



Warminster and Villages Community Partnership

Economy and Tourism Group

NOTES of Meeting held on Tuesday 3rd November 2009 in the Meeting Room of the Athenaeum.

PRESENT: Pamela Thicknesse (PT) in the Chair, Rosemary Buchan (RB), Elisabeth Collyns (EC), Christine Gilbert (CG), Sue Harris (SH), Susan Hewitt (SEH), Beverly Jenkins (BJ), George Jolley (GJ), Michael Mounde (MM), Carol Pilkington (CP), Christine Montagu (CEM). Invited guest : Victoria Coombes (VC) APOLOGIES: Len Turner (LT).

The Chairman welcomed Victoria Coombes, Community Publisher at warminsterpeople website.

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. Friends of the Park (FofP). PT represented both our Group and the Civic Trust at a meeting of FofP on 21st October. CEM reported that the information leaflets are not yet published and we are not therefore able to progress ideas for the notice board in the Park. GJ reported on the cost of vandal proof notice boards. EC asked about the possibility of the boundary hedge and railings on Weymouth Street being removed to better reveal the Park, and GJ and MM agreed to bring the topic up at the next F of P meeting.

Item 3, para 1. List of Warminster Businesses. CEM sent the embryonic list to Cllr Tony Nicklin as requested. SEH is continuing to put together and expand the list before it is published in its entirety next year. She will consult with LT to agree on the most useful format.

Item 3, para 4. The Town Clerk has replied to our letter regarding the new bus shelter in Market Place. The Town Council made the decision last year to have a substantial shelter with seating, and its present position is the only possible one with the buses drawing in close by.

Item 3, para 6. CEM wrote to the Town Council asking whether it was possible to have a public meeting to ascertain the level of public interest regarding the Old Town Hall being bought for the use of Warminster people. MM reported that a meeting has taken place with the Development Trust and the Wiltshire Historic Buildings Trust, and a draft report will be ready next month. An options appraisal will be useful in determining the way forward.

Item 3, para 8. The Stockland proposals for the development of the Three Horseshoes Walk are due to go before the Wiltshire Council planning committee this month.

3. **Project on buying local products.** (CEM asked that this item brought forward)

The sub-group (CG, RB, PT, SH, CEM) met on 21st October and will meet again on 17th November at 2 pm. The distribution of the Christmas leaflets is going well with copies to many outlets in town, together with every village in the community area with a shop, pub or PO. Silver Street News is inserting 600 leaflets in the Warminster Journal this week. There are plans for the Group to do leafleting at the Cancer Research Annual Fair on Saturday 7th November, and **on Saturday 28th November from 10 – 5 at the Warminster Christmas Market** (Volunteers please – names to CEM). Sponsors of the Christmas leaflet together with Group members will meet for a press photograph at the Warminster Information Centre on **Tuesday 10th November at 2pm**. CG has written an article for December's Warminster Way on the importance of Christmas shopping in Warminster. There are ideas to take part in the Christmas Tree Festival at Minster Church, with a tree decorated with the pink Christmas Gift leaflets. A broadcast on community radio is being prepared by CG. The sub-group has also discussed the idea of producing a window sticker early next year (rather than the laminated poster mentioned in the last meeting notes) for Warminster businesses who support the Buy Local Campaign.

CEM reported that the feedback from the Woodcock Industrial Estate leaflet had been very poor. There had also been no clarification regarding the ownership of the road or the signage. LT has said that he hopes to progress this in the new year.

The sub-group has plans to produce a leaflet on the businesses in Crusader Park and Warminster Business Park next year, as well as the annual check of all the entries in the Directory of Local Products. The hard copy of the Directory of Local Products has disappeared from the Library, and has been replaced by the one from Dewey House, which had not been used as much. CEM said that an easy to access web based version would be advantageous.

4. Shops and business news, and the town scene, including empty buildings.

The Group was delighted to note that several long term empty shops are being refurbished and are reopening soon. Woolworths, will open as Alworths on 24th November, the fourth store in the country out of over 20 to be opened by an ex-employee of Woolworths. The old CM2 shop next to Iceland will be Store 21 (a clothes store). There are plans for the Old Army and Navy store to be an internet coffee bar during the day, and a meeting place in the evening. The Cafe Journal is changing to a South American cafe. Stead and Simpson has been remodelled and the Nags Head has been redecorated. The owner of the antique business behind the betting shop has given up business. ProEarth Development is moving from George Street, and Bombay Bens in Chinns Court is empty.

LT has told several Group members about a web based means of monitoring the progress/decline of town centres. He is looking how it would be possible for Warminster to take part. He said that our Group is already undertaking much of the work already. Twelve key performance indicators would be measured, and other groups in town would also be involved in the collection.

Traffic improvements were discussed. GJ reported progress with identification of road markings around town which if altered could yield another 28 parking spaces in the day time and more than that at night. A new zebra crossing is planned across Station Road from the Avenue to Lidl.

GJ and CP reported WETS had tidied up the Avenue area with input from the Leisure and Amenities Department. Several Group members congratulated the team on the job they are doing.

5. Tourism.

MM reported that he is consulting on the best way to introduce information on circular walks around the area. SEH said WIC has walking guides on sale, which add revenue to the walking groups that produce them. VC said that she has produced articles on local walks. MM agreed to liaise with SEH and VC.

A Warminster calendar, Christmas card, and Warminster mug will be on sale by the end of November.

The freehold of Thoulstone Park (hotel and golf course) is for sale.

Several members agreed that the Warminster Carnival was one of the most enjoyable for many years, with very varied entries, and impressive organisation.

6. AOB.

RB, a member of the local Rail Users Group reported that Network Rail are thinking of introducing some fast trains on the local line. It is unclear whether these are in addition to the present timetable. If some of present trains are converted to fast trains it would mean that fewer trains stop at Warminster (perhaps two-hourly trains to Salisbury and Bath). Our Group agreed that this would be completely unacceptable and would be economically detrimental to the town.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: The next meeting will be held in the Meeting Room of the Athenaeum on Tuesday 5th January 2010 at 5.00pm. Pamela Thicknesse will be in the Chair.

C E Montagu (01985 301954)