

Willaston Residents' and Countryside Society (WR&CS)

Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on Monday 20th May 2019
in the Methodist Chapel School Room

Present - Officers: Chris Hampshire (Chair), Vicky Spraggon (Acting Vice-Chair), Sarah Shannon (Secretary), Hilary Booth (Treasurer), Ceri Jones (Social Media) and Barry Vowles (Planning)

Present - Committee Members: Lyn Jackson-Eves, Sandra Kettiros, Myles Hogg, Sheila Smith, John Fisher, Roy Spraggon, Annette Troake, Rob King, Fiona Ennys, Stephen Bazeley, Paul Janvier, Sheila Greenhalgh and Hilary Morris.

Ruth McElroy attended as an observer.

Residents' Issues

No residents attended the meeting to raise issues.

Committee Meeting

Chris welcomed everyone to the meeting; in particular, Sheila Greenhalgh who was representing Willaston and South Wirral Rotary and Ruth McElroy who may be joining the committee in future.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Sue Unsworth, Jane Townsend, Debs Jerrett, Madeline Hughes, Helen Mayles and John Woodrow.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Meeting Conduct

Chris read a statement in which he asked all committee members to respect each other and visitors and to avoid cross-talking, following feedback after the last meeting. He also noted that the meeting location has been moved to the Methodist Church School Room, where there is more space, enabling everyone to see each other.

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting – 18th March 2019

Sarah reported that Ruth Hampshire had requested several amendments to the minutes the previous day but she had not had time to look at them in detail so would respond to Ruth separately. However, she had previously discussed two amendments to the draft minutes with Ruth as follows:

- Item 5.2, para 2: The phrase 'feedback from members of the former Hadlow Green WI' should be replaced by 'from longstanding residents of Willaston'. This amendment was proposed by Roy, seconded by Vicky and agreed with four absences;
- Item 5.2, para 3: At the end of the para, there should be a statement: 'Ruth explained that this was because information was given in the March Parish News that the commemoration book would be going on-line.' It was noted that minutes are not a verbatim record but a summary and there was a general feeling that this detail was not necessary. Stephen proposed and Paul seconded that this amendment should not be accepted and the proposal was agreed by all present.

With the first amendment, the minutes were proposed as correct by Sheila Smith, seconded by Hilary Booth and accepted by all members present as a true record of the meeting, with one abstention.

5. Matters arising from the Minutes of 18th March 2019

There was discussion on the following matters, as the other matters were complete, or included elsewhere on the agenda:

5.1 Disabled Parking Space (Residents' issues, item 1)

Myles is trying to get the disabled parking space repainted, along with the yellow zig zag lines outside school.

Action: Myles

5.2 CCTV at Hadlow Road Station car park (Residents' issues, item 1)

There had been no follow-up action from the PCSO about this. Chris agreed to contact PCSOs Linda/Sarah.

Action: Chris

5.3 Plus Bus

We had not received a PDF of the PlusBus leaflet for the WR&CS website and Facebook. Sarah agreed to contact Ian Dibbert.

Action: Sarah

5.4 Map of our area (item 4.3)

Paul is trying to track down the original map used in the District Community Plan.

Action: Paul

5.5 Stewart Milne Development Information Pack (item 5.4)

Sarah reported that she had met the Chair of Hooton Residents Association (HRA) and had drafted an information pack between the two organisations for new residents on this development. This is now being populated by members of HRA, as they do not have a list of organisations. Sarah confirmed that all community organisations in the area will be listed but not businesses. Once the pack is finalised, she will seek funding to get this printed.

Action: Sarah

5.6 Land at end of Smithy Lane (item 11)

Myles confirmed that any planning obligations on the land will continue if the land were to be sold by CWaC. He noted that at the moment all sales of Council land is frozen pending a review that is taking place.

5.7 Stolen Money (item 12)

The Officers had met and agreed to accept the £1,150 donated by Ceri and to write off the remaining £350. It was also reiterated that risk assessments should be carried out by sub-committees for all future activities to try to prevent a similar situation arising in future.

5.8 Heath Lane Travellers (item 14)

Myles reported that the travellers had been served notice to vacate in April and they have three months in which to appeal.

6. WR&CS Matters

6.1 Request for new organisation membership

A request for organisation membership had been received from Willaston Phil Supporters' Group. Membership was proposed by Myles, seconded by Vicky and agreed by all present.

6.2 Correspondence/Email/Facebook

A list of correspondence had been circulated in advance to committee members. It was noted that there had been two achieved through WR&CS Facebook postings; reuniting a dog with his owner and enabling people to get in contact with relatives of a friend. It was also noted that the day that the organisation list was advertised on Facebook, the website had 98 hits.

6.3 Proposed amendments to Guidance Notes

Jane had requested two amendments to the Guidance Notes as follows:

- That the number of people allowed to speak in the 15 minutes residents' slot should be restricted to two. This proposed amendment was rejected. However it was noted that visitor speakers should be put on the main agenda in future, rather than in the residents' slot.
- That significant proposals to be voted on at the meeting should be proposed in advance of the meeting in writing and distributed to committee members before the meeting. After discussion, Hilary Booth proposed and Sheila Smith seconded this proposed amendment which was agreed with the caveat that the Chair and Secretary should determine what is deemed as significant.

Sarah agreed to amend the Guidance Notes accordingly.

Action: Sarah

6.4 Christmas Lights

Paul reported that the lights on the beech tree are now under a contract for maintenance and at the end of three years, there will be a certificate of conformity. Chris commented that the contract is currently annual and it was agreed to see if this can be a three year contract. Paul agreed to discuss this with the contractor.

Action: Paul

Paul proposed that because of the difference of opinion about the history of Christmas lights in the village, a sub-committee should be set up to determine the history that can then be published on the website. This was seconded by Lyn and agreed with five abstentions. Hilary Morris agreed to lead this sub-committee.

Action: Hilary M

6.5 Lottery Licence

Chris requested, in his role as Chair of FHRs, that WR&CS agree use of the lottery licence for Santa's Grotto 2019 raffle. This was proposed by Hilary Booth, seconded by Paul and agreed by all present. Sheila G asked if all member organisations could use the WR&CS lottery licence for raffles and Hilary B agreed to check.

Action: Hilary B

6.6 Newsletter

Sarah reported that she is planning a newsletter to go out in June. The front page will feature the play area options and the feature page will be on the Memorial Hall. Committee members will be asked to help deliver newsletters.

7. Working Groups

7.1 Logo

John F reported that the group is waiting for drafts from Helen J's sister.

7.2 Play Area

Sarah reported that options had been received from CWaC but members of the sub-group felt they were a bit limited. It was noted that the new item is aimed at children aged 5-10 years old and that the current slide would be removed. It was agreed to go back to CWaC to ask for options that include more variety and incorporate a slide.

Action: Sarah

8. Financial Report

Hilary Booth had circulated a Financial Report of all WR&CS accounts in advance. This report showed that at 27th April 2019, the WR&CS current account had a balance of £890.98; the Play Area account had a balance of £1080.65; the Christmas Lights account had a balance of £12,259.11 and the Lottery account had a balance of £1188.50. Hilary noted that £331 of the current account is ring-fenced for newsletters.

Chris thanked Hilary for all the work she had done on the finances.

9. Planning Applications, Decisions and Appeals

9.1 Hanns Hall Livery

Barry asked for views on an application to build six houses on the livery site and surrounding land. He noted that the size of each dwelling is very small and is less than the current footprint of the livery but is not on the same piece of land so would not be a conversion, making this a development on Green Belt land. Barry noted that a number of local residents had already objected and agreed to do so on behalf of WR&CS.

Action: Barry

9.2 Field between Willaston and Hooton

Jane had identified to Barry the fact that there is only one large field between Willaston and the new Stewart Milne housing development in Hooton. Jane had wondered if this land could be designated as a local green space as it is of community value. Myles commented that an option would be to develop a Neighbourhood Plan as this affords some protection and has to be taken into account in planning decisions. It was agreed that this should be an item for the next meeting and Myles agreed to pass on samples of existing Neighbourhood plans.

Action: Sarah/Myles

9.3 Hadlow Road Station Café

Barry and Chris had attended a meeting with the renters of the Station Master's House to understand the rationale behind WR&CS's objection to their proposed alterations. Concerns were expressed about altering the building that is inconsistent with a 1950's theme and the renters were encouraged to speak to CWAC's Conservation Officer.

Vicky raised a concern that with Chris as Chair of FGRS and WR&CS, it could have been perceived that he had a vested interest and suggested that someone else should have attended with Barry. Chris accepted this point and agreed that in a similar situation someone else would attend to represent WR&CS.

9.4 McCarthy and Stone

Myles reported that it is believed that McCarthy and Stone has put in an appeal for their application on the former British Legion site but this has not yet been processed by the Inspectorate. Lyn noted that they are also proposing a development in Neston.

9.5 Leahurst

Barry reported that the University of Liverpool has published a masterplan for further development of sites including Leahurst. There is an open meeting on Wednesday 22nd May in the lecture theatre and it appears that the proposals are to develop equine and research and development facilities. Barry agreed to look at the plans in more detail and to let the committee know if there are any concerns. He noted that this is not a planning application at this stage.

Action: Barry

10. Organisations' Reports

The reports below had been submitted in advance or were given at the meeting. It was noted that organisations can ask for a separate agenda item if they have something significant to report. Lyn reminded members that there is a Horticultural Society coffee morning this Saturday and Sheila Smith said she had tickets for the Open Gardens event.

10.1 Christ Church

No report submitted

10.2 Friends of Hadlow Road Station Community Group (Submitted by Hilary Booth)

Excellent progress has been made putting back the fencing between the level crossing gate and the signal. A refurbished "Do Not Trespass" sign has been secured to the fence by the level crossing gates, (thank you Andy W) and you will now see the 5 new milk churns attached to the two luggage trolleys whilst window frames have been fitted to the shelter. Many thanks to John I.

Strimming of the rear the far end platform has been done which helps to keep the weeds and ivy down and allows the new plants to get established. The newly planted Rowan trees on the main platform embankment are coming along very well.

We had one gardening day which was a lovely warm sunny day, for a spring clean-up. Many thanks to all who came. This was followed by another gardening day, which was a damp drizzle day, to put down bark. Many thanks to all who braved the weather! We are looking for additional volunteer gardeners, and you would be made most welcome, so please come and join a happy, friendly team. - Wednesday 5th June and Wednesday 3rd July. Please bring with you, if you can, a hoe, rake, secateurs, and a weed bag. - We will give you tea, coffee and biscuits!

Many thanks to Sue U for her regular litter picking, keeping the station area clean and tidy.

Painting and putting back together the signal is awaiting flight of the blue tits, from their nest in one of the holes at the top of the signal post.

We have supported year 3 of Willaston C of E primary school children visiting the station who had a superb visit to the station on 14th May with further follow-up work to be undertaken in class.

The South Wirral Rambling Club held a memorial service at the station, for one of their former Chairs, and we served them teas and cake.

The Pop-up-cafe will be open on Sunday June 16th and Sunday June 30th from 10.30am to 1.30pm.

We look forward to seeing you once again.

10.3 Friends of Willaston Meadow

No report received.

10.4 Hadlow Green Singers

No report received.

10.5 Horticultural Society (submitted by Pam Irving)

Our next monthly meeting is on Tuesday 18th June when we will be having a talk on 'Cut Flowers' by Chris Davies. It is always nice to bring some of the garden into the house so we will learn more of what to grow.

The Society meets on the third Tuesday of each month in the Memorial Hall, at 7.30pm; details are shown on the village notice board, and if you are interested in joining us, come along or contact the Membership Secretary, Ms Jill Thompson, telephone number 336 5927. Membership is only £6.00 per year and you can get 10% discount at Burleydam Garden Centre on all gardening products on production of your Membership card.

10.6 Johnston Recreation Ground (submitted by Sue Unsworth)

The last meeting was held in the Church on 20th March. Andy James from the Council was unable to attend.

Allotments - A fence has been mended temporarily until the Council mend it. There are still some untended pitches which is a great shame. Plot renters are given warnings before the Council will re-allocate to more dedicated renters! It will be a great shame if there is not some improvement before the allotment is opened to the public when the 'Open Gardens of Willaston' takes place on the 30th June.

Tennis - There is a banner attached to the court fence with details on how to become a member.

Playground - Fundraising for the last phase is underway.

Football - The Pavilion still needs repairs and a lot of renovation. The moles are becoming a problem again. There are now many teams of children up to the age of 15 playing on Saturdays. There is also a youth team (15 to 18 yrs.) The Willaston Veterans play every 3 weeks. There was mention of a team (Halfway House) coming to play. They are part of the West Cheshire League. Sadly, the keys to the Pavilion will have to be changed as the white line machine has gone missing! It was noted that the grass cutting has been very infrequent. The pitches are cut but that is possibly being done by the football members.

Footpath - A school representative attended the meeting to complain about the flooding on the path alongside the allotments. This path is a general walkway for children and parents coming and going from school. It has flooded for many years after rain. It was suggested that a ramp or bridge could be constructed as the water will not drain away. It was also suggested that a path behind the wall adjacent to parking area could be made to lead to the school as pavements in the village are so narrow.

The Council have been contacted to report the hollow Oak tree by the opening on to the Rec. from Elm Green. In high winds the branches could be a danger.

Next meeting will be held in Christ Church at 7:30 P.M. on 22nd May.

10.7 Memorial Hall (submitted by Rob King)

We are delighted to advise that as a result of our persistent advertising we have now recruited a new Bookings Secretary who has already taken on the necessary duties. Her name is Gillie O'Rourke and she is relatively new to the village. We are fortunate that Gillie approached us regarding the role rather than us 'arm twisting'. Gillie brings a wealth of experience with her having been a very senior manager with the Environment Agency and heavily involved with the third sector, holding senior positions.

However, we have had less success with the recruitment of a Chairman or Vice Chairman. It is important to note that our very able Treasurer, Keith Greenfield has now been holding that role of Chairman on a meeting by meeting basis for the last 18 months. This situation really does need to be resolved sooner rather than later as Keith holds senior roles in major pension schemes and has recently taken on further responsibilities. Keith was unable to be present at our May meeting and will also be missing for our next meeting in July. Rob King took the chair at the most recent meeting.

It is with regret that we have to announce the resignation of two Trustees, namely Keith Butcher and Liz Young. Keith has been a trustee for many years and brought a wealth of knowledge when it came to applying for grants whereas Liz has been with us for over a decade and during that time has held the post of Bookings Secretary for the majority of her tenure. We hope that the Horticultural Society elect a replacement to act as Trustee in place of Liz.

As part of our ongoing commitment to monitor the condition of the premises, Chris Dundas has agreed to take on an advisory role. A recent inspection by him has revealed a problem with an area of flat roofing and rainwater has been getting through into the S4YC (Play Group) store room. This involves an area of internal wall which will need re-plastering and some floorboards need replacing as well, of course, as the faulty roof being repaired. Our insurance company has been advised

The level of bookings is such that we now consider it prudent to have cleaners come to the hall three times per week rather than two and in addition the cleaner is being tasked with carrying out additional cleaning tasks and maintenance work.

We are pleased to confirm that we have now secured a defibrillator, and this will be positioned in a special cabinet outside the village pharmacy. We are grateful to local organisations who have contributed to the cost of the cabinet. Full details will be circulated once the defibrillator has been positioned but in the meantime, it is housed in a storage cabinet at the Hall and main user groups will be notified of this just in case there is a need.

We are fortunate that casual bookings continue to be buoyant. All annual bookings have been paid as per invoices issued. Whilst our finances are sound, at our next meeting we will be considering our pricing structure for 2020. Organisations will be mindful of the fact that no increase in hire rates has been imposed in recent years and therefore in view pending increases in utilities costs, additional cleaning and general maintenance we need to carry out the review. At this stage we cannot say whether or not any rate increases will be applied.

10.8 Scouting

No report received.

10.9 Football Clubs

No report received

10.10 Willastonhey W.I.

No report received.

10.11 Willaston Methodist Chapel (Submitted by Sheila Smith)

Following on from our Easter celebrations, the Chapel has shared 180 years of the Methodist Church in Willaston, plus 200 years of Methodism on the Wirral with a Coffee Morning and then a service over the weekend of 11th-12th May.

Sunday 9th June is the annual ecumenical service on The Green when Christ Church and the Methodist Chapel come together in an open-air service, weather permitting! It is the Chapel's turn to host this year, so watch for details on the village notice boards.

Sunday 30th June. Advance notice of another ecumenical event, Willaston Village Open Gardens 12-30 to 5-30, previously very popular, viewing many gardens, and the allotments. Refreshments from various areas. Advance tickets from White Feather Gift shop £5. Proceeds split between both churches. Further information from Diknight@btinternet.com.

10.12 Willaston Royal British Legion

No report received.

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

We will be appearing on the village green once again on Saturday 25th May, doing our pop-up book sale between 10am and 12:00 noon. Why not come over and pick up a bargain!

10.14 Willaston Surgery Patient Participation Group

No report received

10.15 Willaston Toddler Group

No report received.

10.16 Willaston Village Festival (submitted by Paul Janvier)

Nothing to report

11. Councillor's Report

11.1 Pink Poo Campaign

CWaC has a new scheme where dog poo is highlighted with bright pink spray with the aim of embarrassing irresponsible dog owners and ensuring pedestrians are aware of the mess. The sprayed mess will be removed by the Council within 48 hours. Dog fouling can be reported on 0300 123 7026 or at www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/contact-us/report-it/dog-animal-fouling.aspx. You can tell the Council in confidence the name of the owner, the location and the times. The car registration number or address is also helpful.

11.2 Guidance for Event Planning

CWaC has updated its guidance for event planning, which covers a wide range of things that need to be considered. A copy is available by emailing artswest@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk.

11.3 Care Choices Directory

A new directory of care has been produced by CWaC, through a company called Care Choices. This is available at <https://www.carechoices.co.uk/publication/cheshire-west-chester-care-services-directory/>.

11.4 Recycling

CWaC has won various awards for recycling and is top for recycling of carbon.

Chris congratulated Myles on his re-election.

12. Footpaths and Bridleways

Jane had reported in advance that the footpaths and bridleways are generally in good condition but some verges are showing signs of being overgrown.

The promised improvements of filling in the hollows of BR66 (end of Street Hey Lane) and FP33 (Change Lane) and remedial work to FP30 (Hooton Road to Mill Lane) and the erosion of FP30 (Hooton Road to Mill Lane) have not yet taken place.

The CWaC Rights of Way Officer has contacted the owner of the adjacent field to BR64 (Feryness Lane) about the potential danger of dead elms but so far, no action has occurred and one has now fallen. Part of this bridleway was flooded and Jane has previously reported a blocked culvert to CWaC. Some tidying work has been done by volunteers along this bridleway.

Jane is writing a risk assessment for footpath work done by volunteer.

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

13. Any Other Business

John Fisher asked about the Post Office and expressed concern that another round of cuts has been announced by the Post Office nationally. It was not clear if there is a buyer for McColls.

Vicky commented on the grass-cutting on the Recreation Ground, saying that the grass is being allowed to grow too long and holes cannot be seen when walking on it. Annette noted that it is school sports day on Friday. Myles agreed to follow this up.

Action: Myles

Vicky also commented that there are problems with cars parking on Birkenhead Road where the dog walking area is established. John F noted that there is provision for parking inside the field. It was agreed to write to Wirral Council about this issue. **Action: Sarah**

Annette commented on the hedge between the Methodist Chapel and Christ Church, which is encroaching onto the already narrow pavement. It was thought that it is not being maintained. Annette agreed to report it to the Council. Sheila commented that the Chapel had cut the yew tree recently. **Action: Annette**

Myles noted that the six men involved in the ram raid on McColls had been convicted and sentenced for 34 years in jail between them.

Ceri noted that the best kept village sign is not in good condition. Chris agreed to ask Andy, who has improved signs at Hadlow Road Station to look at it. **Action: Chris**

Hilary commented positively on the use of the Methodist Chapel School Room for the meeting and Chris commented that this had been an exemplary meeting and thanked everyone for their participation.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 9.20pm.

Dates for future Committee Meetings:

Monday 15th July 2019

Monday 16th September 2019

Monday 18th November 2019

AGM on Friday 11th October 2019