



## **Warminster and Villages Community Partnership**

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### **Economy and Tourism Group**

NOTES of Meeting held on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2010 in the Meeting Room of the Athenaeum.

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

- 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 3. Woodcock Industrial Estate. CL emailed to let us know that Wiltshire Council is researching ownership of the units. She will let us know when more information is forthcoming.

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

EC and MM attended the last management committee meeting. A new administrator has recently been appointed and a development officer will be recruited to update the community plan (with emphasis on housing and health), and to further liaise with the Warminster Area Board and other bodies.

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

MM reported that CM and GJ are preparing a business plan for the Old Factory Shop to become a WVDT shop selling refurbished furniture.

8 High Street is occupied by a Warehouse Clearance of ladies' clothing, for at least a month.

At the Mayor's Community Day, the Town Council asked the public's opinion on the future development of the Assembly Rooms, Dewey House and the Old Town Hall. The three buildings have different problems/opportunities, and the Council has the job of deciding which combination of buildings is the best for Warminster.

We discussed the lack of nearby parking for the Old Town Hall. We thought its absence should not prejudice the acquisition of the building for Warminster's use. We mentioned the small car park on Weymouth Street, south of Chinns Court (with planning permission for housing), which is potentially useful parking for the Old Town Hall.

We talked of the possible future look to the town, with at least some of the police houses likely to disappear, and more commercial buildings built between the future Waitrose and the back of the Cornmarket. IS said that the possible impact of this on traffic patterns needs to be evaluated carefully.

- 5. Buy Local campaign update.**

The subgroup has met twice since the beginning of February, and the draft Christmas Gift leaflet analysis has been written. Businesses were positive about the Christmas leaflet, most were willing to contribute financially next time, and improvements to its layout were suggested. Several businesses coincidentally commented on the Christmas Market organised by the Town Council and CEM has sent these comments to Heather Abernethie.

CEM is preparing costings for the Buy Local Campaign window sticker, which will be offered to local shops.

The Directory of Local Products has been updated, with appropriate amendments made for those producers who responded to the annual request to check their entries.

At the Mayor's Community Day we advertised our Buy Local Campaign with our current leaflets and a new 'Why Buy Local?' trifold leaflet. Many local groups and businesses were represented, which made for good networking opportunities. The Assembly Rooms were crowded with stalls and we agreed that a plan at the entrance might have been beneficial.

SEH is working on a comprehensive list of town centre businesses, and a second list of out of town businesses.

## **6. Tourism.**

Center Parcs is to stop selling day tickets. This will have a knock on effect on the finances of WIC, as they receive a proportion of their income from selling those tickets. WIC's footfall is steady and they are looking to increase the number of people who use the information centre.

MM spoke of the planned new website covering the Warminster Community area. It would have three 'arms' – one for the town council, one for commerce and one with information on tourism and local attractions. He said there would also be a calendar where all local events could be posted.

We spoke of the various events taking place in the Warminster area and the need for effective advertising. Later this year Warminster will host a St George's Day celebration, a Warminster Wobble cycle event, a Town Criers' event, a scarecrow trail and the Warminster Festival, all good for tourism.

WVDT is running an Arts Competition together with the Warminster Arts Society. Details will be available shortly, with an exhibition planned for August in Warminster Library.

Looking ahead to the 2012 Olympics, we questioned whether there has been any new accommodation in the area since we last mentioned the Olympics two years ago. MM said plans are being made to have lists of graded and ungraded accommodation published. EC said that Warminster needs a good hotel. IS said there could be big differences to Warminster if in the next 10 years both a good town hall and a good hotel could be developed.

## **7. AOB.**

IS introduced the topic of how Warminster presents itself to the world. Improvements need to be made to the look of the area around the town. We discussed the need for more litter picking in the wider environs. WETS is effective in tackling specific problem areas in town, but the verges on the roads leading to Warminster are in need of urgent attention, and he cited the litter on the verges of the A36 and in the laybys on the way to Bath beyond the roundabout. CEM agreed to write a letter to the Town Council on behalf of the Group.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING: The next meeting will be held in the Meeting Room of the Athenaeum on Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> April 2010 at 5.00pm. Christine Gilbert will be in the Chair.**

C E Montagu (01985 301954)