

Willaston Residents' and Countryside Society

Minutes of the AGM held on 29th September 2017 in Willaston Memorial Hall

Approximately 67 people were in attendance.

1. Welcome & Apologies

Chris Hampshire welcomed everyone present to the Annual General Meeting of the Willaston Residents' and Countryside Society (WR&CS) and said it was nice to see so many people. He introduced himself, saying that he had been Chair for five years and his original aims had been to improve awareness of WR&CS and to enable it to appear less elitist and he felt progress on this had been made.

Apologies had been received from, Barry Vowles (Planning Officer), Madeline Hughes, Helen Mayles and Stephen Bazeley.

2. Minutes of the AGM held on Friday 30th September 2016

Copies of the minutes had been placed on seats prior to the meeting for attendees to read. Chris asked for any amendments to the Minutes. Three were identified:

- In the Chair's report, it stated that the Community Plan was developed in 2104, which should read 2014.
- Further in the Chair's report, the paragraph that reads 'We have worked closed with CWaC', should read 'closely with CWaC'.
- At the end of this paragraph, should be a sentence: 'Chris thanked Barry for the work he had done on planning issues.'

With these amendments, the minutes were proposed by Debra Jerrett and seconded by Roger James. By a show of hands, the minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting.

3. Actions Arising

Page 2 – Time limit for parking on the Green. This will be covered in the Chair's report.

Page 2 – Hadlow Road Station Car Park. Comments were fed back to the Ranger.

Page 2 – Bungalow in Hadlow Road. WR&CS had checked and planning permission was not required for the roof.

Page 4 – Details were shared about the Quarry Road proposals.

Page 4 – Hedges. We had written to the people whose properties had hedges encroaching onto the Highway identified by residents. In one instance, this had been dealt with by the owner immediately. In the other instances, where nothing had been done, we then contacted Chester West and Chester Council (CWaC) who had investigated and came back to say that they did not consider that the hedges needed to be cut back.

Page 4 – Flashing sign. This had been repaired.

Page 4 – Sign for Hooton Road. This has been put up.

4. Chair's Report

Chris Hampshire reported that the Society had had another active and successful year, continuing to meet every other month for about 2½ hours. On behalf of all village residents, he thanked the Officers and other representatives who give their time freely to WR&CS. Some new committee representatives have joined the Committee, along with Co-opted members. Chris explained that each Officer has a specific functional area that takes up more of their time and ensures that WR&CS is not just a talking shop. However, we have no executive authority and have to liaise with local people, organisations and CWaC to enable changes to Willaston to take place.

Chris then thanked Sarah Shannon as Secretary who he said had worked alongside him through all the trials and tribulations over the past five years that he has been Chair. He said that they have an

excellent working relationship and it is only because of this support that he was prepared to offer to serve as Chair for a further three years. Sarah has also very successfully led on WR&CS's involvement in the play area on Johnston Recreation Ground. The phase two improvements have now been put out to tender by CWaC and the work is planned to be completed by March 2018 in time for use in Spring. Chris thanked CWaC for their support on this work.

Chris then mentioned the disabled access to the Post Office. We have seen different ramps being created on the highway and then being removed following our intervention with CWaC. Now there is a system with a bell that you ring for a ramp to be brought out, which meets all the access legislation.

Turning to car parking in the village, Chris explained that, following a request from the WI, we undertook a survey of parking around the Village Green to understand more about why, when and for how long people park. This took place at different times and days and we concluded that the parking is generally self-regulating. Although there were times when parking isn't available, most of the time there were spaces and it was unrealistic to expect parking to be available for 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Therefore, we agreed not to approach CWaC to request the implementation of restricted parking.

Chris thanked Jane Townsend, the Footpaths Officer who has been working constantly with CWaC to ensure that footpaths and bridleways are strimmed and to resolve issues where footpaths need repair. This has included FP32 (which runs from behind Pollards to the Wirral Way) where CWaC has fitted a metal platform where it gets flooded. After this was done, we then received comments that some dogs don't like walking on it, which just shows we can't please everyone.

Chris said that another issue that keeps being raised is about traffic through the village. Issues include the speed of traffic, the number of large vehicles, a request for an additional pedestrian crossing on Hadlow Road and improved signage at the Hooton crossroads. Kay Parry, Principal Engineer for our area at CWaC attended our last meeting to listen to a range of concerns and took away several actions. We are now waiting her response and will publish the outcome when we have heard from her.

Following the closure of the Willaston Services Club, we contacted the British Legion, locally and nationally asking for time to assess if there is any potential to convert the building to a community resource. However, the response was that it would cost the Legion £20,000 a month to keep the site and that they have an obligation to get the best value for money. Therefore, it is likely to be sold.

Chris thanked Hilary Booth, the Treasurer, who as well as managing the money, also manages the Lottery which has an increased number of members. This generates a small amount of funding to cover our costs. Hilary ensures that it runs effectively and all the legal returns are made.

Chris thanked Ceri Jones, the Social Media Officer, who has created a WR&CS Facebook (FB) page which is regularly updated with village activities. The page is now followed by 370 people and one of our posts has been seen by 2,500 people. The FB posts have included updates from WR&CS, other events happening in the village, images of the village past and present and lost and found items, including pets. Village organisations are encouraged to send Ceri regular updates for FB.

We have also distributed two newsletters over the last 12 months to every house in the village to increase awareness and let residents know what is going on. We were fortunate to receive funding from the New Homes Bonus fund run by CWaC to pay for the printing of the newsletters. We also have a system where we will contact people by email to let them know when minutes of meetings have been put onto our website.

Finally, WR&CS has taken on managing the Charity Christmas Card Fair which has previously been done by Joan and Keith Butcher for many years and Chris thanked them for this. The fair this year will be held on Saturday 18th November from 10am to 12 noon.

5. Planning Report

In Barry Vowles' absence, Chris commented that Barry has worked closely with CWaC scrutinising applications for planning permission. This year we published a guidelines paper which shows our criteria for responding to planning applications. The principal things we consider are the need to protect the Green Belt and to protect the village Conservation Area. Chris explained that we can only make recommendations but CWaC do listen to our comments.

Chris updated the meeting on the proposed Roften development, near Hooton Station. Further remedial work needs to be done on the site but a builder has been selected and has put in more detailed plans so work on the new housing estate may start shortly.

Chris also mentioned that WR&CS had been in email contact with Mr Paul Jackson, the owner of fields on the corner of Heath Lane and Hooton Road and that Mr Jackson had attended one of our meetings. Subsequently, he had submitted an application for use of the field as a market garden, claiming that the buildings and hard core had been there for more than ten years. According to Google Earth images the buildings and hard core had not been there for that period of time and CWaC are looking into it.

We are also looking into a metal motorcycle locker which is on the edge of a house in the conservation area to see if it needs planning permission. We think that this does not apply but will assess it further.

6. Treasurer's Report

Hilary Booth, Treasurer, presented the accounts which had been placed on seats prior to the meeting. She explained that WR&CS doesn't have a regular income and we have to raise any money we need, mainly through the Lottery.

The Current Account funds our core work. Overall, the Current Account had credits of £515.00, payments of £805.52 and carries forward a balance of £1147.32, of which £944 is ringfenced for the newsletter. This leaves a balance of £203 to cover our costs of hiring the hall, insurance, flowers etc.

The Play Area Account had no financial transactions this year.

The Fundraising Account shows the income relating to the Willaston Lottery. This ended with a balance of £516.87 which we also have available to spend. Hilary commented that the Lottery had done well with over 150 members. People can still join for the current year, which would cost £11 as one draw had already taken place.

Overall, therefore we have a total of £6661.31. Hilary then stated that the accounts have been audited by Nigel Pratten as an honest record and said that the accounts will be on the WR&CS website for inspection.

The accounts were proposed by Myles Hogg and seconded by Jen Williams. By a show of hands, they were accepted as a true record.

7. Election of Officers

Chris explained that officers are elected for a period of three years on a rotational basis. This year the posts of Chair, Treasurer and Planning Officer are up for election. At this point, Chris stepped down and Vicky Spraggon, Vice-Chair, took his place.

Vicky explained that Chris Hampshire had expressed his willingness to stand as Chair for a further three-year period. There being no other nominations, he was proposed by Debra Jerrett, seconded by Kath Walker and agreed by all present. Chris then took over as Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

Chris explained that Hilary Booth has indicated her willingness to continue in the role of Treasurer. There being no other nominations, she was proposed by Roger James, seconded by Hilary Morris and agreed by all present.

Barry Vowles has indicated his willingness to continue in the role of Planning Officer. There being no other nominations, he was proposed by Vicky Spraggon, seconded by Jean King and agreed by all present.

Chris explained that during the year, Keith Butcher stepped down as Trustee to the Memorial Hall, leaving a vacancy. Rob King had expressed his willingness to take on this role. There being no other nominations, he was proposed by Jill Lessing, seconded by Colin Jerrett and agreed by all present.

7.1 Resident Representatives

Chris explained that a number of residents are elected onto the committee for three years. Madeline Hughes is due for re-election. Madeline was nominated by Vicky Spraggon, seconded by Sue Unsworth and agreed by all present.

Chris then asked for any further nominations from the floor. Sandra Kettiros expressed her interest in becoming a representative and confirmed that she lived in Willaston. Sandra was nominated by Jen Williams, seconded by Hilary Booth and agreed by all present. Paul Jackson also expressed an interest but as he has a business in the village and is not a resident, he was not eligible for nomination as a residents' representative and withdrew his request. No other nominations were received.

8. Any Other Business

8.1 Traffic.

Richard Dutton said that he appreciated that the Council had recently done a traffic survey in the village and felt it was important that the integrity of the survey is sound as it could and should provide more evidence about the difficulties we face. He stated that regarding the zig-zag bend, Nag's Head had agreed in principle to allow cameras to be placed so that traffic can be viewed and we are able to monitor the behaviour of drivers, potentially through Livescreen on Facebook. This would enable volunteers to monitor what is going on at any time. He proposed that a working group is set up and agree criteria for this.

Chris commented that for their survey, CWaC had used two black monitors which measured traffic for 24 hours a day throughout a period of a week. He agreed that WR&CS would look into this proposal in more detail, including cost, data protection issues and what we do if we have the evidence. Myles Hogg suggested that we would also need to speak to Highways at CWaC to get their view but Richard commented that any enforcement would be a policing issue. **Action: WR&CS**

Ken Stubbs commented that vehicles use Mill Lane as a thoroughfare and the safety issues there need to be looked into.

Another resident commented on delivery vans to the newsagent which park on the zig-zag lines by the crossing. Sarah Shannon explained that we had discussed the issue of delivery vans with Spar and various options for improving the situation. The most viable option was where the vans contact Spar to say that they were coming so that Spar can put cones out to reserve a place. Unfortunately, however, this is not legal and Spar were not prepared to agree to it unless they could have a letter absolving them. This was not possible to arrange so we met an impasse. Chris commented that if people park illegally, including on the zig zag lines, any resident can take a photograph and call 101 to report it.

Jen Williams expressed concern about children walking across Hadlow Road on their way to/from school and suggested a crossing should be installed by the Old Hall. Chris explained that this has

been raised with CWaC but it is believed there are a lot of services running underneath this part of the road which makes it difficult to install a crossing, although CWaC are investigating. In addition, CWaC currently have no money for crossings. Another suggestion that had been made by a resident at our last meeting was to extend the double yellow lines to the Old Hall wall which would make crossing safer here and CWaC have been asked to consider this.

8.2 Stables

A resident raised the issue of people being refused planning permission for stables on Green Belt land, saying that this land is where people are likely to have horses or livestock. Chris commented that CWaC has clear rules for the Green Belt land and would apply those to any planning application. Myles Hogg commented that each planning application was taken on merit and the normal reason for turning down such an application would be because it is considered to be too big for private use and therefore likely to be a business. The resident involved said that she had had a planning application turned down because of comments by residents. Chris replied that any individual has the right to make a comment on any application. He recommended that she look at the planning guidelines and talk to the Planning Officers at CWaC before making an application as they will give verbal advice.

8.3 Flooding

Mr Baragwanath said that the drainage system next to the bus stop opposite the Green is not working, causing flooding. Myles Hogg agreed to follow this up. **Action: Myles**

8.4 Neston Road

Sandra Kettiros commented that when she had been in the Lake District, she saw a flashing notice thanking people for driving slowly. It was agreed to investigate this for Willaston. **Action: WR&CS**

9. Close of Meeting

Chris Hampshire closed the meeting by thanking all the committee and organisation members for their work during the year. He then thanked everyone for coming along and invited them to join us in some wine and nibbles and to visit the information tables around the room.

Want more information?

Our website can be found at: <http://willastoninwirralresidents.org> and Facebook at: www.facebook.com/willastonresidents

If you would like an email alert when minutes of meetings are posted on our website, please contact us via the website.

Any village concerns then let us know

Email Willaston Residents' & Countryside Society through the 'Contact Us' page on the Society's website. Alternatively write to the Society c/o the Chair, 11 The Courtyard, Willaston. CH64 2UT.

If there is any particular issue you would like to raise, the first 15 minutes of each meeting is open to any resident. Please let us know if you would like to attend during this session. You are also welcome to attend throughout the meeting as an observer – again, please let us know if you will be attending.

These Minutes are subject to ratification.
Sarah Shannon
Secretary

