

Willaston Residents' and Countryside Society (WR&CS)

Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on Monday 1st August 2022
in Willaston Methodist Chapel Schoolroom

Present - Officers: Vicki Spraggon (Vice chair), Sarah Shannon (Treasurer), and Ceri Jones (Social media officer).

Present – Committee Members: Lyn Jackson-Eves, Sue Unsworth, Hilary Booth, Ruth Hampshire, Suzie Dixon, Roy Spraggon, Fiona Mosley, Cllr Myles Hogg, Barry Vowles, Sandra Kettiros, Sue Hunter, Madeline Smith, Annette Troake and Will Straiton.

Committee Meeting

1. Apologies for absence

1.1 Apologies were received from Margaret Smyth, Brian Greenhalph, Sheila Smith, Helen Mayles, Rob King, Mel Chapman, Jane Townsend, John Fisher, Ruth McElroy, Fiona Ennys, Liz Young and John Woodrow.

1.2 Fiona M advised that Sheila Greenhalph will no longer be attending the meeting on behalf of the Rotary. Fiona currently represents the Friends of Willaston Meadow and as a member of the rotary club will also represent them.

1.3 Sarah S read through the request from Willaston Tennis Club to join WR&CS as an organisation. Cllr Myles Hogg proposed, with Sue Unsworth seconded the proposal. All members of the committee in attended voted in favour. Will Straiton from Willaston Tennis Club was welcomed to the committee.

2. Declarations of Interest

2.1 Sarah raised as Chair of Friends of Willaston Meadow that they continue to have an interest in the McCarthy and Stone development. The group have been advised that the meadow will receive the funding when 15 flats are occupied. The meadow has also been approached about funding from a housing development in Hooton. The funds will be used for investment in the forest school area.

2.2 Annette Troake advised that there may be a conflict of interest when a planning application on Hooton Road was to be discussed and took the decision to leave the meeting during any discussions.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting – 16th May 2022

For the March meeting there were no corrections from the previous minutes. Roy Spraggon proposed the minutes were correct, Ruth Hampshire seconded the proposal. Members of the committee all voted in favour.

4. Matters arising from the Minutes of 16th May 2022

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

4.1 Slow down sign (item 4.3)

To carry over. 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 once started in role, Myles will look to progress accordingly.

Sue U asked if there was the potential to consider a slow down sign being put up on Neston Road.

Action: Myles

4.2 Hooton Road speed issue (item 4.4)

Carry forward - 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.

Action: Barry

4.3 Footpaths and bridleways

(item 9.2) Carry forward - 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

4.4 Councillor report (item 11.2) Carry over to next meeting. Myles chased signage and road markings for the disabled designated space on the green. This should have been completed.

Action: Myles

4.5 (item 5.8) Concerns were raised about the paving flags outside Christ Church. Myles advised that the flags would only be replaced with tarmac by the council.

5. Groups

5.1 Joint Coordination Group for Queen's Platinum Jubilee

Sarah gave an update on the questionnaire issued to review the jubilee weekend. Overall, the feedback was very positive.

There has been a video of jubilee photo has been developed. Sarah expressed her thanks to Martin Eves for putting this together.

Art trail – There was a committee discussion in relation to the art trail. Sarah gave an update on the current position and that the University of Chester are no longer involved. If the village wished to progress with the project, this would be working directly with three of the students. They have submitted a proposal that the two-way markers they have designed are put on sandstone blocks on the path between the church/pharmacy leading to Elm Road.

If we wished to proceed then funding would need to be found, as the application to the arts council was unsuccessful. The costings quoted are £1,800, which includes their fees. Additional markers would be at a cost of £575 each. Sarah questioned some of the costings and felt further clarification would be needed.

Concerns were raised that the moment has now passed for this project as the Jubilee is over and there has been no community involvement as expected. Also, whether there be an opportunity to go back to the group to advise if we did not like the proposed designs. Some members felt that the current designs were not of a high quality. Photos were circulated at the meeting.

Roy raised who would maintain the cutting of the footpath. The council only cut this a couple of times a year.

Barry raised that the art trail has been publicised to the village and was concerned that not taking it forward would not look good. Myles fully understood Barry's view and advised the project needs to be fully supported or withdraw.

Sarah raised that it is good to have a jubilee legacy. The village will still have this when the trees are planted in the autumn on the Johnston's recreation ground. Annette asked where the trees are due to be planted and when. The trees will be planted opposite the allotments and a date is to be confirmed.

Ruth H discussed at the May meeting she raised that the art trail could become part of the jubilee village walks. Ceri suggested that the jubilee walks can be re-invigorated and promoted on the website and Facebook accordingly.

A vote was taken to stop progressing with the art trail. There were three members who abstained, and all other members of the committee agreed that this piece of work should not be progressed.

Fiona raised to email Brian to advise of the decision as a member of the jubilee committee.

Vicky stated that we should write to the students to sincerely thank them for the work they have done on the project but advised that a decision has been taken not to progress with the proposal.

Action: Officers

Sarah also proposed following the jubilee celebrations that the Joint Coordination Group should be disbanded. Sandra K seconded the proposal and all committee members voted in favour.

Ruth H wished to note her thanks to Sarah and the committee for all the work, time and effort put into the celebrations.

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. No questions were raised on the general update given.

5.3 Ceri shared that the group had undertaken an initial assessment of the bus shelter and a report was produced. It was confirmed that the house behind the bus shelter had been sent a letter asking if they could cut back the overgrown trees and shrubs overgrowing the bus shelter. The paper submitted was an initial review of the bus shelter (not completed by expert tradespeople) and detailed considerations for the project.

5.4 Ceri advised that the work that will needed to be done from the initial assessment looks to be more extensive.

5.5 Ownership of the bus shelter was still unknown, and it was raised that a land registry search would maybe help identify this, along with further information available via Cheshire archives. Vicky raised that WR&CS could fund the land registry search fee (circa £5)

Action: Environmental group

5.6 It was agreed that the environmental group could continue with their investigations.

6. Items raised by members

Wildflowers on the green

6.1 Myles discussed how councillors were consulted by the councillor for potential sites. No sites were identified in Willaston. Sarah raised concerns that the wildflower area will limit the space for community activity on the Green such as the Christmas lights switch on.

Sarah agreed to contact the council and asked for the area to be returned to grass.

Action: Sarah

New wheelie bins/use of old boxes

6.2 Fiona M raised on what should residents do with the old plastic recycling boxes. Myles advised that these can be retained by households or returned. CWaC have developed a list of suggestions of what they can be used for.

Put list of suggestions on Facebook page and website.

Action: Ceri/Sarah

Pavilion on Johnston Rec

6.3 Brian provided a report on a meeting he attended in an individual capacity that was held a recent meeting that discussed improving and modernising the pavilion.

Myles confirmed that it is the Johnston's rec committee responsibility with the council

Vicky raised is this initiative to do with WR&CS or primarily the Johnston's rec and believes WR&CS do not have a say. From a WR&CS perspective there would be an interest in knowing what is happening and if village consultation if going to affect the village.

Plaques in Frodsham

6.4 Fiona discussed how she had visited Frodsham and was impressed by the blue plaque scheme of interesting buildings in the village. Was looking to see if there is anything we could replicate in Willaston.

Ruth H advised that there are blue plaques on display in the village on Ashtree tree farm and Elizabeth cottages.

7. Planning matters

6.1 Mel had previously raised it would be good to be able to have people to discuss applications with, rather than just be one person's input/view. It was raised to support Mel in the planning officer role to consider setting up a sub-group to help support. Action to contact Mel to see if this would be a suitable proposal.

Action: Ceri

6.2 Myles raised that the two planning applications made by Kerry, Hooton Road have been withdrawn. Hanns Hall development have submitted an application for a 7th house on the land,

8. Correspondence/Social Media

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

8.2 Ceri discussed the opportunity to create an Instagram account that will replicate the content we post on Facebook. Sarah proposed creating the account, Ruth H seconded the proposal with all members of the committee voting in favour.

Action: Ceri

9. Financial

9.1 Myles advised that there that the forms have been submitted to the manufacturers for the new noticeboard on Johnston's recreation ground. There is an additional £204 cost which the rec committee will cover. The noticeboard will take 10 weeks to be delivered.

9.2 Sarah advised we have £982 in the general account.

9.3 Christmas lights electricity supply – Sarah went through the summary of the options available as we are currently due to come out of contract with Drax which will see WR&CS incur a £3 a day standing charge and electricity costs of circa £15 for having the lights on in December. We have three options available to disconnect and try to find another supplier, sign a new contract with Drax which will cost circa £50 a month or run the lights out of contract. Due to the contract ending the Officers' agreed in the interim to run the supply out of contract to ensure the Christmas lights would be on for 2022.

Vicky discussed how a lot of work has gone into this to date by Sarah and there is a need for a sub-group to be formed to look further at what the options are. Fiona M, Barry, Hilary, and Ceri stated they would be happy to be on the sub-group.

A proposal was made for the sub-group to look further at the options. Roy made the proposal, Ruth seconded, and the committee votes all in favour.

Action: Lights sub-group

9.4 Lyn raised if there was the possibility to have lights put on the top of the tree. Ceri advised that when the lights were originally put on the branches were not strong enough. If we were to consider putting lights on the top, we would need to pay for a cherry picker, and this is not cost effective

9.5 Sarah advised we will have £2,000 in the lottery account.

9.6 Sarah talked through the proposal for the website for funds to be used to be professionally re-built. Sarah shared the options investigated to move the website onto a secure platform with the preference to use Simon Gamble Designs. Ceri and Barry discussed that the moving of the website to the secure platform should be completed straightaway and the re-design of the website could follow. A proposal was put forward by Sarah to use £1,000 of WR&CS funds to re-design the website. Barry seconded the proposal and all members of the committee voted in favour.

10. Footpaths and Bridleways

10.1 Fiona raised that the new fence between Mill Lane and Johnston's recreation ground has barbed wire across the bottom of this. No comments have been received about this and any queries to be sent through. Ceri will email Margaret to advise.

Action: Ceri

11. Organisation' Reports

11.1 Christ Church

No report received

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

Ukraine Appeal - We had a fabulous turnout to the "Ukraine Appeal Pop-up-cafe" on 29th May. Once again, our customers responded in a superb way. We took a total of £940 including £240 of FHRS costs and in addition Friends of Hadlow Road Station contributed a further £60 to the fund to make a grand total of £1000.00 to go to the Ukraine Appeal. Well done to all of the catering staff, and a big thank you to all our loyal supporters. Without you this total could not have been achieved.

Jubilee Event - And now we come to the Jubilee, and what an event that was!! We had over 400 people attending.

Fortunately, the weather was kind to us, and everyone enjoyed the afternoon of entertainment.

The station platforms were packed with so many people they were even sitting on the platform edge with their legs dangling. (Not sure how they got up again). It was a fantastic sight. FHRS supplied all the food and drinks free of charge. We would like to apologise to all those of you who did not get a piece of cake. This was due to the hundreds of people who turned up, as we were not expecting such a large number to attend. However,

we did manage to supple most of you with a small packet of biscuits when the cake ran out! The numbers that came show what a superb village Willaston is. We cannot thank you enough once again for your fabulous support. You are simply the best as the song goes. Many thanks also must go to the very hard-working catering team. Thank you all for your generous donations for this event.

I would like to congratulate all the people who organised the various events in Willaston, to make the Queens Jubilee a weekend to remember and enjoy. Well done to you all.

Maintenance - Some repairs are required on the level crossing gates, as some of the wood is rotten. This will be completed shortly, by our great maintenance team.

Gardening - They had a very successful gardening session on June 8th. Many helpers turned up. I was amazed to witness how they tackle some of the jobs on their hands and knees, cleaning the grime from the gutters on the platform, as well as the heavy work on the gardening. They really work hard to keep it looking as good as it does.

The next dates for the Pop- up-cafe are -
Sunday July 17th
Sunday July 31st

- When Western Approaches will be singing.

ALL 10.00AM – 1.00PM

Sunday August 14th

- When RSBP will have a stall on the platform

Sunday August 28th
Look forward to seeing you all again.

11.3 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 at our volunteer session in June, we cleared some brambles, cut down some willows by Jackson's Pond and strimmed around the trees in the orchard. We always welcome volunteers at our working group sessions, normally on the first Sunday of the month. 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 20 species in May. We have spotted some orchids growing among the grasses. We recently had a survey of the grasses undertaken by Hilary Ash and will be receiving her report in the Autumn. This helps us decide our priorities for our work.

Our AGM will be on Tuesday 23rd August at 2pm in the Memorial Hall (tbc) when we will be having a speaker from the RSPB.

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

11.4 Hadlow Green Singers (submitted by Helen Mayles)

The concerts on 8th and 9th July, "Music fit for a Queen", were well attended, especially the Friday night. The singers will now have a summer break till 8th September. Our Christmas concert will be on Friday 9th December.

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.

11.5 Horticultural Society (submitted by Pam Irving)

Nothing to report for July.

The Annual Show is at 1pm on Sat 6th August in the Memorial Hall. If anyone wants a Show Schedule, they can call Pam on 327 6048.

11.6 Johnston Recreation Ground (submitted by Sue Unsworth)

Nothing to report.

11.7 Memorial Hall (submitted by Rob King)

The next meeting of the committee is on 10th July and further information may be available following that meeting. However, at the time of writing the Trustees are seeking a new Treasurer and Bookings Secretary. Expressions of interest would be most welcome.

After 12 years as a Trustee, I have tendered my resignation but have been asked to continue on the committee which I have agreed to do for the time being. My position is one which does not carry a vote (at my request). The Trust Deed allows for a representative of WRCS to be a Trustee of the Memorial Hall and as I have resigned there is now a vacancy for someone to take that position. I took over from Keith Butcher. Should anyone wish to come forward I would then resign from WRCS.

It is recognised that it is becoming increasingly difficult to get individuals involved and I will continue to liaise between WRCS and the Memorial Hall Trustees until such time as a new Trustee comes forward. This is approved by the Memorial Hall Trustees but my continuing as a WRCS committee member requires ratification by WRCS Officers.

.11.8 Scouting

No report received.

11.9 Willaston CE Primary School

No report received.

11.10 Willaston Football Club

Throughout the foundation phase (7 - 11) we have seen key developments within recruitment and quality, specifically within our emerging age groups. The U7's have led the way in recruiting over 30 players for their teams, highlighting the potential outreach into future emerging Willaston groups, best practice included school and parent networking. Other teams have also shared the success of numbers, with no Willaston team struggling to field a squad during match day or recruit numbers for training. There has also been a clear increase

in the quality of football, with most teams moving up a division and competing well across the foundation phase of the Eastham & District youth league. In addition to this there has also been significant wins within recent tournaments, with our 11's coming close in the final and finishing runners up.

Youth development phase has also shown positive signs, with an initially struggling transition to 11 a-side football for our U14's, they have now managed to build numbers with merging squads, again showing the incentives of joining the club for those in the surrounding communities. Our 18's have contested for the league for two seasons now, losing only five games across the 36 played and finishing in a commendable position (2nd place), whilst also winning the Eastham & District Youth League Cup.

Adult phase highlights the achievements of our first women's football team in the Club's history. After only joining the Club as a new team during this season, they have already excelled and won the Cheshire Champions West Women's League title. Recruitment has been superb and best practice highlights their use of social media to promote a strong brand of football. Our men's team unfortunately had to concede due to low numbers in the West Cheshire League Division Three.

Training continues throughout the summer and players interested in joining the Club's teams need to contact the Football Development Officers, Harry Mates on 07947 749742 or Steve Blackledge on 07899 063336, for more details.

Besides new players joining the Club there are opportunities for people to join the Club as a Coach or a volunteer on the Committee. Anyone interested in joining needs to contact the mobile numbers given above, or the Chairman Remco Buckley on 07930 603944.

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

We are continuing to attract new members.

The birthday/jubilee meeting went down really well. We sang The National Anthem at the start instead of Jerusalem.

At the Jubilee Big Picnic, we raised £165 with our Tombola, donating £150 to the Appeal for Ukraine and the remaining £15 to the jubilee committee.

Our President, Val Fisher won the competition for the best Jubilee Pudding, which was judged by Nisha Katona who had judged the original winning pudding with Mary Berry.

Our speaker for July was Catharine Corcoran a local author who lives in Neston. She very kindly stood in at short notice as our original speaker was unable to attend due to illness.

The next outing is to Llandudno on 21st July.

Members are also spending a couple of days in Oxford in September, and we are arranging a visit to Jodrell Bank, also in September.

All our other regular activities continue to thrive.

Our next meeting is on 28th July at 7.30pm. and the subject of the talk is Gardening and Astronomy.

11.12 Willaston Methodist Chapel (submitted by Sheila Smith)

A quieter summer is anticipated following a very busy and happy period of participation in the community events of June.

The Flower Festival which the Chapel held, as part of the celebrations for the Queen's Jubilee in Willaston, was highly successful. Many visitors admired the interpretations in flowers of the 7 decades of her reign and lots of enthusiastic comments were left in the visitors' book over the 4 days. People were happy to relax over tea and cakes in the schoolroom, after being isolated for so long due to Covid restrictions.

The "Open-Air Ecumenical Pentecost service" led by Jim Shaw, had to go indoors, due to inclement weather, but had an enthusiastic response from a large congregation.

Despite the strong gales, the "Hidden Gardens" event attracted people from the village and all over the Wirral. Such a variety of beautiful gardens, large to tiny, was admired by all, and a big thank you to all who worked hard to open them, and to Annette, and Carol who hosted the refreshments in their gardens. Also, to Di Knight and her little team for the mammoth job of pulling it together. The two Churches benefitted financially as well as pastorally from these events.

The Chapel will have regular services over the summer, and, as always, welcome all.

11.13 Willaston and South Wirral Rotary Club (submitted by Fiona Mosley)

The lead topic for this report, naturally, is Willaston and South Wirral Rotary Club's contribution to the local Platinum Jubilee celebrations. The tea dance kicked off in fine style at 2:30pm on Saturday 4th June in Willaston Memorial Hall which had been decked out with flags, bunting and balloons by members of the club for the occasion. Over 30 ticket holders enjoyed an hour of dancing before tea and cake served by the Rotarians and a hugely impressive display by the young dancers of "Bedazzled." Wet weather threatened to derail plans for the Big Picnic that formed the conclusion of Willaston's Jubilee events on the Sunday but, after a slow start, it all came good, and a large turnout joined us through the afternoon. The Rotarians' "human fruit machine" complete with synchronised performances, sound effects and rather noisy bell proved a hit with children, parents, and grandparents alike. Thanks to all involved and who donated, helping to raise a total of over £400 for local and Rotary charities.

The club's planters have been made and installed by Willaston Community Farm, who donated both their time and the materials, at the village signs on Hooton Road and Hadlow Road. These have been populated with red, white, and blue flowers to mark the Jubilee and feedback via social media so far has been very positive. They will now be maintained by volunteers from the club.

Club members also managed to find the time to fit in a wine (or non-wine alternative) evening and a guided tour of the RSPB Burton Mere Wetlands nature reserve. With book sales on the green set for 9th and 27th August, barbecue, cocktail tutorial, and other events planned it looks like we have a great summer of activities coming up. As the "Rotary year" commenced on July 1st we now have a new club President in Mark Hughes and have also nominated our main charities for the following 12 months - Maggie's Wirral, and Autism Together.

11.14 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

11.15 Willaston Toddler Group

No report received.

11.16 Willaston Village Festival Society

No report received.

12. Councillor's report

12.1 Myles updated on the waste strategy for household renovation waste. The proposal to charge for renovation waste at recycling centres continues to be blocked.

12.2 Myles discussed that for Remembrance Day (Armistice Day) last year that the village did not have a parade. A request was made to minute for discussion at the next meeting, what the village will be doing.

Action: Agenda item next meeting

12.3 Mike Powell from the council has advised that they will be repairing two pavement defects between the church and the doctor's surgery.

12.4 Myles advised that an appeal has been submitted in relation to gates at the Poppies, Mill Lane. Myles is supporting that gates should be allowed.

12.5 The council have funds available for footpaths and public rights of way. If Margaret wishes to put forward a request for funds to contact Myles.

Action: Margaret (if required)

12.6 In 2023 is election year for councillors. Any new homes bonus funding is required to be committed/spent by November 2022. Submissions to be made by end of November and work completed by February 2023.

13. AOB

13.1 Vicky raised that Rob King has resigned as a trustee of the memorial hall but would like for Rob to still represent the hall. Sarah advised that WR&CS appear to have opposing constitutions in relation to appointment of representatives. Sarah to respond to Rob to advise.

Action: Sarah

13.2 Sarah advised that the new lottery year is due to begin in September and will email volunteers to ask for volunteers to help distribute forms.

13.3 The July lottery draw took place during the meeting.

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 9.35pm.

Dates for future Committee Meetings:

Monday 22nd September 2022

Monday 21st November 2022

AGM: Friday 7th October 2022