



Warminster and Villages Community Partnership

Economy and Tourism Group

NOTES of Meeting held on Tuesday 13th October 2009 in the Meeting Room of the Athenaeum.

PRESENT: Rosemary Buchan (RB) in the Chair, Elisabeth Collyns (EC), Christine Gilbert (CG), Sue Harris (SH), Beverly Jenkins (BJ), George Jolley (GJ), Michael Mounde (MM), Cllr Tony Nicklin (for Chamber of Commerce item only), Ian Stanley (IS), Pamela Thicknesse (PT), Christine Montagu (CEM). APOLOGIES: Susan Hewitt (SEH), Kathy Geraghty (KG).

- 1. Minutes of the last meeting.** The minutes of the last meeting were read and agreed.
- 2. Matters arising from the last minutes.**

Item 2, para 1. Friends of the Park. CEM has been asked by Cllr Chris March of Friends of the Park to produce ideas from the Group for a new notice board. EC asked whether information about Smallbrook Meadows would be included. CEM said she will liaise with Digby Barker, a member of Friends of the Park, who is awaiting a draft leaflet about the park, so that the information tallies. Friends of the Park are meeting later this month to discuss plans to upgrade the park to Green Flag status.

- 3. Shops and business news, and the town scene, including empty buildings.**

Cllr Tony Nicklin, a member of the Chamber of Commerce, told us that there are plans to reinvigorate the local Chamber and increase the membership. CG offered to help the Chamber of Commerce 'spread the word'. There was discussion on the number of business associations available to local businesses. We already send information on empty shops to the Chamber of Commerce each month, and we agreed to send them the preliminary list of local businesses that SH has compiled recently.

MM reported that WVDT posters are on display in the old Army and Navy store, with more planned. There are also plans to have a shop window with a flat screen and continuous viewing of Warminster photographs.

Shop news includes the new Blooms florist that has opened at 10 Weymouth Street. The old Amasar shop has not yet reopened as a sofa shop. A planning application has been put forward for the building now occupied by the YMCA second hand furniture shop to be divided into two shops, one a pizza outlet, with accommodation above the shops. The White Horse Travel Agency in Weymouth Street has been taken over by Travel Angels of Frome.

Concerning our interest in the town scene and its impact on the economy of the town we note that road improvements have finally been completed in the centre of Warminster. CEM will write to the Town Clerk to express our pleasure at the improved appearance of the town centre. There is one concern that was flagged up – the recently erected bus shelter on the south side of Market Place. Although it is good to see a smart piece of street furniture, it seems very large and sited the wrong way. People (at least when it is not raining) are not using the seats because, with the angle of the shelter, it is very difficult to see the buses coming. We wondered if there was any chance of its position being reviewed. There had also been a letter in the press this week about it blocking the view of the Old Bell's distinctive frontage from Station Road.

We had a general discussion on traffic in town. GJ reported that there had been illegal parking in loading bays since the new improvements; however new road markings and signs should solve the problem. Recent ideas about making more car parking spaces in town include possibly using the taxi rank in Station Road. If a one way system was in operation involving East Street, Imber Road, Fairfield Road, then cars could possibly be parked in East Street. IS said a case should be made for both an east and a west one way system in East Street before a decision is made, and detailed studies made on how the systems would integrate with the rest of the town. PT said how difficult it is to cross Fairfield Road and advocated a crossing there.

We discussed the unprecedented interest in saving the Old Town Hall for the use of the town, with articles and letters in the Warminster Journal. WVDT directors have seen the inside of the building and thought it in better condition than expected. MM said that the WVDT is thinking carefully about the best way to move forward now. Our Group is in support of the building being owned and used by the people of Warminster and CEM agreed after a unanimous vote to write on behalf of the Group to Heather Abernethie to ask the Town Council to take the lead and organise an open meeting to ascertain the level of interest.

WETS will tidy up Woodcock Lane next Sunday morning (18th October meeting at 10 am), and daffodils (donated by the Eden Project) will be planted in the Avenue.

The revised Stockland proposals for redevelopment to the north of Three Horseshoes Walk are due to come before Wiltshire Council later this month.

4. Tourism.

MM told us that charity cards are on sale in WIC now, and there is an increasing range of gifts featuring Warminster including a calendar and fridge magnet. CEM commented on the attractive window dressing.

5. Project on buying local products.

The Community Area Board awarded a grant of £400 to us to cover the remaining costs to print and distribute the Christmas leaflet. The leaflets have been printed and distributed with the Warminster Way and Villager. A software problem has been found that moved some of the symbols on the leaflet. The remainder of the leaflets are being reprinted before they are inserted into the Warminster Journal next week.

CEM will look into the cost of a laminated poster to be put into each shop window that features in the Christmas leaflet.

A short article in this month's Sarum Link (Church of England newspaper) reports our Group and the church working together for the good of the community. Churches Together in Warminster has recently donated money towards the cost of the Christmas leaflets, and CG is a member of both groups.

Action for Market Towns' annual conference will have a workshop on shopping locally that will include details of our Buy Local campaign.

6. AOB.

Katharine Dew, the Warminster Area Board Manager will be invited to attend our meetings.

A meeting of the WVCP Management Committee took place on 21st September. CEM has asked that our Terms of Reference be ratified at their next meeting.

There is a new website, www.warminsterpeople.co.uk part of the local people network run by Northcliffe and operating in about 30 towns. Victoria Coombes is the Community Publisher and CEM will invite her to a future meeting.

The Greener Living Roadshow run by Wiltshire Wildlife Trust returns to Warminster this winter (no details yet).

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: The next meeting will be held in the Meeting Room of the Athenaeum on Tuesday 3rd November 2009 at 5.00pm. Pamela Thicknesse will be in the Chair.

C E Montagu (01985 301954)