

Willaston Residents' and Countryside Society (WR&CS)

Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on Monday 16th May 2022
in Willaston Methodist Chapel Schoolroom

Present - Officers: Brian Greenhalgh (Vice chair), Sarah Shannon (Treasurer), Ceri Jones (Social media officer), Margaret Smyth (Footpath's officer) and Mel Chapman (Planning officer)

Present – Committee Members: Lyn Jackson-Eves, Sue Unsworth, Hilary Booth, Fiona Ennys, Ruth Hampshire, Suzie Dixon, Roy Spraggon, Helen Mayles, Sheila Smith, Fiona Mosley, Cllr Myles Hogg, Barry Vowles, Sandra Kettiros, Sue Hunter, Jane Townsend, Annette Troake and Sheila Greenhalgh

Present – Interested Parties: Peter Farrall

Committee Meeting

1. Apologies for absence

1.1 Apologies were received from Ruth McElroy, Vicky Spraggon, Madeline Smith, Rob King and John Woodrow.

1.2 Rob king provided a written update to advise that following 10 years of being a trustee of Willaston memorial hall he has stood down. He has agreed with the hall trustees he will continue to volunteer as a representative of the memorial hall at WR&CS meeting, unless an alternative representative can be found.

2. Declarations of Interest

Sarah raised as Chair of Friends of Willaston Meadow that they have an interest in the McCarthy & Stone approved application in relation to section 106 funding. This will be covered further in the planning and councillor updates in the meeting.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting – 17th January 2022

There was no meeting held in March due to the increased cases of COVID-19 in the village. For the January meeting there were no corrections from the previous minutes, and these were accepted by members present as a true record of the meeting.

4. Matters arising from the Minutes of 17th January 2022

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

4.1 Speed Watch (item 4.1)

Sue U confirmed that she undertook speed watch in March with PCSO Sarah Duffy. Speedwatch will be covered off further within the environmental sub-group update.

4.2 Slow down sign (item 4.3)

Myles advised there has been agreement in principle to re-locate the sign to Hooton Road where you begin coming into the village. There is a new highways officer is joining the council and upon them starting in the role Myles will look to progress accordingly.

Action: Myles

4.3 Noticeboard on Johnston Rec (item 4.4)

Continue to carry over. Myles advised that money has been secured for the noticeboard and Sarah asked if it could be picked up, who will be ordering the noticeboard. The council have agreed at their expense for the old noticeboard to be removed.

Brian asked about the school noticeboard on the entrance to the recreation ground. It was advised that the Johnston's recreation committee are writing to the school about this. No action required from WR&CS.

Brian also advised that the noticeboard on the green was kindly repaired by Charlie Bellow after the door came away.

Action: Sarah/Myles

4.4 Hooton Road speed issue (item 6.14)

Barry confirmed that he had raised to the inspectorate at the McCarthy & Stone site visit regarding moving the 20mph zone where Old Vicarage Road entrance is. In the inspectorate decision this was not taken forward as one of the conditions.

Jane T raised that there was a recent car accident by the crossing and council must be aware of this. Sarah S raised could we speak to the council about moving the start of the 20mph zone. Barry agreed to send a letter on behalf of WR&CS to CWAC highways officer and copy Myles into email.

Action: Barry

4.5 WR&CS funds (item 8.7)

Sarah asked at the last meeting if there were any requests/suggestions for utilising funds that WR&CS hold. No requests were received, action will be marked as closed.

4.6 Footpaths and bridleways

(item 9.1) Margaret advised the tree blocking footpath 30 has been removed. Action closed.

(item 9.2) Margaret advised she has reported the dangerous wall that is situated on the footpath between the Pollards and the Memorial Hall to Richard at the council. No response received from the council to date. Sue U advised that she had reported the dangerous wall as well.

Action: Margaret

(item 9.3) – Item covered in 9.4 Footpath's section

(item 9.4) – The gate at the side of the recreation ground will be replaced as there is livestock in the adjacent field.

11 Councillor report (item 11.2) Carry over to next meeting. Myles to chase signage and road markings for the disabled designated space on the green.

Action: Myles

5. Groups

5.1 Jubilee celebrations

Sarah advised that there would be a busy programme of events and wished to note her thanks to all that delivered leaflets to promote the celebrations in the village.

Sarah raised that the village will be decorated with bunting, banners and jubilee circles on 27th May. If anyone can help, please meet on the green at 10am.

Sarah expressed her thanks to Ruth H for the work she has undertaken for the exhibition. If you are visiting the exhibition, please allow an hour to view.

The picnic and the programme for the stage has been finalised. Myles and Marilyn Hogg will be judging the fancy dress which will be open to children and adults. Nisha Katona will be judging the jubilee pudding competition.

Hilary asked do you need to be a member of an old cars club to bring a classic car. Sarah advised no and people need to have their classic cars on the field before 12pm and unable to leave until 5pm.

Currently publicising the activity across all of the days.

Sarah raised that they are looking for stewards to help and will be advertising in the current weeks. Agreed should put this on the website.

Action: Sarah & Ceri

Helen asked when the concert in Christ Church would take place. Sarah confirmed Friday 3rd June.

Sarah advised that there is a dedicated platinum jubilee page on the WR&CS website which contains all the information.

Sue U requested a poster promoting the jubilee to display.

Art trail

The art trail submission for funding from the arts council was not successful. The art students from the University of Chester are creating way markers.

Ruth H raised if there would be an alternative to the art trail. Myles advised that the Johnstone's recreation committee have agreed for two suitable trees to be planted to the left of the entrance in celebration of the Queen's platinum jubilee and in memory of Prince Phillip. Jane raised would there be a tree planting ceremony. Myles advised that the earliest the ceremony would take place is in the autumn.

Ruth H asked the Committee if they were aware that the Willaston Village Walks are the culmination of a legacy project by WR&CS to celebrate The Queen's Silver Jubilee in 1977 and incorporate significant buildings within the village as notes on the original map of the village walks that was retained for the exhibition. Ruth then asked if WR&CS would consider re-invigorating the Willaston village walks and incorporate the suggested way markers created by art students from the University of Chester as a legacy celebrating the Queens Platinum Jubilee? It was agreed that we look to raise the profile of the silver jubilee walks in the future.

Myles raised that as Willaston is part of the Ellesmere Port borough that an invite should be extended to the Mayor of Ellesmere Port.

Action: Platinum Jubilee group

Environmental sub-group

5.2 Ceri on behalf of the sub-group (Sue U, Sandra, Fiona M and Myles H) gave an update on the group's activities

5.3 Ceri shared the first litter picking date has been agreed for Saturday 28th May, meeting 2pm at the Nags Head car park. To begin with we will start with inviting members of the committee to join us and if wished to be involved to contact any member of the sub-group. We will come up with a number of dates and share with wider village organisations and individuals if they wish to join.

5.4 Sandra updated that the bench next to the phone box (opposite the green) has been re-painted. All materials were kindly donated via village residents to complete the work. Rachel Atkinson kindly volunteered to help assist with the work.

5.5 Sandra raised that Rachel would like to maintain the freestanding flower box next to the bench. Members of the committee agreed and thanked Rachel for taking this on.

5.6 Hilary advised that she has purchased plants for the Hadlow Road planter next to the bus shelter

5.7 Ruth H raised that she had spoken to the owners of White Feather who had asked who is responsible for the bus shelter. The bus shelter is in need of repair and maintenance. There is a large crack down the back wall, the roof is damaged and has overgrown shrubs from the garden behind and the shelter is damp that vegetation is growing on the sandstone brickwork. It was discussed that the bus shelter was modified by John Sanderson and could possibly be the responsibility of WR&CS.

Ceri suggested that the environmental group could take this away and undertake further investigations. It was agreed at the meeting that a letter could be written to the homeowners who garden was overgrown on the roof.

Action: Environmental group

5.8 Concerns were raised about paving outside Christ Church and whilst sections of the paving have been repaired, it has not improved. Myles discussed that the pavement would be best to be replaced with tarmac. Myles advised he will look at the paving outside Christ Church and Doctors surgery.

Action: Myles

5.9 Fiona E raised that the paving could potentially be a public liability issue for the council. Myles confirmed that if a pavement has been reported that it becomes a public liability issue if they have been made aware of the issue and a subsequent accident (e.g. trip/fall).

Members of the committee were advised they are able to report via the council website.

6. Planning matters

6.1 Mel discussed how she currently felt about being in the planning officer role. She would like to see more discussion with people regarding the applications as currently sees that it is purely her individual view. Brian discussed how this is a critical role for WR&CS.

6.2 Jane raised that the planning report is currently sent via Sarah and suggested it could be sent directly by Mel, which in turn committee members could respond directly with their feedback.

Action: Mel

Mel advised preferred method of communication due to her work is text or What's app.

Action: Mel & Committee

6.3 Myles updated on the two Hooton crematorium applications (School Lane and Hooton Road) will take a number of months to validate the second School Lane application. The Hooton Road application has been currently deferred.

6.4 Myles advised that Corfe land (by Hooton station) has had an application for 31 dwelling (2, 3, 4-bedroom homes)

6.5 Badgers Butt (Mill Lane) has submitted an appeal to the planning refusal.

6.6 27 Wallcroft's application has been refused for the 3rd time.

McCarthy & Stone – former British legion site

6.7 Barry advised he is unsure when McCarthy & Stone ~~does not know of the start~~ date for building works to commence.

6.8 Myles talked through the 'open spaces money' that is attributed following selected successful planning applications. Open spaces money is agreed between the planning officer in conjunction with the applicant. If the applicant is successful and there is an impact on the area takes place, then section 106 comes into effect. The amount is negotiated between the planning officer and the applicant, and once agreed the amounts are specified. For the McCarthy & Stone application the following was agreed - £10,350 (Jackson's Pond), £3,105

(extension of two allotments on Johnston's rec), £36,764 (towards Johnston's recreations ground) and £20k for bowling enhancements (bowling funding maybe allocated to Burton).

6.9 Jane raised there was a bowling green on the former British Legion site and would there be the potential to have one on Johnston's recreation ground. Sarah-fed back there was a handful people from the WR&CS survey asking what amenities people in the village wanted. Myles advised that £20k would not fund a bowling green.

6.10 Sheila raised would there be the possibility to allocate money to a new scout hut. Myles advised that there would be a requirement for 100's of thousands.

6.11 It was suggested could the scout hut be an addition to a multi-purpose pavilion idea that Brian discussed. Sarah discussed that what Brian is suggesting is a much bigger project. Jane asked could we ask for suggestions on the website and Facebook for ideas. Sarah fed back that this would require further discussions and get a clearer view before any request for ideas to be requested,

6.12 Hilary asked that whatever Johnston's rec agreed does it need to go to the charity commission for approval, not just the council. For example, a scout hut on the pavilion would need to go to the charity commission.

6.13 Fiona raised that it is the decision of the Johnston's recreation committee to decide on what they want and WR&CS to feed in suggestions. For the next meeting put on the agenda the future of the recreation ground.

6.14 Helen asked is there a deadline when the section 106 'open spaces money' needs to be spent by? Myles advised the funding comes during the construction process.

7. Correspondence

7.1 The correspondence report was presented to the committee and no queries were raised.

8. Financial

8.1 Sarah discussed the situation with the Christmas lights on the green and the standing charge costs that the current supplier wishes to charge. Ceri suggested contacting other councils/groups who manage Christmas lights as to what providers they use.

Action: Sarah

8.2 Sarah raised she is still awaiting a report the electrical contractor who manages the maintenance of the lights. The maintenance costs £450 a year and has requested a report for records to demonstrate the lights are in good working order. The payment of the last invoice has been held back until the report has been received. Ceri to look at if retained emails regarding what was covered in the £450 annual maintenance contract that was set by Paul Janvier on behalf of WR&CS.

Action: Ceri/Sarah

8.3 Sarah advised that will be setting up a community bank account with Lloyds Bank.

Action: Sarah

8.4 Barry asked if we paid in via BAC's to WR&CS are we charged by the bank. Sarah advised we are not charged for BAC's, but most people pay cash. e.g. lottery.

8.5 Sarah raised that she believes that the server that the WR&CS website sits on is not secure. Ceri and Mel said they would be happy to look at this.

Action: Ceri/Mel

9. Footpaths and Bridleways

9.1 Margaret advised that the trees had been cleared from the footpath at the back of Pollards. If possible, if people clear areas of footpaths/trees please can they advise the footpaths officer.

9.2 Barry raised that the footpaths/pavements in different parts of the village including Hooton Road have overgrowing hedges. Sarah advised that due to bird nesting season being between March and September, then WR&CS should not write to households to cut back their hedges. If people notice overgrown hedges, please let the Officers know and we can arrange for letters to be sent from September.

Action: All

9.3 The footpath in the field between Change Lane and Pemberton Road has been put between wooden posts.

9.4 Margaret advised the kissing gate has been removed and is this allowed. Myles advised that owners of the land cannot remove the kissing gate. Margaret to pick up with council.

Action: Margaret

9.5 The gate at the side of the recreation ground will be replaced as there is livestock in the adjacent field.

10. Organisations' Reports

10.1 Christ Church

No report received

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

We have had excellent turnouts for our Pop-up-Cafe's since we reopened again in 2022, with a lovely community spirit. It is so good to be back to normal. The Old School Boys will be singing for us on 26th June, so make a note of this date if you fancy some entertainment.

Our input for the Willaston Community to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee will be on Friday 3rd June from 2pm – 4pm. You will be entertained by Simon le Barber, The Riversign Choir, a performance by the Morris Men, and singing from the Hadlow Green Singers.

There will be free refreshments at this event.

We have very kindly been donated a trunk, and a case, by Dave Turnbull, together with the historical details, these have been installed in the Waiting Room.

We have ordered a new “barrier notice”, for the village notice board to promote the Pop-up-Cafe openings. The last one got destroyed by Storm Darren!

The light gardening day in May was very well supported by our volunteers once again, and they were pleased to welcome more new volunteers to their happy group. They planted bushes on the embankment adjacent to the car park and re-potted up a number of plant holders to add more summer colour. Thank you to you all. Thanks also to Sue for litter picking.

The kitchen will be steam cleaned along with tables & chairs etc on May 30th.

FRHS have paid for an electrical circuit upgrade, and guess what, we can now toast 2 teacakes at the same time, without blowing a fuse!!!

Post and fence repairs have been undertaken by the FRHS light engineering volunteers, and a new Wirral Way Country Park sign has been erected at the entrance to the station car park. Our thanks go to the FRHS volunteers and to CWAC for providing the timber for this work.

We held our AGM in May which was well attended, and we welcomed 4 new volunteers

We have managed to raise £60,000 plus over the last 7 years - which includes grant monies – ALL monies are being invested back into the Waiting Room/Ticket Office part of the building, and into the station grounds, plus various projects, including the Signal Box. A wonderful achievement.

Chris Hampshire was unanimously re-elected as Chair for 3 years, Sue Powell as Secretary for 2 years and Hilary Booth as Treasurer for 1 year. Whilst other Officers were also unanimously elected at the AGM.

A date for the future is FRHS Santa's Grotto is December 11th from 12 noon – 4pm. I will update you later in the year.

Our next Pop-up-Cafe's will be June 12th and June 26th, 10.00am – 1.00pm. We look forward to seeing you all once again.

10.3 Friends of Willaston Meadow (submitted by Sarah Shannon)

At our volunteer session in May, we planted some wildflowers along the footpath, added stakes to the living hedge in School Wood and cut back ivy and nettles. We always welcome volunteers at our working group sessions, normally on the first Sunday of the month. We plant, cut back brambles, trim the grass and take on other tasks as required. We're a friendly group that share a love of the Meadow. Please get in contact if you would like to join us.

This is a beautiful time of year in the Meadow, with the grasses growing and wildflowers appearing. Our birdwatching team counted 22 species in May, from a wren to a sparrow hawk. The Great Crested Newts have returned to Jackson's Pond, so if dog owners can try to stop their dogs going in the water, that would be appreciated.

For more information, please see our webpage on the Residents' Society website, our Facebook page /friendswillastonmeadow or ring Sarah Shannon on 0151 327 5318.

10.4 Hadlow Green Singers (submitted by Helen Mayles)

The two concerts on 1st and 2nd April were well attended. It was lovely to have such an appreciative audience, joining in some of the songs with great enthusiasm, and so glad to be back again. Our next concerts are on 8th and 9th July and the Theme is "Music fit for a Queen".

New singers are always welcome to join this friendly choir. There is no audition, but an ability to sight read is an advantage. Choir practices are on Thursdays at 7.30pm during school terms, in the Willaston Memorial Hall.

10.5 Horticultural Society (submitted by Pam Irving)

Our Meeting in June is on Tuesday 21st when we will be having a talk on the history of the RSPB by Dan Trotman. This should be a good presentation as Burton Wetlands is on our doorstep and can be appreciated at any time. Plenty to see and diverse habitats.

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, Val Brizell, on 07786 982845. 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)

This is a report from our meeting on Wed. 11th May.

Allotments - There has been some trimming done by the Council along the adjacent pathway. More will be done. There is a possibility of a supply of water. More information needed.

The piece of private garden offered as allotment has been “snapped up”! There is still a waiting list. More plots are still planned next to fence and Neston Rd.

Tennis Courts - There are almost enough funds for resurfacing. This will, hopefully, be done on the 6th June. The school have been advised for health and safety.

Football - Extensive enquiries were made regarding the metal “DRAIN COVER” exposed while trying to level the ground at the far side of the field. It leads down to an “air vent” for a water pipe dating from 1880. Decisions still to be made so that work can continue. This area is cordoned off at the moment.

The pavilion needs to be improved. It was suggested that it could be extended to include a Scout Hut, which is desperately needed as Willaston Scouts currently use the one in Ness. However, it would be VERY costly, so not viable. The goal posts will be taken down for the summer and for the Jubilee celebrations to be held on the “REC” on the 5th June. Thanks were expressed for the much-improved behaviour of the teams.

Other things discussed.

The notice board is to be replaced. The old unused blue board is to be removed as it is unsightly.

We then discussed the planting of 2 trees on the green space to the left of the gate bordering Neston Rd. This would be a lasting legacy in honour of the Queens Platinum Jubilee. One for the Queen and one in memory of Prince Philip. An offer was made to fund these. There would be plaques with suitable wording.

McCarthy Stone will be giving The Meadow, the allotments, and the Recreation Ground some quite considerable funds.

Next meeting date still to be arranged but all are welcome to attend. Date will be advised but probably in early September.

10.6 Memorial Hall (Rob King)

No report received.

10.7 Scouting

No report received.

10.8 Willaston CE Primary School

No report received.

10.9 Willaston Football Club

No report received.

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

Our speaker in April was Eddie Tarry talking about Styal Women’s Prison.

We have our Resolutions meeting on 24th May followed by 42nd Birthday and Jubilee Celebrations.

There is a trip to Bridgewater RHS in June and another trip has been arranged in July to Llandudno.

Cheshire Federation are continuing with zoom talks.

Arrangements are on ongoing for the Jubilee celebrations in June.

Darts, Knit and Natter, Walking, Netball, Bridge and Rambling groups are continuing to flourish.

Our speaker in June is Dame Lorna Muirhead and she will be talking about Life as HM Lord Lieutenant.

We have had several visitors attending our meetings and hopefully they will join our membership.

Our meetings take place on the 4th Tuesday of the month, in the Memorial Hall, commencing at 7.30pm.

10.11 Willaston Methodist Chapel (submitted by Sheila Smith)

Reflecting on Easter, the Chapel enjoyed the now traditional family Easter Breakfast. Following this there was a rousing celebratory Easter morning service, led by Chapel members.

On Saturday May 14th there is a Coffee Morning preceding the Sunday Chapel Anniversary service, celebrating 184 years of Methodism in Willaston.

June 2nd - 5th Chapel Jubilee Flower Festival. The Chapel will have flower arrangements depicting events over the 7 Decades of the Queen's reign. Refreshments will be available throughout, in the Schoolroom. The "Christmas Lights Dedication book" will be available to anyone who would like to refer to it.

Sunday June 5th The Annual Open Air Ecumenical Service on the Green (resuming after 3 years due to Covid)

We are delighted to be involved in this village celebration and would like to applaud the Willaston Jubilee Committee for organising and bringing the village organisations together for this historical occasion.

June 26th Willaston Churches Together Open Gardens. Village residents open their gardens for the afternoon with refreshments available at two venues. Tickets available in advance and on the day.

10.12 Willaston and South Wirral Rotary Club (Submitted by Fiona Mosley)

The Willaston & South Wirral Rotary Club have been progressing plans for the Jubilee Tea Dance on 4th June, which it is hoped will be enjoyed by village residents of all ages, and also for the installing of planters on the village boundary. The process for any project like these tends to be extensive and convoluted but the club feels that a general role in local community is an important aspect of the overall remit for Rotary Clubs.

The social aspect of Rotary is of course also important and, despite problems that meant some members could not attend, the latest "wine tasting" evening was a huge success.

Volunteers from Willaston & South Wirral Rotary Club enjoyed our first book sale of the year to raise funds for charity on Saturday 16th April. This raised nearly £30 during the morning and the money will be added to the charity fund.

One of the most significant events of the year, the Charter Night, which celebrates the founding of the Willaston & South Wirral branch, took place at the Nags Head on the evening of St George's Day and was a great success.

Members of the Willaston and South Wirral Rotary Club visited The Hive Youth Zone in Birkenhead on 1st May to present a cheque for £2251, raised through a varied programme of fund-raising activities. This is a milestone within the work carried out in support of "The Hive", as it is usually known, since it was adopted as one of the club's nominated charities last July. The Hive provides various leisure and educational facilities for young people within a safe environment, promoting healthy lifestyles and offering support where needed. This is especially important for its members from the surrounding areas that have high levels of children living in poverty, helping to raise both their abilities and aspirations. The money will be used to improve the facilities currently available for members.

10.13 Willaston Surgery Patient Participation Group (John Woodrow)

No report received

You can contact John Woodrow, Chairman, Patient Participation Group on 01513273260 and at johnwoodrow@btinternet.com

10.14 Willaston Toddler Group

No report received.

10.15 Willaston Village Festival Society

No report received.

11. Councillor report

11.1 Council meeting was held in relation to non-household waste disposal charging e.g. rubble. The decision has been postponed.

11.2 Myles advised when making reports to Highways to use council website to report rather than social media.

11.3 Myles updated on kerbside recycling and had requested feedback on new bins. In Willaston the bins are expected August/September. Sheila S asked what can be done with the old bins. Myles advised that residents could retain them, but if can't/don't want them to retain can request for them to be taken away.

12. AOB

12.1 Lyn raised that Hadlow road car park has become a real issue and has spoken to the local PCSO who advised it is not a police matter. Myles advised he will review this and raise accordingly.

Action: Myles

12.2 Ruth raised that the car garage is only allowed a set number of cars. Myles confirmed that the garage had got planning permission for more cars than previous businesses at the location.

12.3 Lyn advised that the next Friends of Hadlow Road Station pop-up café is on the 29th May 2022. All money made will be donated to the Ukraine appeal.

12.4 Sheila S advised during the storms that the fencing was damaged at the Methodist Chapel, and they have had a quote for £4,000 to replace. If individuals or businesses would be able to help physically or financially with the replacement that would be really appreciated.

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 9.38pm.

Dates for future Committee Meetings:

Monday 18th July 2022

Monday 19th September 2022

Monday 21st November 2022

AGM: Friday 7th October 2022