

MINUTES OF WILLINGTON PARISH ANNUAL MEETING HELD AT WILLINGTON HALL HOTEL, AT 7.00 PM, ON WEDNESDAY 20th May 2026

PRESENT: Stuart Ingram – Meeting Chairman and Chairman of the Parish Council
Rob Winterbourne - Clerk to the Parish Council
Parish Councillors – James Abbott, John Lindsay, Matt Bloxham, Andrew Nicholas
Borough Councillor – Tom Cooper
Thirteen members of the public.

APOLOGIES: Local Residents: David Walker, Jill Walker, Jim Wraith, Audrey Wraith, John Jeffries, Wendy Jeffries.

1. WELCOME

Councillor Ingram welcomed everyone and explained the aims and format of the meeting. Councillor Ingram provided some information regarding the Parish and Parish Council; there are 118 properties and circa 324 residents in Willington, we have five Councillors who meet at least every other month and are elected for a four year period. He encouraged all residents to consider joining the PC; the next election is in May 2027.

The minutes of the Annual Village Meeting held on Thursday 29th May 2025 were signed by the Chairman of that meeting. Copies of the minutes were available at the meeting.

2. MEET YOUR PARISH COUNCILLORS

The Councillors and Clerk introduced themselves and provided a little personal background.

3. 2025-26 ACHIEVEMENTS AND FINANCIAL REPORT

Councillor Lindsay described some of the achievements of the Parish Council during 2025-26. They included installing a grit bin on Waste Lane, installing bird and bat boxes, installing a Vehicle Activated Speed (VAS) detector device, and installing a bench and signpost on Little Switzerland. In addition, after us applying not a little pressure, OpenReach are currently installing fast-fibre connectivity to the majority of the village.

Borough Councillor Tom Cooper provide the 'hot off the press' news that the iTravel on request bus service pilot had been extended to Willington. Details of the service will follow shortly.

The Clerk had prepared the Annual Accounts of the Council covering the year to 31st March 2026. Copies of the accounts were available at the meeting, and can also be found on the Parish Council website. In summary, the Parish Council's finances are in good health. During the financial year 2025-26, our major sources of income were £6,589 from CWaC for the precept, £954 VAT refund from HMRC, and a much appreciated £1108 from our Borough Councillors' Members Budgets towards the bench and sign on Little Switzerland.

We therefore have a bank balance of £12600 despite having funded the installation of bird and bat boxes, the VAS speed detector device, and the Little Switzerland bench and sign (and their installation). Potential Special Projects to be funded in 2026-27 include:

- £3000 Chapel Lane speed limit reduction (2026-27)
- £2000 initial tree management works on the Green
- £380 dog waste bin for Kingsgate
- £550 for a planter on the Green/Triangle
- £250 for another round of bat and bird box installations.

4. THE NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN (NDP)

Councillor Ingram described the NDP and how it linked to Cheshire West and Chester's Local Plan and the National Planning Framework.

Willington PC are currently working with Kelsall PC to create a new joint NDP. One of the key design principles will be to retain the distinct gap between the two villages. In addition, the NDP for

completeness now includes all of Willington parish (this has no practical implications for Willington). The NDP will be issued in the Autumn for consultation and issued towards the end of 2026.

An updated Willington Design document will be available on the PC website soon.

5. WORKING GROUPS

Councillor Bloxham discussed the need for the PC's work to be supported by Working Groups of residents and encouraged everyone to join/form working groups.

6. CLIMATE AND NATURE GROUP

Councillor Bloxham described the work of the Climate and Nature (CAN). Unfortunately, the planned CAN event at The Boot had to be cancelled due to the withdrawal of two key external contributors.

To encourage conversations about our environment, CAN will arrange for a screening of the People's Emergency Briefing (a film based on the National Emergency Briefing in Westminster in Nov 2025) at Willington Hall soon.

7. EVENTS IN THE VILLAGE

Councillor Abbott described the events held during 2025-26 and those planned for the coming year. Events are a key part of village life and putting on successful events involves a considerable amount of work. Councillor Abbott encouraged residents to come forward with ideas for events and help arrange them.

The December Carols on The Green have for the past few years incorporated a Santa walk-about. It was proposed that due to the dwindling number of small children in Willington (they grow up!), the Santa walk-about be suspended. Views please.

8. NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

Councillor Ingram briefly described the 'history' of Neighbourhood Watch in Willington. There is currently no Neighbourhood Watch activity in Willington, and attempts to recruit volunteers a few years ago proved fruitless. It was suggested that the village's appetite for a Neighbourhood Watch scheme be assessed.

9. TASK FORCE AND LITTER PICKING

Councillor Ingram briefly described the work of the Task Force and encouraged volunteers. John Jeffries is now leading the Task Force; his contact details can be found in the PC newsletter. A Willington litter picking event will be arranged during 2026. It is unclear how many of the litter picking rotas are still active.

10. CHESHIRE AND WARRINGTON COMBINED AUTHORITY

Borough Councillor Cooper described the plans to set up a new Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority in 2026 and hold Mayoral elections in May 2027. The combined authority and Mayor will provide a link between the three existing Councils (CWaC, Cheshire East and Warrington) and central government.

11. QUESTIONS, ANSWERS AND COMMENTS

The meeting was opened to the floor. The topics raised included the use of CCTV and doorbell cameras, and the National Emergency Briefing and responses to the imminent threats to our food systems.

There being no further business the meeting was closed.

Rob Winterbourne

Rob Winterbourne
Clerk to Willington Parish Council