

BA13+ REPORT TO WESTBURY AREA BOARD

The BA13+ Community Area Partnership held its Annual General Meeting on Thursday 18th August 2016 at Leighton Recreation Centre. The theme of the meeting was "Leisure"

Carole King, the outgoing Chair of the Partnership, reported that during the past year we covered the themes of Transport (August 2015) and heard from amongst others the Westbury Wheelers about the six exits from Westbury, though not all of them safe or accessible. We touched on the theme of Health & Well-being in both November 2015 and May 2016. The Alzheimers Support project worker, Area Board community engagement manager and BA13 CAP are working on a project to make Westbury a Dementia Friendly Community. The launch was held in April this year and since then there have been a number of Dementia Friends sessions held in the BA13 area with more to come next month. There is a Dementia Advisor and others who work out of the White Horse Surgery and there are a multitude of activities and support for people with dementia and their carers in our area. In May we heard from the CCG Communications Director about the tensions and conflicts between providing hospital vs at home care for people with long term conditions or short acute illnesses.

BA13 replied to the public conveniences and public transport consultations and encouraged our members to do likewise to all WC's consultations. We raised a Freedom of Information question to WTC about disabled access for children's play areas in the town and learned that the main park, Grassacres, provides access to a swing and roundabout. We wrote to the Editor of the WT to suggest some alternative features on Westbury businesses. Lastly, we sponsored a group to do a 'Clean for the Queen' clear up in the Minehole lanes.

We gave two grants this last year. The first was for the Westbury Area Schools Partnership of £245 for their project to work with the Wilts Wildlife Trust in the woodland at Wellhead Drove, where reps from the local primary schools learned about rights of way and trespass, safety in the countryside, conservation, litter picking and forest activities. The second was for the project Anybody Can Cook which was organised by the White Horse Children's Centre where families were nominated by the local schools. This project enables families to learn about alternative recipes, cook together then eat the results.

Officers were then elected as follows for the coming year: Chair – Carole King. Treasurer: Michael Walter.

Reports were received from partner organisations the Lions, the Health group, the Safety group, Westbury Churches, the Town Council, the Diabetes group and the Area Board. Finally, the charismatic guest speaker Peter Wragg addressed the meeting on the subject of the work undertaken by Visit Wiltshire. Since 2010 tourism has been the fastest growing business sector in the UK in employment terms. Tourism-related employment now accounts for 3.1m jobs in the UK – almost 10% of the entire workforce.

We now welcome over 20 million visitors a year to Wiltshire. One of the big challenges we have is to keep visitors in our county overnight therefore exposing them to more of what we have to offer. 1.4 million people visit Stonehenge, and then most of them drive on to destinations outside the county. We therefore need a second large attraction to encourage them to stay.

With this in mind Visit Wiltshire are working with the Army to help them to build a £36m heritage centre and museum on Salisbury Plain. They are also leading the development of the Great West Way, a tourist trail that will eventually run from London to Bristol, greatly benefitting the communities along the A4 corridor. Another project is the Melksham Link which will consist of a new canal running from the Kennet and Avon near Trowbridge up to Melksham and then eventually on to Swindon. In addition to the canal and associated leisure facilities, there would be a new hotel, a wetlands nature reserve and visitor education centre.

They also recently commissioned an accommodation study for the county which resulted in identifying a need for addition visitor accommodation of all types from large hotels to glamping.

There are a vast variety of attractions in Wiltshire. It's easy to understand why the Ancient Britons believed this place was special, and still today Stonehenge is a magnet for people from all over the world.

They are promoting the fact that in Wiltshire time is slower and more relaxing than in other places and in many respects time just stands still. Wiltshire therefore is the perfect place to visit to totally relax, to wind down, to chill out. Westbury has its own page on their website and there is a link from that page to our visitor centre website.

<http://www.visitwiltshire.co.uk/towns-and-villages/westbury-p476423>

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