

WESTGATE-ON-SEA TOWN COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

2016 - 2017



Westgate-on-Sea is a seaside town in north east Kent, England, with a population of 6,996 at the 2011 Census. Within the Thanet local government district the town has two sandy beaches which have remained a popular tourist attraction since the town's development in the 1860s from a small farming community.

In 1894, when the Local Government Act set up parish councils more than 190 residents petitioned for Westgate to be classified as an urban community, Westgate had the largest rateable value in Thanet at that time however the decision was taken to become a civil parish. In 1935 Westgate became part of Margate and in 1974 it was decided not to have a parish council.

In 2015 an order was approved to create Westgate-on-Sea Town Council following a community governance review where residents of Westgate supported the creation of its own town council.

WESTGATE-ON-SEA TOWN COUNCILLORS



Cllr T King

Chairman



Cllr M Pennington

Vice Chairman



Cllr J Cornford



Cllr D Morrish



Cllr R Nightingale



Cllr H Page



Cllr G Rickett



Cllr R Rolfe



Cllr H Scott



Cllr S Stewart

COMMITTEES AND MEMBERSHIPS

Westgate-on-Sea Town Council operates its powers and duties through a committee system. The Council and its committees make the policy decisions of the Council, the Town Clerk carries out the decisions of the Council and has some delegated powers under Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 to ensure the smooth day to day running of the Council.

<p>Finance and General Purposes Committee Reviews the financial performance of the Council and considers monthly expenditure and budgets</p> <p>Cllr T King (Chairman)</p> <p>Cllr D Morrish</p> <p>Cllr R Nightingale</p> <p>Cllr M Pennington</p> <p>Cllr R Rolfe</p> <p>Cllr S Stewart</p>	<p>Events and Tourism Committee Considers the organisation of events and how to increase tourism in the town</p> <p>Cllr R Nightingale (Chairman)</p> <p>Cllr J Cornford</p> <p>Cllr T King</p> <p>Cllr H Page</p> <p>Cllr M Pennington</p> <p>Cllr G Rickett</p>
<p>Planning, Highways and Environment Committee Responds to planning applications and considers matters affecting the</p> <p>Cllr D Morrish (Chairman)</p> <p>Cllr J Cornford</p> <p>Cllr T King</p> <p>Cllr G Rickett</p> <p>Cllr R Rolfe</p> <p>Cllr H Scott</p>	<p>Human Resources Committee Considers matters relating to staffing</p> <p>Cllr J Cornford (Chairman)</p> <p>Cllr T King</p> <p>Cllr M Pennington</p> <p> </p> <p> </p> <p> </p>

COUNCIL ASSETS

As the Town Council is still relatively new it is yet to acquire any substantial assets. It is currently negotiating with Thanet District Council to obtain various local assets.

The Town Council currently holds a licence with Thanet District Council for use of the hut formally known as St Mildred's Games Centre, on Sea Road, CT8 8SA. This is to be used as the Town Council's depot for the operations team to store its cleansing materials and machinery.

EVENTS

Westgate-on-Sea Town Council is committed to building and maintaining open communication lines with the residents of the Town. The website, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter pages are constantly being developed and all meeting documents are available from the Town Council's website or in hard copy on request at the Town Hall Buildings. 'Town Talk' is a regular newsletter delivered to residents giving news from the Council. The first edition is planned for April 2017. The Town Council has plans to organise and support many community events throughout the year including: Putting on summer shows – Punch and Judy by the sea; Remembrance Day Parade – the Town Council will take over the organisation of this for the first time in 2017; Pancake Day Races – the Town Council will organise the administration of the event to ensure that it returns to the town in 2018; Westgate-in-Bloom – supporting the Royal Horticultural Society community planting scheme to transform towns the town will see more planting of flowers. We are investigating a town flag pole so that Westgate can take part in national flag raising ceremonies, such as Armed Forces Day.

SERVICES

Westgate-on-Sea Town Council now employ an operations team that will provide a 'top up' cleansing service to that delivered by Thanet District Council. The team will perform additional cleaning, litter picking and graffiti removal services in Westgate and also support schools, groups and community organisations to improve the appearance of the town,

ANNUAL REPORTS

Cllr Tom King, Chairman of the Council and the Finance and General Purposes Committee

Since May 2016 the council has been considering the results of the community survey. This outlined the concerns of local people and we have been building policies and strategies to deliver on addressing these concerns. The council recognises that cleanliness is the most important issue to residents and we have

recruited two part time cleansing operatives to work for Westgate town. We have negotiated various training, materials and equipment from Thanet District Council and we will provide a 'top up' service to their current offering.

The council is embracing the opportunity to enhance local services using the devolved powers that are being given to parish and town councils. We are working on plans to

transfer and return the town assets back to the people. Thanet District Council are considering our proposals for all the district council owned assets in the town, including the pavilion, beach shelters and Lymington Road Recreation Ground.

The second highest concern for local people in the community survey was about doing more for young people. Just recently the Town Council became aware that the Westgate Youth Project was closing due to a lack of funding. I met with the group and brought this issue to full council where it was decided that the Council will fund the project for the next six months whilst they obtain their charity status and future funding. I am so pleased to have been able to save this worthwhile local project and we are working on how we can expand youth services in the town.

We want to provide the opportunity for local people to have pride their town and we are improving our communications through hand-delivered newsletters, notices, website and social media. We want to hear from you so that we can address your concerns.

Value for money is key and we are working hard to provide all the events and services we can within strict budgets to give residents cost effective results.

Cllr Roy Nightingale, Chairman of Events and Tourism Committee
Over the past year we have supported several local events including the

Westgate Christmas lights and the provision of the Christmas tree. Over the August Bank holiday we have also arranged for some children's entertainment on the Sea Front. In partnership with St Saviours church we will also be participating in the annual Remembrance Day commemorations. We have also commenced plans to reintroduce the annual Pancake Race next year Westgate, I am certain we would all agree, is a great place to live and visit and the promoting of Westgate as a tourist attraction has been a very active part of the committee's work. In particular we have been pressing for improvements in the condition of the station as for many visitors this will be their first impression of Westgate. As a result the station recently underwent a "deep clean", however the station being unsupervised isn't kept clean regularly so we have called for cleaning to be undertaken at weekends. We have also asked why the number of trains stopping at Westgate has reduced by going straight through to Margate meaning that many residents and visitors have to get a train back to where they have just passed through. Finally, we are in the process of compiling details of all holiday accommodation available in the Westgate area.

Cllr Dave Morrish, Chair of Planning, Highways and Environment Committee
Through the past year the Committee has met 11 times primarily to deal

with Planning Applications for which the Town Council is a statutory consultee for any applications submitted for Westgate on Sea . In total we have considered some 70 applications for matters varying from household conservatories to ,fairly ,large residential buildings of over 50 bedrooms. In arriving at our decisions we are particularly glad to have the benefit of the planning expertise of the Westgate Conservation Area Action Group. Additionally, we have drafted responses on behalf of the Town Council to consultations on such matters as Kent County Council's Latest "Local Transport Plan 4".Most recently we have prepared a very detailed response to Thanet Council's Latest Consultation instalment of their "Draft Local Plan "and as part of preparation for a future public inquiry into that plan we are anticipating that considerable effort will be needed during next autumn ,in conjunction with other bodies, to pursue detailed objections to the Local Plan.

The Committee has taken the lead in proceeding with a "Neighbourhood Plan" for Westgate on Sea as we see that this procedure offers the best approach to providing for a sensible plan to safeguard the future of Westgate on Sea. In doing so we have been glad to have been successful in attracting government funding to the processes.

The Committee has been concerned for the environment around the seaside of Westgate and have been urging Thanet Council to take action to properly maintain their properties

and deal with nuisances such as seaweed accumulation

I would like to thank my fellow Councillors, particularly our two co-opted members and the Vice Chair Cllr Hannah Scott, for their continuing support and forbearance.

Cllr Joanna Cornford, Chairman of Human Resources Committee

Our Human Resources (HR) committee was set up at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) in May 2016.

HR formerly 'Personnel' is responsible for employment decisions, a number of employment matters are delegated to the Town Clerk, but ultimate management is the responsibility of the full council as a corporate body who appoint a committee working to a set of rules known as Standing Orders and Terms of Reference.

2016 saw unexpected changes for us and on the 1st November, we confirmed the appointment of Ms Julie Pilbeam as our new Town Clerk. On the 9th January 2017 Julie started the work of ensuring our Westgate on Sea Town council reach full potential and achieve the best for our town. Recently we announced the addition of two new members to the Town Council staff; Neil and Sammy who will become a familiar sight in and around Westgate on Sea, fixing all those top priority problems you all high- lighted in the 2015 Community Survey, Neil and Sammy will be wearing their new Town Council uniforms, Julie has promised us we will love them!

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

Income	Budget	YTD Actual	Overall Variance
Precept	£ 66,810.00	£ 70,587.53	£ 3,777.53
VAT reclaim	£ 1,000.00	£ 1,434.64	£ 434.64
Allotments	£ 1,500.00	£ 2,935.56	£ 1,435.56
Bank Interest	£ 0.00	£ 39.45	£ 39.45
Neighbourhood Plan Grant	£ 3,150.00	£ 3,150.00	£ -
	£ 72,460.00	£ 78,147.18	£ 5,687.18

Expenditure	Budget	YTD Actual	Overall variance
Bank Charges	£ 130.00	£ 45.90	£ 84.10
VAT	£ 1,000.00	£ -	£ 1,000.00
Petty Cash	£ 200.00	£ 400.00	-£ 200.00
Staff Costs	£ 28,500.00	£ 27,464.75	£ 1,035.25
Operational Services	£ 34,530.00	£ 0	£ 34,530.00
Office Expenses	£ 1,000.00	£ 1,890.15	-£ 890.15
Rent and Rates	£ 5,500.00	£ 8,866.45	-£ 3,366.45
Audit Fees	£ 800.00	£ 1,118.00	-£ 318.00
Subscriptions	£ 2,000.00	£ 1,864.60	£ 135.40
Insurance	£ 1,000.00	£ 712.65	£ 287.35
Advertising	£ 1,000.00	£ 230.00	£ 770.00
Training	£ 1,200.00	£ 1,629.20	-£ 429.20
Parking/travel	£ 150.00	£ 0	£ 150.00
IT and Website	£ 500.00	£ 1,072.64	-£ 572.64
Telephone and Broadband	£ 600.00	£ 680.07	-£ 80.07
Office Equipment	£ 500.00	£ 1,534.35	-£ 1,034.35
Office Furniture	£ 500.00	£ 125.00	£ 375.00
Clr Allowances	£ 1,000.00	£ 162.80	£ 837.20
Operators Equipment	£ 1,000.00	£ 1,063.00	-£ 63.00
S137 Grants	£ 500.00	£ 307.60	£ 192.40
Sundries	£ 200.00	£ 539.59	-£ 339.59
Discretionary Powers	£ 2,500.00	£ 0	£ 2,500.00
Grant Scheme	£ 5,000.00	£ 4,345.40	£ 654.60
Allotment Management	£ -	£ 7,740.00	-£ 7,740.00
Water for allotments	£ -	£ 1,824.49	-£ 1,824.49
Events	£ -	£ 869.96	-£ 869.96
Neighbourhood Plan	£ -	£ 3,847.40	-£ 3,847.40
	£ 89,310.00	£ 68,334.00	£ 20,976.00

YOUR COUNCIL TAX EXPLAINED

In 2016/17 Westgate-on-Sea Town Council's element of the Council Tax collected by Thanet District Council was £29.43 per band D property.

This amount is multiplied by the average number of band D properties to give the 'precept' value. The Precept is the amount that the District Council passes onto parish and town councils in order to allow them to carry out their powers and duties.

For Westgate-on-Sea in 2015/16 this amount was £68,810. This doesn't include the government support grant, for which the council received £3777. In 2016/17 the value of Westgate's government support grant is £3399 however there is plans to reduce this further in the future and the council are considering ways to compensate for this.

Westgate-on-Sea Town Council decided upon a precept of £98,040 for 2017/18. The increase covers the costs of the implementation of the new cleansing services to the town and recovering a portion of the reserves funding that the council has been previously using to cover the shortfall in the precept.

How do we compare to Parish and Town Councils with a similar precept amount?

Area	Tax Base 2017/18 £	Precept 2017/18 £	Band D 2017/18 £
Acol	110.25	4,376.00	39.69
Birchington	3,890.32	54,970.00	14.13
Broadstairs & St Peters	9,343.66	463,352.00	49.59
Cliffsend	703.37	14,876.00	21.15
Manston	471.82	16,645.00	35.28
Margate	12,214.16	72,552.00	5.94
Minster	1,167.15	55,568.00	47.61
Monkton	270.8	8,311.00	30.69
Ramsgate	11,140.49	578,526.00	51.93
St Nicholas – at – Wade & Sarre	393.55	15,974.00	40.59
Westgate	2,363.01	98,040.00	41.49