaces within the development

4)   A mix of houses including:

A) Family homes

B) Homes for elderly to downsize to with some social and health care incorporated

C) Starter and affordable homes

5)    Houses designed in a way that fits in with Westgate, completely energy efficient and future looking.

6)    Infrastructure and services (doctor’s surgeries, schools, water resources, roads) provided, that are built at the same rate as the houses and not after completion.

**Cllr Joanna Cornford, Chairman of Human Resources Committee**

2018 has been an active year for the HR committee employing our new Town Clerk (Gill Gray)

Our HR committee is made up of the Town Council Chairman: Martyn Pennington, the Town Council Vice Chairman: Helen Page along with Councillors (Cllrs) Pauline O’Connor and Joanna Cornford.

The purpose of the committee is to oversee and support the Town Clerk; in most work places the day to day line management is undertaken by one person, this model does not work in a Town Council as no single Cllr has the statutory authority to make decisions, equally it is undesirable for the management of Town Council staff to be undertaken by the full council, which is where the HR committee come in.

The committee is bound by clear guidelines known as Terms of Reference or ToRs, these are available for viewing on our website www.westgateonsea.gov.uk

HR meets bi-monthly to discuss aspects of staff management, the officer of the Town Council is the Clerk and it is the Clerk who oversees all other staff on a day to day basis, how this is managed is the business of the committee who support and plan with the Clerk taking their recommendations back to Full Council for debate and hopefully approval.

The members of the HR committee are made up of individuals with experience in staff management along with recent training from the Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC). HR is a complex and challenging area and we are having to keep ourselves well informed on all legal aspects of employment which like many other areas of business are regularly upgraded. An example of these changes is the new data protection Act which came into being on the 25th May this year.

Running a Town Council is a business and must be treated as such, with all the policies and regulations in place alongside a strong Clerk, informed committees and informed debate from members at committee and as full council members.

Westgate on Sea Town Council will make a difference to the lives of those who live in this town, but it takes time, effort and understanding. From a HR perspective we are well on the road to delivering and protecting the needs of our residents.

**Cllr Martyn Pennington, Chairman of the Coastal Community Team**

The Coastal Community Team were implemented as part of a Government initiative to regenerate coastal towns who were experiencing similar problems. The Team comprises of enterprises from Westgate, schools, churches, heritage centre and CAAG. There is an economic plan in place to support the growth of jobs and services. The Team links closely to events and tourism and other teams and recently met with Government ministers to discuss the future.

The Team are proposing to apply for Government support to fund the renovation of shop canopies on Station Road and the Community Centre on Lymington Road.



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**YOUR COUNCIL TAX EXPLAINED**

In 2017/18 Westgate-on-Sea Town Council’s element of the Council Tax collected by Thanet District Council was £41.49 per band D property.

This amount is multiplied by the average number of band D properties to give the ‘precept’ value. The Precept is the amount that the District Council passes onto parish and town councils in order to allow them to carry out their powers and duties.

Westgate-on-Sea Town Council decided upon a precept of £98,040 for 2017/18. The increase covers the costs of the implementation of the new cleansing services to the town and recovering a portion of the reserves funding that the council has been previously using to cover the shortfall in the precept.

How do we compare to Parish and Town Councils in our area?

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Area** | **Tax Base** | **Precept** | **Band D 2017/18** |
| **2018/19** | **2018/19** | **£** |
| **£** | **£** |   |
| Acol | 112.73 | 6,879.00 | 61.02 |
| Birchington | 3,918.92 | 64,192.00 | 16.38 |
| Broadstairs & St Peters | 9,452.03 | 562,301.00 | 59.49 |
| Cliffsend | 720.99 | 15,510.00 | 21.51 |
| Manston | 491.30 | 18,527.00 | 37.71 |
| Margate | 12,525.84 | 137,500.00 | 10.98 |
| Minster | 1,199.55 | 61,321.00 | 51.12 |
| Monkton | 275.05 | 10,520.00 | 38.25 |
| Ramsgate | 11,395.29 | 705,596.00 | 61.92 |
| St Nicholas – at – Wade & Sarre | 397.37 | 20,993.00 | 52.83 |
| Westgate | 2,415.60 | 132,400.00 | 54.81 |

**Contact us:**



 01843 836182



 Admin@westgateonsea.gov.uk

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