

Walton Village Forum (WVF)
Annual General Meeting
Tuesday 28th of October 2025 8.00-9.30 pm

Welcome:

George Curry (Interim Chair) welcomed everybody to the meeting.

Admin:

There is a sign in list for tonight's meeting. Anybody who would like to be on the WVF mailing list please sign up on the website. For GDPR reasons we are unable to manually add people from the sign in list tonight.

Apologies:

Richard Harris (Gillian Hein, Richard Harris)	TWRA Walton planning TWRA Vice Chair and Tadworth planning will be representing
Robin and Gina Parr Davis	
Ben Green	Counsellor (Ben Green joined the meeting midway through)
Ethel Armstrong	
Martin and Jean Saul	
Mo Atkins	
Caroline Divine	WVF committee member
Emmeline Moore	WVF committee member
Mike Fox	TWRA Membership secretary

Agenda:

1) AGM Minutes February 2024

No comments on the minutes. They were proposed by Phillip Truitt and seconded by Mike Gordon and they were unanimously agreed.

Walton Village Forum Committee (WVF)

Committee is keen to recruit someone to take on the role of Chairman. George is currently acting as interim chairman.

Committee Members present:

George Curry -	Interim Chair
Andy Parkinson -	Vice Chair
Marilyn Ridgewell	Treasurer
Jean Bye	Chair Walton in Bloom sub committee
David Larner	Chair Mere Pond sub committee

Nicky Mann
Wendy Pitsillides

Committee Member
Committee Member

George Curry introduced Nicky Mann and Wendy Pitsillides as new committee members. Nicky and Wendy introduced themselves and were welcomed onto the committee.

Committee recruitment:

George explained WVF has three meetings a year and the time commitment for meetings is approximately 10 hours per year. Committee members are welcome to get involved as much or little as they like - it can be a “light touch” right through to a full Chair role. Please contact a committee member if you are interested.

Finances:

The year's accounts have been audited and signed and they will be put on the website. No questions were asked re finances.

George explained we have raised £190,000 in the last year through CIL funding from Reigate & Banstead Borough Council. Due to the Pavilion project this is an amount far higher than is usually spent in one year. George thanked everybody for all their support and help with the project, and in particular, theatre company events – Emmeline Moore, Walton Warriors Football Club, Walton Heath Golf Club, Edward Moore who worked tirelessly on planning and contractors with Reigate and Banstead council for being incredibly supportive in helping achieve what we have with the pavilion. Marilyn commented that there is no doubt that the pavilion has been a huge success, greatly appreciated by Walton Warriors. We particularly wanted the pavilion to be safe to accommodate children with disabilities so to have a regular toilet and a disabled toilet is excellent. A huge thank you to Reigate & Banstead Borough Council for their support.

There were no comments or questions on the finance report. They were proposed by Christine and seconded by Mike Gordon and were unanimously agreed.

Matters arising and correspondence:

Walton in Bloom

Jean Bye gave a report as Chair of Walton in Bloom. 100 small daffodils, 100 tulips and 200 large daffodils will be planted for the next year and Jean hopes that everybody has enjoyed the hanging baskets in the village this year. She would like to thank the WVF for funding these and commend the watering company who did a splendid job of watering the baskets over the summer. Jean reminded people that if the hanging baskets are to continue we do need to raise more funds. George commented that the WVF likes to support a variety of causes and cannot continue to fund the total cost of the baskets year on year. £380 has to date been donated mainly by local residents and Jean reminded people that any standing orders or one off donations would be very welcome. Details of how to donate will be put on the notice boards throughout the village and there are also forms on the tables.

Question:

Is there another way of making payments other than electronically?

It was agreed that the post meeting pack will add details of how to support Walton in Bloom. WVF will speak with Kennedys Estate Agents together with the Post Office who have kindly taken in 'envelopes' for WVF.

Addendum: On her notices for the village notice boards Jean will add details as to how people f

Mere Pond and The Bell public house

David Lerner gave his report on Mere Pond and The Bell public house.

The Bell public house:

David explained the history of The Bell pub on Withybed Corner which has been a public house for 200 years and has been commended by CAMRA the (Campaign for Real Ale) and explained the various events take place there throughout the year. Brakspear (the brewery) made an application to close the pub and attain planning for a 3 bedroom house. There has been a group set up who would like to make a bid to save the pub and are campaigning for the pub to be listed to be a place of community value. The current focus is raising the capital towards buying the pub from the brewery. The concept being explored is for people in the community to purchase the pub and to retain it as an "old-fashioned" pub. There are approximately 40 -50 people who want to support this venture and become shareholders who will purchase the pub for approximately £400,000. They are 3/4 of the way to achieving this funding and recognition of the pub of an asset of community value has been granted.

Next steps are:

- To raise the £400,000 and start negotiations with the brewery. They have secured the internal accounts from the pub and are now taking advice as to what the pub might be worth as a "going concern". They will seek professional advice on all aspects of this.
- To consult with shareholders and any other interested parties.

Anyone who is interested in being involved or would like to be kept informed please contact Lorraine or Bob. David Lerner has Bob's e-mail address if anybody would like it.

George thanked David for keeping the WVF and local community updated.

Action: David to send the contact details for Lorraine and Bob to the WVF committee who will circulate them.

Mere Pond:

Recent achievements over the last year are as follows:

- Unblocking the pond weed
- Removal of a carnivorous turtle,
- Alerting authorities to various issues as they arise
- Fish removal

The council have a five year plan to manage the pond which was produced earlier this year and is on the WVF website. David Lerner had suggested amendments to the council's original plan

which are being considered by the council and a second edition will be published to reflect these as appropriate.

SILT: Council funds are still reserved for Mere Pond silt work which is to be spent before the end of the financial year

FISH: Unwanted fish can often be “dumped” in the pond. David Lerner recommends the erection of a sign to deter people from doing this.

BULRUSHES: Bulrushes have become well established and some are now growing rapidly. David recommends removing all the bulrushes.

TREES: The council’s policy is to survey and retain trees unless they pose a danger even if they are dead. David’s concern is that some trees significantly overhang pathways.

WATER LEVEL: Recent low water levels could be attributed to climate change and therefore the levels need to continue to be monitored and the drains need to be regularly cleared to ensure that water is not wasted unnecessarily.

David's report will be posted on the WVF website.

Any Other Business (AOB)

- 1) *Sunday the 2nd of November at 10 AM* volunteers are meeting in the car park opposite the Co-op to put up the remaining poppies for Remembrance Day. Any volunteers will be very welcome.
- 2) Committee members Marilyn and Emmeline will be wreath making and the wreaths will be put up around the village. Anyone who is interested in helping will be most welcome, please let Marilyn or Emmeline know.
- 3) There is a defibrillator in the phone box on Gun Corner and Martin and Jean Saul were successful in getting a defibrillator for Riddell Hall. Hopefully a third one will be installed by The Spaghetti Tree restaurant, it is currently pending planning permission.

Planning update:

Zelanie Cooper (Councillor) gave an update. Zelanie explained today’s Government decision that local councils will cease to exist in 2027 and that Surrey will be split into East and West. There will be funding available to support the debt that Woking council have incurred. Part of Zelanie’s role this year is as Deputy Mayor. People can sign up for her newsletter if they wish to do so.

Zelanie will send details of community support that is available for example food banks to WVG committee to send out to the community. Zelanie asked if there were any questions. There were none.

Gillian Hein (TWRA Vice Chair & Tadworth planning) addressed the meeting on behalf of Richard Harris. There have been approximately 71 planning applications in the last year, approximately a third of which have been for tree work. Gillian thanked Heath Drive Residents Association (HDRA), Tadworth and Walton Residents Association (TWRA) and Rachel Turner and Marilyn Ridgewell in particular for attendance at the recent hearing for the proposed travellers site in Chequers Lane. Marilyn added that fourteen acres at the end of Howard Close, next to the proposed travelling community site is in the process of being bought by a Consortium which will secure the future of the land not being developed as a travelling community site.

Rachel Turner thanked Gillian for the tremendous amount of work, time and effort that she has put in to opposing the travelling community site planning application at the public inquiry, Gillian's work together with Richard Harris has been absolutely commendable. Marilyn also agreed and thanked Gillian for the amazing work she has done.

Ben Green (Councillor). Ben explained that local government reform is high on the government's agenda. Reigate and Banstead council will close and all local councils will be merged into East and West Surrey in 2027 (Walton and Tadworth will be part of East Surrey). Ben's is concerned about the loss of local accountability and he reminded people that if it is successfully voted for there can be a local parish council set up. He urged people to look out and respond to the consultation on this.

In preparation for this change Reigate and Banstead have reviewed their finances and assets. The council has identified a small pot of money that they would like to spend on the current local community. It is something that community groups can bid for. There are also other grants available for buying land as long as it is for the benefit of the community. Reigate and Banstead has no debt.

George thanked Ben Green for his update.

Rod Ashford (Councillor) Rod urged people to think about what they wanted going forward in terms of Councillors and to reflect whether they wanted somebody with very local knowledge in the local community or whether they would be happy with a councillor from further afield who might not know the local community and individual circumstances. Rod asked if there were any questions on the Surrey County Council reforms.

Question:

Phillip Truett asked how many councillors there were currently. Ben Green said there approximately 60 councillors across Surrey currently and this would reduce to approximately 12 in the new organisational plan. A discussion ensued regarding the importance of councillors who understand individual circumstances and communities. There will be a consultation about whether people want a local parish which may better understand the local community needs. Rod advised that people should consider ensuring the counsellor can represent their community, rather than voting for who they have always voted for without consideration of their locality.

AOB

Jeff Temple (Chairman of TWRA) believed that everybody should consider a parish council, as the local council will no longer exist. The parish council would be consulted on local matters e.g. local planning and will be able to better represent our community needs.

Date of next meeting

24th February 2026.

There will be two further meetings next year in June and October 2026

End of meeting

George Curry closed the meeting at 9.30pm and thanked everyone for their contributions.