

WILLITON PARISH COUNCIL
Minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held on 22nd April 2025 at 7.00 pm
In the main hall, Williton Pavilion

Attendees:

Chairman	Cllr Peter Payne
Somerset Councillor	Woods
Clerk	Mrs M Francis
Attendees	12 members of the public
Press	None
Others	None

Apologies:

Rachel Gilmour MP, Cllr Davies, Ian Aldridge, Elizabeth Peeks

01 Apologies as noted above.

02 Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting held on 23rd April 2024

It was **resolved** to approve the minutes.
Proposed Mrs D Hooper, seconded Mrs L Payne

03 Matters Arising from the Minutes - There were none

04 Chairman's Report

The Chairman welcomed all for attending.

Present Members: Cllrs Peter Payne, Ian Aldridge, Ivan Angell, Guy Denton, Diane Hooper, Barbara Nye, Elizabeth Peeks, Paul Rutter, Deborah Schmieder and Loretta Whetlor.

Cllrs de Burgh-Thomas, Howes and McDonald had resigned from the council and were thanked for all they had done.

There are currently two vacancies on the Parish Council.

Parish Office

- Council and Williton War Memorial Recreation Ground Trustee Meetings take place on a regular basis, normally on a Monday evening. The Events committee normally meet on the 2nd Wednesday of the month, everyone is welcome to attend.
- Agendum and notices continue to be displayed in the Parish Office window and on the website.
- The office window has displays exhibiting local talent, many selling their wares, which the Parish take a commission. It is also used to mark National Events
- Staff members – Williton Parish Clerk – Michelle Francis and assistants Charlotte Hirst and Nadine Ridge welcome you to the office, Monday – Friday, 10am – 12 noon

Business discussed during the last year included the following:

- Williton Parish Council has held meetings with Cllr Bill Revans, Leader of Somerset Council and other officers regarding the decision to close West Somerset House and possible sale of the Library, Children's Centre and the land between, and other matters that affect our village.
- Following concerns about police response times and the use of West Somerset House by Avon and Somerset Constabulary, we met with the Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner, Clare Moody and Rachel Gilmour MP
- Met with a parishioner, Highways engineers and Somerset Council portfolio holder concerning proposals for an alternative road crossing
- Met with Highways engineer to discuss road safety in the Robert Street/Long Street area
- Met with Somerset Council officers to stress need for face-to-face access to Somerset Council, rather than the computer-based system they are bringing into place in the library.
- 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.

Business

- **Civic events** – The Parish Council in conjunction with the Royal British Legion (Williton Branch) led the commemoration in the village to mark the 80th Anniversary of D Day with a service by the War Memorial in the morning of 6th June 2024, followed by lighting of the Beavon in the evening. Union Flags were also flown around the village centre
- **Planning** – We have commented on 36 planning applications, some more than once, ranging from replacement windows to large developments in Doniford Road and at Mamsey House, 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.
- **Bellamy's Corner** – We continue to maintain this area. The trees and shrubs continue to flourish and the area is enjoyed by our community. The flagpole was erected in time for the D Day commemorations
- **The Copse** – We no longer maintain this area as we surrendered the lease with effect from 1st April 2024, however, the area has been kept tidy and grass cut, not at our expense
- **Household Waste Recycling Centre** – following meetings with the public and local Parish and Town Councils, our objections have been heard by Somerset Council, who have reached a decision about the closure of several HWRC's across the County and have promised that there will be further public consultation prior to a final outcome being reached
- **Grass Verges** – The Parish continues to maintain several Somerset Council verges throughout the village
- **Public Toilets** – again this year, there had been a small amount of damage, but one of the toilets has been open every day of the year, problems with the RADAR key on the disabled toilet have been rectified
- **Traffic Management – speeding through the village** – Volunteers have enabled Speed Watches to take place this year, this together with the addition of a second Vehicle Activated Speed Indicator Device (SID) which have been deployed around the village, is starting to see a reduction in the number of speeding incidents
- **Justice Service** – We are continuing to work with the Justice Service and the Community Payback Team to help improve the appearance of the village

Business - External Bodies

- 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 also on Highways sub-group of the LCN which it is hoped will influence highways and traffic issues in West Somerset
- 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 continues 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.
- Williton and District Business Association

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
- Joint meetings with Watchet Town Council
- West Somerset Flood Group/District Flood Board

Ground Maintenance

Grass: Countrywide Grounds Maintenance was contracted for the maintenance of Memorial Ground and Bellamy's Corner. The SCC verges are also maintained by Countrywide Ground Maintenance,

Weed Spraying: The weed spraying contract was with Complete Weed Control

Office – working with Community Payback to redecorate the office. The windows and doors are in need of repairing or replacing, a provision will be established to fund this over a number of years

Miscellaneous – contractors have been employed to do minor maintenance tasks around the village

We are grateful that members of the community are giving their time and resources in maintaining the areas such as Bellamy's Corner, Union Lane and the War Memorial Garden

Projects –

- Finger Signposts – now being installed
- A bleed kit has been installed on the Parish Office, adjacent to the Defibrillator
- Playground – a new climbing frame has been installed in the children's playground to replace one that had reached the end of its life
- Community Kitchen – working with Foxes Academy in Minehead, we have a lunch club, open to all on a Tuesday, we also offer a cream tea on Thursdays
- Warm Hub – we opened a warm hub in the Parish Office between January and March
- Newsletter – Williton Window has been greatly missed; we thank those who ran it for so many years. We have started to produce a bi-monthly newsletter

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 – Storm Bert and Storm Darragh caused significant damage to the fence between with Children's playground and the Amenity Area. Regrettably the playground had to be closed until the fence had been removed and the area made safe
- Storm Darragh also caused damage to trees, including a large willow that fell across the Monksilver Stream and has been removed / made safe
- Playground – damage and wear and tear to playground equipment has been repaired or removed. With help from the Co-op grant funding, we installed a new climbing frame before summer bank holiday.
- Amenity Area – The area of ground 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, although this has sadly been vandalised and has had to be removed. We intend to install other sports equipment shortly whilst further consultation takes place to decide its long term future use

Way Forward

- Planning - Continue to comment on planning applications which affect Williton and where appropriate, hold public meetings
- Social Care – develop and maintain the work that has already been carried out
- Continue to support our Village Agents with their work with the Talking Café
- Support CAWS (Citizens Advice West Somerset)
- Continue to support Williton Youth Club
- Playground equipment is deteriorating fast, and new equipment will be installed as soon as possible
- 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
- The potential sale of the Library, Children's Centre and possibly the toilet building will be carefully monitored

Forthcoming Events

- VE Day Anniversary – 8th May, event start at 9pm with Beacon Lighting 9.30pm
- Williton Fete, Dog Show, Flower, Produce & Craft Show, Saturday 5th July (WWMRG)
- Wimbledon Finals on the big screen in the pavilion with Strawberries and Pimms
- 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 for you to be able to organise your diary
- If you are able to volunteer, please contact the Parish Office

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

Availability

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

05 Financial Report

A detailed breakdown of the accounts for the previous year and the budget for the forthcoming year had been available. The budget for 2025-2026 had been set at £213,931.10 with a precept of £195,000.00, noting the tax base was 1013.02

WWMRG Charity had set a budget of for 2025/2026 of £63,750.00

Questions / Points Raised by Parishioners:

Mrs Hooper thanked Somerset Councillors, Hugh Davies and Rosemary Woods, for attending Parish Council meetings.

Cllr Woods spoke about Somerset Council, highlighting financial woes and selling of assets

A parishioner spoke that this had been the first Parish Assembly they had attended and was grateful to her about how much is being done, in particular a Williton Window replacement and pointed out the following:

- Public Toilets – used by visitors, elderly and young – would be difficult if they were not available.
- Traffic Calming – exiting from Roughmoor Industrial Estate was difficult as cars come around the corner very fast – was there a possibility of the SID being put further back?
- The bridge on Station Road, just before Egrove, fragile bridge signs were deteriorating – the bridge could be in danger with heavy vehicles passing

06 Questions to be forwarded to Rachel Gilmour MP

All other areas of the United Kingdom receive free public transport for over 60's, but not in England (accept London) – can this be bought in line with Wales, Scotland and London to stop the inconsistency?

07 Reports from Local Groups

WASPS and Family Group read reports

08 Any Other Parish Issues

There were none

The Chairman thanked all for attending and said the following:

"It has been a busy year, and I feel that we have achieved a lot, even if we did have several major challenges to overcome.

I would like to thank everyone who has helped the Council and the Charity. I am not going to name names but in general to my fellow councillors who give their time freely to serve Williton, our dedicated staff who often do a lot more than they are employed to do, and to all of the volunteers who help with everything from helping to organise and fun the Fete to doing litter picking, all of which makes Williton a great place to live and work"

The meeting closed at 8 pm

Signed as a true and correct record ... Cllr Payne Dated ... 21st April 2026