

## WESTMINSTER PARK RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING held on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2022 At the Westminster Park Community Centre

#### MINUTES

1. **Attendees:** 23 persons listed separately  
**Apologies:** Susan Eva, Sandra Magilton, Pauline Brown, Tracey Casey, Karen Liddle, Mike and Pat Pollard, Mary and Dick Pole, David Guyton, Christine Westcott.
2. **Minutes** of meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2021 were agreed as a true record by those who attended. Proposed: Peter Cocker, Seconded: Annemarie Macfadyen.
3. **Matters arising:** none other than those listed below.
4. **Chairman's report:** How lovely it is to be able to welcome you all here in person, rather than greeting you on Zoom as we have had to do for the past two years.  
Once again, it has been an honour and a privilege to serve as chair of the Residents' Association over the last 12 months. During that time, some of the regular activities which normally punctuate our year have returned to our great joy. Often it is only when we resume something that we realise how much we missed it.  
It falls to me to provide you with a resumé of our activities throughout the past year, and I am happy to say that I have much more to report this year.

#### **Events**

This time last year we were just emerging from our second lockdown and feeling rather sorry for ourselves as we had not been able to arrange any of our usual events. However, in December we re-emerged to organise our annual Christmas Lights Switch-on evening. This was a lovely occasion with a performance by the children from Belgrave and food generously provided by our local shops and lots of residents there to enjoy both.

We did have a few issues with the lights themselves and have now had them rewired with financial assistance from our Councillors for which we are very grateful. We are looking forward to a very twinkly Christmas this year!

Last weekend we followed up with our second social event our spring Quiz. This was a very well attended evening and my thanks to Colin Dollimore for providing such a good quiz and to Steve Frost for a delicious supper as well as to the 50 or so residents who made it so much fun.

We are now getting very excited about our next event, the Jubilee Picnic and Fun Day to be held in the Community Centre and school field on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> June. This will feature live music, a proclamation by the Town Crier, competitions and activities for children as well as the opportunity to come together as a community. We do hope that you will be able to come along and relax for the afternoon.

#### **Improvements to our local environment**

We have also had a couple of outdoor events, focussed on improving the environment around the shops. My thanks to Brian Westcott for organising working parties in September and April to remove weeds and litter and my thanks to all of the residents who turned up with their tools to make our neighbourhood cleaner and tidier.

The area around the shops has also been enhanced by the planters that we had installed a couple of years ago and we are grateful to Nic Milner of Abbey Window Cleaning for watering them to keep them looking colourful.

After the demise of our newly planted Christmas tree last summer, we have now got a new one by the Co-op which is looking good at the moment – let's hope it survives the dry spell that we are currently experiencing!

We have also welcomed Incredible Edible to this area who are now providing vegetables to residents. Residents are welcome to go along on a Sunday morning to help if they wish.

Our spring display of daffodils and crocuses gets better each year thanks to the bulb planting efforts of our Gardening Club who this year planted daffodils on the corner of Manor Road and Five Ashes Road and crocuses outside the Library.

### **Construction Projects**

As well as organising social events and improving our neighbourhood, the Residents' Association is also involved in representing your views about proposed and current construction projects and this year has been particularly busy.

#### **Winkwell Drive/Lache Lane development**

This time last year I was reporting on the submission of plans to the Council for a development on the local Wildlife site on the field between Winkwell Drive and Lache Lane. We submitted detailed objections to these and in June amended plans were submitted by the developers. These were discussed at the Council's planning meeting in July last year, but despite our best efforts were approved. Our particular thanks go to Howard Williams for making a presentation at the planning meeting on behalf of the Residents' Association and for continuing to monitor the site now that construction has begun.

**Wrexham Road** With over 100 houses built on the Wrexham Road, the developers urgently needed to install a new sewer last year from the site to the main sewer in Circular Drive. Their proposals were not acceptable to our residents and, together with our Councillors, our representative Peter Cocker helped to devise a better plan. The works took place over 6 months from July to December and we are indebted to Peter for keeping a close eye on them and maintaining contact with the Council to resolve any issues, of which there are still a few. More recently the developers have felled a number of trees near Greenacre Road which had been marked for preservation. This serves to remind us that we all need to be vigilant and report any transgressions to the council.

### **Decoy Farm**

The most recent disruption that we are facing is as a result of road closures for works in connection with the Decoy Farm development on Lache Lane. We are again grateful to Peter Cocker for communicating with the Council on our behalf to try to minimise the problems that this is creating and for keeping residents in the loop via Facebook. Unfortunately these works are likely to go on for some time.

### **Membership**

Our membership is growing and, having reached 500 by the end of last year, is already at 490 this year. This is in part because of our boundary change to include Lache Park Avenue and surrounding streets in our area of benefit, but is largely the result of the efforts of our vice chair Colin Dollimore – thank you for all your hard work Colin.

Our members' subscriptions are used in part to produce our quarterly newsletter WP News which is distributed to 1500 households locally. Huge thanks go to Andrea Hopkinson our editor, Adina Hilgard our designer, Alan Birch our delivery coordinator and all of our volunteer deliverers for their sterling work in making sure that our residents are kept informed about local news.

Our Facebook page now has over 2000 members and provides a useful platform for residents to receive more immediate news about traffic, lost pets, job opportunities and much more. Ensuring that members observe the rules to keep it a safe and respectful environment is not always easy and I am very grateful to Dave Craggs, Annemarie Macfadyen and Sue Britton for monitoring the content.

You may not be aware, but Westminster Park Residents' Association is the parent organisation for the Evergreen Over 55s club and the Westminster Park Gardening Club. During the pandemic, the activities of both clubs were severely curtailed, but are now being revived.

Evergreen started cautiously with its first 'in-person' meeting in August and is now meeting regularly on the third Thursday of every month. The Evergreen Supper Club has also just started to meet again.

As I mentioned previously, the Gardening Club were out and about planting bulbs in the autumn, but have only just resumed indoor activities. They have now published an exciting programme of visits and talks for 2022.

You will have noted that we work closely with our local councillors **Neil Sullivan and Razia Daniels** and I would like to thank them most sincerely for their hard work on behalf of our community and for the great support that they have given us as an organisation. Our communications are frequently about complaints and issues which require their attention, so it is nice to be able to say something positive such as thank you very much!

I would also like to thank **everyone on the committee** for their support and hard work throughout the year. We are all volunteers, and luckily we all have different and complementary skills which make us a truly good team. We are also fortunate to have a large number of residents who are happy to volunteer their time to help with events, deliveries, and so on, enabling us to continue our work to make our area an even better place.

Westminster Park Residents' Association was established in 1998 and one of the founding members of the Committee and its first Chairman was Richard Short who passed away recently. We would like to record our deep debt of gratitude to him, who continued to serve on the committee for the next 24 years. Having also served as a Councillor and as Chester's Lord Mayor, he had a great deal of knowledge about Council affairs and always gave good advice. He will be greatly missed by all. I am also sad to report the passing of another of our past Chairmen, Dave Pilling. Dave was a member of the committee for many years and chaired it from 2012 to 2014.

Finally, I am sorry to say that we have lost Bob Tricklebank, for many years a core member of our Wrexham Road sub-committee. Bob had a great eye for detail when examining plans and assessing proposals. His wise counsel will be missed by all of us.

We pass on our deepest sympathies to the families of all three of our friends.

That concludes my report.

## **5. Treasurer's Report:**

In 2020 and again in 2021, there were no fundraising activities due to Covid.

To highlight our main income/ expenditure:

Income for 2021 membership was £1500, donations £193 and advertisements £1530.

Expenditure included Newsletter printing (4 editions) £2,065, insurance of £268 and planters/ bulbs £721. CRAG membership £25, hi-vis vests £25 and spam filter £32.

Thanks to our Councillors who gave WPRA funding from their Members' Budget for the Christmas Lights and Switch-On. Thanks also to Nick Ryan who examined and signed off our accounts.

On 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021 there was £6,485.50 in the bank, of which £1269.40 were Evergreen funds. Audited by Nick Ryan. Proposer: Brian Westcott, agreed: Neil Sullivan.

## **6. Change to the Constitution:** our 'area of benefit' used to spread to the Heron Bridge Roundabout which now includes part of the Wrexham Road Development (Kings Moat). We feel we should concentrate on our 'core' area and it is believed Kings Moat residents are to set up their own Residents Association. Attached is a map of the area to be known as Westminster Park for our purposes.

Proposed: Peter Cocker, Seconded: Jill Baynham-Hughes. Vote – passed.

- 7. Appointment of Committee Honorary Officers:** Chairman, Vice Chair, Treasurer, Secretary and General Committee Members (max of 12 in addition to Hon Officers): All current Officers and Committee members (with exception of Richard Short) have offered to stand again. Anne Ord Sykes has offered to join the Committee. There are still two vacancies. All voted in en bloc. Proposed: Elliot Baynham-Hughes, Seconded Richard Tatton.
- 8. AOB:** A comment had been sent about residents leaving their hedges to grow over pavements. A note will be put into the newsletters but possibly a polite suggestion to the neighbour will suffice. Westminster (recreational) Park: Comments had been made about the state particularly of the Café block. The Councillors told us that there is now funding for resurfacing through the whole park including BMX park due to start immediately. FoWP to be informed. The toilet block has had a deep clean and been repainted. Issues eg BMX track, has been progressed on safety grounds. Irrigation of bowls and croquet greens, should be sorted. Due to vandalism the Café Block has not been open when expected. There are issues with the Landlord, however there are plans to replace the building, they are working up a scope with FoWP to secure funding. The process is very frustrating as there is a will to come up with a great facility, the cricket club etc but it will be a long piece of work. Volunteers are improving the park, FoWP, HKIC litter picking etc. There have been cases of arson, and there is a leaking roof. There are plans to improve lighting in the park and getting CCTV to help prevent vandalism but all other methods need to be explored first. Elliot Baynham-Hughes brought up the matter of badly thought through (or not thought through) planning regarding highways. Very poor coordination. Neil has given feedback to the new Director of Highways. Olwen Bellis brought up the matter of the poor state of some roads on the estate and broken down walls which have been reported but not dealt with despite the high rates we pay. Razia is investigating. Richard Tatton mentioned the proposed Kings Moat Residents Association and hopes there will be collaboration with our RA. The community photocopier is now defunct and the CA did not want to buy one. We have done so and it should be installed tomorrow, cost £460 for a second hand one which will be situation in the Pharmacy again, giving b/w and colour prints.

Razia thanked the Committee for all their hard work.

The meeting ended at 8.50pm.