

Best Kept Village

In the 1990's, Willaston won the Best Kept Village award for Cheshire villages with a population of 2,500 – 5000 two years in a row – in 1993 and 1994 and again in 1997 and 1999.



Celebrating the 1993 win are:

Front: Mary Daugherty, of Willaston-in-Wirral WI and Geoff Knapp, vice-chairman of Willaston Residents and Countryside Society.

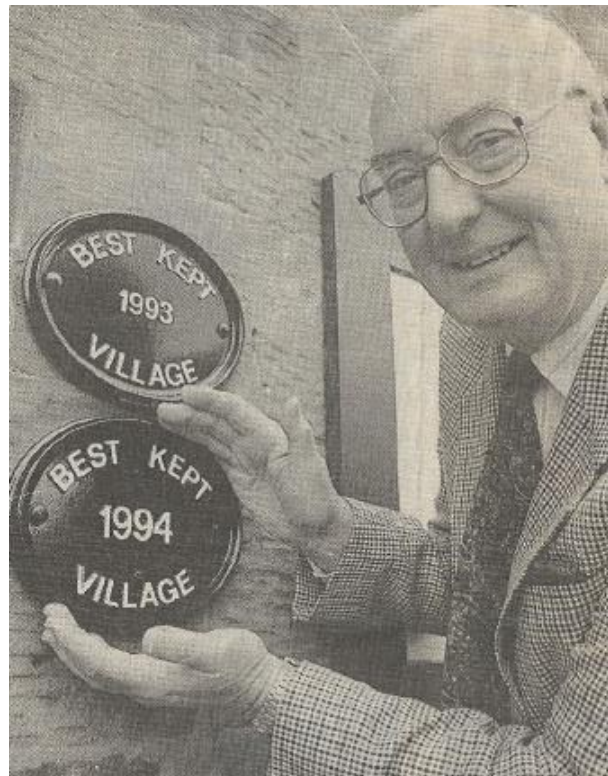
Back: Rob Thurston, Eileen Macdonald, Max Kirby, of the Wirral Footpaths' Society and Ray Wilton, Residents' Society chairman.

Ray Wilton, Chairman of Willaston Residents' and Countryside Society adds the 1994 plaque to the Memorial Hall wall.

The judges commented:

'Willaston is a delightful English country village with many quiet spots of natural and particular beauty.'

Generally speaking, the houses and cottages are in a very good state of repair with the attached gardens and frontages well kept offering much colour. Several hanging baskets, in very good order, were noticed and appreciated.



The large centrally placed tree on the village green looked resplendent in its coat of bronze leaves.

Attendant grasses were kept neatly short with frequent mowing although it was a pity to see that the cuttings were left to lie (disastrous on a windy day) and edges had received only some cursory attention. The allotment area seemed in excellent condition.

During our subsequent visits signs of further attention was paramount.

Harold Stockdale, member of Willaston Residents' and Countryside Society with the three placards on the Memorial Hall



In 1999, the judge's comments were:

The initial impression when we entered the village of Willaston was one of village pride and community involvement. This was evident from the standard of maintenance throughout the village including the buildings and the open spaces. The village community had obviously been made aware of the entry in the Best Kept Village Competition as there was evidence throughout the village of that extra effort.

Willaston does have a large volume of through traffic and yet this did not detract from the traditional village atmosphere as we walked around. This was most noticeable in the character of the location and the attitude of the people in the village that we spoke to whilst judging. In fact, when we first met our village representatives, they went to great pains to show us on the map (incidentally we had two different maps in our pack) the areas that they also wanted us to judge. Two of these areas identified by the village representatives were actually the least well maintained.

One of the locations we judged was the picnic area on the Wirral Way. This area to be fair, was still under construction, but nevertheless it suffered from large amounts of rubbish and debris including encroachment into a nearby pond which still managed to have evidence of wildlife. The Wirral Way itself gave the impression of a stark white chipping-motorway instead of an opportunity for public enjoyment on a route through great countryside. We seriously wondered if this could be considered improvement or habitat destruction.

There were a couple of noticeboards which needed attention. However, the area around the allotments was a credit to the village and there was a lot of activity on both days we visited

The 'Village Walk' alongside the church had a particularly badly rotten gate that did detract from the area's beauty,

There was some sign of building dereliction as you entered the village from Hooton. Our representatives did point this out to us when we first met them and they explained the protracted negotiations!

On the issue of buildings, there was an area of construction close to the old railway at Hadlow Road and this was taken into account in the judging.

Finally, it has to be said the Willaston was a pleasure to judge and gave all the appearance of 'a nice place to live.'