

WESTMINSTER PARK RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

AGM held on Wednesday 30th April 2025 at 8pm

MINUTES

1. **Attendees:** 19 listed separately.

Apologies from: Olwen Bellis, Brian and Christine Westcott, Annemarie and Niall Macfadyen, Anne and John Sykes, Sandra and Tom Magilton, Peter and Moir Cocker, David and Gill Guyton, Mary and Dick Pole, Keith Scott, Linda Shuttleworth, Mike Pollard.

2. **Minutes** of the last meeting held on 1st May 2024: agreed as a true record by those who attended.

Proposed by Steve McMahon

Seconded by Sue Seed.

3. **Matters arising:** covered below.

4. **Chairman's Report:** Since I last reported to you at the beginning of May last year we have organised a number of local social events, continued to engage with our MP, our Councillors, the Council and others on your behalf as well as providing our regular services.

Our social events suffered mixed fortunes this year. Our Spring and autumn quizzes were well attended and great fun was had by all. The Summer Fun Day in July, which was organised jointly with the Community Centre, was a great success and it was lovely to see families enjoying the music and activities, until the rain appeared. And all of our planning for the Christmas Lights Switch-on couldn't have anticipated an amber weather warning for wind and rain! We therefore had to cancel the event, but were still able to enjoy the lights throughout the dark days of winter. We are very grateful to our Councillors for their generous support of our social events from their Members Budgets.

In May we continued to organise First Aid/Defibrillator training run by the Red Cross which was very popular. This year we are hoping to organise some more courses for children and teenagers to run during the summer holidays.

Our Tidy ups at the shops have not been as well supported as we might hope, but I thank Brian Westcott for continuing to organise these every 6 months. As the centre of our community we feel that our parade of shops should appear well cared for as this encourages others to respect the area. Some have argued that this is the job of the Council, but they are not able to give it the time and attention that it requires. It falls to us therefore to do what we can to make our neighbourhood look attractive. With this in mind, we also continue to pay for the upkeep of the two planters which are replanted twice a year. We are extremely grateful to our residents and to the staff of Sandstone who keep them watered so that we can all enjoy them.

I think you will agree that with the addition of trees, a bench seat and the Incredible Edible raised beds, the grassed area by the Co-op is vastly improved. We are now hoping to make improvements to the area at the other end of the parade next to the

Emporium, by providing some hardstanding and a bench. If you are able to help with this project, please let me know.

We are very lucky to have a Green Flag park on our doorstep and I think you will agree that the volunteers who are working with the Council are doing a fantastic job. One of the projects that they are helping with is the development of the terrace area in front of the café. As a committee we decided to support this project financially and donated £500 towards their improvements.

We continue to hold regular meetings with the developers of the Wrexham Road housing estate at which we receive updates on the status of the construction of the school, timing of roadworks, etc. We can also raise issues such as flooding, noise, etc. If you have any issues that you want us to raise, please let us know. We have a meeting in a couple of weeks' time.

The provision of good GP services has been of great concern since the inception of this development, and we have held several meetings over the years. Last year I contacted our new MP Aphra Brandreth about the situation and asked her to take it up with the NHS. She has done this and had two meetings with senior managers this year. Plans are being worked on, but she was unable to reveal any detail. We will continue to push on your behalf for good health care provision.

In June 2024, residents close to the amenity land on corner of Vincent Drive and Dennis Drive were concerned to receive a letter from a housing developer suggesting that he was intending to purchase the land and build on it. The ownership of the land had lapsed to the Crown Estate and although it has been maintained by the Council since the estate was created, it had never been formally adopted. Following conversations with our Councillors, I spoke to the Council's Legal Services manager who outlined a couple of options which we might apply for to give the area greater protection. With the help of Susan Jones, I completed an application to have the land designated as an Asset of Community Value. I am happy to say that we have recently received a notice to say that the land has now been designated as an Asset of Community Value. Although this does not protect the land it does give us more time to consider our options should a planning application be submitted.

The deeds show that the green space on Dennis Drive is part of a larger parcel of land which also includes a large section of the Vincent Drive road and verges and green space adjacent to Wrexham Road. This matter, as well as a previous issue on Fir Tree Avenue, has led us to consider the ownership status of other green spaces around WP. We intend to identify parcels of land and check their ownership status with the Land Registry and whether they have been adopted by the Council as amenity space. If anyone would like to help with this project we would be very grateful – please come and see me at the end of the meeting.

Aside from working with our MP and Councillors, we are also a member of CRAG, the Chester Residents' Association Group, which aims to make Chester an *even* better place to live, work and visit. Although we are on the outskirts of the city, we all use the services provided by it and we consider that it is our interests to influence what happens in the city centre. Pauline Brown, who represents us on the CRAG committee, was one of the organisers of their conference held at the racecourse in October. This brought together residents, councillors, council officers and representatives from the water industry to discuss matters of common interest. A

further conference is planned this year - they are free for all residents to attend, so look out for details in the autumn and go along if you can.

You will be aware that your subscriptions help to pay for the production of a quarterly newsletter, WP News. The production of the newsletter is a team effort, currently involving Susan Speed, myself and Andrea Hopkinson. For the past four years we have been extremely fortunate to have Andrea at the helm as our editor, but she is poised to move to a new house out of our area and understandably is stepping back from the role. This leaves a vacancy which I will fill in the short term, but I would like you to consider whether you could help us put the newsletter together in the future. All that is required is an interest in the activities of our neighbourhood and the ability to write a few paragraphs about them. Plenty of support will be provided to get started so if you would like to find out more, please come and see me or give me a call.

You may not know that the residents' association is responsible for the provision of the photocopier in the Pharmacy. My thanks to vice chair Colin Dollimore for organising this and I urge you to use it when you can. Copies are very reasonably priced at 5p for black & white and 10p for colour.

Colin is also responsible for coordinating our membership and I am pleased to report that in the current year to date we have around 370 members. Regarding subscriptions, as our bank balance continues to be healthy, we have no intention of raising them this year; they will continue to be £3 per household.

Finally, I would like to thank all of those who work hard to make our community the pleasant and peaceful place that it is: our MP, our councillors, you our members and the members of the residents' association committee.

That concludes my report.

Pauline Brown confirmed that there will be another CRAG conference this year, theme 'What makes Chester tick'.

Razia Daniels thanked the Committee for all the work that the Committee does.

5. **Treasurer's Report:** Financially, WPRAs are in a healthy position with £7,131 in our bank account and Evergreen Funds of £974.

There are some expenditure items due: insurance in May of approx £200 and the planters which will cost £470 in spring and the same in the autumn.

A funding application has been made to the Councillors Members Budgets for £940 to cover the planters.

Donations for 2025 are currently £170; thank you to those members who have duplicated payments and donated the extra amounts.

Membership funds for 2025 total £1,344 of which £870 was paid in December 2024. The spring quiz made a profit of £123.84.

Advertisements for the Newsletters will bring in revenue of £1743 which leaves an overall shortfall of approx £500 which WPRAs are happy to cover.

The copier continues to make a loss but is an asset to the local community.... so far this year it has cost £60. However the number of copies are all estimates.

Hopefully this will be resolved soon - it requires PrintLogic to connect the copier to the internet at the Pharmacy, or we need to be shown how to read the meters.

A financial statement had been circulated separately.

6. **Committee:** all the committee with the exception of Penny White (Secretary) will stand for 2025/26, with no-one else proposed. The Chair did ask that residents would consider joining. The committee was voted in by a show of hands.

7. **AOB:**

Traffic on Lache Lane: residents reported a lack of care with children on bikes and fast traffic. We could put a piece in the Newsletter urging common sense. There was discussion about obtaining a flashing speeding sign (SID). A group at the far end of Lache Lane have a speed gun but there are limits as to how many can be reported. Matt Carter suggested markings on Lache Lane. Keith Vernon asked if police will deal with repeat offenders. Razia Daniels has been sent emails asking to replace speeding signage. There is a new speed limit on Wrexham Road which might mean more traffic from Wrexham Road. Another speed check could take place.

Psychiatric Unit: is going to Planning next week with a recommendation to pass it. One ward is secure.

Strip of land: this is the responsibility of Taylor Wimpey and the Management Company. No-one knows how it will work. Keith Vernon suggested that the Management Company should be providing more security. If it is supposed to manage itself as a 'green corridor' weeds will grow and some are quite tall. There is supposed to be specified species in the planting plan but there are already tall brambles.

Overleigh Roundabout: Work will start in July. Keith Vernon pointed out the poor driving at the lights on to Overleigh Roundabout.

The meeting ended at 9.50pm