

Willaston Residents' and Countryside Society (WR&CS)

Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on Monday 19th January 2015 in the Memorial Hall

Residents' Issues

There were no residents present to raise any issues.

Committee Meeting

Present: (Officers): Chris Hampshire (Chair), Jane Townsend (Vice Chair), Sarah Shannon (Secretary), Barry Vowles (Planning), Hilary Booth (Treasurer) (Committee Members): Hilary Morris, Rob King, Paul Janvier, Fiona Ennys, Vicky Spraggon, Phil Leach, Margaret Smythe, Deb Jerrett, Lyn Jackson-Eves, Hilary Gould, Carol Savage, Sheila Smith, Helen Mayles and Madeline Hughes.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Martin Collins, Myles Hogg, Keith Butcher, Leanne Kershaw, Sue Unsworth, Jean King and Emma Sharpe.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 3rd November 2014

Two corrections were noted:

Item 12.4 - We are waiting for installation of six kissing gates, not three.

Item 10.2 – Should read Hadlow Road, not Hooton

With these amendments, the Minutes were proposed by Vicky, seconded by Lyn and accepted by the Committee as a true record of the meeting.

4. Matters arising from the previous Minutes (1st September 2014)

All actions had been completed other than

4.1 Trees overhanging Hadlow Road (item 14.1)

Chris will contact the owners of the Old Hall about this.

Action: Chris

4.2 Snow bags (item 11.4)

There appeared not to have been a delivery of the snow bags. Myles is currently on holiday so was not able to comment on this.

5. Reports from Working Groups

5.1 Playground Working Group

Sarah reported that a few more donations this period mean that the total raised is now £60,967.06. Donations recently received have been:

- Willaston Football Club - £100;
- Willaston Preschool Playgroup - £35;
- Martins' collection box - £6.72.

Unfortunately a donation that was made had to be withdrawn. However, the Environmental Services department at CWaC have now provided us with a £5,000 grant which covers this. The Rotary Club has also put in a bid to provide an archway at the entrance and should here the result of this shortly.

Some changes have been made to the plans as a result of discussions with the new Landscape Architect and the Council. The Council recently undertook a safety evaluation of all play areas which was done by RoSPA. Unfortunately the climbing unit in our play area came out very badly and really had only a short time left before it would need removing. Therefore, we had a decision whether to repair or replace it. In addition,

when the architect looked more at the proposals to put a mound under the slide, this got increasingly technical and expensive. We have therefore agreed to remove the existing climbing unit, make some simple alterations to the slide so it is safer and use the money saved to put in a new climbing unit more suitable for younger children with a slide. Some other simple changes to the plans have also been agreed and the sub-group is happy with the final proposals.

The sub group had discussed when and how would be best to share the final plans with the community and decided that we would have an afternoon during the time that the works are taking place when copies of the plan would be available for people to look at.

The tender for the stage one improvements is expected to be published on The Chest (council procurement website) with a suggested start date of Monday 20th April and the aim of the work being completed by 22nd May. This means that the play area in its current form will be open for Easter. The final price will be decided as a result of the tender applications.

The committee discussed publicity and it was agreed that information should be put in the summary minutes and the final plans on the website. It was also agreed that an official opening should take place.

Action: Sarah

Chris thanked Sarah and the sub-group for all the work done on this project so far.

5.2 Friends of Hadlow Road Station Working Group

Chris reported that the inaugural meeting of The Friends of Hadlow Road Station was held on Monday 1st December and attended by 19 residents with apologies received from numerous others. 15 separate actions were identified at the meeting with various individuals agreeing to follow up on these actions by the next meeting. There is also a database of around 50 people who have registered an interest in becoming a member of the Group.

A draft constitution based upon charitable status is being created for discussion and agreement at the next meeting expected to be held end of Feb 2015, following which the Officers will be elected and the new Group will then be formally operational. WR&CS have previously agreed to be the bankers of any monies on their behalf. Hilary Booth is setting up a separate sub- account for this.

Twenty people met at the station on Saturday 17th January and made a detailed list of what needs doing externally. This has initially been sent to the Council as some things have Health and Safety issues so should fall under their responsibility.

In the meantime 2 small grant applications have been submitted to:

- EPNAVCO to fund the liability insurance for this new Group along with 6 hanging baskets.
- Cadburys Galaxy Hot Chocolate fund for tables and chairs to support the serving of teas, coffees and cakes which will generate further revenue.

6. New Homes Bonus Community Fund

A paper previously circulated on the New Homes Bonus was discussed. Money is available relating to the number of new homes built in the area. The Willaston and Thornton ward was allocated £2,117 for 2013-14 and a further £4,798 from homes built in 2014-15. The paper outlined a number of options for potential bids based on the Community Plan proposals:

- Pay people to do a survey of the cars parking on the Green and why so that we can decide whether to take further steps on looking at restricted parking.
- Publicity campaign about local public transport services
- Hadlow Road Station
- Play area
- Footpaths - create an improved Damhead Lane entrance onto the Wirral Way, if/when we get permission from landowners.
- Signposting of local shops and services from the Wirral
- Newsletter from us about what we do, what we need volunteers for etc. that goes to every house once/twice a year.

Other suggestions made by members were:

- An additional noticeboard in the play area

- Improvement of the connecting pathway between Intake Close and Smithy Lane
- Upgrading of the website
- Flower displays such as hanging baskets in the village
- Improvement of footpath 32 (Pollards to Wirral Way)

Following a discussion Barry proposed and Paul seconded that we initially ask for two projects to be supported: a mailshot in the village twice a year of a good quality brochure with any remaining monies to be allocated to Hadlow Road Station improvements. This was agreed by all present with one abstention.

7. Financial Matters

Hilary Booth circulated the financial report. On 31st December, the current account had a balance of £1,022.93, the lottery account a balance of £1,798.44 and the playground account a balance of £1,686.52. Of the money in the current account, £342.69 is money from the Community Plan which can be used for implementation of aspects of the plan and £567.36 the grant from the Ramblers.

Hilary G asked if licences were required for collection boxes but was assured they are not necessary.

8. Planning Applications, Decisions and Appeals

8.1 Specific Applications

8.1.1 Mill Lane applications

Barry was pleased to report that the Badger Butts application has been withdrawn and the Montrose one was rejected on appeal.

8.1.2 Nessun Dorma, Lydiate Lane

This property had permission to build residential accommodation about ten years ago but had not developed it. They are now applying to build two large houses in their back garden. It was agreed to object to this development as it is in Green Belt land and to maintain consistency. **Action: Barry**

10.2 Other Planning Matters

Barry reported that he and Myles had a very useful meeting with the Head of Development Planning and the Spatial Planning Manager at CWAC. The Council is currently exceeding its housing target as it has 5.6 years of housing planned. The emerging local plan has gone through various reviews and largely remains intact and now carries significant weight. The area is also unusual in that it has adequate traveller site provision.

Chris thanked Barry and Myles for the work that they have done, particularly around the Montrose objections.

9. Local Councillor's Report

Myles had submitted the following report which was noted:

9.1 No 2 Atworth Terrace – there is a much improved appearance plus the garden is tidied up. It will probably be sold or rented out in due course.

9.2 Bus Service to Chester – this is now in operation, initially running on Fridays but changing to Wednesdays. It leaves Willaston at 9.45am and returns at 1.30pm. Currently there are very few passengers (normally 3 or 4 people). There have been comments that it is too expensive.

9.3 Parking space for disabled drivers – now marked out at the entrance to the Green.

9.4 20mph zone on Neston Road – Speed checks were done from 21st to 29th October. This showed average speeds of:

- Near the florist, eastbound – 22mph;
- Near the florist, westbound – 23.8mph;
- Near the school, eastbound – 24.5mph;
- Near the school, westbound – 26.8mph;

The daily flow of vehicles is 3100. Les Green will be producing statistics of the before and after situation. Thanks to Les Green, John Henrys and others for their ongoing efforts to make our roads safer by reducing the speed of traffic through our village.

It was noted that the parking has been extended beyond Spar and is now dangerous.

9.6 Willaston Post Office – awaiting final outcome of consultation from the Post Office.

9.7 Hooton Road – most hedges have been cut and some footpath clearance work has been done on Hooton Road. Further work on footpaths has been promised.

9.8 Highways – double yellow lines have been extended up Elm Road to improve safety at the junction with Neston Road. A couple of H bars have been put in across the new dropped kerbs in Broadlake for safety purposes.

9.9 Heath Lane Travellers – have put in another planning application on 22nd December for permission to stay on their site. This will almost certainly be refused. If not Myles will call it in to be heard by the Planning Committee. There is a site available for them in Ellesmere Port, so their application ought to fail.

9.10 Energy Savings – you can get help to make your home more energy efficient, through the Green Deal and other schemes. Go to www.gov.uk/energy-grants-calculator or ring Energy Saving Advice Service on 0300 123 1234.

9.11 Parking enforcement. Eight tickets have been issued in Willaston in the last three months. Use the Council website to report or complain about poor parking.

9.12 Cost increase for senior railcards – the Association of Train Operating Companies now operate the system. There is a 20% discount direct to Cheshire West residents through using a discount code, making a card £24. To apply for a discount code, email concessionarytravel@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk or ring 0300 123 7039.

9.13 Census profile for Willaston and Thornton – details are available on www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/census2011.

9.14 Christmas Lights - Willaston Rotary and the School put on a wonderful Christmas Lights turning on ceremony on Friday 5th December. The tree looked wonderful.

10. Footpaths and Bridleways

10.1 Footpaths

Most of our local footpaths and bridleways are muddy but passable. The muddiest one currently FP28. The branches that were partially obstructing footpaths 28 (between the mill and the bridleway forming an extension to Street Hey Lane) and 32 (behind Pollards Inn) have been removed by Council staff. The condition of FP 32 is much better than this time last year. Thanks must be given to David Hardwick who cleared his land to make the permissive bridleway parallel to the path. This means that the horses are no longer churning up the footpath on this section of the path. Jane is also trying to get funding to improve the surface of the path. A section of FP 34 (between Ashtree Farm Court and Ashtree Croft) is closed. Jane is investigating this and will speak to Myles on his return.

Action: Jane

There is a report of a possible vehicle on the Wirral Way bridleway. Jane will investigate.

Action: Jane

Jane asked if the committee would agree in principle to applying for future funding for new footpaths. Members responded that we have sympathy to the idea but any formal request would need to be more specific.

Please email willastonfootpaths@outlook.com if you see any other problems with our Willaston footpaths.

10.2 Bridleways

Fiona is still waiting to hear from Leahurst to discuss the possibility of having a permissive bridleway linking Damhead Lane and the Wirral Way. The ranger, Simon Wood said that he would try to contact Leahurst about this but he has since been ill. He felt that we should pursue this option before trying to get permission for the bridleway to be on the other side of the road.

Comments were made that the bridleway at the end of Street Hey is boggy and has overhead branches. Jane will enquire who has responsibility for trees on bridleways. **Action: Jane**

10.3 Willaston Walks Footpath Signs.

Merseyside and West Cheshire Ramblers have kindly agreed provided funding for the way-mark signs. The waymark posts and discs have been ordered. Jane has been in contact with the Council about permission to erect the signs and identifying the owners of the land where these way-marks are to be positioned. She will then need volunteers to help erect the posts. So far she has three adult volunteers. Helen agreed to store the posts if Hadlow Road Station cannot.

10.4 Kissing gates.

Despite repeated requests the six kissing gates on FP 37 (the path that runs between New Hey Lane and the A540) have not yet been installed.

10.5 Hedges

Most if not all the hedges bordering the enclosed footpaths and bridleways have been cut after the Council contacted the landowners.

11. Organisations' Reports

The reports below were circulated in advance.

11.1 Christ Church (Submitted by Jean King)

New Priest-in-Charge - many of you will already know that Stephen Bazely, our new Priest-in-Charge, will be licensed to the Parish on Thursday 19th February 2015, at 7.30pm by the Lord Bishop of Chester.

11.2 Friends of Willaston Meadow (Submitted by Hilary Morris)

Like all village organisations, we could do with a few more volunteers, but nevertheless, maintenance in the Meadow has continued. In the orchard, the tree labels have been checked and some of the fixings renewed. We were again able to harvest mistletoe in time for Christmas, and some was sold through the Country Market.

The Friends participated in the Christmas Tree Festival, decorating a tree with natural materials, including some sourced from the Meadow. There is plenty of winter work to be done, pruning both the orchard trees and shrubs and trees in the woodland area. The annual patch has been cleared ready for cultivating and seed sowing in the spring.

11.3 Guiding Organisations (Submitted by Carol Savage)

All the Guiding units celebrated Christmas in their own ways. The Rainbows and Brownies went to Christmas Crackers at Hadlow Fields where they had fun doing crafts, singing around a campfire and visiting a VIP in his grotto. For some of the Rainbows possibly the most exciting part was the ride in a double-decker bus from the village to Hadlow Fields and back. To finish the term the Rainbows held a fancy dress party but continued the celebrations by going to the panto at the Gladstone Theatre Port Sunlight to see Jack and the Beanstalk at the start of the new term.

News for 2015 - 2nd Willaston Brownies are inviting 8 new Brownies to join them on Monday nights! We meet between 5.45pm and 7.15pm in the village and very few spaces have been available over recent years. So join us now! We are also holding our annual Valentine's Party on 7th February at 3pm where all girls aged 6 – 10 are welcome, whether or not they are currently in Rainbows, Brownies (Beavers or Cubs!). Our Valentine's Party has been a very popular event over the last 5 years - Cooking, Craft, Games and Dancing all feature. For more information, contact me Brown Owl at: sheena.chalmers@talktalk.net or phone on 0151 327 7138.

11.4 Hadlow Green Singers

No report received

11.5 Horticultural Society (Submitted by Pam Irving)

Tuesday 10th February is our AGM which is followed by Cheese and Wine. The perfect time to get to know other members over a glass of wine.

Tuesday 17th March Mr Colin Millington is giving a talk on 'Wild Places, Wild Things'. Sounds very interesting?

11.6 Johnston Recreation Ground

No report received

11.7 Memorial Hall (Submitted by Keith Butcher)

Nothing to report

11.8 Scouting Organisations (Submitted by Dave Kendall)

A big thank you to everyone who bought stamps to support the Scout Post this year. We are also indebted to Martins, Spar and Willaston Pharmacy for selling them for us during what is a busy time – we couldn't do it without them! A special thank you to all the parents and helpers for assisting with the sorting and delivery of the cards – including those of you whose children were members many years ago or are friends of the Group and return every year (we are always pleased to see you!) Each year around 25% of the income from the sale of the stamps is given to charities and 75% to the Scout and Guide groups involved. The charities are listed on the website (www.wirralcharitypost.org).

At the time of writing, we have not been advised what amount we will receive for our funds from the scheme – we normally find out at the awards evening in February at Wallasey when the proceeds are distributed to the participating Groups and selected Charities.

We currently have vacancies in the Beaver Colony and in the Cub Pack. The Scout Troop is presently full and (looking at the number of Cubs due to move up), likely to be for some time – we can help prospective members find places in other Troops in the District so please enquire.

11.9 Sporting Organisations

No report received

11.10 Willastonhey W.I. (Submitted by Hilary Morris)

Willastonhey hosted the annual "Carols on the Green", where in spite of the wet weather there was a good turnout. Members enjoyed a Christmas meal at the Nag's Head, and are looking forward to the annual dinner at Thornton Hall in January. On 28 January we shall be holding our annual Bridge Drive (with exceptional Afternoon Tea) in the Memorial Hall, for which all but one of the tables are now booked. Monthly walks continue on the third Tuesday, and the bridge group meets weekly. Our darts team has had recent success, and a knowledgeable team will be entered in the county quiz in February.

11.11 Willaston Methodist Church (Submitted by Sheila Smith)

Moving on into the year after a wonderful variety of Christmas services, we welcome all, not only to our regular services, but to join us for the Lent courses. This year we will be running two groups, Tuesdays from 10-30a.m. until 12 noon, and Wednesdays 7-30 until 9p.m., both at Chapel. They will begin on 24th/25th February and run for the 6 weeks to Easter.

We will be hosting the February Soup Lunch at the Memorial Hall on Saturday 14th Feb. and look forward to seeing everyone there.

11.12 Willaston PTA (Submitted by Nick Kealey)

The PTA Christmas Fair was a resounding success this year, raising somewhere in the region of £2,300 for our pupils. We received praise from a number of local residents, visitors and businesses. Santa had a great time and has promised to return next year with some help from Willaston and South Wirral Rotary Club. The PTA are planning events for 2015 as we speak (our PTA meeting is also this evening) and I would be grateful if you would pass on our thanks to those local residents who continue to support our school.

11.13 Willaston Royal British Legion

No report received.

11.14 Willaston Royal British Legion Services Club

No report received.

11.15 Willaston and South Wirral Rotary Club (Submitted by Deb Jerrett)

Nothing specific is planned this side of March that has reached beyond the discussion stage as yet, but we are exploring the option of running a wine tasting +/- cheese tasting in the memorial hall in the near future details TBC.

11.16 Willaston Surgery Patient Participation Group (Submitted by Rob King)

December was a busy month for us with the introduction of the FRIENDS & FAMILY TEST (FFT). This is a requirement for all GP Practices and gives patients a simple means of reporting their experience on visiting their Surgery. Posters are in Willaston Surgery and more information is available on the Willaston Surgery website or from the Patient Group. We would encourage patients to complete a FFT form particularly when they have had a negative experience or a very positive one. Survey forms are available on request at the Reception desk or may be completed online. We would encourage patients to complete forms as it is a way of gauging where improvements / alterations to service may be appropriate.

During December we carried out a whole village survey asking patients about their views on weekend opening at our Surgery. Weekend working was a requirement under the new contract terms when Bridgewater took over at the beginning of July last year. We would like to thank Viv Ley and her team for arranging delivery of a survey form to every household in the village at such short notice. At the same time details of Christmas Services were also delivered, these having been printed and paid for by Bridgewater and a £100 contribution was also made by them. At the time of writing the survey results have been analysed and Bridgewater and the Patient Group are meeting with NHS England to agree service levels which we anticipate commencing at the beginning of February. We are not at liberty to give full details of the survey results at this stage but were delighted with a response rate of almost 19% equating to 6.7% of registered patients.

A new doctor, Dr Rowland, started on 5th January and she will be doing 3 surgeries per week on a regular basis. Recruitment of a further doctor is in hand and the Patient Group anticipate being involved. Many of you will have heard media reports of GP shortages nationally and this has to an extent been borne out by the relatively small number of applications received. The intention was to recruit a doctor who would work full time at Willaston but unfortunately that has not been possible.

Our Patient Group meeting in December showed an improved attendance compared to the previous meeting. The presentation regarding Dementia made by Linda Agnew, a Bridgewater Director, was extremely well received and the following is an extract from an email I received from Linda after the meeting.

" The presentation seemed very well received: a number of people came over afterwards and said how useful they had found it. I enjoyed talking to the group. I think it was very worthwhile. The added benefit is that the Alzheimer's disease programme has another 51 dementia friends! "

We are hoping that at some future date we may be able to run another session for those that missed the December one.

A number of patients have commented that the Reception area does not always seem to be as well staffed as it used to be. This situation has arisen because of staff having resigned and sickness. Recruitment of new administrative staff is in hand but so far Bridgewater has been unable to tell me when the new staff are likely to commence their duties.

Unfortunately the health promotion television screens in both waiting rooms and the Self Check-in screen are not functioning as soon as had been intended. We will update you as soon as more information becomes available

11.17 Willaston Village Festival Society (Submitted by Sarah Shannon)

The Christmas Tree Festival was well supported and we had a lot of positive comments. We hope to make this a regular event in the future.

We are now gearing up for the Festival which takes place from 25th to 28th June this year. Letters have gone out to all local organisations asking if they would like a pitch at the Community Event on Saturday. We have lots of plans for the traditional events and new events so keep an eye on our website www.willastonvillagefestival.org for details. If you would like to help in the next few months with the preparations, please let me know.

12. Any Other Business

12.1 Brownies

The 2nd Willaston brownies have vacancies more members.

12.2 Insurance

Jane asked whether we had insurance for volunteers and Hilary Booth confirmed that we do not.

12.3 Dog fouling

Phil noted that the dog bin by Jacksons Pond was overflowing during the Christmas break and there is also a dog fouling issue near the tennis courts.

12.4 Best kept village

Hilary Booth asked if anyone would be interested in leading our application but there were no volunteers.

12.5 Methodist chapel

Sheila reported that the chapel had recently been broken into. Fortunately nothing was taken but doors and windows were damaged. It was noted that there had been a spurt of break ins recently in the area.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 9.10pm.

Dates for future Committee Meetings:

Monday 16th March 2015

Monday 18th May 2015

Monday 20th July 2015

Monday 21st September 2015

Monday 16th November 2015

AGM: Friday 25th September 2015