

Willaston Residents' and Countryside Society

Minutes of the AGM held on 28th September 2012 in the Memorial Hall

1 Welcome & Introductions

- 1.1 The meeting commenced with Vice Chair Jane Townsend welcoming everyone to the Willaston Residents' & Countryside Society's 2012 Annual General Meeting and by giving a warm welcome to our Guest Speaker, David Nind, Secretary of Friends of Willaston Meadow, who will give a talk on '10 years of Big Meadow' later in the meeting.
- 1.2 Jane explained that Barbara Jordan, Chair of Willaston Residents' & Countryside Society, was unable to attend owing to an existing family commitment and that she would chair the meeting until the election of a new Chair later in the meeting..

2 Minutes of the AGM held on Friday 30th September 2011

- 2.1 Copies had been placed on seats prior to the meeting for residents to read.
- 2.2 The Vice Chair asked for any issues arising from the Minutes. There being none, the Vice Chair asked for a Proposer [Eileen MacDonald] and Seconder [Roger James]. By a show of hands from the members the minutes were accepted as a true record of the meeting.

3 Chair's Report

In Barbara Jordan's absence the Vice Chair read the contents of Barbara's 'Chair's Report':

"Welcome and thank you for coming to Willaston Residents' and Countryside Society's 2012 Annual General Meeting.

Firstly let me apologise for not being here: I have a family occasion I must go to. Thank you so much Jane for stepping in for me.

It's hard to believe that a year has passed since we were last here for the AGM in 2011 and at times it has been a very busy year.

Did you know if you live in Willaston you are automatically a member of the Willaston Residents' and Countryside Society? In fact, according to the Constitution, if you live within a 2 mile radius of the Village Green you are also welcome to be a member.

So what have we been doing this past year?

Jim Goodwin, the Secretary, found information about a project to create plans for villages and parishes called a Community Led Plan and you may remember that last year Claire Jones and Sarah Baron from Cheshire Community Action gave us a talk at the AGM. This year the Committee was kept very busy bringing the project to life by applying for grants and holding an open meeting in March so residents were made aware of the plan. The applications for the grants were successful and the project was handed over to Paul Janvier to create a committee of residents (separate from the Residents' Society) to deliver the plan in full. This work is ongoing as we speak. Hopefully, everyone would like to see this plan brought to fruition and I ask you to support Paul and his Committee.

Barry Vowles joined us in January taking up the important role of the Planning Officer. He continues to report on planning applications in and around the Village and of course was involved in reporting about the contentious planning application for the development at the Roften Works soon to be called Hooton Heath. The Residents' Society will continue to try to protect the Green Belt surrounding the Village and try to preserve the Conservation Area and try to ensure any development is sympathetic to Willaston as a whole. Many thanks go to Barry for taking on this job.

We are very lucky to have some lovely footpaths surrounding the Village. Our Footpaths Officer, Jane Townsend (who is also the Vice Chair and reading this now), has persuaded the Council to replace six stiles by kissing gates around Willaston in order to make the footpaths more accessible and safer. A further kissing gate has been added at Jane's request to control livestock and two more kissing gates are about to be installed replacing stiles. Many of you may already have found that you can walk to the mill from the centre of the village without climbing stiles. Please keep looking at our web site to see which other footpaths no longer have stiles. Footpath signage is either missing or in a poor state and efforts have been made to have them repaired or replaced. Jane and one or two others on the Committee also cleared the footpath behind the Memorial Hall recently. Jane has also been involved in contacting the Highway Department to ask for improved traffic calming where the Wirral Way crosses Hadlow Road. Many thanks go to Jane for all her hard work and also to her helpers.

The lottery continues to raise funds for Willaston Residents' and Countryside Society and of course adds a little fun into the fundraising by having 3 winning tickets drawn each month. This form of fundraising raises the profile of the Society and everyone in Willaston can buy a ticket if they wish. Some tickets appear to be luckier than others – not mine I would add! Many thanks to Hilary Booth for taking over this important job which keeps us going financially and of course to all those who take part in the lottery. It is a lot of hard work and we do appreciate the work Hilary puts into it.

The Society is building a website for the community of Willaston. Remember if you live in and around the Village so you are automatically a member of the Society. The website is yours please use it. It will contain news and anything (within reason) that the community would like to see, for example fundraising events and special events (special birthdays, weddings, achievements etc) and news. If you would like to

comment on what you would like to see on the website please use the comment facility and tell us all about it. It will also enable the community to contact the Committee and give their views. We hope the website will help to establish openness between the Committee and the community.

This year we have also opened up Committee meetings to residents. Residents may attend meetings and discuss any issues they have in the first 15 minutes of Committee meetings. However, because of the lack of space in the Committee Room (we can only accommodate up to 3 extra people at the meetings) we ask you telephone the Secretary first to ensure there is space.

Willaston has had a busy year also:

A lot of activity was created by the Village Festival Society for this year's Festival to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee and of course the fantastic Olympics. A drive in movie was arranged, raffles, a fashion show and a big lunch amongst other activities culminated in 2 fun days on the Johnston Recreation Ground. Congratulations to Joan Butcher and her team for giving the Village a summer to remember.

The Traffic Calming Committee carried out an analysis of the traffic survey the Council conducted and came up with some startling results. They produced a survey asking residents about the speed of the traffic going through the village. The majority of respondents voted for the speed limit to be reduced to 20 miles per hour throughout the Village. The results of the survey have been presented to the Council for their response. Thank you to the Traffic Calming Committee for all your hard work.

Much fundraising has gone on in the Village to replace the stolen plaques on the Memorial outside Christ Church. Praise must be given to the young people of the village for their efforts for example the Rainbows raised money through a sponsored 'scoot' whilst the Rangers cycled to West Kirby and back dressed as characters from the Wizard of Oz they had great fun but were very tired at the end of the journey. The Memorial Plaques are to be replaced and the Memorial will be consecrated on Remembrance Sunday 11 November 2012.

The Friends of Willaston Meadow play an essential part in retaining natural habitat in the area. We've got a Great Crested Newt living in Jacksons Pond! It was found by a herpetologist, visiting the Friends of Willaston Meadow. This means any work on the pond will have to stop at certain times of the year. Willaston Primary School has been making use of the Meadow and the children have planted 30 trees.

Many thanks must go to our local councillor Myles Hogg who has regularly attended Committee meetings to update us on what council backed schemes and funding schemes are available to the community and any Council decisions made that may affect us. The information received from Myles has proved to be very helpful to us and the Village community over the last year.

Thanks also goes to the many residents who do work behind the scenes to make Willaston a good place to live from those who pick up litter to the Home Watch team and to those who provide enjoyment for others (Darby and Joan Club for example). Thank you also must go to the businesses in the Village who provide us with necessary services and add colour to our village – the butcher's shop is always eye catching.

Many of you will be aware that I have now resigned from the Committee of Willaston Residents and Countryside Society and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the Committee members for their support during the last year. What must be remembered is that the Committee, which is made up of representatives from Village organisations, Resident Representatives and Officers, is a team of volunteers who give their time freely. Thank you all for all your hard work and support over the last 12 months.

As time moves on so must the Committee. We will have a new Chair and a new Secretary and I ask for the rest of the Committee to rally around these two new people and work as a team to raise the profile of the Society. They will be doing things differently and because it will be different it doesn't mean it's wrong. I know they will have the needs of the community at heart. I wish good luck to the new Chair and Secretary and to the rest of the Committee."

The Vice Chair added her own thanks to Barbara Jordan (Chair) for the work she had done over the past year. She closed by offering the Society's thanks to Jim Goodwin (Secretary) for his services to the Residents' Society over many years. The meeting responded with a round of applause to which Jim acknowledged his thanks.

4 Annual Accounts and Treasurer's Report

Hilary Booth, Treasurer, commenced her report by saying the Society had an interesting, if more complicated year, financially. The Residents Society has had the standard regular payments going out for Insurance, Room Hire, etc. She asked people to refer to the accounts which had been placed on the seats before the meeting.

She stressed that the Residents' Society does not receive an income and would have had serious financial problems if the lottery was not in existence.

She commented that:

- 4.1 The Society has been able to transfer £400 from the Fundraising Account to the Residents' Society Current Account. Lottery rules state that at least 60% of takings must be paid out in prize money and the remaining 40% is profit and to cover expenses. This year the lottery has been supported by villagers once more and she expressed the Society's thanks.
- 4.2 Membership of the Lottery is for 16 months this year and not 12 months, as previously, in order that

ALL Accounts will have the same financial year end for the AGM in 2013. This will reduce confusion and make it easier generally. Obviously the profit will appear slightly greater this year due to the extra four months duration, but it will still represent no more than the 40% allowed. (A one-off extra prize will be given if necessary)

- 4.3 Regarding the "Willaston District Community Plan" the Treasurer said she would like to stress that this is led by a completely independent Committee – but ALL monies have to go through the Residents' Society's Bank Account, as instructed by the Cheshire Community Action Group. The money is NOT available for use by the Residents' Society and she had shown it separately to try to avoid confusion for Willaston residents thinking that this money is available to spend. IT IS NOT. The Willaston District Community Plan has to account to the Residents' Society for all monies spent. Otherwise they run their own budget to suit their own requirements by their own committee.
- 4.4 In discussion with the Auditor it was felt that it was better that the three account balances be shown separately, but that they should be incorporated in the final analysis for the balance sheet showing all activities.
- 4.5 The Treasurer pointed out that the Gambling Licence was paid from the Residents' Society's account as it may be used for other fund raising activities.

The Treasurer said she hoped she had managed to explain these accounts in enough detail. The Accounts have been audited by Mr. Nigel Pratten as "An honest Record of the Finances as recorded in the Accounts Ledger"

There were no issues raised and approval of the accounts was proposed by Sue Unsworth and seconded by Keith Butcher. The accounts were approved by the members.

5 **Election of Officers and Resident Representatives**

As already mentioned our Chair, Barbara Jordan, is retiring from the Society's Committee at this meeting. The post of Chair is, therefore, open for election this evening.

In accordance with the 3-year rotation of posts, the officer positions of Secretary, Vice Chair and Publicity Officer are open for election. Jim Goodwin, Secretary, has previously announced his retirement at the AGM. Nominations were requested on the Notice Boards and the AboutMyArea website in July.

5.1 **Chair**

The Vice Chair said the Society had received one nomination for Chris Hampshire and asked if there were any more. There being no other candidate the Vice Chair asked for a Proposer [Cath Walker] and Seconder [Barry Vowles] for Chris Hampshire. By a show of hands Chris Hampshire was elected as Chair.

At this point the Vice Chair handed the meeting over to the new Chair.

The Chair introduced himself and expressed his thanks to Barbara Jordan for her valuable work as Chair during the past year.

5.2 **Vice Chair**

The Chair announced one nomination for Jane Townsend (for re-election) and asked if there were any more. There being no other candidate the Chair asked for a Proposer [Hilary Booth] and Seconder [Pat James] for Jane Townsend. By a show of hands Jane Townsend was re-elected as Vice Chair.

Before the election for Secretary took place the Chair said he wished to express his own thanks to Jim Goodwin for being the Society's Secretary for many years and who, he hoped, would complete the Minutes for the AGM after the new Secretary was appointed. This was followed by a round of applause from the membership.

5.3 **Secretary**

The Chair announced one nomination for Sarah Shannon and asked if there were any more. There being no other candidate the Chair asked for a Proposer [Keith Butcher] and Seconder [Roger James] for Sarah Shannon. By a show of hands Sarah Shannon was elected as Secretary.

5.4 **Publicity Officer**

The Chair announced one nomination for Sue Unsworth (for re-election) and asked if there were any more. There being no other candidate the Chair asked for a Proposer [Jean Lee] and Seconder [Glenn Ayres] for Sue Unsworth. By a show of hands Sue Unsworth was re-elected as Publicity Officer.

5.5 **Resident Representatives**

The Chair announced one nomination from Vicki Spraggon and asked if there were any more. Two further candidates, Leanne Kershaw and Glenn Ayres, announced their intention to stand.

The Chair asked for a Proposer [Sue Unsworth] and Seconder [Roy Spraggon] for Vicki Spraggon. By a show of hands Vicki Spraggon was elected as a Resident Representative.

The Chair asked for a Proposer [Vicki Spraggon] and Seconder [Sue Unsworth] for Leanne Kershaw. By a show of hands Leanne Kershaw was elected as a Resident Representative.

The Chair asked for a Proposer [Sue Unsworth] and Seconder [Hilary Booth] for Glenn Ayres. By a show of hands Glenn Ayres was elected as a Resident Representative.

The Society is pleased to have these appointments and to confirm the positions will take effect immediately.

The Society's Officers for 2012 / 2013 are:

Chair: Chris Hampshire
Vice Chair: Jane Townsend
Secretary: Sarah Shannon
Treasurer: Hilary Booth
Planning Officer: Barry Vowles
Footpaths Officer: Jane Townsend
Publicity Officer: Sue Unsworth
Trustee to the Memorial Hall: Keith Butcher

6 Committee Representation

The committee of Willaston Residents' & Countryside Society proposed that two additional organisations should be represented on the WR&CS Committee and request that these organisations appoint a representative to be a member of the WR&CS Committee.

6.1 The Willaston Royal British Legion Branch

The Chair asked for a Proposer [Rev. Ray Dent] and Seconder [Eileen MacDonald].

By a show of hands the members approved that Willaston Royal British Legion Branch be represented on the Willaston Residents' & Countryside Society Committee

6.2 The Willaston Surgery Patient Participation Group

Before the group were appointed, Mr. Rob King, Vice Chair, was invited to introduce the group to the members. Mr. King spoke of the requirement for all surgeries to have a patient forum group to represent patient interests. He added that the group may well change its name.

Mr. King referred to how the group was formed and the need to explain to the community possible changes that could take place to facilities when Willaston Surgery's contract is up for renewal, by tender, in approximately eighteen months. This would coincide with the retirement of Dr. G Meyer.

Mr. King said the group required a broader base and was keen for residents to take part. The group will be holding a meeting in October, which will be publicised around the Village, and he encouraged as many as possible to attend.

The Chair then asked for a Proposer [Sarah Shannon] and a Seconder [Barry Vowles].

By a show of hands the members approved that Willaston Surgery Patient Participation Group be represented on the Willaston Residents' & Countryside Society Committee

6.3 The Society's Constitution will be amended to include both organisations.

7 Open Forum

7.1 Sheila Harden asked if anything was being done about parking around The Green.

The Chair responded by saying that the Residents' Society's committee had proposed, through Cllr. Hogg, that the Council implement a parking restriction of 3 hours between 8am and 6pm.

It was asked how the enforcement would be policed when one member had noted police officers parking their cars on The Green and then driving away in a single car.

The Chair replied that the Society had requested further enforcement when the measures were implemented. Another committee member pointed out that Cllr. Hogg had recommended parking issues to be photographed, preferably with a date and time showing, and reported to the police. It was also pointed out that police officers do attend the Friday Market in the Memorial Hall on certain weeks of the month. Residents were advised to phone 101 to report illegal parking issues.

7.2 Eileen MacDonald had been asked to mention that there is still no disabled parking in the Village.

[The Society and Cllr. Hogg have discussed this issue on numerous occasions but putting a disabled parking place by the Post Office would result in both existing parking places being removed.]

7.3 Pat James wanted to know what was happening to the Church Hall site.

Rev. Dent responded by saying that the Church had to be 'squeaky clean' over arrangements but he expected movement by the end of the month.

7.4 Ann Dutton enquired why two large houses had been built down the small lane off Neston Road, beyond Meadow Lane. The Planning Officer replied that the Society had raised objections but permission was granted by the Council in January 2012. Restrictions on 'in-fill' were in the Local Plan and originally three houses had been proposed.

7.5 Alison Minchew enquired if the Church Yard gardens were being maintained.

Rev. Dent responded by saying that the Church had a contract but the contractor didn't do very well and the matter was being taken up. The contractor did return and the grass is tidy now.

Vivien Ley, Church Warden, said the Church could only afford six cuts per year and needed volunteers to cut the grass. Alison said she would willingly cut the grass.

7.6 Peter Dutton said he was glad a group had been formed to represent the patients of Willaston Surgery and to keep a check on the changing situation.

7.7 A member asked if there were any plans to upgrade the children's play area.

Roger James, Johnston Recreation Ground Committee member, responded by saying Council

savings did not provide money for play areas and Cllr. Hogg had been asked if money could be provided from his budget. He added that current Council policy appears to be "if it breaks, take it away".

Jane Townsend said the matter had been raised with the Willaston District Community Plan and the question of play equipment would probably be included in the forthcoming questionnaire. She urged all residents to complete the questionnaire if they want something done as this would put more pressure on the Council. The Chair repeated that the WDCP is not part of the Residents' Society. Eileen MacDonald said Myles Hogg had done a lot, but money for play areas is beyond a councillor's budget. Vivien Ley said two swing seats had been replaced.

- 7.8 A member asked for maintenance of the pavements in Hooton Road. Joan Butcher asked for additional street lighting and another member complained of being scratched by bushes when walking down Hooton Road towards the station. The Chair said the issues would be followed up with Cllr. Hogg. It was also pointed out that the Council had written to many owners of land on Hooton Road advising them to tidy their hedges or the Council would do the work and charge for the service.
- 7.9 Joan Butcher said thanks for all the kind words about the Summer Festival. The Willaston Village Festival Society AGM will be held on 17th November followed by a celebratory lunch. She appealed for more committee members to join the Festival Society.
- 7.10 Eileen MacDonald said large ruts had been made on the Wirral Way from Hadlow Road Station in the Neston direction. A member said she had seen a man opening the crossing gate at 5am and driving his car along the Wirral Way towards where horses are kept. The Chair said the Residents' Society will try to ascertain who this is and whether anything can be done to stop further damage.

8 Guest Speaker

The Chair then handed the floor to our Guest speaker, David Nind.

David gave a much appreciated talk, illustrated by photographs, of ten years in the life of Big Meadow, from its inception by Willaston Residents' & Countryside Society to it being awarded Site of Biological Importance (SBI) Grade C status.

During the talk David spoke of the abundance of flora and fauna found on the site and the numerous people who had made it such a success, including Friends of the Society, local residents, school children from Willaston Primary School, Wirral Conservation Volunteers, the Countryside Rangers and Council departments.

After taking questions David was thanked by the Chair for a most interesting talk. The membership responded with loud applause. The Chair presented David with a gift in appreciation.

9 A.O.B.

- 9.1 Mr. Richard Berry, Chair of Willaston Royal British Legion Branch, wished to thank the Village for its response to the War Memorial Fund and recalled it is a year since the plaques were stolen. The new plaque is a combination of the two former plaques on account of the cost to replace both. The RBL branch involved the Council and much had been achieved resulting in a new plaque being commissioned and John Sanderson laying flags and constructing steps to the memorial. The new plaque will be consecrated on Remembrance Sunday, 11th November 2012.
- 9.2 The Society's Treasurer said anyone could join the lottery and forms were available in the Hall.

10 Close of Meeting

- 10.1 The Chair said, by way of setting expectations, that although the actions taken will be followed up, members shouldn't expect things to happen overnight as it is often a slow process to get things implemented.
- 10.2 Thanks were given to Pat James for organising the cheese and wine.
- 10.3 There being no other business, the Chair closed the meeting and invited everyone to enjoy the cheese and wine.

These Minutes are subject to ratification.

J Goodwin,
Retiring Secretary

Date of the next AGM: 7.30pm, Friday 27th September 2013, in the Memorial Hall.

See the latest from Willaston Residents' & Countryside Society by visiting:
'About Us' on the Society's website: <http://www.willastoninwirralresidents.org> or
the AboutMyArea website: <http://www.aboutmyarea.co.uk/Cheshire/Neston/CH64/Villages-in-CH64/Willaston>

Email Willaston Residents' & Countryside Society through the 'Contact' page on the Society's website, the link on the AboutMyArea website's WR&CS page or directly to admin@willastoninwirralresidents.org.
Write to the Society c/o the Secretary, Memorial Hall, The Green, Willaston, Neston CH64 2XR