

Willaston Residents' and Countryside Society (WR&CS)

Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on Monday 21st September 2015 in the Memorial Hall

Residents' Issues

There were no residents present to raise any issues.

Committee Meeting

Present: (Officers): Chris Hampshire (Chair), Sarah Shannon (Secretary), Barry Vowles (Planning), Hilary Booth (Treasurer), Sue Unsworth (Publicity), Keith Butcher (Memorial Hall Trustee); (Committee Members): Hilary Morris, Rob King, Debs Jerrett, Jean King, Lyn Jackson-Eves, Myles Hogg, Vicky Spraggon, Sheila Smith, Margaret Smyth and Helen Mayles.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Jane Townsend (Vice Chair), Leanne Kershaw, Emma Sharpe, Paul Janvier, Madeline Hughes, Phil Leach, Fiona Ennys and Hilary Gould.

2. Declarations of Interest

Chris Hampshire declared an interest in item 7.2 as Chair of Friends of Hadlow Road Station.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 18th May 2015

Myles identified two amendments:

Item 12.3: The second sentence should read 'A householder...', not 'The householder...'

Item 9.1: The second sentence should read 'The response was that they now have a committed purchaser...', not '...committed developer...'

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

4. Matters arising from the previous Minutes (16th March 2015)

There was discussion on the following items, other items being completed:

4.1 Litter (item 4.3)

A clean up took place on 15th August and another is planned for 3rd October – meet at 10am at the British Legion car park. It was also noted that the Council undertakes regular litter picking. Most members felt that the village looks cleaner.

4.2 Play area (item 5.1)

Martin was not available to report whether fundraising for the play area had been raised at the School Governors meeting. Action to be carried forward. **Action: Martin**

Some donations had been received as a result of the appeal in the newsletter.

Myles stated that there is £2107.36 in the allotment pot. There is a meeting of the Johnston Recreation Ground committee on Wednesday when this will be discussed. **Action: Myles**

4.3 Post Office (item 9.5)

Chris had written to the Post Office but not received a response. He will follow this up. **Action: Chris**

4.4 Fir Tree (item 12.3)

Myles confirmed that the fir tree at Delamore's Acre will come down.

4.5 Dog Fouling (item 6.3 from May meeting)

Myles had spoken to the school who have said that they will not actively take part in a campaign around dog fouling but would distribute information to parents. The committee expressed its disappointment.

5. Reports from Working Groups

5.1 Playground Working Group

A letter received from the Toddler Group and the response had been circulated before the meeting. Sarah explained that the main issues raised are the path and the sand under the cantilever swing. The path is quite stony and children falling could be hurt. The sand has attracted a small amount of fouling and is below the marked safety level. As both were funded through WREN, it is difficult to make alterations and any alterations would cost a lot of money. The level of the sand has been raised with the Council. The broken 'log' seat was repaired within 24 hours of being reported. It was also noted that the play area was inspected by RoSPA before it opened and currently has regular weekly inspections by the Council so the committee did not believe that there are serious Health and Safety issues, although clearly parents feel irritated by some aspects of the new play area. Sarah has a further meeting with the Council on Thursday.

There was a discussion about whether there could be some form of resin or sealant put on top of the path and Sarah agreed to investigate. **Action: Sarah**

It was also agreed that this is a community facility and the community needs to take some responsibility for the play area, not expect the Council to do it all. A rota of people to rake the sand from the edges to the middle and remove any offending items was suggested. Sarah agreed to see if people would be willing to take this on. **Action: Sarah**

It was agreed to have a formal consultation meeting with children and parents before finalising stage two and funds to hire the Memorial Hall for two hours were approved. Sarah will make the arrangements for this, liaising with the Council. **Action: Sarah**

Sarah reported that she has some Garden Centre Vouchers and so far has spent £20 on bulbs. She has approached various children's groups to help plant them.

5.2 Friends of Hadlow Road Station (FHRS) Working Group

Chris reported that the initial grant funding of £360 that was approved was not paid as funding was not available. As a result expenditure has been incurred that had to be covered by other income. An initial meeting with Ness Gardens was held but the support may be less than hoped.

Weeding and tidying up of the platforms continues to be well supported by an average of 20+ volunteers and dates are set for the next few months.

The Signal Box reopening will take place on Sunday 27th September. Over 100 tickets have been sold. There will be a local dignitary attending, Hadlow Green Singers will be performing and refreshments will be available. There are also plans for a Santa's grotto in the signal box on 13th December, with mince pies and mulled wine in the waiting room.

Various locks have now been changed at the station so that FHRS can have access to the kitchen and other areas. However, the staff working may be moving out, leaving empty premises.

The Memorandum of Agreement with the Council has not yet been produced by CWAC. The group is going to visit Whitegate Station which has been sold by the Council to an independent group to learn from their experience.

6. WR&CS Business

6.1 Website

Chris thanked Sarah for creating a new website which is now live. Sarah said that she would prefer to find someone else to be the webmaster and keep it up to date. This is only a few hours work a month. There were no volunteers from the committee and it was suggested that this should be raised at the AGM.

6.2 AGM

The AGM is on Friday 25th September from 7.30 – 9pm. Debs agreed to buy the cheese and wine.

Action: Debs

The draft agenda was considered. Two amendments to the Constitution were discussed:

- To change the rules for 'Retirement of the Officers' to read: 'Officers will be expected to serve for a period of three years, after which the Office will be open to election. The retiring officer may, if he/she wishes, seek re-election at the Society's AGM.'
- To change the rules for 'Meetings' to read: 'The Committee will meet every other month. Meeting dates will be determined by The Committee.'

These amendments were proposed by Debs, seconded by Lynn and agreed by all present. They will now be formally proposed at the AGM.

A review then took place of committee members. The Officers who have completed their three year term are Secretary and Vice-Chair. Sarah agreed to stand for re-election as Secretary. Jane had said that she would be willing to stand for re-election if no-one else wanted to do so. Vicky stated she was willing to take on this role as Jane already has the role of Footpaths and Bridleways Officer. The committee therefore agreed Sarah and Vicky would be nominated at the AGM.

Action: Sarah/Chris

A review then took place of member organisations. A proposal was made by Keith and seconded by Vicky that we should invite Friends of Hadlow Road Station and Willaston Toddlers Group to have representatives on the committee. This was agreed by all present.

Action: Sarah/Chris

6.3 Welcome Pack

Sarah reminded the committee that there is a welcome pack available to new residents in the village. Names should be passed to Sheila.

7. Financial Matters

7.1 Financial Report

Hilary Booth circulated the financial report. On 31st August, the current account had a balance of £1203.65, the lottery account a balance of £536.46 and the playground account a balance of £10. It was noted that £80 of the money in the current account is earmarked for footpaths and £352 for future newsletters.

Hilary reported that the new Lottery started in September and £1500 has been raised through ticket sales. In addition, £50 has been raised for the play area fund.

7.2 New Homes Bonus

Chris explained that the New Homes Bonus is a sum of money available to parishes from CWAC based on the number of houses built in the area. There is a £4,798 to apply for in 2014-5. Once again Hooton residents do not want to apply for funding. Options for this money had been circulated ahead of the meeting for members to consider.

After discussion, Rob proposed and Sue seconded that one priority item should be a new noticeboard for the Green. This was agreed by everyone present, except Barry who abstained. Myles will investigate options for the committee to consider.

Action: Myles

Vicky then proposed and Debs seconded that the priority items in addition to the noticeboard should be the play area and Friends of Hadlow Road. This was agreed by all present.

The committee also asked Lynn to talk to the Horticultural Society about whether they would be willing to maintain planters/hanging baskets in the village if these could be funded.

Action: Lynn

8. Planning Applications, Decisions and Appeals

8.1 Willaston Planning Applications

Barry reported that the application to build housing on the land behind Fairways had been rejected after he and Myles presented objections at the Council Board meeting. Chris thanked Barry and Myles for the work that they had done on this.

The application for Nessun Dorma in Lydiate Lane for two new dwellings has been approved.

There is an application for a new dwelling between Alma Cottage and Merton Cottage on Neston Road. Barry agreed to respond to this as it does not appear to be following the Green Space rules. **Action: Barry**

8.2 Traveller site on Heath Lane

The travellers have put in two appeals against the rejection of their application and against the enforcement notice. Interested parties have to comment by 1st October and the hearing will be on 16th February 2016. Myles urged **all members** to respond on the grounds that this is inappropriate development on the Green Belt and that the Council has now provided pitches within a few miles of the site. Barry agreed to circulate the references. **Action: Barry/All**

9. Local Councillor's Report

9.1 Western Link Project

The duct is now being installed on the A540. Quarry Road will be one-way for three months, allowing traffic to go towards Neston but not towards Willaston. Hadlow Road will be closed for three weeks from 17th September in both directions whilst the work is taking place. Access to Willaston from the A540 will be via Hanns Hall Road or Damhead Lane.

Comments were made that there is nothing on the A540 to say that there is no entry to Quarry Road which is leading to confusion. Myles agreed to raise this with the Highway Department. **Action: Myles**

9.2 Empty Homes Strategy

The Council is asking for views on its proposed Empty Homes Strategy. There are currently 4069 empty homes across Chester West and Cheshire and of these, 1795 have been empty for six months or longer. Homes can be reported on 0300 123 7038 and the Council will work with the owner to provide advice and support. Ultimately, the Council can take other action, including compulsory purchase. The online questionnaire can be found at www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/emptyhomestrategy or by emailing housingstrategy@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk.

9.3 Cultural Services Consultation

The Council is asking for views on the future of its cultural services. Options include the Council continues to retain delivery of services, a wholly Council-owned company is established or an independent social enterprise is set up. The consultation lasts until December 2nd. Information can be found at www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/culturalservices, by phoning 0300 123 8128 or by emailing culturalservices@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk.

Sheila commented that the library at Willaston was still running but with reduced times, books are not being changed and as a result very few people use the service. We have not heard anything about the proposal that came to us to replace it with a mobile library service. Myles agreed to follow this up. **Action: Myles**

9.4 Littering

Myles reported that 12 people had been successfully prosecuted for littering by the Council and more anti-litter campaigns are planned.

9.5 Locality Dashboard

The Locality Dashboard has been updated and gives information about the local area, including a wide range of data tables. It is available at www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/localitydashboard.

9.6 Bus Services

The X22 Stagecoach service has now ceased and is being run by a new company. However, they will not come into Willaston either, despite requests to do so. The 272 now only runs on weekdays.

9.7 Christmas Light Switch-on

This is provisionally planned for Friday 4th December.

10. Footpaths and Bridleways

10.1 Footpaths

Jane reported that most of our footpaths and bridleways are passable but the second strimming has not taken place. She has asked for an estimate for the cost of improving the surface of FP 32 (behind Pollards Inn) and got an estimate of £2,700.

There are still open trenches alongside part of FP31 (between Mill Lane and Hooton Road) but these are now marked with red and white tape.

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

10.2 Bridleways

Jane had now heard from Mr Pattwell, Technical and Site Manager of Leahurst about the proposed permissive bridleway for entering the Wirral Way off Damhead Lane. Unfortunately, they cannot give permission for reasons of biosecurity and infection control. Jane is now investigating alternative access.

10.3 Willaston Walks Footpath Signs

Most of the way mark signs are now in place. Jane is waiting for final permission to put a sign on the lamp-post at the corner of the Green and the B5133.

Vicky commented that the post in Elm Road may need re-positioning as there is not space for a mower.

11. Organisations' Reports

The reports below were circulated in advance.

11.1 Christ Church (Submitted by Jean King)

Christ Church is moving forward with considerable thought and discussion concerning our future priorities as we seek to serve Christ and our community and beyond. A shared lunch with the Methodists allowed us to share our 2020 Vision and begin to get excited about what this will look like.

Stephen and Joanna Bazely are generously inviting small groups of us to have Sunday lunch with them at the Vicarage. This ensures that all of us get to know each other better. Joanna just happens to be an excellent cook, lucky us! The Vicarage is always warmly welcoming.

Sunday September 27th - A special and important day as Christ Church Celebrates its 160th Anniversary at 10am, we hope you will all join us. We will be having one service for all the congregations and inviting everyone in the community to join us.

11.2 Friends of Willaston Meadow

No report received

11.3 Guiding Organisations

No report received

11.4 Hadlow Green Singers

No report received

11.5 Horticultural Society

No report received

11.6 Johnston Recreation Ground

No report received

11.7 Memorial Hall

No report received

11.8 Scouting Organisations

No report received

11.9 Sporting Organisations

No report received

11.10 Willastonhey W.I.

No report received

11.11 Willaston Methodist Church (Submitted by Sheila Smith)

As the new school year begins, so do our extra Chapel activities:

CREATE - for primary school age and carers, begins Wednesday 23rd Sept., 3-30 to 5pm

CHURCH MICE - for pre-school age and carers, begins Thurs. 1st Oct.

PAUSE - Bible study, coffee and cake begins Tues. 15th Sept. 10-30a.m. to 12 noon.

EVENING BIBLE STUDY - begins Wed. 16th Sept. 8pm.

HARVEST - Sunday 11th Oct. We celebrate our Harvest Festival with a morning service at 10.45a.m. and Harvest Hymns Of Praise at 6.30pm.

11.12 Willaston CE School PTA (Submitted by Nick Keeley)

We will also be meeting at 7pm on Monday 21st September 2015 for our annual AGM and to discuss our priorities for the 2015/16 school year. The Willaston and South Wirral Rotary Club are keen to assist with preparation for our Christmas Fair.

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

No report received

11.16 Willaston Surgery Patient Participation Group

During September both myself and my primary contact at Bridgewater have been on holiday at different times and It has been difficult getting updates on various issues.

Access to Physiotherapy services without referral by a GP should be fully in place soon and we are optimistic that we will be able to announce details at the forthcoming Patient Group meeting. More information will be posted around the village as soon as it is made available.

A Wellbeing Coordinator has been appointed to cover the 2 Neston practices and Willaston. The role of this individual is to direct patients to non NHS services which are considered appropriate to assist that patient. A simple example could be a referral to Social Services. Again, we hope to be in a position to explain in more detail at the forthcoming meeting, having invited the Coordinator to speak.

There have been further staff resignations, one of those being one of the nurses. Concern has been expressed about this particularly with the "flu" vaccination season almost upon us but I have been assured that action has been taken to cope with the seasonal workload. Watch out for details of when the vaccination campaign is due to start.

A new Practice Manager designate, Anna Commander, is in post and I am waiting for more information about what the impact of her appointment will be on the management structure at the Practice.

Bridgewater continues to try to appoint a further doctor but clearly, in that it is 15 months since they took over management of the Practice, they are finding this a particularly challenging issue. I am assured that they are continuing with the recruitment process.

I have been approached by some patients who have commented that they have been unable to get a "same day" urgent appointment. This should not happen. Even if a patient is not seen there should be contact from a clinician. Anyone experiencing a problem regarding access to an urgent appointment should complete a Friends & Family Test questionnaire which is available at the Practice or may be completed online via the Willaston Surgery website. Alternatively, write to the Practice outlining the circumstances of your situation.

Our next OPEN Patient Group meeting is on Tuesday 29th September at 7.30pm in the Memorial Hall

11.17 Willaston Village Festival Society (Submitted by Sarah Shannon)

Our AGM will be on Saturday 21st November at 11am at the Memorial Hall. At the moment we are not sure if we will be able to put on another Festival in 2018 as we currently do not have enough committee members. If you, or anyone you know, would be interested in joining us, we have the following roles available: Secretary; Services Manager; Exhibitions Co-ordinator; Community Event Co-ordinator. You will be expected to work extremely hard throughout the Festival weekend but the reward is seeing the community come together and have fun. For an informal discussion, please ring me on 0151 327 5318.

12. Any Other Business

12.1 Memorial Hall

Keith said that the Memorial Hall are looking for a new Treasurer. Contact Keith on 327 5191 if interested.

12.2 Job seekers

Lynn commented that she had been concerned about some aggressive people asking for work. The police were informed.

12.3 Overhanging Trees

Chris confirmed a letter had been delivered to The Old Hall and Ashtree Farm Croft about overhanging trees. He asked members to let him know of other properties where this is an issue.

12.4 Newsletters

Chris thanked Sue for organising the newsletter delivery and everyone for doing their part.

12.5 Friends of Hadlow Road Station

It was agreed that now this is a separate organisation, it should be included under Organisation Reports.

12.6 Johnston Recreation Ground

Myles reported he is not getting far with the Council's Legal Department appointing a committee. He asked if we could advertise for members. It was agreed this should go on the website.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 9.50pm.

Dates for future Committee Meetings:

Monday 16th November 2015
Monday 18th January 2016
Monday 21st March 2016
Monday 16th May 2016
Monday 18th July 2016
Monday 19th September 2016
Monday 21st November 2016

AGMs:

Friday 25th September 2015
Friday 30th September 2016