



## Willaston Village Meeting

Friday 17th May 2024 - Willaston Memorial Hall

This is a summary of the notes taken at the meeting that took place from 7 - 9pm.

Introduction (taken from previously circulated literature & the WR&CS website)

This village meeting was arranged following an earlier consultation of the WR&CS Committee, where it was highlighted once again that finding willing volunteers to take on vacant roles, or even take a lead on specific projects identified by residents, is impossible. Significant Officer roles remain unfilled despite continued efforts to recruit to these key positions. Several Officers have now confirmed that they will not seek re-election at the next AGM later this year, and/or will resign.

In addition to the above, the Society received a Subject Access Request under data protection legislation in 2023. Resolving this, and legal advice obtained, made it clear that the structure of the Society in its present form should change as soon as possible, identifying that if it was to continue, it should perhaps become a formal, incorporated body. However, even if a new organisation was to be set up, WR&CS must close and cease its operations before any new organisation/company could start afresh with a new constitution. Consequently, a Special General Meeting has been arranged for 20th September 2024 when the Society will close.

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There was an excellent attendance at the meeting, with people queuing to get into the hall. When the meeting commenced, the hall was full to capacity, with many people standing. Everyone who signed the attendance sheets lives in the village.

Brian Greenhalgh, WR&CS Vice Chair, thanked everyone for their attendance & expressed his wish that the meeting would help villagers decide on a way forward. With a prepared PowerPoint presentation Brian discussed the following:

- ✓ The current Constitution & organisation of WR&CS.
- ✓ The composition, aims & structure of the Society (which has remained almost unaltered since its inauguration in 1975).
- ✓ Possible options for a new incorporated organisation e.g. Parish Council, Community Benefit Society, Company Limited by Guarantee. Alternatively, and perhaps less complex, a new village organisation could be established with a new Constitution.

N.B. Unfortunately, due to the number of people in attendance, visibility of the slides was limited. This presentation can be found on the WR&CS website at [willastoninwirralresidents.org](http://willastoninwirralresidents.org)

Upon completion of the presentation, Brian stated that hopefully this meeting would lead on to the development of a working party with further meetings to follow. The floor was then opened for further discussion.



# **WILLASTON**

Residents' & Countryside Society

*N.B. As many people making comments were not identified, the comments have been documented without names. For ease, comments have been placed in a logical order.*

- ✓ The main point to be established this evening is whether the village actually wants a new organisation to be set up.
- ✓ Past achievements of WR&CS were summarised e.g. raising funds for the children's playground on the Recreation ground, establishing Friends of Hadlow Road Station, raising funds for & installing the Christmas lights on the village green. For further details go to the WR&CS website: [willastoninwirralresidents.org](http://willastoninwirralresidents.org)
- ✓ It was hoped that a new organisation could continue these successful ventures.
- ✓ A new enterprise was discussed involving a number of Willaston businesses, who would set up a Community Interest Company, creating a vibrant business community which could engage with & benefit the wider Willaston Community.
- ✓ It was identified that Cheshire Community Action can help with the setting up of a new village organisation; their advice is to establish a charitable organisation rather than a company.
- ✓ As few people here knows the advantages/disadvantages of various options put forward this evening, it would require another meeting to discuss this in more detail.
- ✓ Councillor Myles Hogg explained that a Parish Council (PC) is part of local government. It is a rather complex structure which would require a village referendum & it takes approx. a year to be formally set up. A question was raised looking at possibilities of 'sharing' a PC with other neighbouring villages?
- ✓ With a 'show of hands', a majority of attendees were in favour of a new village organisation being formed.
- ✓ Queries were also raised asking if volunteers would be willing to form a new organisation after the difficulty experienced by WR&CS.
- ✓ It was clarified that although WR&CS will help & support the establishment of a new village organisation (if that is the decision made), it will not be actively involved as that would be the responsibility of the new members.
- ✓ A suggestion was made to retain the current organisation's name; however it was felt by many that a new organisation should start afresh with a new identity & a new name.

Upon completion of the discussion, those interested in joining a Working Party (to move this initiative forward), were asked to give their contact details at the front of the hall.

**These notes were compiled by Sue Hunter, WR&CS Secretary.**

**As stated at the start of the meeting, the meeting was recorded to ensure accuracy.  
In accordance with GDPR recommendations, this recording was then deleted  
when the notes were verified.**