

WILLASTON RESIDENTS' AND COUNTRYSIDE SOCIETY

Many residents in Willaston are not fully aware of the activities and achievements of the village Residents Society, which for the past 50 years has been the only pan village organisation to represent the views and wishes of those who call Willaston their home. Over the years the Residents Society have raised funds for various key activities and developments within the village and taken action on some major initiatives. These include

- Raising funds for the children's playground on the Recreation ground and negotiating with our Council CW&C to pay for and manage the ongoing maintenance.
- Establishing Friends of Hadlow Road Station who have significantly improved the Station for the benefit of our community, with its pop-up Café and Santas Grotto.
- Raising funds for and installing the Christmas lights on the village green. The funds raised recently for the new light include cover for electricity costs and maintenance for several years.
- Establishing the Willaston Festival Society which over the years has put on several festivals in the village, and together with them the Residents Society ran events for the Queens Jubilees.
- Purchasing and maintaining the two Noticeboards in the village.
- Gaining awards for Best Kept Village several times in the 1990s and early 2000s.
- Clearing and maintaining Jackson's Pond, which led to the establishment of the Big Meadow
- Establishing and managing litter picking groups to keep the village tidy.
- Ensuring that the 20mph speed limit was introduced in the village centre.
- Ensuring local footpaths have been maintained and arranging funding for the many kissing gates installed. The Society also produced Village Walks maps to encourage footpath use.
- Producing Community Plans in Consultation with village residents to ensure our Borough Council understand Residents wishes in Planning and other local issues.
- Regularly challenging, and holding to account, our Borough Council Planning Department on Planning Applications that could have a negative impact on the village and our Green Belt. A recent example is the Retirement Apartments on the British Legion site. The original application was for a larger and more intrusive development and the Planning Officers recommended approval until the Society took action. The final version is more appropriate for the village.
- The Society took legal action many years ago to register the main Village Green as common land to ensure it can never be developed, and also the Little Green was given added protection.

These are just a sample of a larger range of activities which only happened because of the actions of the Residents Society. If the Society dies, and no-one in the village volunteers to enable a new organisation to be established, then the village will probably suffer.