

## **`Willaston Residents' and Countryside Society (WR&CS)**

Minutes of the Committee Meeting held on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> September 2021  
in Willaston Methodist Chapel Schoolroom

Present - Officers: Chris Hampshire (Chair), Vicky Spraggon (Acting Vice-Chair), Sarah Shannon (Secretary), Hilary Booth (Treasurer), Ceri Jones (Social Media), Margaret Smyth (Acting Footpaths Officer),

Present - Committee Members: Lyn Jackson-Eves, Roy Spraggon, Rob King, Suzie Dixon, Ruth McElroy, Annette Troake, Myles Hogg, Jane Townsend, Fiona Mosley, Brian Greenhalgh, Barry Vowles, Helen Mayles, Madeline Hughes and Sandra Kettiros

### **Residents' Issues**

No residents attended to raise any issues.

### **Committee Meeting**

#### **1. Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from John Woodrow, Liz Young, Fiona Ennys, Sue Unsworth, Sheila Smith, Viv Ley and Sheila Greenhalgh.

#### **2. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **3. Minutes of Previous Meeting – 26<sup>th</sup> July 2021**

There was one correction – the date should be 26<sup>th</sup> July 2021, not 2020.

With this correction, the minutes were proposed as correct by Ceri Jones, seconded by Hilary Booth and unanimously accepted by members present as a true record of the meeting.

#### **4. Matters arising from the Minutes of 20<sup>th</sup> January 2020**

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

##### **4.1 Willaston History (item 4.1)**

Jane said that she had got things stored and done an inventory. There is still a need to discuss what to do with it.

**Action: Jane/Sarah**

##### **4.2 Village Facilities (item 5.1)**

Myles confirmed that 90% of allotments are owned by Willaston residents.

##### **4.3 Speedwatch (item 5.2)**

Chris confirmed that he had emailed Sarah Duffy and been passed on to the lead in CWaC but we had heard nothing from him. Myles agreed to chase this up.

**Action: Myles**

##### **4.4 Walking Bus (item 5.2)**

Sarah still needs to discuss this with school.

**Action: Sarah**

##### **4.5 Speed Restrictions (item 5.2)**

Chris had been in contact with CWaC about 20mph zones for Hooton Road and Hadlow Road. We have received a response that they will do a speed assessment in both roads. However, they only implement 20mph if the average speed is below 24mph. It was agreed to chase this up and copy the email to Myles.

**Action: Chris**

#### **4.6 Dog Poo (item 5.3)**

Chris had been in contact with Environmental Services about putting a dog poo bin in Mill Lane but no response has been received. It was agreed to chase this up.

**Action: Chris**

#### **4.7 Pavements**

A letter still needs to be written to the Council about pavements in the centre of the village.

**Action: Chris/Sarah**

#### **4.8 Hooton Road**

Chris had been in contact with CWAC about improvements to the pavement and lighting in Hooton Road but no response has been received. It was agreed to chase this up.

**Action: Chris**

### **5. Groups**

#### **5.1 Joint Coordination Group for Queen's Platinum Jubilee**

Brian introduced himself as Chair of the Festival Society and explained a joint group has been set up with WR&CS to coordinate a Festival event over the four days of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee which takes place on 2<sup>nd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> June 2022. Currently WR&CS is represented by Chris and Sarah. Brian explained the current planned events and asked people to let him know if they, or their organisation wishes to put on an event so that we can ensure it fits in with other activities.

Brian also explained that the group are planning a lasting legacy which is hoped to be an Art Trail around the village, working with Chester University Fine Art Department. An initial meeting to develop the proposals is planned for 1<sup>st</sup> October. There will be an introduction to the community about this at the WR&CS AGM.

Hilary asked if there are any plans to plant a tree. Sarah said that if a site can be agreed, this could be incorporated but any interested party needs to agree the site can be used.

Brian explained that the group will need to raise some funds to put the plans into action but there are some residue monies in the Festival Society account which can support the activities.

Chris thanked Brian for his work on this project and asked organisation representatives to take the information back to their committees to consider how they wish to get involved.

#### **5.2 Environmental Group**

Ceri explained that the group had not met yet but she is putting together a draft terms of reference and they will be meeting shortly to discuss this and will present it to the WR&CS committee meeting in November.

### **6. Annual General Meeting - Friday 8<sup>th</sup> October in the Memorial Hall**

#### **6.1 Review of Committee Members and Vacancies**

Sarah had circulated a paper in advance which showed that most Officers are up for re-election as we did not have an AGM in 2020. It was noted that currently there has been no interest in the roles of Chair or Secretary and Chris and Sarah do not wish to continue after significant periods of time in the roles.

Jane proposed a vote of thanks to all retiring Officers.

#### **6.2 AGM**

Chris said that he would continue to Chair the AGM if no-one is elected. As Sarah is on holiday at the time of the AGM, Ceri agreed to take the minutes. It was agreed not to have any refreshments after the meeting. Sarah will produce some fliers which need to be delivered to all houses in the village.

**Action: Sarah/All**

### **7. Planning Matters**

#### **7.1 Planning Report**

Chris reported that CWaC has turned down the McCarthy and Stone application again and had added extra conditions. They had also requested a viability assessment.

Myles said that he would be working with the Hooton Residents' Association about the application relating to the Hooton Hotel and commented that this is outside our area.

Myles also noted that the developers at Hanns Hall livery have now applied to increase their curtilage to make gardens for the houses being developed which is likely to be refused by CWaC.

## **7.2 Crematorium**

The planning application for the crematorium is likely to be published shortly. Committee members expressed concern that this could extend ribbon development on the Green Belt along Hooton Road. However, some members also questioned if WR&CS should be responding as it is outside our area, although there are clear issues about the increase in traffic through the village.

Barry proposed that if the crematorium application goes in, WR&CS should object on the basis that it is on Green Belt land. Jane seconded this but three members abstained as they were unsure whether we should comment on this basis because it is outside our area.

Brian then counter-proposed that we should fully support Hooton Resident Society's objections to the proposal to build a crematorium on Green Belt land. This was seconded by Jane and agreed unanimously.

Chris noted that anyone can object or support the proposal for a crematorium on an individual basis, through the Council planning portal.

## **7.3 Request from Michelle Swan to develop a Neighbourhood Plan**

Chris explained that he and Myles had met Michelle following her input to the last WR&CS meeting. She has now been in contact with various people requesting that a Neighbourhood Plan is developed for Willaston and Hooton. He noted that this had been discussed by WR&CS in November 2019 at which point we decided not to pursue this option.

Barry explained that several Officers had met a representative from Cheshire Community Action who had explained the process involved. It was a lot of work and could take up to three years to complete. The final plan has to go to all electors in the area to be voted on. The plan can't just be a list of what we don't want but needs to identify places where development should take place in the future – it needs to be a balanced document. Barry expressed the view that there is very little space to develop in Willaston and little willingness to discuss complete change.

After discussion, Chris proposed that this is something that we do not wish to pursue and Hilary seconded the proposal, which was agreed unanimously.

Chris expressed concern that Michelle is writing to people asking that a Neighbourhood Plan be developed and suggesting that WR&CS support her in this. It was agreed that we should inform her of our decision and ask her to stop using the WR&CS name.

**Action: Myles, Chris and Sarah**

Chris thanked Barry for all he had done on planning issues and specifically in establishing WR&CS as a highly effective contributor to all planning applications in Willaston that CWaC Planning Officers took seriously.

## **8. Results of Questionnaire and Agreed Actions**

### **8.1 Theme Four: Planning**

Ceri confirmed that the link to the planning report is now being put onto Facebook each month.

A summary of how individuals can object to planning proposals should be developed and put onto the website page and noticeboards. This will also be added to the AGM slides.

**Action: Sarah/Chris**

### **8.2 Theme Five: Communication**

It was agreed that there would be a second newsletter in November.

**Action: Sarah**

All organisation representatives were asked to submit information about their activities so that they can be promoted on the website, Facebook and noticeboards.

## **9. Finance Report**

Hilary confirmed that there had been little change to the figures circulated for July, other than payment for a gift for the auditor along with a donation of £150. The main account is £1560.74 in credit.

As Hilary is stepping down as Treasurer, Vicky thanked Hilary for being the Treasurer of WR&CS for eleven years.

Sarah said that it appears that HSBC are going to start charging for charity accounts so we may need to look at amalgamating accounts or going to a new bank. However, we have had nothing in writing so far.

## **10. Organisations' Reports**

The reports below had been submitted in advance.

### **10.1 Christ Church**

No report received

### **10.2 Friends of Hadlow Road Station Community Group**

No report received

### **10.3 Friends of Willaston Meadow** (submitted by Fiona Mosley)

Our AGM in August was well attended and everyone enjoyed the opportunity to meet together indoors again. Unfortunately, we had to say goodbye to several committee members: Elaine Mills (a founder member and source of great knowledge on the meadow), Tim Ley (a long standing member and stalwart of the volunteer sessions) and Ken Watson, who stood in as Treasurer during the pandemic. This leaves only four of us on the committee, and we hope that someone will step forward to be our new treasurer very soon.

Our recent tree trimming day under the watchful eyes of experts Tim and Russell was a great success. We were able to raise the canopies of some of the trees by Dead Man's Pond and remove some saplings. This has opened up the area to let in more light. We hope to plant woodland wild flower seeds under the trees. We also laid out a 'living fence' in School Wood to help to keep people out of the densely vegetated areas so wildlife is not disturbed, especially in the nesting season. Our next volunteer session is Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> October when we will continue with the tree work and mow the path around the meadow.

We are very much looking forward to our Apple Day on 2<sup>nd</sup> October on the village green. We hope everyone will come along to try pressing some apples for juice, try their hand at peeling an apple leaving the longest whole peel, or just tasting our apples from the community orchard in the meadow.

At the end of October members and volunteers are invited to join a pruning workshop. Katie Lowe will be teaching us how to prune fruit trees then we will give it a try ourselves. Places are limited, but if not filled, the event will be opened to all. Further details to follow.

### **10.4 Hadlow Green Singers** (submitted by Helen Mayles)

After a long break, Hadlow Green singers had 3 choir practices in the Memorial Hall in July/August for those willing and able to come. About 20 people attended. Following that, Autumn term rehearsals started at the beginning of September and numbers attending are not much lower than previously. It is hoped to have a Christmas concert in December.

### **10.5 Horticultural Society** (submitted by Pam Irving)

The September meeting on Tuesday 21st will be wine, nibbles and a short fun quiz. The October meeting should be as normal as it can be when we will be having Steve Halliwell talking about 'Gresgarth Hall and Gardens'. These are the gardens of Arabella Lennox-Boyd in Lancaster.

It has been agreed by the Committee that Subscriptions of £8.00 will be collected in January/February next year and they will last until March 2023.

### **10.6 Johnston Recreation Ground**

Myles reported at the meeting that the football club wish to extend the pavilion and the tennis club is raising funds for court refurbishment.

### **10.7 Memorial Hall** (submitted by Rob King)

The AGM followed by our bimonthly meeting of Trustees took place last week. Whilst the AGM had been advertised no villagers attended the meeting.

Bookings for the Hall are now on the increase which is encouraging. Keith Greenfield will be stepping down as Treasurer at the end of the current financial year and we are hopeful that a replacement (Qualified Accountant recently retired) will take over from Keith. This is, yet again, someone from outside Willaston who is taking on a key Trustee role and it is disappointing that there is insufficient interest within the village to fill vacancies that arise!

The pandemic has obviously affected our income stream over the last 18 months but our end of year accounts are projected to remain relatively healthy and we have a current credit balance just in excess of £40,000. Heating costs are a major area of expenditure and in an attempt to regulate things more efficiently HIVE systems have been fitted serving the two boilers. This means that temperatures can be monitored remotely and adjusted as required. Controllers are located both in the main hall and committee room. Our Cleaner has been attending twice per week as the Hall has been in regular use by S4YC Mondays through to Fridays. In view of the increased level of bookings our cleaning schedule is being increased to three times per week. Currently there can be delays in getting any repairs dealt with because tradesmen such as plumbers, electricians, decorators who are readily available to do work for us are not easy to come by.

At the AGM I advised that it is my intention to stand down as a Trustee at the end of this year having served on the committee in excess of ten years.

#### **10.8 Scouting**

No report received.

#### **10.9 Willaston CE Primary School**

No report received.

#### **10.10 Willaston Football Club**

No report received.

#### **10.11 Willastonhey W.I. (submitted by Susie Dixon)**

At last we are getting back to normal and are having an afternoon tea on Friday 17th September at the Woodcote Hotel to celebrate our 40th anniversary held over from last year. Fifty-seven members are attending.

Ken Pye, the Liverpool historian, came to give us a talk in August on Curious and Amazing Tales of the Wirral.

Walking netball is commencing in October in the Memorial Hall. Our darts team haven't yet started up due to issues with parking at the venue. Knit and natter has been ongoing and is now taking place back at the Memorial Hall. Bridge group is up and running.

The next meeting is on 28th September. The speaker will be Ken Clarke and the subject is Mills of Wirral, Water and Wind.

Several new members have joined this year and if you are interested in joining the W.I you would be made very welcome.

#### **10.12 Willaston Methodist Chapel (submitted by Sheila Smith)**

We are delighted to announce that normal Chapel services have now resumed weekly at 10.45am every Sunday, with refreshments to follow. Everyone very welcome. Only selected services will be on Zoom.

The schoolroom is now available for hire. Please contact Carol Savage 327 3593 for enquiries.

#### **10.13 Willaston and South Wirral Rotary Club (Submitted by Fiona Mosley)**

Another successful book sale on the green at the August Bank Holiday weekend was followed by a social in the form of an afternoon of outdoor games and a picnic. We tried our hands at croquet, swingball, boules and patio Jenga and enjoyed sandwiches and cake. The end of September sees another 'booze tasting' evening where we bring along a variety of alcoholic beverages to expound on and for others to try.

In early October we have a club visit to the wonderful Ellesmere Port Boat Museum, who offer guided tours and refreshments for groups. October 24<sup>th</sup> is World Polio Day, and Rotary is committed to eliminating this disease from the planet. All clubs are encouraged to fund-raise, and our efforts this year have yet to be

finalised at the time of writing, but we hope you are able to support us on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> October if you see us around dressed in 'purple 4 polio'.

Our first big event since Covid is on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> November when we are holding a charity quiz in the Memorial Hall. Details will be announced soon. Food will be included and there will be a bar.

This autumn we are planning to work with Willaston Primary to help the children plant trees from the Woodland Trust and to try growing some trees from seed. The best time of year for tree planting is November and the children will need help digging their planting holes. We are also working with West Wirral Rotary to collect tree seeds as part of their Wirral-wide project.

We meet every 2<sup>nd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday at the Nags Head. Look out for our Facebook page to keep up to date with our activities.

#### **10.14 Willaston Surgery Patient Participation Group** (Submitted by John Woodrow)

Nothing to report

#### **10.15 Willaston Toddler Group**

No report received.

#### **10.16 Willaston Village Festival Society**

Separate report on Joint Co-ordination Group on agenda

### **11. Councillor's Report**

#### **11.1 Local Heritage List**

Myles reported that it is possible to designate groups of buildings that are not listed as important for local heritage. He suggested that this may be something we could take advantage of in the future and said he would see what impact the first listings have had.

#### **11.2 Public Rights of Way**

There is funding available to improve PRowS. Sarah and Margaret will liaise on this.

**Action: Sarah/Margaret**

#### **11.3 Slow Down 30mph sign**

Myles said that a sign is available and it was suggested it should be put where the village begins on Hooton Road.

#### **11.4 Remembrance Day**

Myles reported that there is unlikely to be a parade because of the difficulty of undertaking the required Covid risk assessments. However, there will be a service.

#### **11.5 Waste and Recycling**

60% of residents will have a new day for their waste and recycling collections so watch out for new information. The new system for bins will come in next year. Sandra asked if the old boxes will be collected and recycled and Myles said that this is not clear.

### **12. Footpaths and Bridleways**

Margaret reported that all paths have been strimmed and at the moment they are all usable. She is looking to improve FP 28 with Helen, who owns the land and the initial quote is being checked to see if it can be reduced. It was suggested that if a working party is needed, this can be advertised on Facebook.

Margaret and Brett Hoare had spent several hours clearing FP 32 where it leads off the A540 at the junction of Damhead Lane. Brett will continue to look after this, along with FP 33 that he also clears regularly. The committee proposed thanks to Brett.

### **13. Any Other Business**

#### **13.1 Scout Hut**

Vicky said that she understood that the Scout Hut has been condemned. Myles confirmed this and that they are not looking to build another hut there.

### **13.2 Traffic on Hooton Road**

Lyn said that she had witnessed a double lorry going along Hooton Road, which couldn't cope with the bends at the end of the village or into Benty Heath Lane.

### **13.3 Benches on Green**

Chris thanked Sandra for painting the benches on the Green. There is one more to be done. Sandra also noted that the noticeboard needs to be painted.

### **13.4 New Noticeboard on Recreation Ground**

Chris said that Liz Young had requested a new noticeboard, similar to the one on the Green for the Recreation Ground as the current one has deteriorated and is not big enough. Sarah agreed to get a costing from the company that provided the one on the Green. **Action: Sarah**

There being no other business, the meeting ended at 9.25pm.

### **Dates for future Committee Meetings:**

Monday 15<sup>th</sup> November 2021

AGM: Friday 8<sup>th</sup> October 2021