



WESTGATE ON SEA TOWN COUNCIL

FORWARD PLAN

2020-2024



Town Clerk: Gill Gray

Westgate on Sea Town Council

78 St Mildreds Road

Westgate on Sea CT8 8RF

Telephone: 01843 836182

townclerk@westgateonsea.gov.uk

INTRODUCTION FROM CLLR MARTYN PENNINGTON (CHAIRPERSON)

Westgate on Sea is a wonderful place to live and work. It has a rich heritage and a strong sense of community. It would be easy to take all this for granted, and yet we know that much could be lost without looking forward to defend the town and build on our strengths. Change happens, and we have to manage it and turn it to our advantage. The Town Council has turned its attention to the next few years, looking at what the Town Council and the community can achieve together.

This 'Forward Plan' contains no big infrastructure projects or fancy ideas; it is built on what the residents have identified as priorities and what the Town Council thinks can be delivered without asking for huge increases in its Council Tax demands. As the town builds its own identity through events such as Westgate Day and the Christmas Market, we believe that it will grow stronger and be an even better place to live, work, visit and invest.

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VISION STATEMENT

Westgate on Sea Town Council's vision for Westgate on Sea is that of a vibrant, thriving and welcoming community, where people want to live, work and visit.

MISSION STATEMENT

Westgate on Sea Town Council wants to work with the community to improve and promote the social, environmental and economic wellbeing of the people of Westgate on Sea, in particular by:

- Improving the general appearance and cleanliness of the town.
- Working with local businesses to increase the Prosperity of residents.
- Supporting children, young people and the elderly, and encouraging inter-generational activities.
- Influencing other bodies, for example Kent County Council and Thanet District Council by providing a democratic voice for the Westgate on Sea community
- Helping to protect the level of services to the Town, for example education and health service to ensure the community is not disadvantaged or deprived of essential services
- Engaging in an open dialogue with the community of Westgate on Sea to better understand their needs and, in turn, explain how we will address those needs within the resources and powers on the Council
- Working with other groups and organisations to preserve and enhance character, heritage and unique identity of the Town
- Promoting Westgate on Sea as a clean, safe and inviting Town for all
- Helping to create a socially inclusive and caring community which embraces all its residents, irrespective of age, gender, sexual orientation, culture, income, race or religion and seek to develop their understanding and mutual co-operation; working in partnership where possible to achieve more for Westgate on Sea

One of the main tasks of the Council has been to draw up a Neighbourhood Plan, driven by several consultations and surveys to identify the main concerns and aspirations of residents in relation to the town.



Westgate Parish Council Boundary Plan



ROLE OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

Westgate on Sea Town Council was formed in May 2015, following 80 years under the control of Margate and then Thanet District Council. It comprises 10 Members, and elections are held every four years.

The Council has always viewed its role as supporting, not replacing, the initiatives of local community groups and organisations to strengthen and serve the community. It has been a catalyst for encouraging better co-operation between these groups and has made things easier for them in relation to getting permits and agreements from TDC. Equally, Council has sought to keep any budget increases to the minimum, and needed to maintain best practice towards its employees, and to finance defined programmes of benefit to the town, rather than building up reserves without clear projects. This forward plan is therefore based on projects which imply minimal cost to residents.

The Council employs a Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer who manages a dedicated team of five part-time staff, made up of a Project Assistant, a Finance Assistant, and currently three Cleansing Operatives who provide the top-up cleansing services for the Town. The Council offices include a community space for local groups to use, and where local artists can exhibit their work.

A full schedule of meeting dates of Council and the Committees can be viewed on the Westgate on Sea Town Council website together with copies of Agendas and Minutes. Copies of the Council's core governance documents including Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Terms of Reference for Committees and Publication Scheme, together with key policies can also be viewed on the Council website.

TOWN COUNCIL VALUES

- To conduct its business with integrity and impartiality
- To be open, transparent and accountable
- To make the most efficient and effective use of its resources
- To encourage co-operative and partnership working
- To consult and listen to the local community in its planning for projects and activities



WoSTC Strategic Plan – Key Themes and Priorities		
<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p><u>Priorities – The Town Council has identified the following key strategic issues where it will focus its efforts on behalf of the community:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning, including Neighbourhood Plan, community facilities and infrastructure • Partnership working • Community engagement and events • Street cleansing • Facilities for young people • Business Forum for Westgate on Sea • Eco friendly and environmentally sustainable services • Promotion of the Town and the unique heritage • Improving communication and input to its decision-making • Sourcing of additional funding opportunities and identifying income streams 		
Priority	Current actions	Planned actions
Planning and Neighbourhood Plan (NP)	Draft NP completed; Consultation to commence in March 2020. Council opposes plans to build 2000 houses on agricultural land, planning decision expected soon.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NP to go to Referendum and adopted by the end of 2020 • NP Steering Group and Town Council to help shape planning proposal for the proposed 2,000 houses • Emergency and Resilience Plan for the Town • Research the setting up of a community larder/fridge for the Town • Highways improvements plans identified and consulted upon • Shop canopies repair facilitated with collaborative approach
Partnership working	Working with community groups/organisations to deliver events and projects, such as Westgate Day, Christmas Market, Pancake races, Remembrance Parade, Paint the Town Poppy Red, Westgate Against Rubbish, Speedwatch, Foodbank donations, CPR/Defib training. Liaising with TDC and KCC to support services provided by both authorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To encourage more cooperation in the community through the development of Westgate Day and other events. • To seek new partnership opportunities in the private sector; build on those achieved so far, for example South East Rail and Stagecoach • To expand co-operation with town and parish councils in the area in relation to training, plant management, etc

Priority	Current actions	Planned actions
Community engagement and events	<p>Providing a space for use by local groups to tackle social isolation and for displays/exhibitions</p> <p>Organising community events on a regular basis</p> <p>Communicating by holding an Annual Town Meeting, Town Councillor surgeries and issuing a Council magazine quarterly</p> <p>Council website and social media used for information sharing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target hard-to-reach groups by better publicising Council work in the community • Organise free meals and food bank distribution, monitor homeless issues • Host a calendar/diary for events in the Town; work towards one a month • Examine possibilities for events like food fairs, music, etc
Facilities for young people	<p>The Lymington Recreation Ground is being acquired by the Town Council from TDC .</p> <p>Football matches to commence as soon as possible following the transfer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding opportunities to be identified and a strategy to be agreed on how the Asset will be managed • Develop business plan for the recreation ground to be utilised to provide regular sports activities and a safe environment. • Facilities to be improved to provide toilet facilities and refreshments on site. • Memorial garden to be landscaped to provide a focal point for the site, on basis of local consultation.
Business forum		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact local businesses and seek interest in the setting up of a local business forum for Westgate to give businesses a voice and encourage employment opportunities

Priority	Current actions	Planned actions
Eco-friendly and environmentally sustainable	Recycling initiative launched Fuel carbon levy paid by Town Council Westgate in Bloom and Tree planting scheme commenced Recycled furniture/hardware purchased where possible Allotment gardens managed and provide plots to residents to grow produce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carbon zero housing in local developments • Improved cycle paths and public transport for the area • Green open spaces an integral part of any future housing developments • Draft Environmental Policy for the Town Council
Promotion of Town and heritage	Raising profile of Town via community events. Working in collaboration with Westgate Heritage Centre to commemorate history of the Town.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitor Information Centre to be set up and potential Westgate Greeters to be explored. • Explore setting up of a Community Interest Company to market the town and its heritage. • Use station's 150th anniversary in 2021 to showcase the town.
Additional funding and income streams	Funding secured for NP research, community events and Westgate in Bloom. Income streams to date are photocopying service, room hire, allotment plot hire, community lotto and hot desking.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore with TDC better use of foreshore and potential income streams for both authorities. • Funding opportunities to be secured for projects such as renovation of Lymington Recreation Ground, community events and NP consultation with the community. • Additional income streams need to be identified.

This is a living document which means that budgets, themes and priorities may change during the four-year period and this is reviewed annually by Council.