

WILLITON PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held on 23rd April 2024 at 7.00 pm
In the main hall, Williton Pavilion

Attendees:

Chairman	Cllr Peter Payne
Somerset Councillor	Davies and Woods (arrived at 7.21pm)
Clerk	Mrs M Francis
Attendees	24 members of the public
Press	None
	Representative from Community Council for Somerset
Others	Representative from West Somerset Community Land Trust
	PCSO's Howe and Marlow (left at 8pm)

Apologies:

Public	None received
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01 Apologies as noted above.

The PCSO's had been able to attend and PCSO Marlow gave a report on crime statistics in Williton, noting low incidents compared to other areas. PCSO Howe gave a report on speed watch, asking for more volunteers. Three sites had been confirmed and had regular checks; the SID had also shown good results. All were asked to report incidents either on 101, online or 999

Questions / Points Raised by Parishioners:

- Q1. Why does it take so long to have 101 calls answered?
- A1. Calls are taken in Portishead or sometimes Bridgwater, they are aware it is slow and infuriating. Encouraged to report online, which local teams can pick up.
- Q2. Why can't public contact police at Williton?
- A2. Agreed it was a shame this is not possible, but Minehead has a front office.
- Q3. Minehead took 8 weeks to follow up when reporting damage to a wall; police are not seen walking around Williton but are seen in Watchet
- A3. This is down to resources, they cover 19 parishes, priority to crime log but do try to patrol as much as possible.
- Q4. Can a speed watch be undertaken in High Street at night?
- A4. Has to be undertaken at agreed spots – speed watch is a volunteer service, and more volunteers would be welcomed.

The Chairman thanked both on behalf of the Parish for all they and their colleagues do.

02 Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting held on 19th April 2024

It was **resolved** to approve the minutes.

Proposed Mrs D Hooper, seconded Mrs M de Burgh-Thomas

03 Matters Arising from the Minutes - There were none

04 Presentation from the Community Council of Somerset – Community Review Project 2024

A community review was currently being run in Williton, to be completed by 30th November. 12 were run in Somerset last year, this is the 2nd phase. It gives an opportunity to engage with the community. Currently forming a steering group, which attendees were asked to join. A survey would run for 3 weeks in September, please contribute to the review over the coming months

Questions / Points Raised by Parishioners:

- Q1. Concern raised about the amount of housing and effect on facilities
- A1. The review would look to highlight pinch points.
- Q2. How much influence would the review have?
- A2. Enables public to let concerns known.

05 Presentation from West Somerset Community Land Trust

In 2016 no social housing was built in West Somerset; The Community Land Trust develops in perpetuity for tenants to protect homes. They have 70 members, with a board of 5. There was currently a project running looking for suitable sites all through West Somerset; 40 sites had been checked, but no building yet. Funding problems were highlighted, currently campaigning nationally. Money must be borrowed, and interest paid, some were run with community shares. Currently, 1 in 39 houses in West Somerset are empty – it was expected that Somerset Council would increase council tax on empty homes.

Leaflets, contact information, current report and membership forms were made available to attendees. The AGM was being held on 9th May, 7pm at Minehead Eye – all were welcome to attend, and any support would be gratefully received.

06 Chairman's Report

The Chairman welcomed all for attending.

Present Members: Cllrs Peter Payne, Ian Aldridge, Ivan Angell, Mandi de Burgh-Thomas, Guy Denton, Diane Hooper, Dawn-Lesley Howes, Barbara Nye, Elizabeth Peeks, Loretta Whetlor and Michael White.

There is currently one vacancy on the Parish Council.

Countrywide Grounds Maintenance was contracted for the maintenance of Memorial Ground, Bellamy's Corner and The Copse. The SCC verges were also maintained by Countrywide Ground Maintenance, as was the spraying contract. We are grateful that members of the community give their time in maintaining areas such as Bellamy's Corner, Union Lane and the War Memorial Garden.

Business discussed during the last year included the following:

- The Parish Council led the celebrations in the village for the Coronation of HM King Charles III, which included live screening of the Coronation and a tea dance in the Pavilion. Union Flags were also flown around the village centre.
- Commented on planning applications that affect the village and its residents and are working collaboratively with Watchet Town Council on applications that affect both communities and are seeking to create a strategic plan for traffic flowing along the A39/A358 corridors.
- Bridge Green (The Copse) the Parish Council surrendered the lease, with effect from 1st April 2024.
- Bellamy's Corner – the Parish Council continued to maintain this area. The trees and shrubs continue to flourish, and the area was enjoyed by the community.
- Household Waste Recycling Centre – open meeting had been held to discuss Somerset Council's proposal to close Williton's HWRC and vehemently objected to this proposal.
- Grass Verges – The Parish maintains several Somerset Council verges throughout the village.
- Public Toilets – there had been a small amount of damage, but one of the toilets had been open every day of the year
- We are active in Somerset Council's Minehead and Watchet Local Community Network (LCN) which influences Somerset Council's decisions which affects this part of West Somerset.

- We are on the newly created Highways sub-group of the LCN which it is hoped will influence highways and traffic issues in West Somerset
- Justice Service – We are continuing to work with the Justice Service and the Community Payback Team to help improve the appearance of the village
- Wyndham Charity – The Chairman has a position on the board of this charity, which makes small donations to those in need in the village.
- Youth – the Council continued to support the Williton Youth Club run by Minehead Eye.
- Quantock Foodbank – The Council has a representative on the board of Trustees of the Quantock Foodbank which provides relief for those suffering from food poverty in the area.
- Citizens Advice West Somerset
- St Decumen's and Mary Huxtable Trust – we have a representative on the Trust.

Projects –

- Finger Signposts – now being installed
- Hanging Baskets and Planters were installed around the village centre

Somerset Association of Local Councils Grant

- Working with Foxes Academy in Minehead we have a lunch club, open to all on a Tuesday, we also offer a cream tea on Thursday's
- We opened a Warm Hub in the Parish Office between January and March.

Outside Meetings

The Council members also attend, where possible, other outside meetings which directly or indirectly affect the community. These included:

- West Somerset Voluntary Sector Forum – dealing with welfare issues.
- Magna Housing
- Watchet/Williton/Quantocks Area Panel
- EDF Community and Transport Forums
- Parish Council Open meetings
- West Somerset Flood Group/District Flood Board
- Quantock Foodbank

Williton War Memorial Recreation Ground

- Bookings for the Pavilion, especially the hall, continue to rise. We are looking at ways of increasing the usage of the other rooms.
- The grounds have been maintained to a high standard
- Storm damage to trees on the main field has been made safe
- Damage and wear and tear to playground equipment has been repaired or removed. With help from the Co-op's grant, we hope to have new equipment installed before the summer
- The area to the east of the Memorial Ground (now known as the Amenity Area) is open to the public as a dog free area
- Benches and children's football goalmouth had been installed, we intend to install other sports equipment shortly whilst further consultation takes place to decide its long term future use

Way Forward

- Continue to comment on planning applications which affect Williton
- Develop and maintain the work that has already been carried out
- Continue to support our Village Agents with their work with the Talking Café
- Continue to support Williton Youth Club
- Support CAWS (Citizens Advice West Somerset)

Somerset Council financial emergency may lead to some assets or services being devolved to Williton Parish Council. No ideas have come forward or decisions made but we need to know what is important to Parishioners, if we want to save those services

Other Information

- It is with regret that vandalism and anti-social behaviour still occurs occasionally, within the village and on the Memorial Ground, but fortunately on a minor level. We do work closely with the police to minimise the impact it causes in the village; however, this has a financial implication for every taxpayer in Williton.
- Dog fouling and litter dropping around the village is increasing. We are working with Somerset Council's Enforcement team to reduce it, new signage will soon be installed
- NatWest mobile bank comes to the village on Tuesdays, 14:15 – 14:45

Forthcoming Events

- D-Day Anniversary – 6th June, Beacon Lighting 21:15
- Williton Fete and Flower, Produce & Craft Show, Saturday 31st August (WWMRG)
- Christmas Festivities – November/December (WPC)
- The Events Committee are hoping to hold an event each month, any many are still in the early planning stages, details will be published in plenty of time
- If you are able to volunteer, please contact the Parish Office

Availability

- The Parish Office is open daily from 10am – 12 noon
- Staff can be contacted by email, clerk@willitonpc.org.uk; admin@willitonpc.org.uk or office@willitonpc.org.uk
- Phone - 01984 633979
- Please let us know of any issues or concerns
- We are here to help and listen

07 Financial Report

A slideshow was shown by power point slide show, which gave the meeting a detailed breakdown of the accounts for the previous year and the budget for the forthcoming year. The budget for 2024-2025 had been set at £166,281.10 with a precept of £163,000.00

WWMRG Charity had set a budget of £62,360.00

Questions / Points Raised by Parishioners:

For approximately 30 minutes, various questions were raised from one parishioner regarding the budget and precept. It was confirmed the budget had been very carefully considered

08 Reports from Local Groups

WASPS and Family Group read reports

09 Any Other Parish Issues

There were none

The Chairman thanked all for attending and the speakers for their time.

The meeting closed at 8.58 pm

Signed as a true and correct record Cllr Payne Dated ... 22nd April 2025