



BA13 COMMUNITY AREA PARTNERSHIP Report October 2017

The most recent BA13+ Community Area Partnership meeting took place on 17th August at the Laverton and focussed on Arts and Culture in the Westbury area. It also happened to be our AGM.

This latest in an increasingly popular series of public meetings, which have in the past year also covered issues as diverse as the Environment, Youth Matters and Business Issues, welcomed as a guest speaker on this occasion Meril Morgan, the Arts Lead for Wiltshire Council.

Meril's primary focus is leading on the arts within Wiltshire Council. She is based at the History Centre in Chippenham but works all around the county. Her role is to enable and facilitate and to help develop community projects, for example linking community groups with artists and arts organisations. Meril went on to explain that there's a number of organisations who have a remit to help things happen in Westbury. In addition to the Westbury Festival (which Cllr. Ian Cunningham outlined very entertainingly), there is a rural touring scheme which has put on professional performances in Dilton Marsh; the Wylie Valley Arts Trail as well as the Cloth Road Arts Week are on our doorstep; and then there is the annual Edington Music Festival. Some of the public arts projects in the past have included gates on a new development; the lakeside view development had bespoke number plates for some of the houses; and the 'Westbury and Me' photography project by Penny Ellis.

Finally, the Annual General Meeting of the Partnership saw Carole King unanimously reinstated as Chairman for the coming year.

In her presentation to the meeting, Carole referred to the year's highlights, which included hearing from Guy Parker representing the Environment Agency in November 2016. He spoke about the issues of dealing with an area of chalk like ours is, including bore holes, flooding, the re-introduction of beavers and dredging. This was followed by Trevor Carbin, a local archaeologist, geologist and geophysicist speaking about fracking in Wiltshire. He explained that the west wilts area had been explored in 2015, even though there was no coal in the area, so he felt he could give a 99% assurance that they wouldn't return to our area! For our February 2017 meeting, our theme of the Economy brought in speakers Tim Martienssen, Head of Economic Development and Planning from Wiltshire Council, and Chris Wordsworth from the local Hawke Ridge Business Park. There was the opportunity to ask questions about Westbury's future bypass and the strategic influence of the Local Enterprise Partnership and it was fascinating hearing Westbury described as a "powerhouse" location from a distribution point of view. In May this year we covered the theme of Children and Young People and we were privileged to listen to James Threlfall, a TV presenter and Wiltshire-based skateboarder.

The Partnership is pressing ahead with the project to get Westbury recognised as a Dementia Friendly Town. Many Dementia Friends Sessions have taken place in our area including Westbury Junior School and we are currently encouraging everyone to train as a Dementia Champion so we can continue to take our programme forward.

The next Partnership Meeting is to be held on **16th November 2017** at 7pm at Leighton Rec. It was agreed we would have a transport theme.

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