



Warminster and Villages Community Partnership

Economy and Tourism Group

NOTES of Meeting held on Tuesday 5th January 2010 in the Meeting Room of the Athenaeum.

PRESENT: Pamela Thicknesse (PT) in the Chair, Rosemary Buchan (RB), Elisabeth Collyns (EC), Victoria Coombes (VC), Sue Harris (SH), George Jolley (GJ), Caroline Lightfoot (CL), Michael Mounde (MM), Carol Pilkington (CP), Ian Stanley (IS), Christine Montagu (CEM). APOLOGIES: Christine Gilbert (CG), Susan Hewitt (SEH), Beverly Jenkins (BJ), Jacky Thomas (JT).

The Chairman welcomed Caroline Lightfoot (CL), Principal Economic Development Officer for Wiltshire Council covering the Warminster area.

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 (FofP). This group has not met since our last meeting.

Item 2, para 4. MM reported that the Development Trust continues to take an interest and watch developments with regard to the future of the Old Town Hall, which is in receivership. GJ continues to clean off the pigeon droppings from the pavements around the building and reported that the anti pigeon spiking plan is on hold because the money ring fenced by the Town Council and the old District Council is no longer available. PT mentioned the possible health risks from the birds and said that Bath had apparently been able to solve their pigeon problem.

Item 2, para 5. The Stockland proposals for the development of the back of the Three Horseshoes Walk have been rejected by Wiltshire Council planning committee. It is not known whether further plans will be submitted.

3. **Report from WVCP Management Committee member.**

Elisabeth reported that our Terms of Reference have been approved by the committee. She also said that the committee is appointing a new administrator, Linda Tree, for 5 hours a week.

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

Alworths is open and appears to be doing well. No progress seems to be being made on the fitting out of Store 21 in Three Horseshoes Walk. The Warminster branch of Threshers has shut, in common with the rest of the chain.

The rear of the Factory Shop is very untidy, and GJ has spoken to the manager. They have also unfortunately suffered a burst pipe in this cold weather, which has damaged stock. In passing we noted that the garish signs on the listed building persist, a topic that we have mentioned many times before.

IS talked of the importance of shops keeping their doors closed in this bitterly cold weather. We agreed that if there is a clear notice on the door to say they are open for business, then the 'closed door policy' does not deter customers, saves energy, and keeps the staff more comfortable.

The closure of the YMCA shop was discussed. MM said it had met a social need in town by selling large items of donated furniture, and there was general agreement that a similar outlet was needed. The WVDT is planning to lease an empty shop for a similar business, to benefit the town and local charities.

East Street is looking smarter with more shops repainted, and the Masons Arms much improved. Coates and Parker's shop badly needs painting now. The Weymouth Arms has opened a restaurant recently.

Everyone is invited by WETS to meet at 10 am on Sunday 10th January at the rear of the Bath Arms to tidy up the nearby pathway.

5. Buy Local campaign update.

Over 15,000 Christmas leaflets were distributed in total, including at the Warminster Christmas Market, and at the Minster Church Christmas Tree Festival. Articles with photographs were printed in the Warminster Journal and Wiltshire Times. CG wrote 'Shop Locally for Christmas' for the December Warminster Way, and also broadcast a piece on local radio on shopping in Warminster. All businesses appearing in the leaflet will be given a feedback form together with an invitation to support the Buy Local Campaign by displaying a window sticker.

CEM walked around Woodcock Industrial Estate a couple of days ago. One small unit has been let (number 57 – no further details), but apart from that there has been no material change since June 2009. The basic problems of the ownership of the road remain, and the estate continues to look ill kept. CL said that she will ask Len Turner what the current situation is. MM said that the Town Plan is aware that the estate is an area of difficulty. IS asked whether businesses on the estate could become more involved.

The annual check of all the entries in the Directory of Local Products will commence soon.

6. Tourism.

There was unanimous praise for the first Warminster Christmas Market held on 28th November, which was organised by the Town Council in conjunction with Kingdown School.

VC has had a lot of experience publishing walks around the region, both general and specialised and is willing to help compile them if a dedicated group is set up (perhaps a reconvened WVCP Countryside Group?) She will also liaise with the Warminster Festival Committee to offer to lead walks during the festival in July.

The Development Trust is looking for new competition ideas. They already have plans for a watercolour painting competition this year on a four season theme, which could be linked to a series of limited editions and a calendar in the future.

The Group discussed the lych-gate on Copheap, which has recently been signposted (and which features on the WVDT Christmas card this year). A suggestion was made that if even more is to be made of the memorial then a parking bay/small car park nearby would be advantageous.

MM reported that the Town Council website is being developed. It will be linked with the WIC and could be running by May. CEM said that our Group could benefit greatly from an easy to access, brightly coloured and attractive website, with links to the businesses featured in the Directory of Local Products. MM said that our Group could be part of the website that is being constructed.

7. AOB.

Although transport is not in our remit, GJ reported that the WVDT is planning a minibus system to serve the community area villages. This is to be applauded, as Warminster depends upon good transport links to flourish economically.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: The next meeting will be held in the Meeting Room of the Athenaeum on Tuesday 2nd February 2010 at 5.00pm. Elisabeth Collins will be in the Chair.

C E Montagu (01985 301954)