



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 25th February 2026 at 6.00pm

Present

Cllr Mike Livesey (Chair)

Cllr David Donaldson

Cllr Stephen Fenning

Cllr David Wallin

Ms Nabila Yakub – Town Clerk

Ms Emma Dublin – Community Engagement and Social Media Consultant

2 Members of Public

ETD/26/15 Welcome from the Chair

The Chair welcomed members to the Events, Tourism and Development Committee and reminded them that the events they create are vital for fostering community in Westgate-on-Sea and reducing loneliness, particularly among older residents, and thanked everyone for their ongoing commitment and attendance.

ETD/26/16 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Mulinya.

ETD/26/17 Members' Interests

None.

ETD/26/18 Public Right to Speak

None.

ETD/26/19 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 28th January 2026 were received and approved as an accurate record.

ETD/26/20 Pancake Races

Cllr Livesey reported that the pancake races were a great success, helped by a lucky spell of good weather, with large numbers attending and children delighted to receive their medals. The event benefited from being held in half-term, which brought more parents and added to the colour and atmosphere, and it received both TV coverage and live coverage on BBC Radio Kent, with thanks recorded to the events and media team for their hard work.

ETD/26/21 Easter 2026

The Town Clerk confirmed that Cllr Fenning will again act as the Easter Bunny for 2026 and reported that eight kilos of chocolate eggs have been ordered, more than double last year's amount after the very popular event quickly ran out of eggs. Buying early has reduced costs, and the next step is to confirm with Reverend Wing that the church grounds can be used after the service on Easter Sunday. Members noted the success of last year's event and agreed they should try to secure coverage from ITV Meridian and the BBC.

ETD/26/22 Blooming Westgate

Cllr Livesey noted that the Blooming Westgate working group had reached the stage of making formal recommendations and reminded members that working groups should operate in line

with the agreed Terms of Reference (including Full Council approval of members and appointment of a lead member). He expressed concern that these guidelines had not always been followed and supported a review to make the Terms of Reference more flexible, with proposed amendments to be brought to the Annual Council Meeting in May.

Cllr Livesey updated members that the Blooming Westgate working group had met again, with Joanna Cornford confirming that the 12 planters in St Mildred's Road and Station Road can be used as the group sees fit, with plans to enhance them with additional wildflowers. There has been positive interest from local businesses in hanging baskets and, subject to listing regulations, the group hopes to plant wildflowers along the wall from Westgate Bay Avenue to St Mildred's Road. In response to Full Council feedback, further sites are being considered at the Lymington Road/Cambourne Avenue junction and the meadow area near the Community Centre. A key recommendation is to involve residents, particularly those with front gardens, by encouraging them to plant up their own spaces, supported by information from the Council, to create a strong summer display for 2026.

ETD/26/23 Picnic in the Park

The Town Clerk reported that Picnic in the Park will be held on 18 July at the end of the school year, with plans to repeat last year's successful format, including face painters, a circus workshop, arts and crafts in the Community Centre, Punch and Judy, street football and an ice cream van (but no additional hot food traders, with only teas and coffees provided from the Community Centre). Members noted the popularity of free face painting and supported adding hair braiders, arranging music and including the traditional Big Bear mascot to enhance the event.

ETD/26/24 Tourism Initiatives

Cllr Livesey opened a discussion on **tourism initiatives**, stating that while Westgate now runs successful established events, it also needs to attract more visitors from across Thanet and "put itself on the map". He reported meeting **Paula Harbidge**, TDC Tourism and Culture Manager and Westgate resident, who offered advice on early-stage ideas. He proposed creating a **tourism working group**, involving local businesses and councillors, and confirmed he would join but felt a more historically experienced councillor should lead it, whom he would fully support.

Members then discussed **heritage-led tourism** opportunities, including a heritage/blue plaque trail, improved signage and the reinstatement of **Westgate Day**, as well as exploring markets and mixed events. **Cllr Fenning** emphasised positioning Westgate as a **heritage town**, supported Council representation at the **Heritage Centre**, and agreed to take part in a **canopy/heritage working group**. Members agreed to explore heritage funding (with contacts offered by Cllr Fenning) for an ambitious project to restore the **Victorian shop canopies/awnings** as a key legacy scheme to enhance the conservation area and attract visitors.

ETD/26/25 Councillor Reports

None.

ETD/26/26 Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 25th March 2026, 6pm.

Signed: _____

Date: 25/3/26