

# **WILLINGTON PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT**

## **Year to 31 March 2019**

Welcome to Willington Parish Council's Annual Report for 2018/19. The following pages contain details of the Council's activities throughout the year, financial statements, and other relevant Council information.

### **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT (by the Chairman of the Parish Council, Councillor John Grimshaw).**

Your Parish Council has now four years of operation under its belt, and we are indeed grateful to be able to continue to hold our meetings here at Willington Hall.

You will be aware that there has been a recent election, and it was pleasing that this time it was contested, which is an indication of increased interest in what we do, with the following Councillors re-elected.... John Grimshaw, Jane Lowthion and Andrew Nicholas. And we welcome newly elected Donna Okell and Rob Merrick to the council.

Two long standing councillors, Pat Tyson Jones and Roy Penk have stepped down having given long service to both Delamere and Willington residents for many years. In the case of Roy 46 years; we would like to recognise both more formally later.

Not only do we have a new Council but a new Clerk. After fruitless advertising we suddenly had a flood of applicants and were pleased to appoint Rob Winterbourne who has lived here for 22 years, to the position. I am increasingly sure we have made the right decision.

Mike Hassall our Clerk for the past four years without whom we could not have successfully developed this council, is moving on to pastures new. We must thank him most sincerely for his guidance and patience! Thank you, Mike.

With the most able assistance of our Clerk and all councillors, we fully comply with all statutory requirements, and communicate our activities by putting

meeting agendas in our notice board, minutes of meetings on our web site, deliver four newsletters per year, and regularly update our website. You can also communicate with us on Facebook.

Our Borough Councillor, John Leather, regularly attends our meetings and keeps us up to date with developments at Cheshire West and Chester. As a result of the Borough Council election John has been re-elected, and will be joined by newly elected Harry Tonge. We look forward to welcoming both to our future meetings.

You will be pleased to know that the council has not increased the precept for 2019/20 that you pay as part of CWaC council tax. You will see from our finances that we have a healthy balance. If you have any questions I will be pleased to answer them.

### **Planning**

There have been six planning applications to consider. All were extensions with the exception of a garage with accommodation ancillary to the main house.

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### **Main Achievements**

- A salt/grit bin was located on Roughlow for residents to spread
- A picnic bench was located on The Green
- An Action Plan has been produced, and is reviewed monthly -out for consultation
- Litter Picking group formed
- Working party activity continues, and we thank those who attend.
- Defibrillator maintained and further CPR training given to residents who now total 62.
- Achieved Foundation Level of the Local Council Award Scheme.

## **Projects, Highways and PRW Department**

- Parish Boundary signage installed
- Agreed to remove debris on Willington Lane between Willington Hall entrances- action awaited
- Road repairs and blocked drains – reported upon.
- Chapel Lane/Willington Rd junction line marking altered to improve visibility when exiting Chapel Lane.

## **Dog fouling**

- Many notices posted bringing dog owners attention to this Nuisance

The situation is now much improved, with the exception of Gooseberry Lane.

## **Environment**

With regard to the condition of our footways, and we only have one i.e. along Willington Rd between Willington Corner and South View; keeping the footway clear of debris and getting absentee landowners to cut their hedges remains a challenge. We are in discussion with Highways re the hedge between Pebble Cottage and The Hob, Willington Rd.

- Himalayan Balsam remains a problem in Boothsdale and is now spreading to the adjacent wood land. The new owner of Boothsdale Farm is making some progress in eradicating this pernicious weed.
- Local footpaths are regularly walked and reported on to PRW officers.
- Road defects, flooding and fly tipping are reported to CWaC and checked upon.
- Speed checks on Chapel Lane. Surprisingly only one car was 'speeding'. Further checks have been requested!
- Your Council has decided to enter The Best Kept Village competition this year. It will be interesting to see how others 'see' us.
- The trees on the Green have been inspected and the dead branches removed.

- Two well attended working parties were held. One to collect litter (9 bin sacks). The other to remove leaves from the Green, also weeds and grass from the footpath between Pebble Cottage and The Hob, Willington Rd.

### **Village Design Statement (VDS)**

Now agreed and adopted by Cheshire West and Chester Council as supplementary planning guidance. Cllr Lowthion was the Council representative on the steering group. Ian Dingwall and Simon Walker both from Gooseberry Lane also agreed to be members, and we thank them for their time and guidance. All residents have received a copy and it is also on our website.

### **Financial Matters**

#### **How We Spend Your Money – The Statement of Accounts**

	Year to 31st March 2018 £	Year to 31st March 2019	See Note No
Balances brought forward	5,667	6,376	1
Plus Annual Precept	4,400	4,517	2
Plus Other Receipts	110	9	3
Less Staff Costs	2,258	2,510	4
Less Other Payments	1,543	2,512	5
Balances carried forward	6,376	5,880	6

#### **Notes**

1. Balances brought forward means Cash in the Bank Account.
2. Precept is the money the Parish Council receives from the Council Tax to carry out its duties.
3. Other Receipts covers all other income received by the Council.
4. Last year £108.40 received was VAT refunded covering the previous year's purchases and £1.91 bank interest. The £9 this year is bank interest received.
5. Staff Costs are the total costs of employees of the Council. Council increased the number of staff at the beginning of March 2019, taking on an Assistant Clerk who will replace the present Clerk in June 2019 when he leaves. (NB The Councillors are all volunteers and do not receive payment for their work)

6. Other Payments cover all other expenditure incurred by the Council.
7. Last year the main items were Insurance £280.00, finger post on Gooseberry Lane £195.01, training £129.98, newsletter, annual report and other printing £129.80, website maintenance £125.00, subscriptions £109.90, new printer and ink £94.89, general maintenance £94.81, audit fee £87.50, payroll software £69.20.
8. This year the main items are picnic table and benches £409.50, Village Design Statement £390.65, insurance £330.00, audit fees £291.00, subscriptions £227.04, general maintenance £197.36, computer software/support and stationery £151.55, website hosting £125.00, payroll software £72.00, printing £58.50.
9. Balances carried forward means cash in the bank accounts. Policy for the first four years of the newly created Council has been to aim to hold between a minimum of six and a maximum of twelve months of the most recent precept plus an estimate of any known likely fluctuations. The six and twelve month figures are reviewed annually to ensure that Council does not build up an unnecessary high bank balance or allow funds to fall below an acceptable level. The restricted funds held in the bank account are not part of reserves. Of the £5,880 in the accounts at 31st March 2019 £1,500 is restricted for the Parish Signage and £40 (from the Willington/Utkinton Fete) has been designated to a Community Fund. The most recent precept amounted to £4,517. Council consider that general reserves of £4,340 are on the high side but acceptable at the present time and in line with the approved policy. In order to bring down the cash at bank figure slightly during the coming year Council has not increased the Precept figure. As a result, it is expected that Council will overspend on training, salaries, and the cost of the May 2019 Parish Council election.

### **Parish Council Meetings**

- All Parish Council meetings are open meetings and members of the public are most welcome to attend and listen to the debates.
- If you want to come along to a meeting but don't want to stay until the end that is not a problem. Come and join us and then leave when you wish to do so. All we ask is that you come and go quietly.
- Meetings are normally held on the 4th Tuesday evening of January, March, May, July, September and November, at Willington Hall.
- The first 15 minutes of each meeting is a public forum where anyone can have his or her say on any local matter. The allocated time may be increased under certain circumstances

- An agenda for each meeting is placed on the Council's noticeboard.
- All approved minutes can be found on the Parish Council website

**Website** - Our website address is [www.willington.org.uk](http://www.willington.org.uk)

**Facebook** – Our Facebook address is Willington Parish Cheshire

Finally, I would like to thank all Councillors for their sound common sense and enthusiasm which has made my job as chairman relatively easy.

*John Grimshaw, Chairman. 8 May 2019*