

Local Plan Update

We were grateful to all those who came to the public meetings in Westgate-on-Sea and in Birchington to discuss the draft Local Development Plan from Thanet District Council, proposing 2,000 new houses for the Westgate area and 1,500 for Birchington, and especially to all who wrote to Thanet District Council with their comments.

The consultation period for the draft Local Plan has now closed at Thanet District Council. The Town Council responded to Thanet District Council and outlined our position, based on the following points:

1. The housing need is grossly overstated, because it is based on completely out-of-trend figures for Thanet population growth in a single year (2013-14). Figures for 2016-17 (July-June) show a return to the lower trends in earlier years. Moreover, it underestimates the additional accommodation which can be provided from currently unoccupied dwellings and does not take into account the proportion of elderly people in the existing population.
 2. The population density in Thanet in general, and in Westgate in particular, is already very high compared with the rest of Kent. Thanet, at 27%, is already far more 'built-on' than the neighbouring districts (eg. Dover at 8% and Canterbury at 9%). The population density tables for 2017 show a Kent average of 439 inhabitants/sq km, and a Thanet average of 1368 (so Thanet is already over 3 times the average for Kent), compared with Dover at only 368 and Canterbury at 531. The current population density in Westgate is already over 2,800!! The proposed allocations of new homes would double the population, and therefore the population density, of Westgate.
 3. Our schools and clinics are already overstretched. Westgate surgery is now over-subscribed, and adding residents will result in a deterioration in health care for all. Even within Thanet, Westgate is already a deprived area, with health indicators for life expectancy and disability considerably worse than average. The two primary schools in the area proposed for housing (St Crispins and Chartfield) are overcrowded and under-resourced.
 4. Additional housing would have to be built on prime agricultural land, which is contrary to the Government's food security and environmental plans post-Brexit.
- There are serious questions about the effects of increases in housing developments on the water table here.

In our view Thanet District Council should reject the 'one-size-fits-all' figures from Whitehall and insist on a more serious approach to local planning which takes the feelings of local people fully into account. Thanet is an exceptional case because of its level of deprivation – it is not part of the "rich south-east" as it is commonly perceived. Please check our website and Thanet District Council where further updates will be available in due course.

In September the Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC) held a free Community Resilience Workshop, numerous Parish and Town Councillors from Kent County attended. Community Resilience is the ability of a community to cope with an emergency situation. In our county flooding is the number one emergency situation. Here in Westgate on Sea many residents will remember flooding in the early 1970s when school boys canoed down Victoria Avenue, the WRVS served fish and chip lunches in the Walmer Castle (Greek Community Centre) and sadly there was one fatality. Since that time the number of residents has increased, the culture has changed and we now have the Town Council to assist with front line co-ordination for any emergency which might occur.

Many thanks for taking the time to read up on the news happening in your town! We would love to hear your thoughts for future editions of the newsletter - such as topics, events, editorial and overall design. Please contact the Town Clerk with your ideas.

Quarterly Newsletter of Westgate-on-Sea Town Council

“Westgate Talk”



A message from the Chair.

This is the time of year when Councils agree the level of Council tax for the coming financial year. Most of what you pay (about two thirds) goes to Kent County Council (where incidentally the ruling group voted itself a 15% pay increase; in Westgate, councillors work on a voluntary basis). Westgate Council gets a rather underwhelming 3% of what you pay. So what we decide has a very limited impact on your total bill, but we still want to ensure that any rise is kept to a minimum. It's true, we are ambitious for Westgate – we have a town we can be proud of – but we realise it has to be done within our means. So we are looking for ideas, like 'Westgate Day', that bring us all closer together and can be a success because of the goodwill and efforts of our residents, rather than depending on large sums of money.

A message from the Vice Chair.

Councillor Martyn Pennington Chairman



Well, what a fantastic Summer we had! It was great seeing the Town so busy and our beaches, bars and cafes bustling and lively. I met visitors who were loving their time here - some for the first time, who said Westgate is a gem. We're proud of it, aren't we! On that note, I'm delighted to tell you that plans for Westgate Day have started. Westgate Day is being created as the annual anniversary to celebrate our unique Town and will start in 2019. The date will be 18th July. After some interesting discussion with Dr Dawn Crouch, this date has been chosen from historical events which began the development and growth of Westgate in 1870. To mark the anniversary, our schools will be involved in Westgate-related projects to be submitted and judged for a prize-giving. On the Sunday after the anniversary there will be a Celebration Day for the whole Town. So, please make a note of these dates :- 18th July 2019 (Anniversary Day). 21st July 2019 (Celebration Day).

Please continue to put donations of non-perishable food/groceries into the Food Bank Collection Points, especially leading up to Christmas. Please donate whatever you are able to - no matter how small - it all helps. Thank you for your generosity.

Councillor Helen Page Vice Chair



The Town Council would like to welcome our new Town Councillor Robert Micallef who was co-opted to the Council on 2nd October 2018 and we hope that he will enjoy working with us to promote the Town.



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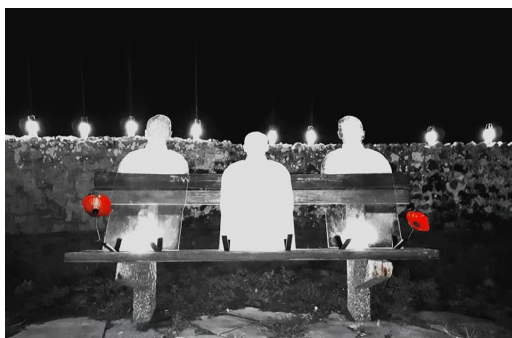


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Following the decision to close the stroke unit at QEQM hospital in Margate, there is now a likelihood that the Accident and Emergency facility will be closed. These measures ignore the wishes of local people and make the NHS less accessible for Westgate residents. Yet again, closures intended just to save money are being dressed up as improving efficiency.



Beacon Lighting Event



The Beacon Lighting Event took place on Sunday 11th November; the evening was a commemoration for the end of World War 1 and to remember the Fallen Men of Westgate-on-Sea who gave their lives 100 years ago.

It was a privilege to be involved in a true community event which the Town Council is proud to have organised with the support of local community groups who made the event the success that it was.

We would like to thank the Thanet Big Sing Community Choir, 438 and 2433 (Thanet) Squadron Air Training Corps, 1st Westgate-on-Sea Scout

Group, Revd. George Kalu, Revd. Andrew Way, P Wave Medical Limited, Millie's Beach Bar, Mr Joseph Fairbairn, Mr George Andrew and Mr Terry Pankhurst.



The event was sponsored by the Kent County Council Combined Members Grant Scheme – thanks to Cllr Emma Dawson and Cllr Liz Hurst for their kind support; a special thank you to Dr Dawn Crouch and the Westgate-on-Sea Heritage Centre Committee who kindly sponsored the purchase of the lanterns. It was wonderful to have the presence of our local Community Warden – Laura Bungard and our local PCSO – Suzie Waldie-Temple who stood in the cold to help with the stewarding for the event.



Nimy Company Living History Group

The three men who are local residents who attended in the Burma uniforms were a great addition and we would like to thank them for being so accommodating and playing an active part in the event.

We are pleased to confirm that we raised £55.34 during the evening; this will be donated to the Royal Air Force Benevolent Fund which is the leading Air Force welfare charity.

We hope that everyone who attended enjoyed the experience and we look forward to working with the local community on our planned future events and initiatives.

Unveiling and Dedication of the Commemorative Plaque on Lymington Recreation Ground.



The Town Council was pleased to attend and support the event for the unveiling and dedication of the commemorative plaque at Lymington Recreation Ground.

The Land at Lymington Road was purchased in 1920 with money raised by public subscriptions to be a Recreation Ground as a permanent memorial to men of Westgate-on-Sea who died in the Great War.

There has never been anything to denote this as the site and it is hoped that this plaque will do this.



We are pleased to confirm that the new bins for the Town are now all out on site; we hope you agree they make a welcome addition to the street scene. The Town Council has worked in collaboration with Thanet District Council to get the 16 new bins installed; thank you to the Thanet District Council minor works team who liaised with the Town Clerk to get the bins installed quickly and efficiently. We hope that the addition of these bins will help to tackle some of the litter problems in the Town. We are emptying them all once a week at the moment but this will be monitored; if you do notice any bin in particular that is regularly overflowing please do get in touch to report to us at admin@westgateonseas.gov.uk.



The Town Council welcomed Fido to the Town last month; as you can see the driver had some assistance from one of our canine residents. Thank you to the operator from Thanet District Council for helping to raise awareness of the issue of dog fouling and clearing some of the high footfall areas in the Town.

We have two locations in the Town where dedicated bags for dog waste are available free of charge; one at West Bay and another at Lymington Road recreation ground and we now have a supply of bags to replenish if needed. If you do notice that the dispensers are empty please contact us at admin@westgateonseas.gov.uk.

Community Surgeries

Police Community Support Officer surgeries are the first Wednesday of every month at Westgate library between 14:00 – 15:30 hours. Please pop in to see Suzie Waldie-Temple with any concerns or queries that you have in relation to police matters.

Town Council surgeries are the third Saturday of every month at Westgate library.... between 10.00 – 11.30 hours. Please come along to discuss any issues that concern you as a resident or having an interest in the community. **Kent County Council Community Warden** can be contacted at Westgate library; please leave Laura Bungard a note if you are passing the library or alternatively she can be contacted by email at laura.bungard@kent.gov.uk.



The Westgate-on-sea Speedwatch initiative is going well, we now have seven volunteers who are giving up their free time to raise awareness of road safety and help to record any persistent speeding motorists in the Town. The volunteers currently taking part are four Town Councillors, the Town Clerk and two local residents.

If you would like to get involved and help towards making Westgate roads safer for both motorists and pedestrians then please do contact us at admin@westgateonseas.gov.uk.

Christmas Lighting Event for the Town- Sunday 2nd December 2018

The Christmas Switch On for the Town this year is on Sunday 2nd December 2018; we know how popular this event is and as always are happy to support the organisers who make the event a success for the whole community.

Pancake Races—5th March 2019

The Westgate Pancake Race is a charitable non profit event which will take place on Tuesday 5th March 2019, on Station Road, Westgate. We hope to see you there!

Westgate in Bloom—April and July 2019

We want to launch Westgate in Bloom initiative next year and are looking for volunteers (this can be as an individual or community group) to help plant and manage flower beds; if you would like to get involved please contact admin@westgateonseas.gov.uk for further details.

Westgate Day 21st July 2019

The Town Council is proposing to launch a new event for next year, which will be known as Westgate Day, if you would like to volunteer and get involved we would love to hear from you. We have a working group for this event and if you think you have ideas, expertise that could be useful we would welcome contact from you; this is a community event that we hope will become a regular addition to the calendar.

