

Willaston Residents' and Countryside Society

Minutes of the AGM held on 26th October 2018 in Willaston Memorial Hall

Approximately 80 people were in attendance.

1. Welcome & Apologies

Chris Hampshire welcomed everyone present to the Annual General Meeting of the Willaston Residents' and Countryside Society (WR&CS) and took them through the agreed agenda.

Apologies had been received from Vicky Spraggon (Vice Chair), Barry Vowles (Planning Officer), Fiona Ennys (Resident Representative), Rvd Stephen Bazeley, David Compton, Jen Williams, Roger and Pat James.

2. Minutes of the AGM held on Friday 29th September 2017

Copies of the minutes had been placed on seats prior to the meeting for attendees to read. Chris asked for any amendments to the Minutes and none were given. Therefore, the minutes were proposed as a true record of the meeting by Sandra Kettiros and seconded by Lyn Jackson-Eves. By a show of hands, the minutes were accepted.

3. Actions Arising

Page 4, item 8.1 Traffic – Chris Hampshire reported that there had been a number of interactions with the Highways Department, as a result of which they have recognised that signposting at the A41 junction to Willaston needs improvement since traffic wishing to go on the Welsh Road comes towards Willaston by error. Work on the junction is planned and improved signposting will be incorporated.

Page 5, item 8.3 Flooding – Cllr Myles Hogg confirmed that the drains by the bus stop had been cleared.

Page 5, item 8.4 Neston Road – Chris Hampshire reported that the committee had looked into having a flashing notice to thank people for driving safely but it was too expensive. He thanked Sandra Kettiros for looking into this.

4. New Constitution

Chris Hampshire stated that a draft revised constitution had been available on the website for a few weeks and copies had been placed on chairs before the meeting. He explained the committee had developed a new constitution to put a more formal approach around some activities. In addition, it corrects an anomaly around membership which currently has anyone living within a two-mile radius of the Village Green as a member which could include people living in Wirral Borough Council as well as Little Ness, Hooton and Neston. The committee had agreed to adopt the map created for Willaston District Community Plan as the boundary for membership. There was some discussion around this area and Chris clarified that the area is half of the Councillor's current ward, stopping at (but including) Benty Heath Lane and parts of Heath Lane and going down to the Chester High Road.

John Henrys asked about membership and Chris clarified that the proposals are that if a Willaston organisation nominates a representative who lives outside the area, they are still regarded as a full member, whilst performing the organisation representative function on the committee.

A resident raised a concern about the new housing development near Hooton Station (the former Roften estate). Cllr Myles Hogg explained that there is a separate Residents' Society for Hooton and they represent the area. He confirmed however that WR&CS did respond favourably to the original Roften planning application.

The new constitution was proposed by John Woodrow and seconded by Tim Ley. By a show of hands, the majority of people present were in favour of accepting the constitution. Three people abstained and five objected. Therefore, the motion was carried and the new constitution adopted.

5. Presentation by PCSO

Chris Hampshire explained that this item was being brought forward as Sarah had advised she had to leave early and went on to thank Sarah Duffey and Wendy Dalton for coming.

Sarah Duffey explained that she and Wendy had been PCSOs for twelve years and had taken over the Willaston, Thornton and Netherpool area in January 2018. Their role is to provide high-visibility patrolling in the community, to gather intelligence and feed it into the system. They deal with non-confrontational, low-level crime, so don't get involved in fights, domestic violence etc. They will help investigate burglary, criminal damage, car theft etc. by doing house-to-house enquiries. Their uniform includes a body camera which is both for their protection and for the person being filmed.

Sarah spoke about Halloween and concerns some people have about nuisance youths. She explained that they have Trick or Treat Yes/No posters which can be downloaded from www.cheshire.police.uk/media/102059/halloween-yes-and-no-a5-flyers-2016.pdf. They have also been doing talks in schools to help young people understand the impact of their behaviour.

Sarah went on to speak about speeding vehicles in the area. They have done Speedwatch, working with the community, in both Neston Road and Hadlow Road where people get a warning on a first speeding offence. However, they now have Truecam which enables them to ticket people, but this can only be operated by Cheshire Police personnel. This data is also used to gather statistics and identify roads where there is a problem.

Sarah explained that the police are developing Tier Two locations in the community. Every three weeks on a Friday morning, she is in the Country Market at the Memorial Hall. They are also looking to put in a location at Heath Lane Nurseries.

Sarah said that you can get alerts from Cheshire Police by signing up to Cheshire Police Alert at <https://member-registration.neighbourhoodalert.co.uk/94/Join> .

Sarah then turned to fraud and encouraged people to report suspicious or actual fraud to Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040 or online at www.actionfraud.police.uk. They have also developed the Little Book of Big Scams, which can be downloaded from www.cheshire.police.uk/media/84747/cheshire-constabulary_lbbs_third-edition_online-usage.pdf and Sarah described some common scams. She encouraged people to ring 101 if there are door-to-door salespeople suggesting they are from the probation service or similar organisation.

Chris thanked Sarah for her presentation and for her support to the Willaston community. He commented that he had been in contact with Sarah directly a couple of times about issues such as parking on pavements and outside school and had received a very quick and positive response.

6. Chair's Report

Chris Hampshire reported that the Society had had another active but sometimes difficult year, with a number of successful outcomes. The committee had continued to meet every other month for at least 2½ hours and there had been additional meetings, particularly around the planning application by McCarthy and Stone for the former Royal British Legion site. Chris thanked Cllr Myles Hogg, Barry Vowels (WR&CS Planning Officer) and Iain Henrys for attending the Cheshire West and Chester Council (CW&C) Planning Meeting and speaking against the McCarthy and Stone proposals which was then refused by eight votes to one.

Chris said that two village-wide newsletters had been produced and distributed by hand to every house in the immediate village. Funding has been provided for this by the New Homes Bonus Fund, which unfortunately is no longer available from CW&C Council. The Society now has three channels to reach an increased number of residents – the WR&CS website, its Facebook page and posters on

the two village noticeboards.

Improvements have finally been made to Footpath 32, the one that runs behind Pollards.

WR&CS wrote to the Council to seek support for the re-instatement of the 22 bus service, which now has a subsidy from CW&C until July 2019.

Chris thanked Sarah Shannon for leading on the second phase of the play area development, which provided £18,500 improvements, following on from the first phase which provided £60,000 improvements a few years earlier.

Chris then moved on to WR&CS' major project this year, which was fundraising for Christmas Lights on the beech tree on the Village Green. To date £24,184.94 has been raised. He explained that the committee had appointed a task group of Cllr Myles Hogg, Ceri Jones and Paul Janvier to take this project forward. He paid particular tribute to Ceri Jones for enthusing the entire area, including individuals, groups and businesses to support the appeal. At this stage a bouquet was presented to Ceri by Cllr Myles Hogg and the meeting applauded Ceri for her work. Chris then explained that an arrangement had been made with CW&C so that they would purchase the lights on our behalf but then the Society will own them and will be responsible for maintenance, public liability insurance, electricity etc. Chris confirmed that as the fund raising had significantly exceeded the original target, the Society has the funds to cover these costs for several years. He stated that all the monies raised for Christmas Lights would be ring-fenced in a special WR&CS account and not used for any other purpose.

Chris then moved to planning and gave Barry Vowles' apologies. He explained that the main aim is to protect the Green belt and village conservation area and as Planning Officer, Barry works closely with CW&C on assessing planning applications throughout the village and has developed a deep understanding of the planning rules. Over the past year, Barry has reviewed 45 applications, with each taking at least 40 minutes. Some have taken considerably longer including planning developments at the Roften site, the McCarthy and Stone application, land adjoining Cherry Brow Farm and Heath Lane Nursery. All the 'important' applications are reviewed by the full WR&CS committee and a response to CW&C agreed. Chris thanked Barry for his time and expertise on planning matters.

Chris then discussed proposed WR&CS activities for the next twelve months. The Christmas Card Fair will take place on 3rd November from 10am to 12 noon – any profit from this goes to WR&CS funds. There are plans for a WW1 Commemoration Weekend on 9-11th November 2018. Silhouettes will appear around the village from 27th October, supported by a village walk leaflet, which was placed on chairs before the meeting. Full details of the range of events are available on Facebook, website and noticeboards.

With regards to the Royal British Legion site, it is still possible that McCarthy and Stone may appeal, in which case it will go to an independent inspector for a decision. Alternatively, McCarthy and Stone may re-submit a revised planning application or they could withdraw, in which case there are other businesses interested in buying the land, with alternative proposals. Chris advised that WR&CS will respond to any new planning application when it is submitted.

Finally, Chris said that Sarah Shannon will be leading a new WR&CS fund-raising effort for phase three of the play area appeal, which will cost approximately £40,000 to put in a large climbing unit suitable for older children.

Jim Shaw then commented that the Methodist Chapel is putting on a craft day and film show on 27th October to support the Christmas Lights appeal. He had tickets available for the film show (which is free).

Christine Barnes commented that McCarthy and Stone has been reported to be in significant debt and the CEO has resigned. Chris commented that they are the current preferred bidder for the Royal British Legion but there are others interested in the site.

7. Treasurer's Report

Hilary Booth, Treasurer, presented the accounts which had been placed on seats prior to the meeting. She explained that these figures represent the situation at 31st August 2018.

Hilary explained that the Current Account funds our core work and that WR&CS doesn't have a regular income and we have to raise any money we need, mainly through the Lottery but also through the Christmas Card Fair and donations at the AGM. Overall, the Current Account had credits of £480.80, payments of £1029.79 and carries forward a balance of £598.33, of which £585 is ringfenced for the newsletter. A finger sign to Willaston had been purchased for Hadlow Road Station to encourage people to come into the village from the Wirral Way. Hilary also thanked Vicky and Viv Patton for watering the flowers over the hot summer that WR&CS provides outside the pharmacy.

The Play Area Account had no financial transactions this year.

The World War One account is a temporary account, which currently has £252.95 in it but a number of invoices are expected. Hilary confirmed that any profit from the WW1 weekend will go to the RBL Poppy Appeal.

The Fundraising Account shows the income relating to the Willaston Lottery. This ended with a balance of £328.62 which is available to spend. During the year £200 was transferred to WR&CS for general funds, £250 has been loaned to support the WW1 activities and £500 was donated to the Christmas Lights appeal.

The Christmas Lights account has a balance of £15,374, although, as identified earlier, more money has been raised since the end of August and Hilary thanked Ceri and everyone who was involved for their work on this.

Overall, therefore we have a total of £16,630.09. Hilary then stated that the accounts have been audited by Nigel Pratten as an honest record and said that the accounts will be on the WR&CS website for inspection.

The accounts were proposed by Pam Irving and seconded by Carol Mercer. By a show of hands, they were accepted as a true record. Chris then thanked Hilary for all her work on behalf of the Society.

8. Election of Officers and Resident Representatives

Chris explained that officers are elected for a period of three years on a rotational basis and nominations are requested in advance, together with a supporting statement. There had been no nominations received for the post of Vice Chair so that remains vacant. One nomination had been received for Secretary, which was Sarah Shannon and a slide was shown with a summary of Sarah's supporting statement. Sarah was proposed by Sandra Kettiros, seconded by Madeline Hughes and by a show of hands, agreed by all present.

Chris explained that up to six Residents Representatives are elected onto the committee for a three-year term and there are currently two vacancies. Nominations had been received in advance for Roy Spraggon and Helen Jakubczak and again a slide with a summary of their supporting statement was shown. Roy had been co-opted on the committee for a year and was proposed as a Resident Representative by Ruth Hampshire and seconded by Sandra Kettiros. Helen was proposed by Roy Spraggon and seconded by Debs Jerrett. By a show of hands, their appointment was agreed by all present.

9. Volunteer Opportunities in the Village

Chris explained that there are a number of opportunities for volunteers with different organisations in the village. This includes fundraising for the play area, the Festival Society, Friends of Hadlow Road Station Community Group, Johnston Recreation Ground Advisory Group and the Memorial Hall. Jane Townsend also mentioned the need for people to help with tidying footpaths and Sue Unsworth mentioned helping with litter picks.

10. Any Other Business

10.1 Traffic.

A resident raised the issue of lorries in the village, stating that on Monday 22nd October, he had taken his daughter to Hooton Station and seen six articulated lorries going through the village, of which three were for Aldi. Chris Hampshire stated that WR&CS has had success with Aldi by writing to them and asking them to divert lorries via Two Mills. They have informed WR&CS that they can track drivers and have an agreement with suppliers that they do not come through the village. Chris agreed that WR&CS would write again to Aldi with specific dates and times and re-iterating their agreement to avoid Willaston.

Action: Chris Hampshire

Ged Weeden raised traffic speed issues in Hadlow Road. A Range Rover had driven into his wall, which is the third time their wall had been damaged by vehicles. He expressed concern that pedestrians could have been hurt. Chris commented that the last speed check done on Hadlow Road showed no speeding motorists. Helen Jakubczak also commented that the traffic on Hadlow Road was dangerous, particularly as there are a lot of cars parked there. She also felt that crossing the road at the Wirral Way was dangerous and asked why the 20mph zone could not be extended. Jane Townsend suggested that a red area with a slight rise could be put in here to slow traffic. Comments were also made about traffic in Neston Road and Hooton Road and the need for further traffic calming measures.

Cllr Myles Hogg then commented that at the time of the implementation of the 20mph zone, not everyone agreed with it. However, it has been successful, reducing traffic from an average of 32mph to 25mph. He stated that he has put in a request that the CW&C engineers look again at Hadlow Road. However, they have a four-year rolling programme and Willaston is not currently in this programme. He has however, got agreement for the section of Hadlow Road from the High Road to be reduced. Myles further commented that traffic-calming techniques come in and out of favour and some speed bumps are now being removed. He welcomed suggestions which he can then discuss with the CW&C Highways Department.

10.2 Pavements

Fiona Mosley said that she had moved to the village three months ago and was very impressed with it. However, she expressed some concerns about the state of the pavement outside Elizabeth Cottages and also at Meadow Croft. She also commented that the pavement between Meadow Lane and the village has become very narrow as it is overgrown and asked that the vegetation is cut back. Cllr Myles Hogg agreed to progress the issues of the pavements. Chris Hampshire said that he would look into the overgrown vegetation but first we will have to find out who owns that piece of land before we can contact them.

Action: Myles Hogg/Chris Hampshire

Tim Ley then proposed a vote of thanks to all involved in WR&CS, including committee members, organisation representatives and other individuals who give their time and expertise to improve our village. He acknowledged that many hours of effort that goes on behind the scenes and noted that it is all voluntary but essential to make things happen. He stated that we are fortunate to have such broad community spirit in the village which keeps it alive and thriving and we are lucky to live in such a lovely village. Chris thanked Tim for his kind words.

Ceri Jones then thanked everyone involved in the Christmas Lights appeal, stating that it was a community effort and everyone should be proud of what has been achieved. She said that a Hohoho group had been formed, as a group of community volunteers, to help drive the fund-raising initiative and without them the lights campaign would not have been as successful as it was. Ceri particularly highlighted a lady called Trish who was part of the Hohoho group and who sadly passed away during the fundraising. Trish epitomised everything about the group, what they stood for and was a valued member of the group. Ceri finally noted that the Rotary Club will be organising the Christmas Lights Switch-on on 3rd December 2018 and encouraged everyone to come along.

11. Close of Meeting

Chris Hampshire closed the meeting by thanking all the committee and organisation members for

their work during the year. He then thanked everyone for coming along and invited them to join us in some wine and nibbles and to visit the information tables around the room.

The meeting then concluded at 8.55pm.

Want more information?

Our website can be found at: willastoninwirralresidents.org and Facebook at: /willastonresidents

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

Any village concerns then let us know

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

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

These Minutes are subject to ratification.
Sarah Shannon
Secretary