

Willaston Residents' and Countryside Society (WR&CS)

Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on Monday 20th January 2020
in the Methodist Chapel School Room

Present - Officers: Chris Hampshire (Chair), Sarah Shannon (Secretary), Hilary Booth (Treasurer), Ceri Jones (Social Media), Barry Vowles (Planning) and Sue Unsworth (Publicity)

Present - Committee Members: Lyn Jackson-Eves, John Fisher, Roy Spraggon, Rob King, Stephen Bazeley, David Nind, Sheila Smith, Helen Jakubczak, Madeline Hughes, Sheila Greenhalgh, Helen Mayles, Suzie Dixon, Ruth McElroy, Annette Troake and Sandra Kettiros

In attendance: Ruth Hampshire, Susan Hopkins, Joan and Colin Brown, Ronald Anderson (throughout); Les Green and John Henrys (until item 6)

Residents' Issues

A number of residents had attended to express concern about the bus services in Willaston. Susan Hopkins explained that the 22 bus service ceased operating on 19th January 2020 and on 31st March 2020, the CWaC contract subsidising the 272 service comes to an end. Susan explained that she had written to Cllr Myles Hogg and Justin Madders MP but felt that she had not achieved anything. She also commented that the 22 route has been slowly reduced as it used to go to Arrowe Park and now Willaston residents can't get to the hospital.

John Henrys commented that the 22 bus service is now going through Mollington as well as Neston and Parkgate. It was noted that the 23 service is no longer going through Mollington, which could explain this additional section for the 22 service. Les Green commented that when the 22 used to go through Mollington very few passengers got on, whereas many people used it in Willaston.

Hilary Booth said that the drivers don't like turning onto the Chester High Road from Hanns Hall Road.

Les Green expressed the view that WR&CS is not doing enough about this issue which is key for many residents and urged the committee to take action. Chris responded that he had been in contact with Myles and was aware of other things happening. He explained that the issue is on the agenda tonight for the committee to decide what steps to take.

Chris then thanked the residents for attending and agreed to bring the item on bus services forward so that they can hear the discussion by the committee.

Committee Meeting

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Vicky Spraggon, Myles Hogg, Paul Janvier, Fiona Ennys and Jane Townsend

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting – 19th November 2019

The minutes were proposed as correct by Sheila Smith, seconded by Hilary Booth and accepted by members present as a true record of the meeting, with no abstentions.

4. Matters arising from the Minutes of 19th November 2019

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

4.1 Stewart Milne Development Information Pack (item 5.2)

Sarah reported that the pack is now printed and she has begun to distribute it to the occupied homes. However, the funding has still not been received, despite being promised some time ago. Sarah agreed to follow this up. **Action: Sarah**

4.2 Willaston History (item 5.4)

Ruth Hampshire reported that she and Jane had not yet had time to sort through the information received from Burton History Society. **Action: Jane**

4.3 Best Kept Village Sign (item 13.2)

Chris has written to the Memorial Hall committee who will consider it at their meeting on 21st January.

5. Bus Services

Chris commented that a number of representations had been received and he had also heard views from several committee members on the loss of the 22 bus service in Willaston. Barry commented that our experience in the past was that discussions with Stagecoach were not useful and the most effective thing to do would be to contact the Council. It was also thought to be helpful to contact Justin Madders who has already mentioned this in parliament and to identify the Council lead to let residents know who should be written to.

It was agreed to urgently establish a sub-group to take this forward. Chris agreed to lead it with Helen M, Sue, Barry and Sandra. Susan Hopkins agreed to email copies of her responses from Justin Madders and Myles to Chris. **Action: Chris**

Chris thanked the interested residents for coming. Les Green and John Henrys left at this point.

6. WR&CS Matters

6.1 Correspondence/Email/Facebook

A list of correspondence had been circulated in advance to committee members and there were no comments.

6.2 Vacant/Pending Officer Roles

Barry reported that someone had contacted us about the Planning Officer role following a post on Facebook. Barry will be meeting the individual shortly. **Action: Barry**

After discussion, Ceri proposed that Sandra Kettiros should be co-opted as Footpaths Officer. This was seconded by Sue and agreed by all present.

7. Sub-Committees

7.1 Play Area

Sarah reported that further funding had been received from the Memorial Hall Soup Lunch raffle (£173), Barry Vowles (£100), PTA fair (£74), the Auxiliarum Trust (£250), the Zoom Zoom Trust (£1,000) and Myles' councillors' fund (£3,505). This brings the total raised to £10,792.08, of which £6,503 is in a separate earmarked account in the Council. Sarah explained that next stage is to apply to FCC Communities Grant. **Action: Sarah**

Concerns were still raised about the condition of the play area and the need for it to be looking good when the grant is submitted. A complaint letter will be sent to the Council after the FCC grant application has been submitted. **Action: Sarah**

7.2 History of the Lights

Ceri had circulated a summary of the relevant information uncovered to date. She still hopes to get some information from Hilary Morris' family and may also visit the WI archives. She commented that a full timeline is not possible and this will be more a summary of interesting facts about the lights. There was a discussion about how to include people's memories, which are less verifiable and it was agreed that they should be included but the source made clear. **Action: Ceri**

7.3 Post Office

Chris reported that there is no further update on the Post Office, despite various contacts.

7.4 Footpath 70

Barry reported that he had spoken to the person who lives in the cottage by the side of the footpath. They had not expressed any concerns about the work and may even help. Barry also commented that the wall on one side had started to collapse. He will check who has responsibility for the wall and also ask if the Council can provide chippings for the path. Barry also agreed to do a risk assessment for any work that takes place.

Action: Barry

7.5 Logo

A paper had been circulated outlining the process that the sub-committee went through in designing the new logo and Helen J passed around copies of the new logo that had been agreed by the sub-committee. Ruth H explained that there were different sizes for different uses including the parish magazine, headed paper, ticket, stickers and badges. Effort had been made to ensure it is shrinkable without it being blurred. Rob proposed and Ruth McE seconded the adoption of the new logo and this was agreed unanimously. A copy has been sent to Paula Seedhouse, owner of the mill for her agreement and once this has been received, we will start to use it.

Helen J then circulated some options for banners, with the full name of the organisation. Members voted and a clear preference was shown for option C.

It was agreed that the logo should be launched with the next newsletter which is due shortly. It was further agreed to send a thank you and some flowers to Helen's sister.

Action: Chris

8. Planning

8.1 Planning Applications

Barry reported that the Planning Department at CWaC has been reduced in numbers and their workload is very high. He also noted that it is no longer possible to read comments on the website about planning applications. This makes his role harder as he can no longer see what any residents' main concerns are.

Helen M commented that she had received a letter from CWaC Planning Department stating that the owners of Street Hey had made an appeal to the Secretary of State against the CWaC decision 'for the non-determination of the planning application for the proposal to make a new drive opening (a few yards away from the current temporary opening), within the assigned timescales.' Barry explained to the committee that they had previously succeeded with a similar appeal when the Council did not make a decision within the assigned time of eight weeks.

Barry then commented on the McCarthy and Stone application which had been dismissed. He reminded the committee that there was still a strong chance that McCarthy and Stone will come back with an alternative design. The Inspector upheld our main grounds for objection that the proposed building was inappropriate in terms of size and fitting with the village and it was overbearing on the neighbours. However, there was also some indications in the report of what McCarthy and Stone need to do to make it acceptable. Barry commented that if McCarthy and Stone come back with alternative plans, we will have to consider it on its merits. He suggested that we hold an open meeting to hear what residents think at that stage.

There was a discussion about an application from Willaston School to build a single storey classroom on the front. There was no rationale included with the application and concerns were expressed about parking and that the school wished to increase the number of pupils. Stephen explained that the purpose of the extension was to provide extra space for music, children needing a quiet space and after school activities as currently all the rooms are normally in use. He reassured the committee that there was no intention to increase the number of pupils or to take away parking spaces. It was suggested that a statement could be given by the school to put on our website, noticeboards etc. Sarah agreed to request this.

Action: Sarah

The committee agreed a response saying we do not object to the school's application, subject to work being done outside school term time and that there is no impact on Johnston Recreation Ground or on parking.

Action: Barry

8.1 Planning Guidelines

Draft revised planning guidelines had been circulated before the meeting. Helen J said she had not had time to respond to the guidelines circulated at the last meeting but she felt that they should be made more inclusive. Helen was asked to forward any comments to Barry.

Action: Helen J

Sheila S proposed and John F seconded that the revised version is adopted for the time being and put on the website, recognising that further changes can be made in future. This was agreed with three abstentions.

Action: Sarah

Chris thanked Barry, Myles and all involved in objecting to the McCarthy and Stone application. Barry said he had written to CWaC to thank them for employing an external consultant to support the appeal process.

9. 20mph Zone

Responses had been received from CWaC to our response to the consultation and to our follow-on letter specifically requesting a 20mph zone in Hadlow Road. It is clear that this will not happen for the time being. It was agreed no further action should be taken at this stage.

10. Financial Report

Hilary Booth circulated a Financial Report of all WR&CS accounts. This report showed that at 6th January 2020, the WR&CS current account had a balance of £315.66; the Play Area account had a balance of £3039.08; the Christmas Lights account had a balance of £12,869.11 and the Lottery account had a balance of £2031.84. Hilary noted that £57 of the current account is ring-fenced for newsletters and that CWaC hold an additional £3000 for the play area.

There was a discussion about what to spend our additional funds on. It was noted that we should be getting a grant shortly for additional newsletters. In addition, a donor had promised money towards a bench on the Green in memory of his parents. Sarah proposed and Chris seconded that £100 should be put into the play area account from the Lottery account to help show our support in funding applications. This was agreed by all present.

There was a discussion about the existing bench on the Green which has a plaque on. It was agreed to put up a notice saying that the bench will be removed and to let us know if the relatives of the named person on the plaque can be contacted. It was also agreed to contact the people giving towards the new bench to see if they would mind a second plaque being on the new bench.

Action: Chris/Sarah

11. Organisations' Reports

The reports below had been submitted in advance.

Sheila G reported that the Rotary had made over £1000 at the light switch on and Santa sleigh collections. These funds are being used to support Wirral Dementia Together and Stick 'n' Step this year.

Sarah reported in Paul's absence that the Festival Society is considering its future and is asking for feedback about whether they should close and if so, what should happen to the money they currently hold. No firm decision has been made yet.

Rob said that the Memorial Hall had made a surplus for the year and had installed a new boiler and commercial dishwasher. They hope to have a new Chair shortly.

11.1 Christ Church (submitted by Stephen Bazely)

In 2019 we held over 100 services, 12 Prayer gatherings, 2 Weddings, 1 Baptism, 12 Funerals among many other events, as well as welcoming thousands of people into the church. In December we had lots of wonderful services with Leahurst, our Primary school, a flame from Bethlehem at our Peace light service for Guides and Scouts and we welcomed the High Sheriff of Cheshire Mr Mark Mitchell who read at our 9 Lessons and Carols. In 2020 we will continue to progress our plans to improve the church building and make it a more welcoming place for all, the next step is to shortlist an Architect, we will keep you up to date with any news.

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

The Hadlow Road Station platform sign has been refurbished and work to fit is well underway just awaiting the two posts drying out. A boundary sandstone marker post with the inscription "L and NW joint GWR RWC" has very kindly been donated to the station and will be fitted by the new fence at the east side of the south platform.

The Hadlow Road Station model railway was collected from Birkenhead Model Railway Club at the end of January and work is well underway to create a large table (8ft by 2ft) on which this display will sit inside the signal box, against the window by the viewing platform.

At the pop-up-cafe opening on 26th January there was a formal handover of two new Hadlow Road Station signs consistent with the original designs. The two signs will be fitted on both the east and west sides of the signal box, and the old sign removed.

Santa's Grotto in December was a huge success. Santa walked down the platform talking to all the waiting children, before entering his Grotto. The steam train rides around the car park were very popular once again with a total of 220 children and adults enjoying their ride. In addition, 36 children enjoyed their face painting whilst the balloon man was kept very busy all afternoon giving away balloon animals. The cafe served in excess of 340 customers with drinks and goodies. All this to the accompaniment of music from Simon-le-Barber, the Hadlow Green Singers, and The Signing Choir.

The next Pop-up-cafe will be February 23rd from 10.30am - 1.30pm followed by two openings per month thereafter including March 15th and March 29th.

We look forward to seeing you all back again, and may we wish you all a very happy and healthy New Year for 2020.

11.3 Friends of Willaston Meadow

FOWM had a committee meeting in December chaired by our newly co-opted Chair, Sarah Shannon. She has also taken over the treasurer's role for the time being until a new treasurer is found.

We intend to plant a tree in Big Meadow in memory of Hilary Morris in the next month or so; Friends will be joined by members of Hilary's family.

John Ellinson, the lead teacher of the Forest School, has agreed to be co-opted on to the committee; and we will be meeting in the near future with Tim Lloyd our main contact with CW&C (Greenspace).

11.4 Hadlow Green Singers

No report received

11.5 Horticultural Society (submitted by Pam Irving)

Tuesday 18th February is our AGM, which does not take very long, then we can enjoy our cheese and wine and a good chat with other members.

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.

11.6 Johnston Recreation Ground (submitted by Sue Unsworth)

The meeting was held on 20th Nov.2019. It was combined with the Annual General Meeting. Unfortunately, Andy James, from the Council, was unable to attend so several points could not be covered during the open forum.

FOOTBALL - The toilet has now been repaired. Enquiries were made about drainage for the pitch. A manhole at the corner of the pitch is being considered. The Football Club are now maintaining the pitch.

PLAY AREA - A parent playing football with his child broke his leg, possibly due to the very poor surface. Myles Hogg advised that poor surfaces anywhere in the village should be reported to the Council. Thirty-one thousand pounds is still needed for the last piece of play equipment.

ALLOTMENTS - Fencing to the left of the main gate is falling down and could be dangerous. We are awaiting a quote from Andy James (council). There is still a possibility of adding two more allotment plots but exact location is still to be decided.

Other business discussed during the meeting was as follows.

- A booking system for the pitch, tennis courts, allotments, is to be introduced plus keys for the main gate for health and safety reasons.

- There is a problem with part of the sandstone wall adjacent to the parking area. It is starting to collapse and could be a safety issue.
- It was thought that a small bridge at the pathway end towards Elm Rd. is the only solution to the flooding which has been excessive this year.
- Moles are still a problem as is dog fouling. Hedges are in need of trimming. A new bench was provided this year.

The next meeting will be in Christ Church on 19th Feb. at 7:30pm. All are welcome.

The following were re-elected to the committee.

Chair: Myles Hogg. Vice Chair: Sarah Kennedy. Secretary: Hilary Booth.

CWAC hold £1389 in the Johnston Rec. account.

11.7 Memorial Hall

No report received.

11.8 Scouting

No report received.

11.9 Willaston CE Primary School

No report received.

11.10 Willaston Football Club (submitted by John Fisher)

11.11 Willastonhey W.I. (submitted by Susie Dixon)

We have lots of things planned for 2020, beginning with a visit to the Walker Art Gallery on February 13th to see the Emily Tinne exhibition. Our Bridge Drive takes place in the Memorial Hall on February 19th.

The centenary concert takes place on February 25th and there is a visit to the Nordic Church in Liverpool on March 31st. It is also the 40th birthday of Willastonhey W.I this year and we will be organising a celebration.

Along with our speaker meetings on the fourth Tuesday at 7.45pm every month in the Memorial Hall there are also rambles and other events. If you are interested in joining the W.I why not come along, you will receive a very warm welcome.

11.12 Willaston Methodist Chapel (submitted by Sheila Smith)

A Happy New Year to everyone.

The Chapel enjoyed a wonderful Advent and Christmas with all the activities, events, and special services greeting old and new friends. A surprise arrival of 200 knitted Angels descended on railings, hedges and bushes throughout the village very early one morning, which were happily all adopted!!

Now our regular meetings have commenced and we look forward to 2020 with its new challenges and opportunities. Please join us when we host the next Soup Lunch at the Memorial Hall on Saturday 8th February, 12 noon until 1pm.

Advance notice of the Chapel Easter breakfast, prior to the 10-45a.m. service on Easter Sunday, April 12th. All welcome.

11.13 Willaston Phil Supporters' Group (submitted by Sarah Shannon)

Our season so far has been very successful, and we took a record number of people to the Christmas concert on 18th December. We are now taking bookings for concerts up to July 2020.

For a copy of the programme and booking form, contact Joan Butcher on 0151 327 5191 or email infoconf@dircon.co.uk.

11.14 Willaston and South Wirral Rotary Club (Submitted by Sheila Greenhalgh)

Willaston & South Wirral Rotary Club organised the Christmas lights switch-on and market, which included craft stalls, food stalls as well as musical entertainment from the local Hadlow Green Singers and Simon Le Barber. We wanted to include as many local businesses as possible and to bring the village together for the switch-on event. Feedback from all concerned was that it was a very successful event which is now part of

the village calendar. The Rotary Club also provided a Santa sleigh which also went on a street collection for charity. Two further street collections were held in the period before Christmas.

The Rotary Club will be holding a further 'Willaston Quiz' on Saturday 28th March. Any village organisations wishing to include a team, please let us know.

11.15 Willaston Surgery Patient Participation Group (Submitted by John Woodrow)

May I take this opportunity to wish all Patients of our Surgery a very Healthy 2020.

As you will be aware the Palladium Gardens residents will be eligible to sign up to become patients at our Surgery. This will inevitably increase the demand for services. I would, therefore, like to encourage patients, before you think of booking a Doctor's appointment, to consider whether it might be more appropriate to see our practice nurse or the pharmacist. If this is appropriate you will be assisting in keeping doctor's appointments free for those of us who really need to see a doctor.

As ever I would encourage you to give me any feedback on your experiences at the Surgery that you consider would be helpful to me. You can contact me at johnwoodrow@btinternet.com or on 327 3260.

11.16 Willaston Toddler Group

No report received.

11.17 Willaston Village Festival Society

No report received

12. Councillor's Report

In Myles' absence, Sarah reported that the cost for road closure for Remembrance Day will be about £300. This may be covered by the Ellesmere Port Charter Trustees.

There is a consultation on proposals for new walking and cycling routes which runs until 7th February 2020. To look at the plans and to complete an online survey go to:

http://inside.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/get_involved/consultations/local_cycling_and_walking_infrastructure_plan_consultation

Barry said that there is also a consultation on a special planning directive. He will compare it with the previous one and respond if necessary. **Action: Barry**

13. Any Other Business

13.1 Garden Sheds

Sheila S asked if there is a size restriction on sheds as she was aware of a very large newly erected one. Barry advised that it should be no more than 50% of the floor area of the current building.

13.2 Roads

Colin Brown informed the committee that he had received a response about the road surface of The Knowe, saying that it will be done when resources permit. Lyn commented that lorries working on Hawthorne Drive were causing problems by parking on Hooton Road. It was suggested that she speak to the builder who lives on Hooton Road.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 10pm.

Dates for future Committee Meetings:

Monday 16th March 2020

Monday 18th May 2020

Monday 20th July 2020

Monday 21st September 2020

Monday 16th November 2020

AGM: Friday 9th October 2020