

Willington Parish Council

Annual Report to 31st March 2024

Welcome to Willington Parish Council's Annual Report for 2023/24. It contains details of the Parish Council's activities throughout the year, its financial statements and other relevant information.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT (by the Chairman of the Parish PC, Councillor Andrew Nicholas).

This was the ninth year of Willington Parish Council. For the past year we have been operating with a new team of Councillors and I would like to begin by thanking all of them for their hard work and contributions at our meetings and their leadership on various projects. We are governed by a Code of Conduct and all Councillors have conducted themselves courteously and with respect for me and for each other. This has made my role as Chairman easier to fulfil.

Sadly, Councillor Rob Merrick is standing down after our May meeting. Rob has made significant contributions to our discussions and could always be relied upon to put forward very sensible points of view, particularly on planning issues. Rob will be greatly missed. However, he has promised to maintain his involvement with our Christmas events; we are very grateful to him for doing so. Christmas in Willington would not be the great community celebration that it is, without the selfless contribution from Rob, Wendy and their family.

We now need to co-opt a new Councillor to fulfil our quota as soon as possible. It would be great if one of our ladies were to take up this role. Previously we have had a balanced council gender-wise and in my view, a female perspective creates a better council.

I will be stepping down as Chairman in May but will remain as a Councillor. I have enjoyed fulfilling this role for the last four years. I believe it is time to let someone else take the lead and as there is no shortage of talent in our council, I know the Chair will be in safe hands.

Parish Council Meetings

Seven Council meetings were held during year. The agendas for these meetings are posted on the village noticeboard and on the website, as are the minutes. We were pleased to welcome ten members of the public who attended our meetings and spoke to the council during the Open Forum on a number of issues. New Borough Councillors Tom Cooper and Ted Lush attended some of our meetings and kept us up to date with developments in Cheshire West and Chester. We are grateful to them for their support.

Village Events

We held a number of events during the year; the village picnic, open gardens, poppy display and Remembrance Day gathering, Santa walk and carols on The Green. We are grateful to our events team for all their hard work organising and planning these enjoyable events, all were a great success.

Achievements - during the year, the Council has:

- Purchased and installed a King Charles III Coronation Bench and a Willington Interpretation Board on The Green.

- Purchased an LED Christmas Tree to add to our festive lights on The Green.
- Achieved the implementation of a 30mph speed limit on Willington Road and supported speed compliance with an action plan.
- Renovated the finger post at Willington Corner.
- Corrected CWaC boundary details which incorrectly showed three properties in Waste Lane as being in Kelsall rather than in Willington.
- Started a new PC Facebook Page for sharing information and maintained our website to meet with legal requirements.
- CWaC Public Rights of Way have appointed a contractor to fix the steps and handrail at the top of Little Switzerland and repair to the sandstone retaining walls.
- We are continuing to pursue projects such as ownership of The Green, the replacement telephone kiosk at Willington Corner and super-fast fibre broadband for Willington.

Planning and Enforcement

We commented on eleven planning applications and raised a number of issues with CWaC Planning Enforcement. CWaC Planning have a backlog of applications and have been terribly slow to make decisions. However, they have recruited several new planning officers to address this situation.

Roads

It has been a long and slow process however we have managed to achieve the new 30mph speed limit on Willington Road and are pursuing speed limit reductions to 20mph limit on Chapel Lane, Rough Low and Gooseberry Lane. Tarvin Parish Council are representing us for a speed reduction on Willington Road from Lilac Close to the golf course at Oscroft.

We installed a traffic mirror opposite the junction of Boothsdale and Willington Road to improve visibility of traffic approaching from the direction of Kelsall.

Newsletters

We have continued to publish four newsletters during the year. Grateful thanks to Ian Armstrong for his editing and designing of our newsletter editions.

JA Nicholas

John Andrew Nicholas - Willington P.C. Chairman