

Willaston Residents' and Countryside Society (WR&CS)

Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on Monday 3rd November 2014 in the Memorial Hall

Residents' Issues

One visitor attended to for the item on the consultation on the Post Office.

Richard Lynds from the Post Office also attended for this item.

Committee Meeting

Present: (Officers): Chris Hampshire (Chair), Jane Townsend (Vice Chair); Sarah Shannon (Secretary), Barry Vowles (Planning), Sue Unsworth (Publicity), Hilary Booth (Treasurer); (Committee Members): Hilary Morris, Rob King, Paul Janvier, Fiona Ennys, Jean King, Myles Hogg, Vicky Spraggon, Leanne Kershaw, Phil Leach, Martin Collins, Margaret Smythe, Deb Jerrett, Lyn Jackson-Eves, Hilary Gould and Madeline Hughes.

1. Welcome to New Members

Chris welcomed Deb Jerrett who represents the Willaston and South Wirral Rotary Club and everyone introduced themselves.

2. Post Office Plans for Re-organisation

Richard Lyons gave the background to the current consultation. He explained that the Post Office is modernising across the network and they have made a public commitment to 11,000 branches. The aim of the modernisation is to ensure services are in the right places, at the right hours and offering a broader range of services. For example, they are developing banking services, travel services (insurance, money etc). They are aiming to have three basic models of Post Offices:

- a. Community branches in very small villages;
- b. Local branches – for larger villages where there is a smaller customer base but a service can be provided by working in partnership with larger retailers;
- c. Mains branches – stand-alone Post Offices in town centres.

Willaston fits into the local branch model.

Richard then explained that McColls operates the current Post Office branch as well as Martins and they have requested that they operate the Post Office from the same premises as Martins. He was not able to answer questions on what savings the re-organisation would make as this is not something he was aware of. However he did explain that the way the Post Office is remunerating people is changing so they will get paid for work done, rather than have a lump sum for running the service.

In answer to a question, Richard confirmed that the Post Office has a public commitment to no closures, stating that this is an established Post Office in a vibrant community. If the answer to this consultation is 'no', then McColls may come up with a counter-proposal. If they do not wish to continue to provide a Post Office and they give up the licence, then other partners will be sought.

Several people commented that Martins is very cramped and expressed concerns that there would be long queues. Richard explained that one criterion for the Post Office is that they need to be convinced that the new premises will be DDA compliant. They have said no to proposals if there is public concern about this. Richard also commented that they have found in other premises that queues were often shorter than envisaged as the opening hours became extended.

Questions were also asked about the design of the premises and security for staff. Richard said that the current plans are for one position counter, which would either be open plan or screened off. Richard agreed to share a version of the plan when it is available. The proposals would be subject to a risk assessment. Richard thought that the premises would not be seen as high risk but members said that there had been several attacks in Willaston in the past.

Concern was also expressed about privacy and security for customers. Richard commented that often people found there was more privacy if screens are removed because they don't have to speak loudly.

In answer to questions, Richard confirmed that most services would continue but deposits would be limited to £1,000 per deposit; it would not be possible to send parcels over 2kg; transcash and premium bonds would not be available and nor would on-demand travel insurance.

Chris thanked Richard for attending and asked that people do a response to the consultation individually. In addition, he will submit a WR&CS response that includes the points raised in this meeting. **Action: Chris**

3. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Carol Savage, Sheila Smith and Emma Sharpe.

4. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

5. Minutes of the Meeting held on 1st September 2014

The Minutes were proposed by Paul, seconded by Hilary Booth and accepted by the Committee as a true record of the meeting.

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

6.1 Tree Warden (Item 5.6)

Sarah has received information from Cheshire Wildlife Trust about the role and will circulate the need for a new warden after this meeting. **Action: Sarah**

6.2 Cheshire Rural Women's Award (Item 5.5)

Unfortunately, the person we nominated did not receive an award but Joan Butcher was successful. She had been nominated by the Festival Society for all she has done in establishing it.

6.3 Neston Angels (Item 8.1)

Sue reported that she had attending the meeting with Pam Irving. They were largely seeking volunteers but the project was focussed on Neston so they were not going to continue to be involved. There was a short discussion about the fact that the membership of the Monday Club was dropping.

6.4 Willaston District Community Plan (Item 9)

Paul confirmed that the final sign-off report for the grant has now been written and CWaC have confirmed receipt of this.

6.5 Hedge on Hooton Road (Item 11.7)

Barry said that he had followed this up and there is some improvement but there is still work to be done. Update following meeting: This has now been completed.

6.6 Plants on the Village Green (Item 11.8)

Myles said that he had raised the issue of the lack of planting. Sarah commented that there are no plants again at the moment and questioned whether it would be better to grass these areas over.

6.7 Speed Limit on Hooton Road (Item 14.1)

Barry had been in contact with the Council about this but had not been able to discuss it fully with the relevant person.

7. Reports from Working Groups

7.1 Playground Working Group

Sarah reported that a few more donations this period mean that the total raised is now £60,534.60. Donations received recently have been:

- Garden Centre vouchers from Halifax Building Society - £250. We will use this to plant bulbs, with local children, probably next Autumn;
- Johnston Recreation Ground Advisory Committee - £402.09;
- Collection at Willastonhey WI - £16.14;

- Collection box at Willaston Barbers - £12.14;
- Mr and Mrs Ingle - £50

The Council has appointed an independent Landscape Architect who will oversee this project, as their department is under-staffed. Sarah has met him and discussed the first stage of the play area development in detail. He is now refining the specifications and reviewing the costings and is expecting to put the project out for tender in the next two months with a view to doing the work in the spring of 2015.

7.2 Friends of Hadlow Road Station Working Group

Chris reported that the first meeting will be on 1st December at 7pm, with a view to forming the group. WR&CS has paid for the room. Chris agreed to do a press release about this meeting and Sarah to circulate our volunteer list.

Action: Chris/Sarah

7.3 Willaston District Community Plan

A revised draft implementation plan had already been circulated. There was a discussion about the potential to limit HGVs through the village. Jane had been in contact with the Institute for Advanced Motorists who had suggested that there is no reason why they should not be limited. Myles agreed to have a traffic survey done to identify what level of HGV traffic there is.

Action: Myles

The implementation plan as provided was proposed by Paul, seconded by Vicky and approved by all present. Barry proposed that the next stage would be to put it on the website and email it to all volunteers to see if they want to lead on taking some actions forward. This was seconded by Jane and agreed by all present. Barry and Sarah will put some together words to go with this on the web site about the implementation plan.

Action: Barry/Sarah

8. WR&CS Business

8.1 AGM Review

The feedback from the AGM has generally been positive and it was felt that there was a good balance between speakers and the opportunity for the audience to comment. It was agreed that it was worth delivering leaflets but it was still disappointing that the majority of people present were over the age of 55. A second microphone would have speeded things up and also the use of the hearing loop is beneficial. Chris will follow this up with the Memorial Hall. Information about the loss of the bus service had been in the Ellesmere Port Pioneer.

Action: Chris

8.2 Fence on Hooton Road/Heath Lane

At the AGM, a resident had offered to mend this metal fence which is very battered. However, it is on private land and no-one knew who owns the land. Therefore, it is not possible to do the work.

8.3 Frequency of Meetings

Chris asked if people would like to meet more frequently, given the length of the meetings. It was agreed to continue to meet bi-monthly but to have ad-hoc additional meetings if necessary. There was then a discussion about the difficulties of meeting on the first Monday and different options were considered. Sarah and Chris agreed to explore the options and when the room is available. They were mandated to make a decision and let members know any new dates.

Action: Chris/Sarah

9. Financial Matters

Hilary Booth circulated the financial report. The current account now has a balance of £455.57, the lottery account a balance of £1948.44 and the playground account a balance of £1544.80. Of the money in the current account, £342.69 is money from the Community Plan which can be used for implementation of the plan. Hilary said she will be shortly transferring £400 from the lottery account into the current account.

It was agreed that we would be willing to have a separate sub-account to support the Friends of Hadlow Road Station if the group would like this.

10. Planning Applications, Decisions and Appeals

10.1 Specific Applications

10.1.1 Netherfield

Barry reported that the original application may have been withdrawn with a new application for one house, rather than four. However, it looks as if the replacement of the bungalow with a two-storey house is still pending.

10.1.2 Badger Butts

Barry will be opposing this application on the grounds that it is in the Green Belt area, it is not appropriate for infill and the Council has now fulfilled its quota of new homes. Hilary M said that the Friends of Willaston Meadow will also be objecting as the land adjoins the meadow. Barry encouraged others to also submit objections.
Action: Barry/All

10.2 Other Planning Matters

Barry has forms to fill in for the Local Service Centre about the village facilities, which were discussed briefly. He also has been asked to identify potential development sites and it was agreed to put forward the ground opposite 125 Hooton Road.
Action: Barry

11. Local Councillor's Report

11.1 Travellers in Heath Lane

The travellers have been offered plots on the site in Ellesmere Port.

11.2 New Homes Bonus

It was agreed to have this as an agenda item at the next meeting and Chris asked that everyone consider what we could best spend the money available on. It can be used to implement aspects of the Willaston District Community Plan or any other village activity.
Action: All

11.3 Bus Services

Myles reported that he had been told that the 272 service is now running more reliably and some people have signed on to the Plus Bus scheme, following the demise of the No 22 service.

Les Green has led on a consultation to gauge interest for a minibus service to Chester. 51 people have shown some interest and it will run on a trial basis, subsidised through Myles' budget. The service will be run by Ellesmere Port and District Community Transport probably on a Monday or Friday. People will have to register and book it in advance. Full details will be available shortly.

11.4 Snow Bags

The Council has one tonne bags of salt and sand available for £100 each. Myles agreed to buy two so that there is one at each end of the village for residents to help themselves when the weather is bad.
Action: Myles

11.5 Western Link Pipeline

The Lees Lane car park will be closed until 15th April 2015 for the installation of the pipeline and there will also be occasions when parts of the Wirral Way will be closed.

11.6 Healthwatch Cheshire West

This is an independent voice which helps to shape and improve local health and social care. They are seeking volunteers to enter and view services and report on them. They can be contacted on 0845 340 2859 or email info@healthwatchcwac.org.uk.

11.7 Community Trigger

Community Trigger is a process that allows members of the community to review their response to complaints of anti-social behaviour if they feel inappropriate action has been taken. You need to phone 0300 123 8 123 and ask for a community trigger and someone will discuss the issue and complete the application process with you.

11.8 New Library Services

It is now possible to borrow e-books from libraries. Many libraries (including Neston) also have free Wi-Fi services.

12. Footpaths and Bridleways

Jane had circulated a report which was discussed.

12.1 Footpaths

Currently all our footpaths and bridleways are passable. Two branches partially obstruct footpaths 28 (between the mill and the bridleway forming an extension to Street Hey Lane) and 32 (behind Pollards Inn). Jane hopes to have these removed in the near future. **Action: Jane**

12.2 Bridleways

Fiona is still waiting to hear from Leahurst to about the possibility of having a permissive bridleway linking Damhead Lane and the Wirral Way. Simon, the Ranger is now following this up.

12.3 Willaston Walks Footpath Signs

Merseyside and West Cheshire Ramblers have kindly agreed to provide funding for the way-mark signs. It will take some time to identify the owners of the land where these way-marks are to be positioned and to get permission. Sarah agreed to circulate the volunteer list for help with erecting the posts. **Action: Sarah**

12.4 Kissing gates.

The three kissing gates on FP 37, the one that runs between Adfalent Lane and the A540 have not yet been installed, although funding of these has been provided from Myles' budget so installation should take place shortly.

12.5 Hedges

Some of the hedges on footpaths and bridleways have been but others still need to be done before the nesting season starts in February.

12.6 Speeding Cars

There has been an issue with cars on FP 30 (between Mill Lane and Hooton Road) and signs have now been erected.

13. Organisations' Reports

The reports below were circulated in advance. At the meeting other comments made were:

- The Remembrance Day Parade leaves at 10.45am from the Legion on Sunday 9th November. All are welcome for this, followed by a service in Christ Church;
- The Rotary Club will be doing a Christmas light switch on event on 1st December. Vicky commented that there are still cables hanging down. Myles said he thought the lights had been checked but will follow this up. **Action: Myles**
- A copy of the book *Lest We Forget* was circulated.
- The Rotary Club are collecting bar codes from Yorkshire Tea to support The Wheelchair Foundation UK.
- Carols on the Green will be held on 16th December.

13.1 Christ Church

No report received

13.2 Friends of Willaston Meadow (Submitted by Hilary Morris)

It is pleasing to report that the Meadow has had its annual mowing, thanks to CWaC's contractors, who have also kept the paths clear during the summer. The grass was baled and removed, which we hope will reduce fertility and encourage more flowers. Some of the apple trees in the orchard had very large crops, and a few overlaid branches snapped. This winter we shall undertake more pruning, as the trees are beginning to encroach upon each other. The children at the Forest School again used some of the apples to press for juice, and this year saw our first crop of damsons, and a few pears.

13.3 Guiding Organisations

No report received.

13.4 Hadlow Green Singers

No report received

13.5 Horticultural Society (Submitted by Pam Irving)

November 18th is our Social Evening at the Woodcote Hotel in Hooton. Tickets are still on sale at £20.00 each. If you are interested please ring 327 6587. This is the last get-together until 2015! Our speaker on 20th January is Chris Davies on 'Fieldcrest – Making the Garden'. I have been to this garden on an NGS open day and I can say it is very impressive. You will be amazed.

13.6 Johnston Recreation Ground (Submitted by Sue Unsworth)

A meeting was held in Christchurch on 24th Sept. There was, as usual, an open forum. A resident viewed concern regarding the late application for the metal container used by the football teams. An application had not been received by the date of expiry of the previous planning permission. The container is used to store football equipment which it was thought was not now needed as the team was no longer in the division it once was.

Once again there was no representative from the Allotments or the Tennis club in attendance. We are still awaiting a litter bin near the Pavilion. Litter still continues to be a problem. We are still awaiting a summarised version of the Bye-Laws, which the School have agreed to be displayed in their unused notice board at the entrance to the Rec. A football match list was received, as requested but only for October. A full list of teams with age groups was received from Jerry Hopkins for the junior football. A diseased tree has been cut down as have some of the tall poplars at the edge of the allotment (some were thought to be a danger) and some were pollarded. Thanks to Myles for organising this. There was an offer of a new tree to be planted by the Rotary but this was not thought necessary and declined.

13.7 Memorial Hall

No report received

13.8 Scouting Organisations (Submitted by Dave Kendall)

1st Willaston Scout Group again joins forces with other Groups across the Wirral to provide the annual Christmas Card Post service. Money raised from the sale of special stamps helps to raise funds for Scout Groups and selected Charities. The scheme is now in its 33rd year and over £500,000 has been donated to local Charities to date.

Stamps cost only 30p and this year there will be a number of different designs. They can be purchased from **Martins**, the **Spar** shop and **Willaston Pharmacy** from Sat 22nd November until midday on Wed 17th December (last posting day). Postboxes are also located in these shops. (The license from the Post Office does not allow us to commence sales before 22nd Nov so we are unable to sell stamps at the Charity Card sale day on 8th November).

Cards will be delivered to all areas on the Wirral including Parkgate, Neston, Ness, Burton, Hooton and Willaston but please note that the scheme does **not** include Ellesmere Port and beyond. Deliveries of cards will take place on the weekends of 13th/14th and 20th/21st December.

More details of the scheme and the charities being supported this year at: <http://www.wirralcharitypost.org/>

13.9 Sporting Organisations

No report received

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

Willastonhey hosted the first of this season's soup lunches, and were complimented on their matching T-shirts with their own logo. Recent meetings have included talks from a "Mystery Shopper" and on Autism. Members enjoyed a performance of "Somewhere in England" at Theatre Clwyd, and are looking forward to a visit to Arley Hall. The walking group explored Puddington and Shotwick in September, and last week had a very windy but exhilarating walk on Caldly Hill and into West Kirby, where rough seas prevented the planned route round the marine lake.

13.11 Willaston Methodist Church (Submitted by Sheila Smith)

Please see the Chapel notice board for details of Christmas services.

13.12 Willaston PTA (Submitted by Nick Kealey)

Following our September 2014 PTA AGM, Faye Clowes (Chair) and Debbie Pickering (Secretary) have stepped aside. The AGM elected Nick Kealey (Chair) and Diane Davies (Secretary) to support Anna Groves (Treasurer). Faye and Debbie have contributed immensely over the past two years and fortunately, have agreed to remain on the PTA. Anna is serving out her third and final term as Treasurer, and the committee hopes that in the next 12-months, we will be able to coerce someone into this demanding, but equally rewarding role.

The PTA provide funding for a wide range of school activities, nurturing our children, and making sure they appreciate the importance of good citizenship when they represent the school and their family in their local community.

Our school enjoys being part of the community. We donate food to a local food bank throughout the year on a weekly basis; collect for the Poppy and Shoebox (Christmas Child) appeals, and our school choir visit The Monday Club at the local British Legion.

Between September and December 2014, we are taking part in a special commemorative exhibition to mark the Centenary of WW1. This is part of the Heritage Lottery funded Cheshire Great War stories project. The aim of the exhibition is to mark the centenary of the Great War by highlighting the contribution made by our local community. We will tell the story of those who served, as well as those who lost their lives. It will also bring to life the 'home front', from hospitals for the wounded, to a local munitions factory.

The PTA is looking to improve our school environment and play areas. We are working closely with our teachers to expand the children's access to I.T. equipment. We constantly strive to provide the funds for our pupils to engage with their community, and visit the diverse heritage and culture found throughout Merseyside, Cheshire and beyond.

We are particularly keen to approach local businesses and employers who may consider making a donation to our school PTA from their Charitable Trust. With your continued support, our children can discover so much more. If you are able to provide a donation to the school via our PTA, or you work for a local or national employer who may consider making a donation on behalf of a Charitable Trust, please contact me at your earliest convenience via the school, our PTA website: <http://www.willastonpta.weebly.com/>, or directly at jonick@orange.net.

P.S. Don't forget, see Santa at the School Christmas Fair, Friday 5th December, 5-6.30pm – see our website for details ☺

13.13 Willaston Royal British Legion

No report received.

13.14 Willaston Royal British Legion Services Club

No report received.

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

A new potential member is running a feasibility study through the village in regards to the possible cost/need/usage of a weekly Willaston-Chester Mini Bus shuttle to replace the 22 bus. We have supported this endeavour and hope to explore how Willaston & South Wirral RC may be able to help; results to be presented on 26 November to the club and I will disseminate as indicated.

We have had approval to organise a 'light switch-on' event on 1st December for the village and we have approached the school to enquire if they would like to participate with a choir; participation & timing TBC but hopefully around 16-16:30 hrs. We are also trying to organise 'Santa' to visit as the children finish singing. As the planned Christmas Tree festival is taking place on 28-30th November with Christ Church & Willaston Festival Soc. we hope this will nicely dovetail onto their event so perhaps joint advertising can be arranged.

We plan to arrange visits by Santa's sleigh on every Tuesday in December (excl 23rd) though the Village streets, licence TBC.

Ticket sales for Gordale's Xmas Charity night continue on behalf of the playground appeal.

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

Overall satisfaction levels seem to be generally positive - patients seem to be getting appointments more or less when they want although there will always be exceptions to that. This was always one of the key things that patients wanted when Dr Meyer retired and unfortunately it was reflected in the turnout at the October Patient Group meeting at which approximately only 35 people attended. Nevertheless that was a good turnout by the standard of the majority of patient groups and it was a lively meeting with a useful exchange of views.

During the meeting Rob King was re-elected as Chairman for another term. There has been regular dialogue with senior management from Bridgewater and they demonstrate their wish to have meaningful engagement with patients. Rob was actively involved in the recruitment of a new GP. Bridgewater has made an offer of employment and is waiting to hear from the applicant regarding acceptance of the offer.

Whilst appointments with a clinician appear to be fairly readily available, I would stress the need for patients to show strong support by attending meetings. Strength of support was instrumental in achieving the current position. There is some evidence that there are underlying problems which could affect patients along the line. Two receptionists have handed in their notice and unless they are replaced quickly this is likely to impact on service levels usually enjoyed by patients. There are occasions already when the reception desk is manned by only one person. Obviously, it is difficult to answer the telephone and deal with patients at the desk at the same time – something has to give! We understand that a change in the way doctors work has resulted in an average weekly reduction in appointments equivalent to 30 consultations. Whilst Bridgewater says they are keen on patient participation, this reduction is something we were not consulted about and we are currently awaiting their response to our concerns. Since starting, a high percentage of patients attending meetings have been in the 55 plus age bracket and we wish to achieve greater representation from younger age groups. We realize that many younger patients are working and have young families to attend to but both we and Bridgewater want to hear what patients feel about alternative opening hours. Do you want extended hours Monday – Friday and / or weekend opening?

At the beginning of December all GP surgeries roll out the Friends & Family Test (F&FT). This gives patients and opportunity to rate their experience and comment generally whether their experience be good, bad or indifferent. Bridgewater are keen to get as many responses as possible on an ongoing basis as it will provide useful feedback regarding their performance and ideas about other services and facilities patients would like to see in place.

So in summary things are going quite well but we need to regain the support levels we enjoyed earlier and the participation of other age groups if we are to have a meaningful voice to face the challenges which will present themselves.

13.17 Willaston Village Festival Society (Submitted by Sarah Shannon)

Our AGM is on Friday 7th November when we will also be launching our book: *Lest We Forget: Willaston Remembers its First World War Fallen*. Joan Butcher, Hilary Morris and Keith Butcher have done a remarkable job, researching the backgrounds of the 34 names recorded on the village War Memorial and the book is a great tribute to those who lost their lives. It will be available for purchase after 7th November through me or the authors, at the Christmas card fair, PTA Christmas fair and at the Christmas Tree Festival. There will be an exhibition featuring Willaston in the war at the next Festival in 2015.

We are working with Christ Church to put on a Christmas Tree Festival which will take place in the church over the weekend of 28th-30th November. Local groups, businesses and organisations have been asked if they would like to decorate a tree and we hope to have up to 13 trees in the church, which will be open for people to come and admire, and bid for a tree if they wish. Do come along and have a look that weekend.

We are now gearing up for the next Festival which takes place during 25th-28th June 2015. We have a new website which gives all the details about what we are planning. Please have a look: www.willastonvillagefestival.org and put comments on the different activity pages. We want the website to be

as interactive as possible.

14. Any Other Business

14.1 Trees overhanging Hadlow Road

Paul commented that some trees at the Old Hall are overhanging Hadlow Road. Chris agreed to contact the owners as they have always been good about dealing with any issues. **Action: Chris**

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 10.05pm.

Dates for Committee Meetings:

To be confirmed

Addendum to Minutes

Subsequent to the meeting, Jean King has reported that a new Priest-in-Charge will be joining Christ Church in the new year. His name is Stephen Bazely.