

Town Clerk Report 06.09.22

Community Space Update

The Community Hub facilitated by Barclays bank is now confirmed as commencing on Friday 9th September, as well as being a drop in for customers the hub will also be providing advice on potential financial scams and tips on budgeting. This will be held every week on Friday and there will be promotion of the service shared to banking customers.

There is also a free NHS hearing aid aftercare, advice and battery supply clinic starting on the 8th of September, this will be held the second Thursday of each month and is facilitated by Hi Kent. A Book Exchange is planned to be up and running next week from the TC office, this will be great for the winter months when the days are darker and people are at home.

The Heritage Centre calendars for 2023 are on sale at the office, they are priced at £5.00 each.

CPR and DEFIB Training

The next CPR and Defib training session is scheduled for Monday 12th September at the Westgate Fire Station on Osbourn Road in Westgate, this session is now fully booked. It will commence at 7pm and is due to finish at 9pm. There is now a waiting list being started to offer places for the next planned session. Thanks to Lindsey for all her hard work in organising these valuable sessions.

Work Based Learning Group CIC

Following the initial workshops attended by the majority of the officers and half of the Town Councillors, there was work done to identify what they would like to achieve as a result of the training programme. I have recently emailed four Members to advise the date of a 1.5-hour workshop which is step one of the process and this will be the last opportunity to be engaged in this part of the process. Step 2 involves the design of a course outline for discussion by all participants and is likely to happen later in September. Step 3 will follow in October when further workshops using practical exercises to introduce the course, workbook and learning methods.

Youth Sessions at the Recreation Ground

It has been particularly joyful to be involved with organising and facilitating the Youth Sessions at the Recreation Ground this summer. The sessions started for four weeks in August and are now continuing for four further weeks in September. The times have now been altered to start the sessions an hour later due to the time of year with light fading by 8pm now. The sessions start at 5pm and finish at 7pm on a Monday evening, the last session will take place on Monday 26th September. There are free activities such as crafting, table tennis, pop up football short pitch, rounders, skateboarding lessons and free snacks with water. We are organising a free raffle and there are prizes being collected for a draw on the last session, each child who attends one session this month will be entered into the draw.

Eat Well, Spend Less Roadshow – 25.08.22

The Town Council supported the roadshow that was organised by Thanet District Council, the Eat Well, Spend Less message was well received by all those who attended and this was great community engagement to be involved with and providing a valuable message.

Play Area, Recreation Ground, Lymington Road

The repairs for the play area are now underway and there are two welding jobs that should be completed today as part of the works. Sadly, when the recent play area inspections were undertaken in late July the seesaw in the middle of the play area was deemed beyond repair due to age related deterioration. This has now been removed as the welding was beginning to look weak and the potential to fail and be of high risk was highlighted in the recent play area inspection. There is one additional repair that is needed in the skate park area and the quote for this is expected this week.

Allotments Renewals

Chloe has worked hard and has now sent out all the renewals for the allotment plots for 2022/23, the invoices have been raised and the payments have started to be received. Thanks to Chloe for all her hard work in managing the allotment renewals.

Recording of Meetings

Following a break in the recording of meetings, I can now confirm that a video camera has been purchased with the necessary accessories, the total cost was £392.97.

Westgate NDP

Following the resolution of Full Council the Westgate NDP has now progressed to Thanet District Council ready for the Regulation 16 Consultation, once this is completed an Examiner will be appointed and the Examination of the NDP will be undertaken. As long as all this goes smoothly it could be possible for the Westgate NDP to go to Referendum in May 2023 and be Made. The Regulation 16 consultation will be run by Thanet District Council and hard copies of all the Submission documents will be available for inspection at the Town Council office and Westgate Library. The Notice of Compliance from TDC has been received today and the Regulation 16 Consultation is scheduled to run from 15th September to 27th October. There will be hard copies of the submission documents available here at the office and at Westgate Library. I will be uploading the Consultation Statement and Basic Conditions Statement to the Town Council website later this week. There will also be a link to the TDC consultation page, this should go live on 15th September when the consultation is open.

Pop Up Café and Information Hub

The Rural Kent café is visiting Westgate again on Thursday 8th September, this is a friendly drop in and they have free cake and tea or coffee.

Community Shield Sign Up

The Town Council has joined a number of organisations that have volunteered to be safe locations in our local community, the scheme has been set up by Thanet District Council in Thanet and the aim is to protect the local community.

Memorial – B-24 Liberator Plaque

Blaze Signs have now completed the manufacture of the entire plaque and stand totally free of charge; I am speaking to a local contractor and obtaining a quote for the installation of the new plaque on Sea Road.

Community Clinic and Meet the Councillor Dates

The next Meet the Councillor surgery will be on Saturday 17th September and Cllr Parry and Cllr Wallin will be attending. The Community Clinic is scheduled for Wednesday 21st in the Community space front office from 10am until 12 noon.

Community Warden and PCSO Updates

Westgate now has a new permanent Community Warden called Jason, he is finishing his training this month and then will be out in the community assisting everyone. We also now have Eileen as our PCSO who covers Birchington as well, so you may have seen her about in the town before with Mark.

Birchington Civic Awards 2022

Birchington Parish Council have extended an invitation to Westgate on Sea Town Council to attend their Civic Awards evening event on 24th September, the ticket cost this year is £25 each or £175 for a table of 8; if you are interested in attending please do contact me to let me know by Friday 9th September and I will collate a list of names to send to the Clerk at BPC.

Myth Busters

LGPS – There has been speculation on Facebook over a prolonged period about the pension arrangements for the Town Council with the term “gold-plated” pension used and I wanted to use this as an opportunity this evening to share the facts for the record. The LGPS is the public sector scheme that is offered to people working in local government (usually Councils) and education (but not teachers). There is a legal requirement to offer and provide a workplace pension scheme to employees of the Town Council. When I joined the Town Council as the Town Clerk/RFO on 2nd January 2018 the contract I was offered and signed in good faith included membership of the LGPS. I was therefore surprised when I contacted Kent County Council in mid-January 2018, who run the Kent scheme to find out that the process for joining was not completed by the Town Council. There followed debate for six months by the Town Council as to whether they joined the scheme and I can confirm that this took place in meetings where a locum clerk was present for the majority of them so I did not have any conflict of interest.

The minutes are available on the Town Council website and the membership of the LGPS was resolved on 12th June 2018 to commence from 1st April 2018.

I do pay into the pension scheme myself with contribution taken from my salary each month and if anyone wants to see the evidence I am happy for them to make an appointment to come and see me at the office.