

Willaston Residents' and Countryside Society (WR&CS)

Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on Monday 15th July 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), Jane Townsend (Footpaths and Bridleways) and Barry Vowles (Planning)

Present - Committee Members: Lyn Jackson-Eves, Myles Hogg, Sheila Smith, John Fisher, Roy Spraggon, Annette Troake, Rob King, Fiona Ennys, Paul Janvier, Madeleine Hughes, John Woodrow and Debs Jerrett.

Residents' Issues

No residents attended the meeting to raise issues.

Committee Meeting

Before the meeting started, a minute's silence was held in memory of Hilary Morris, who had been a long-term member of WR&CS, representing Willastonhey WI and Friends of Willaston Meadow.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Sue Unsworth, Helen Mayles, Helen Jakubczek, Ruth McElroy, Hilary Gould, Stephen Bazely and Sandra Kettiros.

2. Declarations of Interest

Chris Hampshire and Hilary Booth declared an interest in the planning application for the Station Master's House because of their roles as Chair/Treasurer of Friends of Hadlow Road Station Community Group.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting – 20th May 2019

The minutes were proposed as correct by Myles Hogg, seconded by John Fisher and accepted by all members present as a true record of the meeting, with two abstentions.

4. Matters arising from the Minutes of 20th May 2019

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

4.1 Disabled Parking Space (item 5.1)

Myles has asked that the disabled parking space be repainted, along with the yellow zig zag lines outside school but no action by CWaC has been taken yet.

Action: Myles

4.2 CCTV at Hadlow Road Station car park (item 5.2)

Chris has discussed this further with the PCSO. However, there is no money available so the discussion has been about amending the existing cameras.

Action: Chris

4.3 Map of our area (item 5.4)

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

Action: Paul

4.4 Stewart Milne Development Information Pack (item 5.5)

Sarah reported that the pack is almost ready and she is just waiting for some additional information from Hooton Residents' Association. It was noted that some residents appear to have moved in so this now needs to be completed.

Action: Sarah

4.5 Amendments to Guidance Notes (item 6.3)

The amendments still need to be put onto the website.

Action: Sarah

4.6 Christmas Lights Contract (item 6.4)

Paul reported that he had written to the supplier to extend the contract but had not yet received a reply.

4.7 Lottery Licence (item 6.5)

Hilary B reported that she had spoken to the Lottery Officer at CWaC and it was confirmed that the licence can only be used for WR&CS, not member organisations. She further reported that Friends of Hadlow Road Station had historically had a linked bank account to WR&CS but this has now been separated so they will need to have a separate licence for any raffles they hold.

4.8 Defibrillator (item 10.7)

Myles reported that the defibrillator will shortly be installed outside the Pharmacy. There was a discussion about how it would get power and who would charge the battery if this is needed. John W agreed to speak to the surgery about what is required with their defibrillator.

Action: John W

4.9 Birkenhead Road (item 13)

Sarah still has to contact Wirral Council about parking around the dog walking area.

Action: Sarah

4.10 Best Kept Village Sign (item 13)

Chris reported that the post had been removed and the sign was being repainted. However, a new post is required as the current one is rotten. This will cost £100 and Chris requested the money from WR&CS. There was then a discussion about whether it is appropriate for the sign to be up as it could be misleading – we are no longer a best kept village and the sign is undated. Debs proposed and Barry seconded that the sign be removed and stored for the time being. This was agreed by 14 votes, with 4 votes against and one abstention. Chris agreed to fill in the hole remaining on the little green.

Action: Chris

4.11 Grass Cutting on the Recreation Ground (item 13)

Myles reported that this had been discussed at the last meeting of the Johnston Recreation Ground Advisory Committee and the CWaC representative said that no additional cutting can be done. The Council policy is to try to devolve this task to football clubs and this is under discussion across CWaC. It was noted that the grass had been cut the day of the committee meeting.

5. WR&CS Matters

5.1 Request for new organisation membership

A request for organisation membership had been received from Willaston School. Membership was proposed by Sarah, seconded by Chris and agreed by all present.

Sarah noted that new representatives are needed for Willastonhey WI and Friends of Willaston Meadow and she will write to both groups to request this.

Action: Sarah

5.2 Correspondence/Email/Facebook

A list of correspondence had been circulated in advance to committee members. In addition, Sarah reported that an email thanking us for setting up a sub-group to agree the definitive history of the Christmas lights had been received from Ruth Hampshire on behalf of a group of long-standing residents.

6. Sub-Committees

6.1 Logo

John F reported that the group has met and agreed a new logo which will be shortly circulated. Thanks are due to Helen J's sister who has done the design work. Chris suggested that we send some flowers to her and this was agreed.

Action: Chris

6.2 Play Area

Sarah reported that the consultation on the play area options had taken place and a good response received. A clear preference was for option two and a new plan had been received from the landscape architect which also includes a picnic bench. The budget for the work is £30,853.50. The next stage is to start fundraising. Sarah agreed to write to local groups asking for help with fundraising. The outcome of the survey also needs to be publicised.

Action: Sarah

Annette commented that the grass cutting in the play area is not good and there are some weeds in the safety surfacing. Myles agreed to follow this up. **Action: Myles**

Sarah said that two reports had been received on Facebook about a hole in the safety surface by the roundabout. This was reported to the Council and they are seeking a contractor to do repairs.

6.3 History of the Lights

Hilary Morris had agreed to lead this work and Ceri agreed to take it on now. Ceri said that she understood that Hilary had done some research at the Cheshire Archives and Sarah said that she had suggested to Hugh Morris, her son that anything to do with the village could be passed on to her so that she can distribute it as appropriate.

7. Loss of McColls/Post Office

McColls will be closing on 17th August which means that the village is likely to be without a Post Office. Myles commented that some Post Offices provide an outreach service where neighbouring villages lose their Post Office. Other options, including housing the Post Office in another business in Willaston and developing a community Post Office/shop were also raised. Myles proposed that a sub-committee is set up to investigate the options and see what action (if any) can be taken to keep a Post Office facility in the village. This was seconded by Ceri and agreed by all with one abstention. Myles, Chris, Sarah and Paul agreed to be on the sub-committee.

8. Neighbourhood Plan and Other Options

Myles said that he had suggested we consider developing a neighbourhood plan at the last meeting as this has statutory powers for planning decisions. Myles outlined the contents of Tattenhall Neighbourhood Plan. He noted that it took them two years to do the plan and all those areas that had done one had a Town or Parish Council. However, there is support from CWaC.

Barry commented that he had concerns about how useful it is for Willaston as we are a constrained village surrounded by Green Belt and this is already a constraint in the local plan. There is very little land for development in the village and a neighbourhood plan should identify development areas as well as those not for development.

Fiona suggested that we have a representative from an area that has developed a plan to tell us more about what they did, why they did it and what it has achieved to speak at a future meeting. This was agreed.

Action: Chris

Fiona also said she would speak to a cousin of hers who has been through the process of creating a neighbourhood plan. Barry agreed to distribute a document giving a roadmap about the process to all members.

Action: Barry

There was a discussion about the potential of identifying assets of community value and registering them with CWaC. As a first stage, Barry and Jane agreed to identify potential assets in the village and investigate their applicability for this process.

Action: Barry/Jane

9. Financial Report

Hilary Booth had circulated a Financial Report of all WR&CS accounts in advance. This report showed that at 27th June 2019, the WR&CS current account had a balance of £529.06; 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 £828.50. Hilary noted that £146 of the current account is ring-fenced for newsletters and about £470 will be left in the Lottery account at the end of the financial year.

Sarah agreed to put together an application for more funding for newsletters to the New Homes Bonus Fund.

Action: Sarah

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

10. Organisations' Reports

The reports below had been submitted in advance or were given at the meeting.

10.1 Christ Church

No report received

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

You will see that the North platform has now been re-instated to match the far platform. The new slabs have been relaid and heavy-duty grass seed has been sown on the top of the embankment. The signal post by the crossing gates has now been painted, ready for the signal arm to be fitted very shortly. We are also looking for an additional signal to fit at the other end of the platform.

We have had a meeting with the contractor who is manufacturing the bespoke extractor fan for the kitchen, so things are moving along and hopefully we will have one fitted in the near future.

The cafe was very busy on Willaston Open Gardens day. I think a lot of our customers then went on to see the beautiful gardens that were open around the village on a lovely sunny day.

The last gardening session was in July and was well attended. The next gardening session will be on Wednesday August 7th. All are welcome to join this friendly group.

The next Pop-up-cafe dates are 11th Aug and 25th Aug from 10.30am – 1.30pm. Do come along and join us, - and please bring the sunshine with you!

10.3 Friends of Willaston Meadow

No report received.

10.4 Hadlow Green Singers (submitted by Helen Mayles)

Nothing to report

10.5 Horticultural Society (submitted by Pam Irving)

Our next big event is our Annual Show to be held on Saturday 3rd August. If you would like to show your vegetables, flowers or produce and do not have a Schedule you can call Pam (327 6048) and she will let you have one. This is a fun Village show which gives everyone an opportunity to show off their hard work in the garden. The joy of seeing a prize card next to your entry is something else. Give it a go!!

On 17th September we are having our Autumn Show followed by a short Quiz. Another opportunity to have a go at showing. The classes are at the back of the Show Schedule and again ring Pam if you need a copy.

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)

Football.

The Pavilion toilets which were in a bad state have still not been replaced. The pitch is also in a bad state as mowing has not been done as regularly as before. There are holes and rough uneven ground. It was suggested that the football club could look after the pitch by doing some fundraising and employing private contractors or doing it themselves. Any weed killers should be approved by the Council.

Adult teams have not played this year but will do next season. They are hoping to apply for Community Status and have a 5-year plan. The goal posts have been removed for the Summer. The white line marker has been returned!

Parking

A solution could be to re-route the pavement to the other side of the sandstone wall. A lay-by was suggested involving the pavement going up to the wall. There are even more cars because the walking route from Elm Road is flooded after rain. A ramp was suggested to go over the flooded area as the water will not drain away.

Allotments

The Council representative, Andy James, stated that the extension of two more allotments is viable. If anyone wants one, they can create this themselves and pay no rent for three years. He is to research the Allotments

Act, and check with the Planning Dept. He is also to check on the broken fence and the cutting of the hedge height adjacent to the allotments.

Play Area

Decisions are being made on the last pieces of play equipment.

The next meeting will be held on Sept. 11th in Christchurch at 7:30pm. All are welcome.

10.7 Memorial Hall

Rob reported at the meeting that unfortunately the new Bookings Secretary had decided the role was not for her and they are seeking someone for this role. If they do not get someone by Christmas, they may have to stop taking casual bookings. They had no response to the article in the newsletter for a new Chair and Rob expressed concern that the number of trustees was diminishing. They will be doing a maildrop to all households in the village shortly.

Rob also reported that a new dishwasher is going to be installed and there had been some complaints about the state of the flower bedding at the front of the hall. He commented that the plants just need time to get established.

10.8 Scouting

No report received.

10.9 Willaston Football Club (submitted by John Fisher)

Playing football for 115 years in Willaston the 2019/20 season sees a new Willaston FC. The Open Age Club and the Wolves juniors and youth have agreed to merge into one club playing under the Willaston banner. The aim and ambition of the Club is gain accreditation for a Community Standard Club by continuing with the present teams, and in September adding an U21 team, and in the future seasons develop female and disabled football. So, it will be possible to play from the age of 6 to 60 for Willaston FC.

Open Age

The new Open Age team will play in the West Cheshire League Division 3 with games starting in early August. Two new managers, Steve Blackledge and Steve Healey, were appointed in the close season, and they have successfully managed the side in an U21 league in previous seasons. The Steves will be assisted by Stan Hully on match days. Training on a Thursday and a Saturday has already started, and the first friendly game started on 22nd June with the first match of the season on 10th August. On a Sunday the U21 side will play in the North West Counties U21 Premier League and they will be managed by the same team. The Vets will continue to play friendlies on a Saturday afternoon.

Willaston Wolves

There will be 7 teams running in the 19/20 season:

Under 7's - home matches Saturday morning typically at 10am on mini pitch (5-a-side), training 5pm to 6pm on Wednesdays

Under 8's - home matches Saturday morning typically at 10am on mini pitch (5-a-side), training 6pm to 7pm on Tuesdays

Under 9's - home matches Saturday morning typically at 10am on mini pitch (5-a-side), training 6pm to 7pm on Thursdays

Under 12's - home matches Saturday morning typically at 10am on colts pitch (9-a-side), training 6pm to 7pm on Thursdays

Under 16's - home matches Saturday morning typically at 11.15am on 11-a-side pitch, training 6pm to 7pm on Tuesdays

Under 17's & U18's- home matches Saturday morning at 9.30am on 11-a-side pitch, training 6pm to 7pm on Wednesdays

Winter training is from 24th September 2019 to 19th March 2020 at Ellesmere Port Sports Village.

Anyone interested in playing for Willaston both Adults and Juniors should come along at the times given above or contact John Fisher (Willaston Open Age/U21) 07780 693 284 or Jerry Hopkins (Wolves Juniors/Youth) 07714 071552 or Jonathon Todd (Willaston Vets) 07976 458 383

10.10 Willastonhey W.I.

No report received.

10.11 Willaston Methodist Chapel (Submitted by Sheila Smith)

June was busy with special events for us. It was the Chapel's turn to lead the annual Ecumenical Pentecost open air service on the Green, which was a happy, lively one, blessed by sunshine and attracting around 80 people. Following the service, we shared a Faith Lunch, giving everyone the opportunity to mingle.

On 30th June the Methodist Chapel and Christ Church organised a hugely successful Garden Trail, where 15 kind villagers opened their wonderful gardens to the public. The allotments were also on the Trail maps. Refreshments were available at the Memorial hall one end of the Trail, and at "Ravone" at the other end. Gallons of tea and large quantities of cakes were served to locals as well as some from far afield. Again, the sun shone, and the atmosphere was brilliant. Many thanks to all who opened their gardens and to all who enjoyed supporting it, and helping. Over £4000 was raised to be equally split between the two Churches.

10.12 Willaston Phil Supporters' Group (Submitted by Sarah Shannon)

We have just finished a successful season and are now launching the programme for the 2019-20 season. This includes two concerts by Sheku Kanneh-Mason, who shot to fame after playing at the 2018 Royal Wedding. Our first concert is on 19th September and includes Rachmaninov's Piano Concerto and Berlioz' Symphonie Fantastique. If you would like to join us, ring 0151 327 5191 for the programme.

Our AGM is on Tuesday 27th August at 2pm at Willaston Memorial Hall. We will be having a film about the work of the Phil's 'In Harmony' Youth Group. Please do join us.

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

We hope to do a couple of pop-up book sales on the village green to coincide with the Horticultural show on 3rd August and the pop-up country market on 24th August - timing still to be confirmed.

Saturday October 5th, we run our next Quiz night, this time in support of the playground appeal - full details will be available nearer the time but it will be held at The Memorial Hall and we hope to sell tickets once again through McColls (to be confirmed). If you can spread the word through your organisations, please. We will be asking for advanced payment rather than sales on the door, this allows us to not only cater accurately but protects our fundraising efforts.

10.14 Willaston Surgery Patient Participation Group

No report received

10.15 Willaston Toddler Group

No report received.

10.16 Willaston Village Festival

No report received

11. Councillor's Report

11.1 Consultation on Services for Dogs

The CWaC dog warden service received the RSPCA's Gold Paw Print Award for the seventh consecutive year. The contract is coming to an end and the council is consulting on some proposed changes. These include having dog wardens at weekends and changing duty times during the week. There are also proposed changes to fees if the dog wardens are called out. The consultation runs until 11th August 2019 and can be found at www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/dogwardenconsultation, where there is also an on-line survey that can be completed.

11.2 Hedges

Myles reported he had received several complaints about hedges and had followed these up. This included The Burf, which had also been reported to WR&CS. The hedges at The Burf are all covered under a Tree Protection Order so the owners had to get permission before they were allowed to cut any of the shrubbery down but this has now been done. Rob noted that Neston Road and Hanns Hall Road have been closed to cut back growth on pavements. There was a comment that the former British Legion site is getting overgrown with trees growing onto the road. Myles agreed to follow this up. **Action: Myles**

11.3 Bus Service

Myles reported that he had received some comments on the proposed amendments to the 22 bus service which will no longer go to Arrowe Park Hospital. People will need to change at Heswall in future. However, there is a regular service from Heswall to Arrowe Park. Myles noted that all journeys are recorded, even if the ticket does not say Willaston on it.

11.4 OVO Energy Tour of Britain

There is a stage of the Tour of Britain coming to Wirral/Cheshire on Wednesday 11th September which will go through Willaston.

11.5 Members' Budget Scheme

The Members' budget scheme is now open for applications from community groups.

12. Footpaths and Bridleways

Jane reported that the footpaths and bridleways are now getting overgrown. They should have been strimmed last week, but Jane thought that only some had been done so work may be done this week. Two volunteers have been trimming parts of FP28 (between Mill Lane and Street Hey Lane) but it is overgrown again.

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) have not yet taken place. The CWaC Rights of Way Officer says that a contractor has been identified to do some of the work and he is also hoping to do some of this work himself, rather than get a contractor but has a number of other pieces of work to do. It was noted that the number of Officers has reduced from six to two and they have very little money to do requested pieces of work.

The Officer has also contacted the owner of the adjacent field to BR64 (Ferryess 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.

The risk assessment for footpath work done by volunteers has been written and approved by Chris and Sarah.

Jane received a complaint about some overhanging growth on the new ramp onto the Wirral Way, partially cleared this herself and asked the Council to trim this. There was also an email from a cyclist using the Wirral Way which she has forwarded to the Ranger.

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

13.Planning Applications, Decisions and Appeals

13.1 Hanns Hall Livery

Myles noted that this application had been rejected but that if an application for a building with a similar footprint to the existing one were put in, it is likely to be accepted.

13.2 Stewart Milne Development

Barry commented that the work to improve access from Hooton Road onto the A41 should have been completed before people moved into the new houses. The original plans for improving the access were turned down by Highways England and agreement about what needs to be done is awaited.

13.3 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 in Willaston but this has still not yet been processed by the Inspectorate. It was noted that it could take up to 13 months for a decision to be made after it is formally lodged with the Inspectorate.

13.4 Station Master's House

Revised plans have been submitted for the Station Master's House and Barry has commented that whilst we would ideally prefer no alterations to be made, what is proposed does not significantly change the buildings

and we have no serious objection. He had also submitted comments about the style of the new window and the location of the gate onto the platform relative to the memorial benches.

13.5 Travellers in Heath Lane

Myles reported that the travellers had been served their notice but had now put in a new planning application to remain on the site permanently. He suggested that WR&CS should object as this is on green belt land and agreement could set a precedent for other developments. Sarah expressed concern that this proposal is outside our usual area and she was not aware of any affect that the site had on Willaston. It was noted that Hooton Residents' Society will be objecting to the new application. After a discussion, Barry proposed, and Jane seconded that WR&CS should submit an objection. This was agreed with three abstentions.

Action: Barry

13.6 WR&CS Planning Guidelines

Barry agreed to update the planning guidelines to include a section on when we should communicate with potential developers.

Action: Barry

13.7 Part 2 of the Local Plan

Myles reported that Part 2 of the Local Plan will be going to the Council for approval on Thursday. He expressed the view that this strengthens the Planning Committee's powers. In particular, he highlighted that they will be able to insist on conservation measures, particularly water conservation and that that amount that homes can be extended will be reduced from 30% to 10%. If CWaC agree the proposals, it will then go to the Inspector for agreement which can take 3-4 months.

14. Any Other Business

Hilary B raised the issue of large banners appearing around the village advertising events, sometimes some distance from Willaston. It was noted that these are illegal, and the organisers can be contacted to ask for them to be removed.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 9.55pm.

Dates for future Committee Meetings:

Monday 16th September 2019

Monday 18th November 2019

AGM on Friday 11th October 2019