



## Minutes of the Events, Tourism and Development Committee Meeting

Held at the Westgate-on-Sea Town Council Office

78 St Mildreds Road, Westgate-on-Sea CT8 8RF

on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2026 at 6.00pm

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### Present

Cllr Mike Livesey (Chair)

Cllr Alice Mulinya (Vice-Chair)

Cllr David Donaldson

Cllr David Wallin

Ms Nabila Yakub – Town Clerk

Ms Ana Jagelo – Administration Officer

Ms Emma Dublin – Community Engagement and Social Media Consultant

Ms Julie Edwards, Senior Tourism Officer, Thanet District Council

Ms Simone Breugem, Chair, Westgate-on-Sea Heritage Centre

2 Members of Public

### ETD/26/40 Welcome from the Chair

The Chair welcomed all present.

### ETD/26/41 Apologies for Absence

No official apologies

### ETD/26/42 Members' Interests

None.

### ETD/26/43 Public Right to Speak

A resident raised concerns that the current standard of bin emptying, street cleaning, public toilet provision, response to fly-tipping, and management of unadopted alleyways is affecting the town's appearance, with possible implications for local trade and summer tourism, and asked that Westgate Town Council and Thanet District Council continue working together to address these issues.

### ETD/26/44 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2026 were received and approved as an accurate record.

### ETD/26/45 Thanet's Heritage Open Days

Presentations by:

Julie Edwards, Senior Tourism Officer, Thanet District Council; and

Simone Breugem, Chair, Westgate-on-Sea Heritage Centre.

Julie Edwards, Senior Tourism Officer at Thanet District Council, gave an overview of Heritage Open Days (HODs) and how Westgate could take part. She explained that HODs is England's largest free, community-led festival of history and heritage, held annually in September with a broad theme of "Everyday Histories" this year, but that participation does not have to fit the theme as long as basic criteria are met: events must be in England, free to attend, registered by the deadline and offer something special (e.g. opening areas not usually accessible, adding an extra experience, or providing free entry where there is usually a charge). She outlined the national support available (webinars, advice, free merchandise and good responsiveness

from the small central team), and shared some Thanet-specific experience: TDC works with town partners (e.g. civic societies and town councils) who liaise with venues, help them register events online, and contribute to a printed Heritage Open Days leaflet, which is widely distributed in high-footfall locations and promoted via websites, social media and press releases. Last year, around 27 local events took part, with surveyed venues averaging 264 visitors each and very positive feedback. For Westgate, she suggested potential participants such as the Town Hall, Westgate Heritage Centre, Westgate Library, the Carlton Cinema, the station, and local coastal sites, and stressed that events do not need to be large or costly – simple displays, talks, guided walks, maps or shop-window QR trails can work well – and that both the HODs team and the Thanet tourism team are available to support Westgate if it chooses to get involved.

Simone Breugem, Chair of the Westgate-on-Sea Heritage Centre, described the work of the Westgate Heritage Centre, founded in 2007 by historian Dr Dawn Crouch to research and share the history of Westgate with residents and others. Originally based at St Saviour's Church and now in an upstairs office in the Carlton Cinema building, the Centre holds a substantial collection of publications, documents and local history material, though access is physically difficult due to steep stairs. It runs monthly talks for members on a wide range of topics, undertakes and supports research queries and acts as custodian of material from other local historians. The group also tries to contribute to the town's physical heritage, for example by donating benches and taking an interest in buildings and monuments, though this is challenging with a small volunteer base. For Heritage Open Days, Simone said they could offer booklets/publications, talks and exhibitions, and expressed a strong willingness to collaborate with the Town Council and others to develop events that showcase Westgate's rich heritage and everyday history.

#### **ETD/26/46 Easter 2026**

Members received an update from Ana, Administration Officer and Events Organiser, who reported that the Easter Bunny event was very successful: around 8 kilos of chocolate eggs were given out and there were many happy children and families. Special thanks were offered to Cllr Fenning for once again dressing up as the Easter Bunny.

#### **ETD/26/47 B24 Liberator Memorial Service**

The Committee noted arrangements for the B-24 Liberator memorial service to be held on 27 April at 11:00 a.m., commemorating the US pilot who ditched his aircraft in the bay. Rev. Sue Woan (Birchington) will lead the service this year, and thanks were recorded to Rev. Susan Wing for arranging cover.

#### **ETD/26/48 Annual Town Meeting**

The Town Clerk reported on preparations for the Annual Town Meeting, confirming that speakers will be selected and invited, posters will be displayed around the town, refreshments will be provided and that the event will prioritise public participation so that residents can raise issues and suggest future projects.

#### **ETD/26/49 Blooming Westgate**

Cllr Livesey reported that Blooming Westgate is moving forward with home-grown wildflower seedlings and school involvement (e.g. St Saviour's growing Cosmos and creating pollinator-themed art), but progress is slowed by a lack of volunteers and delays in clearing town planters. He emphasised that this year is mainly a preparatory "statement of intent", with wider wildflower areas and perennial planting expected in future years, supported by TDC's biodiversity coordinator and KCC member Luke Evans's proposals for local meadows.

#### **ETD/26/50 Picnic in the Park**

For Picnic in the Park, the Committee noted that the event application to TDC has been submitted and paid, two St John Ambulance first aiders are booked, one face painter has confirmed, alternatives are being sought for the previous circus/bubble act, and a print-making

workshop option will be considered nearer the time subject to budget, with low-cost children's arts and crafts remaining a fallback.

**ETD/26/51 Tourism Initiatives**

Members discussed creating a Tourism Initiatives working party to develop and drive events and projects (noting that Committee discussion alone is insufficient), with agreement in principle to proceed formally at a later meeting. Ideas mentioned included linking work to Heritage Open Days, a possible future film festival at the Carlton Cinema (potentially involving local or student films) and reviving the Poverty Alleviation Project later in the year within available budget.

**ETD/26/52 Councillor Reports**

None.

**ETD/26/53 Date of Next Meeting**

Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2026, 6pm.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

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