

Willaston Residents' and Countryside Society (WR&CS)

Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on Monday 16th March 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); Sue Unsworth (Publicity) (Committee Members): Hilary Morris, Rob King, Fiona Ennys, Phil Leach, Debs Jerrett, Lyn Jackson-Eves, Hilary Gould, Myles Hogg, Martin Collins, Jean King, Sheila Smith, Helen Mayles and Madeline Hughes.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Leanne Kershaw, Emma Sharpe, Vicky Spraggon, Margaret Smyth and Carol Savage.

2. Declarations of Interest

Phil declared an interest in a recent planning application.
Hilary Gould declared an interest as an employee of the Martins.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 19th January 2015

The Minutes were proposed by Rob, seconded by Phil and accepted by the Committee as a true record of the meeting.

4. Matters arising from the previous Minutes (19th January 2015)

All actions had been completed. There was discussion on the following items:

4.1 Snow bags (item 4.2)

These are not required now.

4.2 New Homes Bonus Community Fund (Item 6)

An application has been submitted for the newsletter but not yet been confirmed. Myles has spoken to the residents' group in Hooton and they have no requirements from the fund at the moment. Therefore he stated he would support an application for the remaining monies to go to the Friends of Hadlow Road Station.

Action: Chris

4.3 Footpaths (item 10.1)

Jane had investigated why a section of FP34 had been closed. A resident had asked for a step to be removed but when the council had come to do the work, the landowner had objected. This has now been resolved and the step removed with a post remaining to prevent access by vehicles.

Jane had also contacted the council after reports of a vehicle on the Wirral Way bridleway but had not yet received a reply.

5. Reports from Working Groups

5.1 Playground Working Group

Sarah reported that CLD (County Landscape Design) has been appointed for the play area improvements and the start date is envisaged to be 20th April. It should take five weeks so will be completed by 22nd May. The group has highlighted to them about the proximity of the school and the need to avoid deliveries during school opening and closing times as the entrance next to the play area is the main one used by pupils/parents for dropping off and collecting children.

The Rotary club is funding a wooden archway which will say 'Johnston Recreation Ground' over the entrance.

The Playground working group will have an information afternoon so that people can see the plans – probably on Saturday 27th April and need to start thinking about an official opening towards the end of May. Fundraising for stage two will probably start in the Autumn. **Action: Working group**

It was noted that the ground may suffer with this work and then the Festival, particularly the area next to the school where heavy vehicles will go. Sarah said that the Festival Society was looking at options for protecting the ground but they may prove to be very expensive. **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 Annual General Meeting of The Friends of Hadlow Road Station was held on Monday 2nd March 2015 and attended by 18 residents and a CWaC Advisor with apologies received from 3 residents. A draft constitution based upon charitable status was formally adopted and all the Officer positions were filled. Meetings will be held every other month and will be open to any member to attend but only Officers will be able to vote on matters arising. The next meeting is at 7.30pm on Monday 27th April 2015 and is open to the public.

A grant of £360 has been approved to fund the liability insurance for this new Friends Group along with the purchase and installation of 6 hanging baskets. The 2015 focus of the Friends Group is to work closely with Cheshire West and Chester Council (CWaC) to get the existing infrastructure up to date and tidied up and a number of Health and Safety aspects fixed. Meanwhile, further grant opportunities are being explored to fund some of the development and remedial work around the station and the immediate environment. Costings for some of the timber are being obtained. In addition, CWaC funding for the signal box repairs has been agreed from the 2015/16 budget so this repair work will be undertaken later in the year. When this has been done, the group will have an open day.

There will be a tidy-up of plants and bushes at the station on Sunday 12th April at 10am.

6. WR&CS Business

6.1 Draft newsletter

Sarah reported that we have applied for funds for two newsletters from the New Homes bonus and the April draft was circulated to the committee. Other items that were suggested were:

- Key diary dates
- Residents' Lottery
- Website at the bottom of the back page

Once the money is approved, then we will print this and Sue agreed to organise deliveries using a team of volunteers to cover the village area. **Action: Sarah/Sue**

6.2 Traffic

It was agreed to ask Les Green to attend the next meeting with an analysis of the traffic speeds following the implementation of the 20mph zone. **Action: Chris**

It was noted that the pot holes in Mill Lane had been filled.

7. Bus Services

Myles reported that the subsidy to the Community Transport bus will continue until June and then be reviewed. The service now runs on Wednesdays, leaving Willaston at 9.45am and returning from Chester at 1.30pm. However, it is not very well used. It costs a £65 to put on and Myles funds the difference between this and fares taken from his budget.

Myles also reported that the 272 will be changing its times on Saturdays from 4th April with a slightly reduced service.

There is also a new bus service that goes to Arrowe Park Hospital on Tuesday evenings which costs £5 return which is good value.

8. Post Office

Sarah reported that the Post Office is going to move into Martins, following the consultation last year. The work will start on 29th June and the new Post Office will go live on 10th July. Hilary Gould commented that there will be no Post Office facility that morning of 10th July. Martins will retain their existing opening times and the Post Office facilities will be available when it is open.

Martins is also going to use its licence and stock alcohol from 10th July. Consequently other stock will be reduced. There will be a larger empty area at the front to allow for queues. Two new security cameras will be installed.

The committee was pleased that this is likely to make Martins more viable and retain the Post Office facility in the village. However there were concerns expressed about staff security and disabled access. It was also noted that there had been no formal contact from the Post Office, although this had been promised when Richard Lynds attended our meeting in November. Chris agreed to write asking him to come to the next meeting to share the plans and discuss any concerns. **Action: Chris**

9. Johnston Recreation Ground

Sue expressed concerns that the advisory committee has very few members at the moment. The current Chair is resigning and there is no Secretary. Myles explained that the Council is the sole trustee but the advisory committee is set up to help oversee the area. The Council would like this to be an active committee. The committee is appointed by the Council as vacancies arise and would welcome new members.

There is a meeting on Wednesday 18th March at 7.45pm in Christ Church at which Myles is likely to be appointed as Chair. He undertook to work on this and establish a more effective committee. A couple of Members of the Residents' committee agreed to attend but new members are required. Contact Myles if anyone is interested.

10. Financial Matters

Hilary Booth circulated the financial report. On 27th February, the current account had a balance of £382.43, the lottery account a balance of £1,614.64 and the playground account a balance of £1,686.52.

It was noted that the lottery currently has 136 members and we will be able to transfer some of the funds to the current account shortly. It was agreed that we should discuss how to publicise the lottery at the next meeting as we will need to sign people up again. **Action: Sarah**

Chris thanked Hilary for all the work she does on the finances.

11. Planning Applications, Decisions and Appeals

11.1 Specific Applications

11.1.1 Netherfield

Barry said that the new application had a house sited 5m from the road which he has objected to and had suggested it should be 10m to be in keeping with other frontages.

11.1.2 Fairways

This application is still pending a decision as they need to report on what the need for affordable housing in the area is. Myles is going to discuss this further with the Planning Officers. **Action: Myles**

11.2 Implications of Local Plan (Part two)

Jane expressed concerns that Willaston is likely to be named as a Local Service Station in the second part of the Local Plan. Barry explained that it is very clear in the first part of the Local Plan that there will be no changes with regard to the village inset or the Green Belt, which means that there are very few sites in the village that development can take place.

Barry then explained that part two of the Local Plan outlines an approach to develop sustainable housing in CWAC as there is no point building houses where there are no facilities. The priority areas for building are:

- a. Cities and big towns

- b. Big service centres such as Neston
- c. Local service centres – villages with a reasonable number of facilities such as Willaston.

However, the priority will be the village inset and Green Belt so this does not imply we will suddenly see a lot of development.

Chris thanked Barry for all the work he does on planning.

12. Local Councillor's Report

Myles had submitted the following report which was noted:

12.1 Trees – following on from a discussion at an earlier meeting, Myles confirmed that all trees in a conservation area are automatically protected.

12.2 Dog fouling – There is a new initiative using a dog called Mabel and working through schools to raise awareness of dog fouling. Myles is hoping to link with Willaston School. Myles also asked that if there are places where dog bins are needed, to let Sarah know and a list will be compiled. **Action: All/Sarah**

12.3 Home Energy Solutions – this is a new scheme that will provide a comprehensive domestic energy service and raise awareness about how to improve your energy use. For more information, go ring 0800 377 7299 or visit www.homeenergysolutions.info.

12.4 Local Police Chief Inspector – the Chief Inspector for Ellesmere Port and Neston has now unfortunately moved to a central role to share experience having done a superb job in Ellesmere Port & Neston.

12.5 Active Travel Map – six pocket sized maps are available including suggested walking and cycling routes, bus services and key attractions locally. They are available from libraries and Chester Visitor Information Centre. Electronic versions can be downloaded from www.itravelmart.co.uk.

12.6 Council Tax Bills – people should have received their bills for the next financial year showing no CWAC increase.

13. Footpaths and Bridleways

13.1 Footpaths

Jane reported that most if not all of our local footpaths and bridleways are clear. As a result of the dry weather this Winter, they are in much better condition than usual. She has investigated reports that FP 30 had been partially blocked. She asked that landowners and those with private rights should note that they need permission from the Council Greenspace department if they wish to dig up public rights of way or do anything that affects the public's rights to the use and enjoyment of such ways. Please email willastonfootpaths@outlook.com if you see any problems with our Willaston footpaths.

13.2 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 when he returns from sick leave.

13.3 Willaston Walks Footpath Signs.

Jane reported that the waymark posts and discs have been received and she has been painting some of the coloured bands. Obtaining permission from a number of Council departments and landowners has proved more difficult than she imagined, not least because of difficulties identifying the individuals to contact in the first place and a phased installation was suggested when 80% of the permissions had been received.

13.4 Kissing gates.

The five kissing gates on FP 37 (the path that runs between New Hey Lane and the A540) have now been installed. As the owners of one stile refused permission for it to be replaced there is money left over. Myles agreed that this could be used towards improving the surface of FP 32 (footpath behind the Pollard). All the footpaths in the parish are now 'fully gated' There are still two stiles on FP28 but they can be bypassed.

Fiona suggested that we do a press release and photo of people kissing at a gate.

Action: Chris/Sarah

Chris thanked Jane for the work done on footpaths.

14. Organisations' Reports

The reports below were circulated in advance. In addition the following comments were made:

- Jean said that she had spoken to Stephen Bazely regarding future Christ Church representation. She will give him recent papers to consider. It was confirmed that this is a decision that is made by the PCC.
- Rob commented that it will now be possible to ring the surgery at weekends. This will be done on a trial basis for four weeks and reviewed. He has asked for the criteria of the review.
- Debs confirmed that the Rotary Club meets in the Nags Head and that the events below will be in the Memorial Hall.
- Chris confirmed that Keith will be able to attend Memorial Hall meetings after May as he is standing down and will not have any Councillor duties then.

14.1 Christ Church (Submitted by Jean King)

Christ Church has focused on preparations to receive and welcome Stephen Bazely, Willaston's Priest-in-Charge. The official Licensing Service on February 19th required considerable preparation, our Church Wardens orchestrating everything from service rehearsal to spring cleaning! The Dean of Chester, Church and Civic guests, Stephen's family and friends from Bolton Diocese and the congregation from Willaston welcomed Stephen and Joanna his wife. We wish them and their twenty month old daughter Grace joy, hope and happiness in Willaston.

On March 1st the Methodists provided a Faith Lunch to share. Christ Church to reciprocate. The joint Lent Course is in progress. We continue our monthly 'Worship at Weatherstones'.

Two fund raising events. A Film Night in the Memorial Hall. A full house and financial success. Christ Church is organising the Soup Lunch on March 14th. We hope for another full house!

14.2 Friends of Willaston Meadow (Submitted by Hilary Morris)

Recent work in the Meadow has included clearing brambles and preparing the annual flower patch for sowing. Members of the Wirral Countryside Volunteers assisted by laying a short stretch of hedge which was planted several years ago adjacent to the existing hedge alongside the Recreation Ground. Some of the hazel in the woodland area was coppiced to provide the poles needed for this process. A number of small rooted whips of wild cherry (*prunus avium*) and field maple (*acer campestre*) have been planted in several areas, some to eventually provide screening between the Meadow and the proposed houses off Mill Lane.

A special bench has been commissioned in memory of Max and Pat Kirby, and family and friends will be meeting at the Meadow on Saturday 28th March at 10.30am to view the new seat and also to plant a native tree nearby. Anyone who wishes to remember Max and Pat is welcome.

14.3 Guiding Organisations

No report received.

14.4 Hadlow Green Singers

The choir is busy rehearsing for our Easter Concert, returning this year to Christ Church on Friday 20th March 2015 at 8pm, with a jam packed programme to delight all tastes. Then it's onward and upward with preparation for our contribution to the Willaston Festival Concert and then our own ever popular Summer Concert. This year we will be presenting a 'Musical Kaleidoscope' with numbers from Les Miserables, the Beatles, Ol' Blue Eyes and many more. Make an early date in your calendars for this not to be missed event on Friday and Saturday 10th & 11th July in the Memorial Hall. What a busy time we're having!!

We have welcomed several new members lately and they are all thoroughly enjoying themselves. So, if you think you would like to give it a try then come along on a Thursday evening to the Memorial Hall at 7.30pm. No audition necessary, so nothing to scare, just good fun and an uplifting of the spirit! All genders welcome.

14.5 Horticultural Society (Submitted by Pam Irving)

Tuesday 21st April we are having a presentation by Mr E Hilditch on 'The History of Bees Seeds'. Membership can still be paid at the April meeting, together with sponsorship monies, to Jill Thompson, the Membership Secretary.

14.6 Johnston Recreation Ground

No report received

14.7 Memorial Hall

No report received

14.8 Scouting Organisations (Submitted by Dave Kendall)

Recently, we took delivery of our new Kayak Trailer which was mostly funded by £2000 from Councillor Hogg's member's budget. The trailer was handed over at a ceremony attended by Leaders, Scouts and Myles. This new trailer will enable us to increase participation in kayaking as we now have the capacity to carry all our boats. The Group is extremely grateful to Myles for his continued support of the young people of Willaston both financially and personally.

We currently only 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. Any offers to take on Leadership roles within the Group would be very welcome.

14.9 Sporting Organisations

No report received

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

As this year sees the centenary of the WI nationally, all Willastonhey members received an attractive mug at the January meeting. Later in the year there will be a Cheshire Federation celebration of its own 95th anniversary.

Recent successes by the darts and quiz teams mean that both will be taking part in their respective county finals. Events in the near future include a theatre visit and a trip to the Hat Museum at Stockport.

14.11 Willaston Methodist Church (Submitted by Sheila Smith)

The Chapel hosted the Soup Lunch at the Memorial hall on Valentine's Day and send thanks to all who supported it. A full house for a happy community event. On March 1st. our minister, Rev. Marcus Torchon introduced and welcomed Rev. Stephen Bazely and family, and our friends from Christ Church to our ecumenical Faith Lunch. Much food and fellowship!

See the Methodist Chapel notice board for the Easter services. The Easter Sunday morning service will be, as usual, preceded by Easter breakfast, open to all. It is the Methodist Church's turn to organise the forthcoming open air Pentecost Service on the Green on 24th May. This year there will be a brass band to accompany the singing, and we are pleased that Rev. Bazely has accepted our invitation to preach. Come and join us!

A Blessed Easter to you all.

14.12 Willaston PTA

The school summer fair takes place on Saturday 16th May from 11.30am to 1.30pm. If anyone would like a stall, please email jonick@orange.net. A 'charge' of 20% of takings will be made.

14.13 Willaston Royal British Legion

No report received.

14.14 Willaston Royal British Legion Services Club

No report received.

14.15 Willaston and South Wirral Rotary Club (Submitted by Debs Jerrett)

31 March @ 19:30-21:30 - Historic Liverpool: a talk on the overhead railway & the Williamson tunnels. Followed by cheese & wine. Tickets £5 payable on the door - proceeds go to Riding for the Disabled & Clatterbridge cancer unit.

2nd May @ 19:30-23:30 - Barn Dance to celebrate our first year as a reformed rotary club in the village. Tickets £13.50 and include a fish & chip supper. Charity cash bar on the night.

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

Since the last meeting there is more talk in the village about there being problems with the Surgery. This was partly anticipated and the reason why we have continued to stress the need for good support at Patient Group meetings. The main problems revolve around problems getting through on the telephone and for some patients it has proved much harder to get appointments when they want. Unfortunately these problems are not resulting in hard complaints to the Surgery management. They only seem to take notice of factual information from the results of surveys, Friends & Family Test questionnaires and the fact that they have had few written complaints. If Patients are experiencing problems they are urged to write to Bridgewater or complete a F&FT form which can readily be obtained from the Surgery or completed on line. There seems to be a perception that complaining may result in being struck off the list and therefore there appears to be a reluctance to put pen to paper. Such an outcome is highly unlikely and the view held is something that Bridgewater has been made aware of and will be addressed by them at the forthcoming Patient Group meeting. It should be noted that being struck off a list is very much a last resort when there has been violence or abusiveness or it is considered that an irretrievable breakdown of the doctor patient relationship has taken place.

Saturday and Sunday morning surgeries commenced at the end of January but the current situation is unsatisfactory because the telephone line is not open – it plays a recorded message giving you the number of the out of hours service. In addition, even though the Surgery is open both mornings at a weekend, if a patient has an urgent requirement to be seen they would have to report to the surgery to try and get an appointment. We are awaiting a response from Bridgewater regarding the issues surrounding weekend working.

The 6 week Self Help course dealing with the self-management of long term conditions being held at the Memorial Hall is fully subscribed and we are waiting for feedback as to whether further courses will be run. We hope that patients are finding the course, which is free to those attending, beneficial.

Bridgewater is finding it difficult to cover the clinical sessions covered previously by Dr Meyer. Dr Rowland has been appointed and carries out 3 surgeries per week. The other sessions are, where possible, covered by locums but since Christmas they have been hard to find which we assume is part of the problem in terms of appointment availability.

Our next Patient Group meeting is on Wednesday 25th March, 7.30pm at the Memorial Hall and we would encourage as many patients as possible to attend particularly those that have experienced problems regarding unsatisfactory service or service which is less than that previously enjoyed.

14.17 Willaston Village Festival Society (Submitted by Sarah Shannon)

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 and tickets will be going on sale shortly. 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.

15. Any Other Business

15.1 Contacting the Council

Martin commented that it is very difficult to find out who to talk to as a lot of Departments had changed their names. He wondered if a list of departments and what they cover could be made available. The selection codes used when phoning also need to be updated to reflect the new CWAC organisation. **Action: Myles**

15.2 Parking

Phil commented that when people park on both sides of the road beyond the new houses, it is very tight. He also asked about the double yellow lines in Broadlake. Myles confirmed that there was opposition to the double yellow lines and they will not be extended. It was noted that the disabled parking space on the village green is well used by people with disabled badges. Myles also commented that there is now a disabled parking space marked out in the car park behind Cherry Brow Terrace.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 9.45pm.

Dates for future Committee Meetings:

Monday 18th May 2015

Monday 20th July 2015

Monday 21st September 2015

Monday 16th November 2015

AGM: Friday 25th September 2015