



**Minutes of the 9th Assembly of the
Westgate-on-Sea Annual Town Meeting
Held at the Westgate Community Centre,
Lymington Road, Westgate-on-Sea CT8 8EJ
on Wednesday, 28th May 2025 at 7.00pm**

Present:

Cllr David Donaldson (Chair)
Cllr Clive Veck (Vice Chair)
Cllr Stephen Fenning
Cllr Tom King
Cllr Mike Livesey
Cllr Alice Mulinya
Cllr Charlotte Thomason
Cllr David Wallin
Ms Nabila Yakub (Town Clerk)

PC Steven England, Ward Officer
Jason Gordon, Community Warden
Nic Powley, Margate Skateboard Club CIC

32 Members of Public

ATM/25/01 Chairperson's Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone present.

ATM/25/02 To receive apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Scott and Cllr Worrow.

ATM/25/03 Minutes

The minutes of the 8th Assembly of the Annual Town Meeting held on 29th May 2024 were received and approved as an accurate record.

ATM/25/04 Chairman's Report

Cllr Wallin reported that the Council has rebuilt its staffing and systems after a difficult period, now has a full office and operative team, and has improved communication via a new accounting system, revived magazine, website and social media. He highlighted ongoing work on events, play areas, the skate park and the exploratory project to acquire and better use the library building.

ATM/25/05 Committees

(i) Cllr Veck - Planning, Highways and Environment Committee

Cllr Veck reported that the Committee has considered a range of planning applications and submitted an updated Highways Improvement Plan to KCC. On the housing development front, Cllr Veck reported a quieter year while continuing to liaise with the Westgate and Garlinge Action Group. Cllr Veck also expressed concern over KCC's decision to halve the No. 35 bus service.

(ii) Cllr Donaldson - Human Resources Committee

Cllr Donaldson reported that the Committee has focused on staffing policies, training, appraisals and compliance as a fair employer, following an independent HR review. New model contracts and updated NJC-based pay scales have been implemented for staff.

(iii) Cllr Veck - Finance and General Purposes Committee

Cllr Veck reported that a new Scribe accounting system has been adopted, the 2023/24 accounts have passed internal audit and are going to external audit, and quarterly reporting will commence. He explained that the increased precept funds a new van, potential library purchase and refurbishment, and higher staffing, pension and NI costs.

(iv) Cllr Thomason - Events, Tourism and Development Committee

Cllr Thomason reported that core events (Remembrance, Christmas tree and lights, Pancake Races, Easter event, D-Day/B-24 commemorations) have been delivered or supported, alongside community initiatives such as litter picks and the coat swap. The Committee aims to add new events and involve more residents directly in planning.

ATM/25/06 Clerk's Correspondence

The Town Clerk reported on her first year in post, highlighting the rebuilding of the office team and the successful use of the Council offices and hall as a community hub (regular groups, banking hub, surgeries, exchanges and events). She thanked staff and operatives for their work and emphasised the Council's open-door approach and close communication with residents.

ATM/25/07 Speakers

(i) Mr Nic Powley of Margate Skateboard Club CIC

Mr Powley reported that the skate park rebuild is ready to proceed, with permissions in place and core funding, including Town Council match funding, already secured. Further donations, materials and volunteer help are being sought so the improved facility can be completed in time for the summer and used for coaching local young people.

(ii) Ward Officer PC Steven England

PC Steve England reported that overall crime in Westgate has slightly decreased over the past year, with some increases in specific categories explained by recording rules, and he outlined ongoing partnership work with Orbit housing, local schools, the mosque and assisted-living facilities. PC England highlighted regular ward surgeries at the Town Council offices and reassured residents that much policing activity and prevention work continues behind the scenes even when not immediately visible.

(iii) Community Warden Jason Gordon

Jason Gordon, KCC Community Warden, reported a busy year supporting local events, scam-awareness work, welfare visits and responses to anti-social behaviour, working closely with Kent Police and the Town Council. He noted a temporary reduction in his presence in Westgate while mentoring a new warden for rural villages but confirmed he is now back covering Westgate and Birchington more fully and will attend forthcoming community events.

ATM/25/08 Public Discussion Open Forum

A resident requested information about the cost of the new van.

A resident asked whether Westgate could have a permanent beacon, similar to the one used for the VE Day event.

A resident said the Town Council website is difficult to use and lacks certain important features. The resident urged the Council to prioritise a redesign or replacement.

A representative from Hi-Kent, the hearing aid maintenance clinic, thanked the Town Council for hosting their regular sessions in the Council hall, noting that this support enables volunteers to continue providing batteries and maintenance to keep residents' hearing aids working.

A resident asked whether the funds currently allocated to the proposed new play area could instead be used for repairs to the existing play area.

A resident suggested that the Council should have some form of youth representation so that young people can express their views directly on local issues and facilities.

A resident asked what would happen to the post-it note comments collected at the meeting and how they would be used by the Council.

Two allotment site representatives spoke about the importance of the Westgate allotments for health, social contact, food growing and wildlife. They outlined the role of the allotment association and site reps in working with the Council, welcomed recent practical support and thanked the Town Council for its continued backing.

A resident suggested introducing a "Westgate in Bloom"-style initiative or similar planting scheme to encourage community involvement in improving the town's appearance.

The Chairman thanked all speakers and residents for their contributions and closed the meeting, inviting attendees to stay for refreshments. The meeting closed at 8.33pm.

Signed: _____

Dated: _____