



Warminster and Villages Community Partnership

Economy and Tourism Group

NOTES of Meeting held on Tuesday 2nd February 2010 in the Meeting Room of the Athenaeum.

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

1. Minutes of the last meeting.

CEM said she had omitted to record that the Mayor's Community Day details had been discussed at the last meeting. The minutes of the last meeting were read and agreed.

2. Matters arising from the last minutes.

Item 2, para 1. The Old Town Hall. CEM had received a letter from the Town Clerk (in reply to our letter of 20th October). It outlined the Council's current position which, in the absence of interest in acquiring the building for Warminster use, was to wait to see how the approach from the Development Trust proceeds before taking any further action. MM reported that the Development Trust has met with the official receivers for the Old Town Hall and continues to monitor developments. CM spoke of the public interest in the Old Town Hall and is working on an agenda item for the next WAB meeting on 4th March.

Item 4, para 2. GJ reported that the manager of the Factory Shop has organised for the rear of the building to be tidied up. More improvements are planned by them, including screening.

Item 5, para 2. Woodcock Industrial Estate. LT said that any progress towards the improvement of the estate is on hold, as the Wiltshire Council department that could help is temporarily short staffed.

Item 6, para 2 Local walks. VC has been in touch with the organisers of the Warminster Festival regarding walks during the festival. She has the copyright for several local walks she has created. The WVCP Countryside pillar is in abeyance and therefore not felt to be the best vehicle for producing Warminster walks. MM and VC will pool ideas. Several local groups have published local walks in the past – History Society, walkers groups, and the Civic Trust (Blue Plaque Trail), each with a different emphasis.

Item 6, para 4. Copheap lych-gate. GJ and VC will put forward an idea for a sign for the attraction. 'Memorial Path to Copheap and Lych-gate' was suggested. CEM had received a written comment that Copheap Lane has problems already without creating a parking bay for visitors, and if parking is thought to be necessary then cars could be directed either towards Copheap Rise (from where there is a footpath), or (with agreement) Northlands Industrial Estate.

3. Report from WVCP Management Committee member.

Elisabeth reported that she attended the last Warminster Area Board meeting. Several grants were awarded including £45,000 towards the Athenaeum renovations.

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

CG has visited a lot of independent businesses since Christmas to gauge how well the town is doing economically. She reported that all the businesses have survived and one, the Jacques Vert concession in M & Co has sales figures that have merited an award. She visited the many shops manned by one salesperson on Christmas Eve to see if they needed anything as they were unable to leave their shops. CG has also written to several bosses of the multiple stores in Warminster to ask whether it is fair for staff to be expected

to work on the Sundays each side of Christmas, as well as Boxing Day at a family time of year. The responses have indicated that it is 'a policy that is driven nationally'.

Pound World next to Thomas Cook in Three Horse Shoes Walk has shut quite suddenly, with stock still in situ. Doubts were expressed as to whether Store 21 scheduled to open in Three Horseshoes Walk will do so.

The whole of the ground floor of the old YMCA shop is being redeveloped by Domino Pizza, after which half will be used as another retail space.

David Wiltshire's photographic shop in George Street is being refitted. The Coates and Parker's shop badly needs painting now and CM agreed to talk with the owner. The Collectibles shop sign in silver Street also needs repainting, as it no longer operates as an antique shop.

VC said that the warminsterpeople website, as well as offering a news service, included a business directory, with automatic entry of a lot of local businesses. Incentives have been offered to the public to write reviews on the businesses. There is also a job directory (as has warminster-web.co.uk). LT thought that if websites are used for business they should be locally owned and should not cost anything for businesses to use them. This led to a discussion on the proliferation of the five or so websites for Warminster, all apparently covering slightly different ground, and how they could develop.

Everyone is invited by WETS to spread the word that the clean up group will meet on Sunday 14th February at 10 am by New Close School to tidy up Woodcock Lane.

5. Buy Local campaign update.

Christmas Gift leaflet feedback forms have been delivered to the featured businesses. Some have been returned but the remainder will be chased by the subgroup. There is general support for a Buy Local Campaign window sticker. In the last month CEM has contacted all the producers who feature in the Directory of Local Products for an annual check/expansion/amendment of their entries. Just a quarter have responded so far. She also told each producer about the Made in Warminster element at the Mayor's Community Day.

We have asked for a grant of £100 from the Town Council to fund the creation of a Crusader Park/Warminster Business Park leaflet – the second in a series of leaflets on business parks around Warminster. We will know in March whether we have been successful. We also have £150 in hand for reprinting and updating of the existing leaflets we have previously produced.

We will share a stand at the Mayor's Community Day with WVCP to advertise our Group. It is on Saturday 27th February between 10 and 4 at the Assembly Rooms. *If any Group members can give an hour, please contact CEM.*

6. Tourism.

The Town Park boats and bouncy castle will operate from the Easter holidays onwards including all school holidays, and all weekends until the end of October. The Town Council has plans to draw up a leaflet promoting the park with times of activities. GJ has measured the distance around the lake.

CEM has received an email from Cllr Pip Ridout giving details of the preparations for the St George's Day Celebrations on Friday 23rd April. If the event is to take place then more help and volunteers are needed.

7. AOB. There was no other business.

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

C E Montagu (01985 301954)