

**MINUTES OF WISTASTON PARISH COUNCIL'S ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
HELD AT WISTASTON MEMORIAL HALL ON THURSDAY 20TH APRIL 2023, AT 8.00 P.M.**

Present: Cllr. J. Moore (Chairman)
Cllrs. D. Houston, D. Lucas, R. Moore, G. Roberts, D Millington, T Kilkenny.

In Attendance:

Kerri Wilcox (Clerk) 5 representatives of Wistaston Organisations.

1 APOLOGIES

Cllrs Mrs Margaret Simon, Squirrell, 1 Wistaston Organisation representative.

2 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 21st April 2022, be approved, and signed by the Chairman as a true record.

3 POLICE MATTERS

The local PCSO was not on shift this evening, so he had forwarded a report which the Clerk read to the meeting.

4 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the 127th Annual Parish Meeting. He reported that it was disappointing that we have had to postpone the Civic Service due to the lack of attendees but we hope to resume the service next year. Wistaston has no need for an election this year as the number of Councillors standing is under the amount for the Parish so the Council will advertise the vacancies after the elections take place. Budget – We set out to keep the precept at the same level which we were able to achieve due to extra monies from extra properties which have been built in the area and the Community Infrastructure Levy payment. We also made a few cuts in places so we have managed to support all the organisations requests which was larger than previous years. We saw the installation of the much awaited SID post at Broughton Lane in the latter part of 2022 which revealed a lot of speeding taking place, the highest speed recorded was 97mph in the first month, subsequent months have shown an improvement but we will continue to build the data so we can present it to the PCSO so they can arrange speed checks at the times when most speeding takes place. The Council are commencing the research work required as to where to install another post within the Parish and are keen for Volunteers to resume the Speedwatch group. The Chairman also reported that a new Bench has been installed on King Shilling Way in commemoration of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. The Council have helped the WSLA to fund their Drain project. The Chairman congratulated Wistaston In Bloom and the Conservation Group on their successful year and the Council have slightly increased the Wistaston in Bloom budget for this year. The new Wistastonian of the Year is Jonathan White who is well known for his photography skills of the local area. The tree works which needs to take place throughout Joey the Swan is a costly annual exercise as they all need inspecting and dealing with appropriately so there is no danger to the public and fly tipping has been an issue over the past 12 months as the Council have to pay for removal of any rubbish from the Parish Council land. There is still a lot of dog bags that are being dumped so the Parish Council will continue to raise awareness. The volunteers from the Council to

other organisations is going to be difficult this year due to less Councillors within the Council but it would be good if a Councillor could pick up on the adult exercise area project. The Chairman ended his report with thanking all the volunteers, organisations, Councillors, Park Ranger and the Clerk.

4 PRESENTATION OF ACCOUNTS

The Accounts for the year 2021/2022 were made available for inspection and no questions were raised.

5 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES

- (i) **Wistaston Conservation Group** – David O’Hara reported that they have had another successful years, the number of followers on facebook have increased and the new noticeboard is attracting a lot of attention. There have been lots of memorial trees planted and a wildflower area has been seeded by the stream. There are new benches being delivered in May courtesy of donations from members of the public. The Spinney area has been opened up to reveal wildflowers. The wood carvings are very popular with families with young children. Birds and butterflys seem to be increasing and there are more spotting them. The Northwest mental health group are assisting the conservation group which now has 15 members helping.
- (ii) **Wistaston Memorial Hall Report** – Diane-Heather Edge-Robinson reported that the Hall is now back to how it was pre-covid with bookings and events. John Cook who has been a trustee for 41 years has stepped down. The wifi has been installed and is working well. The Remembrance event was held inside last year after being held outside the previous year due to covid which was still well attended but inside events is favoured due to our unpredictable weather. The trustees have discovered a lot of paperwork detailing the history of the hall which has proved helpful in the upcoming projects. Two new committees have been formed, one which is responsible for changing the halls status and the other the new build committee. A structural survey has been completed by a member of the community of the hall and the finances for the hall have increased over the last 12 months. They also thank the Parish Council and the Community Council for their donations.
- (iii) **Wistaston Bowling Club** – Michael Simpson reported that the bowling green has had a lot of money spent on it over the last year as they have had a computerised irrigation system installed which only waters the green when needed. The have 100 members at present which is higher than previous years as a lot of bowling greens in the area are closing down which means more people coming to Wistaston. They have started giving bowling lessons to Children from the primary school so the bowling is appealing to all age groups.
- (iv) **Wistaston Sports & Leisure Association** –Cllr Kilkenny reported that This year has been all about getting back to normal after Covid. We had taken the opportunity to work on the MUGA – the all-weather games area – so that it would be available as soon as restrictions on outside activities began to be lifted and we had measures ready to be put in place as soon as indoors activities were allowed. When many other venues were still closed we were able to open and our outdoors facilities in particular were in great demand as we began to come out of the pandemic and we have been able to keep several of the regular bookings that came to us around then. We had fears when covid struck that we would lose a substantial number of our bookings from one of our best customers the U3A. I am pleased to report that all of the groups have returned and others too. We are especially pleased to host the newly established Wistaston Swans WI group’s

monthly meetings.

It's an ill wind that blows nobody any good as they say and the government's Covid grants together with the income received as result of opening up before many others meant we found ourselves close to being able to begin work on a long-standing project to connect to the mains sewer – we were finding ourselves having to pay approximately £2k per year to empty our septic tank. We had originally hoped to be able to plug into the Church Lane Academy's main sewer connection but for various reasons this was not viable and we found ourselves having to make a longer connection into Marys Gate which of course would mean higher costs. So we were not quite close enough and it looked like we'd need another year and a half of successful trading to have the funds in place to start. Of course with the end of Covid had come rising costs across the board and in fact in the course of just a few months, the price quoted by the contractor for the work had risen substantially - and we became worried that the project would continue always to remain just beyond our grasp. I have to say we are very grateful to Wistaston Parish Council for stepping in with a loan that – on top of the substantial grant already promised to us - has allowed us to complete the project much sooner than would otherwise have been possible and no doubt at significantly less cost.

We have recently agreed an extension to the Village cricket club's lease which means they will be with us till 2047. It's a mutually beneficial relationship because of all the work members of the club do around The Brittles and it is important to mention again Kevin and Pauline Jobbins in particular for all they do to keep The Brittles looking as wonderful as it does.

- (v) **Wistaston In Bloom** – The Clerk read out a report from Bill Heath who reported that on the back of the success of last year in the North West In Bloom competition receiving 3 awards – Gold in the Town category, Best town in the North West region and pride in Cheshire East Award, the North West organisers nominated Wistaston to enter the UK Finals this year. The nomination was accepted and judging for this will be on Tuesday 1st August 2023 in the morning. Judging for the North West In Bloom competition will be some two weeks before the UK Finals. The UK Finalists in the Town Category are : Abergavenny Town Council, Alnwick Northumberland, Brandon-in-Bloom Suffolk, Donaghadee Ards and North Down Borough Council and Elloughton-cum-Brough in Bloom East Riding. So, together with the support from the Parish Council, The Conservation Group, The Litter Pickers, Wistaston Allotments and all the residents of Wistaston, he is sure we will put on another good show.

On a sad note, the Bloom group that Bill and Helen joined some eleven years ago has pretty much depleted, two stalwarts of the group John White and Roger Woodward passed away in 2020 and now Gwyneth Brown , John Lomaz and David Clowes are no longer very active because of health problems but Helen and I have both soldiered on together with a few willing helpers. We have decided that this year will be our final year so by announcing our retirement early it gives the Parish Council time to decide how to proceed in the future. Our immediate attention for now will be on the UK Finals and North West in Bloom and we will continue to do our very best particularly in our final year.

- (vi) **Wistaston Jubilee Tennis Club** – The Clerk read out a report from Bill Heath who reported that they have organised groups playing on a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings 9.30am – 12.30pm and a Wednesday evening and Sunday afternoon throughout the year weather permitting. They are a member of the South and Mid-Cheshire Tennis league and enter two teams in the Winter, Spring and Summer Leagues. They have junior coaching on four evenings a week throughout the year and a junior tennis camp during the school summer holidays all of which are well attended. They are very grateful for the funding provided by the Parish Council

to recover the Pavilion roof which was badly damaged during storms over 2020/21 winter. With regard to the proposed redevelopment of the Memorial Hall, the club has offered to move to a new site providing the facility is of a standard required but so far no such site has been acceptable 1. Build new courts at the back of the School field has been rejected by the School 2. Move on to the Brittles MUSG playing area is a possibility but at the moment this is heavily used with football training so is not available. We will just have to see how the whole redevelopment plan progresses.

- (vii) **Wistaston Community Council** – Richard Chaplow reported that Jonathan White is the 2022 Wistonian of year. He has worked tirelessly for many organisations in Wistaston and is one of the local journalist for Crewe and Nantwich Newspapers and their websites. He expressed his thanks to Andrea Cross the retiring Wistonian of year for her support to WCC over the 2021 season. The Fete and Rose Queen was cancelled at the last-minute siting poor weather conditions which we now feel was a hasty decision which left a lot or residents disappointed and WCC members as a result.... Thank you to the team for all their hard work in getting the event ready. The Flower and Produce show took place in August and was a good turnout which was also attended by the Deputy Mayor and consort who presented the prizes. The Duck race sold 1000 ducks and was attended by lots of people, they even had people lined up along Church Lane to buy ducks. The Firework display in November was again a well attended event with the best bucket collection in history. The Carol concert also went ahead in December which again was successful and was attended by the Mayor David Marren and his wife. Dane thank all of the WCC team and the people who have helped make all these events go ahead successfully. He thanked Eileen Bamber and Ian Gould for their continued sterling work with the Roundabout magazine. He thanked John Lomax and his team of collectors for the considerable time spent dealing with the 100 club. He reported that he has signed off as Chair and the New Chair is Nadiha McKeown and he thanked Rob, Helen and Ian Gould, Lexie, Nadiah, and Chrys for all their support and hard work.

6 OPEN DISCUSSION

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending and invited everyone for refreshments after the meeting.

The meeting closed at 9.11 p.m.