

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF WILLINGTON PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT WILLINGTON HALL ON
TUESDAY 25th MARCH 2025**

PRESENT:

Councillor James Abbott
Councillor Stuart Ingram (Chairman)
Councillor John Lindsay (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Andrew Nicholas
Councillor Janet Smethurst

IN ATTENDANCE: Rob Winterbourne – Clerk to the Parish Council, Borough Councillor Tom Cooper, seven members of the public.

24/114 APOLOGIES – None.

24/115 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

24/115.1 New Written Requests for Dispensations

There were no new requests.

24/115.2 Declarations of Interest

Members were invited to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary or other Interest in any item of business on the agenda and if necessary, leave the meeting prior to discussion of that item.

None were declared.

24/116 OPEN FORUM

RESOLVED: that the Council meeting be adjourned for the Open Forum.

24/117 PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

RESOLVED: that the Council meeting be reconvened.

24/118 REPORT ON OPEN FORUM – the following items were raised:

- The ecological impact of any additional street lighting in the village
- The diversity of the Parish Council and the options to increase its size
- The impact of the revised housing targets for Cheshire West and Cheshire on local Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDP). Kelsall's plans for their NDP and Willington involvement in the plans was discussed.
- The opportunity to attend an event on Weds 26th March at the Alexandra Stadium in Crewe where officials from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) will present the details of the consultation on the Cheshire and Warrington devolution plans.

24/119 MINUTES OF MEETINGS - Minutes of the meeting of the full Council held on 28th January 2025

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

24/120 REPORT ON ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE MEETING ON 28th January 2025

24/120.1 Public Transport for Willington - Councillor Ingram provided an update. CWaC will not extend the current boundary of the pilot iTravel service. The Chairman and Borough councillor Tom Cooper will both raise the issue of public transport in the village with Aphra Brandreth MP.

24/120.2 Ownership of the Green – Councillor Abbott provided an update. We await a response from CWaC regarding the current situation and the options.

24/120.3 Fast Fibre Provision - Councillor Ingram provided an update. The plan to provide fast fibre by the end of 2026 stands. Although fast fibre may be provided to local businesses via small 'community' schemes.

24/121 PLANNING MATTERS

24/121.1 New Planning Applications – none.

24/121.2 Previous Applications - the status of outstanding applications and of recently approved/refused applications was noted.

24/121.3 Notes

24/121.3.i Reworking of the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) for Kelsall.

Councillor Ingram attended a meeting in Kelsall where updating the Kelsall NDP was considered. Councillor Ingram will work further with Kelsall PC to ensure Willington's involvement in the revised NDP's production.

24/121.3.ii Planning Enforcement for 22/01936/AGR - Agricultural building to store hay and machinery; Land Opposite Mead Cottage Willington Road Delamere.

The Clerk has raised the matter of the location of the agricultural building on land opposite Mead Cottage with CWaC Planning Enforcement (ref EN697697175); they have requested further details and photographs.

RESOLVED: that the Clerk contact CWaC Planning Enforcement putting the enforcement request on holding pending re-erection of the building or other planning developments.

24/122 INTERNAL AUDIT 2024-2025

RESOLVED: that the Council approve the application for exemption from external audit for 2024-25. And that the Chairman sign the exemption certificate as soon as possible.

RESOLVED: that the Council appoint JDH Business Services to undertake the internal audit for the year 2024-25.

24/123 INSURANCE REVIEW – the current insurance arrangements were reviewed.

RESOLVED: that the existing insurance cover meets the requirements of the Council.

24/124 STATEMENT ON INTERNAL CONTROL

RESOLVED: that the statement of internal control for 2024-25 be approved.

24/125 TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

The Training and Development plan was reviewed and outstanding training noted.

RESOLVED: that the Training and Development plan is appropriate.

24/126 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND EVENTS

24/126.1 VE Day Celebrations on Thursday 8th May 2025 and VE Day themed picnic on 11th May 2025 – Councillor Abbott provided an update. The Thursday evening event will include a fish and chip supper and will be held at The Boot

24/126.2 Open Gardens 2025 – Councillor Abbott provided an update; the event will be on Sunday 8th June 2025; five or six gardens will be open.

24/127 ROAD SAFETY

24/127.1 Hedges and Trees Obstructing Footpaths and Highways – the Clerk has contacted CWaC Highways regarding the responsibility for cutting the hedges on The Pad. We await a reply.

24/127.2 Obstructions on or near the carriageway – obstructions on Chapel Lane were discussed. The Clerk had contacted CWaC Highways who advised that specific examples be raised with them.

RESOLVED: that the Clerk and Councillors physically review the situation and raise any specifics as requested by CWaC Highways.

24/127.3 Purchase of a portable speed sign – was discussed. Three potential suppliers had been contacted and their offerings reviewed.

RESOLVED: that the PC purchases a portable, battery powered speed indicator sign and tripod from Elan City at a cost of £3468.

24/128 FIRE TENDER ACCESS TO GOOSEBERRY LANE AND BOOTHSDALE

Councillor Nicholas stated that the fire service had reviewed the situation and confirmed that access is possible both to Boothsdale and Gooseberry Lane properties.

24/129 COMMUNITY COMMUNICATION

24/129.1 Feedback on and analytics for the new PC website – Councillor Smethurst provided an update. The new website www.willingtonparish.gov.uk has been well received. Analytics will be provided prior to the next meeting of the Parish Council.

24/129.2 Delivery, 'open' and click through data for the February newsletter – Councillor Smethurst and the Clerk provided an update. The delivery, 'open' and click through data was discussed. The newsletter was sent to 125 addresses in two tranches (the second tranche targeted those who had not opened the first one). Three e-mails bounced and 96 of the remaining 122 were opened.

24/129.3 Date of next newsletter – was discussed.

RESOLVED: that the next newsletter is published over the weekend of 10th & 11th May 2025.

24/130 WILLINGTON ENVIRONMENT AND TASK FORCE

24/130.1 Improved lighting at the bottom of Chapel Lane – Councillor Ingram provided an update. A solution is not feasible at the moment. Borough Councillor Cooper will enquire how further low-level LED lighting can be deployed in the village.

RESOLVED: that the Council does not proceed with the initiative improve lighting on Chapel Lane.

24/130.2 Damaged stiles in Utkinton – repairs are being managed by Utkinton and Cotebrook PC, and CWaC.

24/130.3 Providing an additional road sign 'Willington Lane' at Willington Corner – the Clerk has contacted CWaC Highways to request a new sign. We await a response.

24/130.4 Produce Exchange - Councillor Lindsay provided an update; the 'exchange' will be assembled on The Green in the next four weeks.

24/130.5 Installation of a bench at the top of Little Switzerland – was discussed. Councillor Lindsay has agreed with the landowner that the Council will install a bench at the top of Little Switzerland. A resident has offered to contribute to purchase of the bench.

RESOLVED: that the Clerk writes to the landowner to confirm the situation

RESOLVED: that the Clerk purchases a suitable bench at around £750, this will allow a further £250 for installation and materials

RESOLVED: that the Clerk applies for a grant for the bench from the CWaC Members Budget.

24/130.6 Decoration of the Openreach 'green boxes' on the triangle – was discussed.

The Clerk has again applied for permission via Openreach but has still had no response.

24/130.7 Use of pesticides and herbicides in Willington – Councillor Abbott provided an update.

Pesticide and herbicide advice will be published in the next newsletter. The initiative will be 'adopted' by the Climate and Nature Group.

24/130.8 Installation of bat and bird boxes in Willington – Councillor Lindsay provided an update. An installer has been identified and costs confirmed. The next step will be to identify suitable locations via requests in the newsletter and on the website.

RESOLVED: that the PC will fund the purchase and installation of bat and bird boxes in Willington.

24/131 CLIMATE CHANGE AND NATURE GROUP - Councillor Smethurst provided an update. The first meeting of the CAN group will be 14th April to consider how we can contribute to climate change reduction.

24/132 ACTION PLAN 2025-26 – the revised format Action Plan (splitting projects and 'day to day' activities) was discussed.

RESOLVED: that the Action Plan for 2025-2026 is fit for purpose.

RESOLVED: that the Action Plan is used in future meetings to report on and manage Council projects.

24/133 SCHEDULE OF COUNCIL DOCUMENTS AND REGULATIONS – none required to be reviewed at this meeting.

24/134 CLERK'S REPORT/CORRESPONDENCE

E-Mail Correspondence. A variety of items have been forwarded to Councillors via e-mail and are not elsewhere on the agenda; there were no comments.

24/135 BUDGET FOR FINANCE YEAR 2025-26 - the Clerk confirmed that CWaC had acknowledged the PC's request a precept of £6589. The Band D 25/26 charge will be £42.87 per annum, an increase of £0.39 per annum (0.9%) or £0.04 per month.

24/136 FINANCIAL MATTERS.

24/136.1 Payments between meetings.

RESOLVED: that the following payments made since the Council Meeting on 25th January 2025 be confirmed:

Payee	Supplier and Detail	Amount Paid
R Winterbourne	Clerk salary February 2025	£251.02
R Winterbourne	Clerk Allowance for February 2025	£26.00

24/136.2 Cheque Payments

Payee	Detail	£ Amount to be Paid
R L Winterbourne	Clerk's salary for March 2025	£240.56
R Winterbourne	Clerk Allowance for March 2025	£26.00
R Winterbourne	Clerk Expenses March 2025	£126.80

24/136.3 Direct Debits

It was noted that the following payments have been made by direct debit:

- Sage One Payroll – February 2025. Paid 17th February 2025 - £12.00
- Sage One Payroll - March 2025. Paid 17th March 2025 - £12.00

24/136.4 Management Accounts

RESOLVED: that the management accounts for FY 2024-25 to the end February 2025 be approved.

24/136.5 Review of the cash book and bank statements.

Councillor Abbott has reviewed the cash book and bank statements for January and February 2025. No issues were found.

24/136.6 Parish Council Credit Card – the Clerk provided an update. We are in possession of the card.

24/137 ANNUAL VILLAGE MEETING 2025 – the arrangements and 'style' of the meeting were discussed. Aphra Brandreth MP will be invited to attend.

RESOLVED: that Councillor Smethurst circulates proposals for the format and content of the Annual Village Meeting 2025 to the Clerk and Councillors for review.

RESOLVED: that the Annual Village Meeting 2025 is held on a separate date in May (to be agreed) to the scheduled May 2025 meeting of the Parish Council

24/138 ITEMS OF INTEREST FOR NEXT AGENDA – the use of AI for local councils.

24/139 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED: that the next meeting of Willington Parish Council be held on Tuesday 20th May 2025 at 19:30 at Willington Hall.

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Chairman's Signature Dated.....

Chairman's Initial