

A Message from Town Mayor Cllr Fraser Tinsley

& the members of the Greater Willington Town Council



Welcome to our latest newsletter. At GWTC we are continuing to work to make improvements and address the challenges that we face as a Town. We increasingly work with partners to drive projects in areas ranging from environmental improvements, heritage initiatives and community safety. All our project are driven by a commitment to improve Willington and the surrounding area as a place to live and work for all the community.

You will see from this newsletter that over the past year we have been involved in a huge number of projects, many of which you will see the benefit from in coming months.

We have been successful in gaining funding to provide a new CCTV system for the town, which will help the police in the fight against crime and anti-social behaviour. We will be working to redevelop the playground on the Town Green. We have led a project to improve the South Dene and reinstate the circular walk. We will be remembering our history with a project to erect a 'Miners Beacon Brazier' above the Town, which will also play an important role in the Queens 90th Birthday celebrations.

We are seeking your views on the provision of a new Town Square. GWTC will be moving to a new office in the former Market Hotel Pub on the High Street, which will provide a new community facility for Willington and enable us to play an active role in the regeneration of the Main Street by returning this former pub to active use.

We continue to manage the town's allotments which are increasingly popular with residents and the waiting list continues to grow. This year has seen new community projects including the pantomime Aladdin, which we organised at the Working Men's Club and was a huge hit with parents and children alike. Halloween events. Our hosting of the

Remembrance Sunday events. Our children's Christmas card competition. The Christmas Carol service and many more.

Most of these events are only possible because of working in partnership with other organisations. The Town Council work closely with County Councillors to fund many of these projects and other financial support has been secured from Durham County Council and Ron Hogg the Police and Crime Commissioner. One of the main benefits I see of being both Town Mayor and County Councillor for this area along with Cllr Olwyn Gunn, is that we are able to coordinate funding to ensure that we get the most out of every penny that there is available to spend in the area.

We continue to support many organisations and groups in Willington ranging from our sports clubs, playgroups, churches, charities, schools, social clubs and associations. We provide funding through our Community and Civic funds that is increasingly important in these difficult financial times.

As a Town Council we have done a lot over the past year. I thank everybody for their help and support over the past year and ask for this again in the future. A lot done – always more to do.

Finally, on behalf of the Town Council, can I wish you all the best and hope you have a happy and safe spring and summer.

**Fraser Tinsley
Town Mayor**

Inside this Issue



Page 2 - New Offices



Page 2 - Beacon



Page 3 - South Dene Clean Up



Page 4 - CCTV



Page 8 - Scary winners



Page 10 - Care Village



Community Newsletter Issue 10

Serving Our Community

91 High Street, Willington, Co Durham. DL15 0PE
t: 01388 417725 e: gwtc@live.co.uk w: www.gwtc.co.uk

New 'Miners Beacon Brazier'



This year 2016 marks a number of important local and national anniversaries. Nationally it is 100 years since the start of the Battle of the Somme and 21st April 2016 marks Her Majesty the Queens 90th Birthday – both of which will be marked by national events and ceremonies.

This year we also have an important local anniversary in Willington. At 10pm on 13th April 1896 an explosion occurred below ground at Brancepeth Colliery (in Willington) which took the lives of 20 men and boys (the youngest 14, the oldest 66) working in the A Pit. It was the worst tragedy to occur at Brancepeth Colliery and is a key event in the history of our town.

This year marks the 120th anniversary of the Brancepeth Colliery disaster. To commemorate this tragic event and the other major national anniversaries occurring this year, we will erect a 'Miners Beacon Brazier' above Willington on the site of the former Pit Heap. This will be lit every year on 13th April to commemorate the disaster and the lives lost. It will also be used to commemorate other anniversaries including the Queen's Birthday on 21st April this year, when we will join in with a national beacon lighting event in Her Majesties honor.

Greater Willington Town Council have commissioned local metal sculptor Graham Hopper to make the Miners Beacon Brazier which will be erected on the 'Dante Heap' between the Roman Road and Willington Woods. It is appropriate that this is the location for the Miners Brazier as it was the miners of this town who hewed the coal (and slag) that make up the millions of tons of land on which the Beacon Brazier will stand.

People are invited to join the first lighting ceremony which will take place on 13th April 2016 at 8 pm (sunset). A reading of the names of those who died will take place before lighting of the Miners Brazier.

Greater Willington Town Council @ The Market – New Office for GWTC.



In May GWTC will move to a new office in the former Market Hotel on the High Street.

The former pub has been closed for several years and has become something of an eyesore on the Main Street. As well as providing a better office for the GWTC with dedicated meeting and public areas, part of the reason for the move was to bring this building back into use and improve the look of the High Street and play our part in the regeneration of the Main Street.

The good news is that GWTC has been able to do a deal with the owner of the building so that the move can be made and a new facility for the town provided within existing budgets. We want to provide a public facility that can be used by everybody.

We will have a dedicated office for staff and a large multi-purpose area that will act as a meeting space for the Council and can be sub-divided for other public uses such as exhibitions and displays. We are doing our best to maintain the character of the old pub which has played an important part in the history of Willington for over 100 years. We have kept most of the former bar and will use this as a reception desk.

These are exciting times for GWTC and we are delighted to be providing a new facility for the town. Why not call in and say hello once we are up and running in May?

New Town Square



We are working on a project to provide a new Town Square in Willington on the site of the former Empress Theatre.

It is intended that the Town Square will provide a new public space and focus for the centre of the town that can be used for events and has the potential to be used for a small weekly market.

We realise that the Main Street in the town needs work to encourage people to use it and improve its overall appearance. We need more reasons

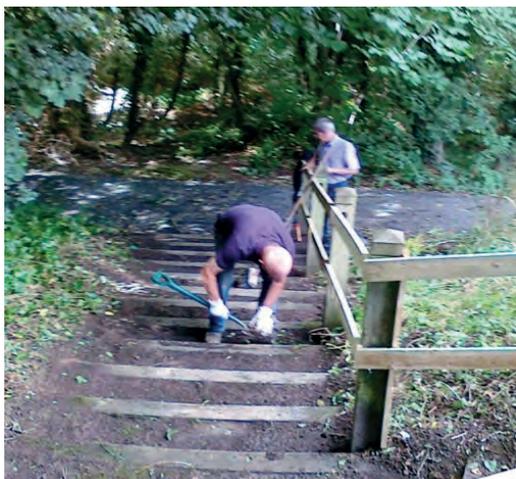
for people to stay and spend money in Willington.

Money is tight at the moment but we have secured a significant part of the funding needed to make the project happen. We are not there yet, but there is a lot of potential in the project and we are very interested to hear your views and ideas as we decide how to move forward with it.

So please get in touch on gwtc@live.co.uk or call into the office.

Environment Group

Provided by Janet Sloomweg, Chairman



The Group usually meets on the second Tuesday of the month at WCA centre to plan the forthcoming seasonal activities: North Dene and South Dene clean ups, planting tubs with summer bedding, daffodil planting and winter bedding.

The Group apply for a grant from GWTC for plants and compost and for other materials as necessary.

We have produced a leaflet setting out a calendar for the year. The Calendar has been printed and will be distributed. The plants (from a new supplier) have been ordered for the tubs.

Clearing the steps from Spectrum to South Dene, August 2015.

South Dene

Provided by Janet Sloomweg

Working with GWTC the South Dene Restoration Project is on-going and the Group will help with a clean-up day in April.

Laura Tedstone, from Durham Wildlife Trust, will be presenting a management plan for the South Dene to GWTC and the Group will be invited to help with any of the activities planned for the coming months, such as invasive plant clearing and bramble clearance.

The Group contributes to projects which enhance the local visual environment. Various ideas have been discussed at recent meetings. The seating area adjacent to the library and at the sculpture were identified as 'grot spots' which could do with a clean-up and replanting.

We have identified the need for an overall scheme to improve the appearance of the town – including design of flower beds, street furniture, signage, litter bins etc. This would give a cohesive appearance to the town landscape and help to give Willington a positive identity.



Playground Extension

We have in recent weeks placed an order to make a major upgrade to the main playground on the Town Green.

Outdoor play is very important for children as they grow and develop and we need to do all we can as a community to support this at

a time when children are less likely to play outside.

This is a major project that has only been made possible by GWTC working together with County Councillors Olwyn Gunn and Fraser Tinsley to secure the £45,000 funding necessary to make the project happen.

New equipment for younger children was provided in 2013. This new project will provide equipment for older children aged 5-11 years – replacing the old worn out equipment that needs to be replaced. It will also upgrade the safety surfacing and generally freshen up the area.

Work will start towards the end of the summer with completion due later in the year.

We know there have been problems with anti-social behaviour caused by older youth gathering in the playground after dark. The new playground will include features that are intended to reduce anti-social behaviour.



Durham County Council

Durham County Council is experiencing government cuts to its budget that will mean by 2020 it will have £257 million less to spend on services in the County than it did in 2010.

The Council face many more tough decisions about where government forced cuts will fall in light of these over 50% cuts to its budget.

In the face of these challenges, our local County Councillors, Olwyn Gunn and Fraser Tinsley, have been listening to residents, helping to solve problems, answering questions and representing views in Durham County Council committees. Olwyn and Fraser have attended community events regularly and talked to residents in their homes, in meetings and in the play areas, the streets, the library and the shops of Willington. If you see them out and about they'll be happy to talk to you.

Olwyn and Fraser work closely with Greater Willington Town Council (of course Fraser's the Town Mayor so he has a dual role!). Undoubtedly, the County Council and Town Council relationship is strong and positive and brings many benefits. For example, there was joint working on the provision of CCTV cameras for Willington with Olwyn and Fraser contributing funding and 'form filling' support. There have been other joint projects such as South Dene Wood improvement, Christmas events including the pantomime and Willington Football Club. There are more in the pipeline. Keep a look out for plans to improve the fixed play areawatch this space.

Olwyn and Fraser also provide County Council reports at Town Council meetings and work with the Three Towns Area Action Partnership, the Churches, the schools, Durham Community Action and Willington Community Action to support people and families in Willington, Sunnybrow, Hunwick, Oakenshaw, Brancepeth and Page Bank.

Olwyn and Fraser will always be available to discuss projects with residents. Sometimes it's not possible to provide financial support but they may be able to offer advice. Some of the organisations in GWTC area which Olwyn and Fraser have supported with financial contributions: Willington Cricket Club, Spectrum, Open Door Church, Willington Luncheon Club, Willington Community Action, Dovedale Community Hub, Parkside Academy retired persons Christmas Lunch, Foodbank, Women's Refuge, Wear Archers, Chyrelle Adams Cancer Support, Oakenshaw Community Association and Disability Club.

Olwyn can be contacted on 03000 268714

olwyn.gunn@durham.gov.uk

Fraser can be contacted on

03000 268691

fraser.tinsley@durham.gov.uk

New CCTV



Together with the Three Towns Area Action Partnership, Ron Hogg the Police and Crime Commissioner, Councillors Olwyn Gunn and Fraser Tinsley - GWTC are together funding and co-ordinating a major upgrade of CCTV cameras covering the Main Street in Willington.

The new 'state of the art' cameras will be added to the Durham County Council network and will be monitored 24 hours a day from the central monitoring hub in Chilton.

The new cameras are even able to relay pictures to police hand held devices in 'real time' that allows them to decide how best to tackle incidents of crime and anti-social behaviour as they happen.

The new cameras will replace existing cameras that have recorded pictures in the town for over 10 years but are now reaching the end of their operational life. We are working with Willington Community Action who have operated the old cameras and are helping us with the move to the new system - including providing us with the existing camera locations which will be upgraded.

This is a major project which has the potential to be expanded across the town and will help the police in their fight against crime and anti-social behaviour.

Willington Youth



Willington Youth football was founded in 1996 and this year will celebrate 20 years delivering excellent local youth football, the teams play in the Russell foster Youth League and train at Parkside School.

Most nights teams are training and at weekends the blue and white strips of Willington Youth are proudly worn by the players. The Club holds Charter Standard Community Club Status, all coaches are volunteers holding level 1 or level 2 coaching certificates. They conform to all the

strict vetting and policy and procedures implemented by club, county and the National Football Association are supported by a mentor From Durham FA.

We have had great success over the years with teams winning leagues, cups, tournaments and representing Willington from Blackpool Skegness Holland and Barcelona. Young people have gained confidence learned life skills and enjoyed playing the beautiful game.

We have a development session and teams training at various age groups between the ages of 6 and 15.

If you know of any young people wishing to play football please call either Rob Lee on 07789 346681 or Andrew Allwright on 07919501384 who will put them in contact with one of our managers.

We invite and welcome anyone interested in developing youth football to attend one of our regular club meetings held the third Tuesday of each month starting at 7:45 pm at the Willington AFC Social Club in Hall Lane Willington.



Willington AFC

Article courtesy of Northern Ventures Northern Gains Brochure

Identical twin brothers Shaun and Paul Cooper have been digging deep to help resolve Willington's historic pitch drainage problems – and to unearth a little treasure trove of industrial archaeology.

"It's been like Time Team. They've found all sorts, even found a pit pony's horse shoe," says club secretary Geoff Siddle. "There are volunteers who spend the first 15 minutes leaning on their spades. In 15 minutes these two have dug a hole and are working down it."

The brothers – Shaun's five minutes older – have been volunteers for around five years but chose the rainy season really to go with the flow. "It's better that way. When it's raining you can see whether what you've done is working," says Shaun, who was working on the ground both on Christmas Day and New Year's Day.

Both bachelors, the 49-year-olds share a house in Willington. Kevin, another brother, is on the committee of neighbours and arch-rivals Crook Town – and Paul has a £50 bet with him on who'll finish higher in the second division. "You can't believe a Willington lad would support the old enemy," he says, cheerfully.

As youngsters the only way that most people could tell them apart was that Shaun's left handed and Paul right handed. "We played all the usual tricks at school, even went into one another's classes," admits Paul. "We still have a lot of the same hobbies, often find ourselves thinking the same thing".

These days Shaun has slightly bushier sideburns but otherwise they still dress alike – it's just Willington gear, they insist – right down to identical trainers.

Shaun, who also has a huge vinyl record collection, works for a marquee erection

company in the summer but devotes winters to Willington. With the help of a metal detector he and Paul have found pots, bottles and much else.

The brothers are responsible for the handsome array of advertising boards around the Hall Lane ground, obtained without charge from a friend who lives in the town and supplies hoardings to Premiership clubs.

Shaun insists that he's enjoyed every minute. "It's been a lot of hard work, clearing out and repairing the field drains, but the real pleasure is in seeing things work that haven't worked for years. When the rain's as relentless as it has been there's a limit to what you can do, but the pitch is better than anyone can remember it."

Geoff Siddle has no doubt about it.

"The guys have been magnificent," he says. "I can't think what the club would ever do without them."

Willington Cricket Club

Willington Cricket Club play at the highest level of club cricket in the country in the North East Premier League (NEPL).

Last season the first XI narrowly missed out on promotion from Division 1 to the Premier League. The club also operate a Second XI and Third XI (who play on Sunday afternoons), full youth set up and women's team.

This year we are having a big focus on women's cricket. So if you are interested in playing cricket at any level or age please get in touch via GWTC or directly down at the Club.

There are games on every Saturday during the season and a 'Big Bash' style Twenty20 competition on Friday evenings in June and July. The bar will be open and we will be more than happy to see you.



Precept Charges

Each year the Town Council determines the budget for the coming year in order to calculate the precept required. Once this figure is agreed at the Town Council meeting, it is forwarded to Durham County Council who then process this request.

The 2016/2017 budget has been set to £102,607.31 starting in April 2016. This is an increase of 3.12%.

The 2016/2017 precept request is 87,732.16 which will be supplemented by a Local Council Tax Reduction

Scheme application for £9,265 and GWTC income of £5,610.15.

The total 2016/2017 council tax rates for the GWTC area for the year are;

- Band D £52.29
- Band C £46.48
- Band B £40.67
- Band A £34.86

The Band D charge is used as the basis on which to calculate the other Band amounts. From 2015/2016 to 2016/2017 the Band D payment will increase by £1.02 (1.99%) for the year.

As a comparison, annual Band D charges for other nearby parishes for 2016/2017 are as follows;

- Brancepeth Parish Council £72.83
- Tow Law Parish Council £71.56
- Spennymoor Town Council £208.33
- Great Aycliffe Town Council £217.57
- Shildon Town Council £254.91

PACT

Police & Communities Together



PACT meetings are an opportunity for the community to have their say on what matters most to them in the area in which they live.

It is the best way to get involved, make a difference and influence what happens in the area.

The meetings identify

and discuss the local problems, agree actions to tackle these problems and set priorities for the area to make it a better place to live.

The next available dates are as follows;

- 28th April 2016
- 26th May 2016
- 30th June 2016

- 28th July 2016
- 25th August 2016
- 29th September 2016

The meetings are held at Willington Community Action Centre, 65 High Street, Willington at 6pm.

Everyone is welcome to attend.

Planning

GWTC are a consultee on all planning applications in the area and have the ability to 'call in' applications for decision by a full committee of Durham County Council.

We look at all planning applications in the area and advice residents on putting together responses to issues that concern them.

Please contact us if there is a planning matter which we may be able to help you with.

Meeting Dates



Greater Willington Town Council meet on the first Wednesday of each month starting at 6.30pm.

It was resolved at the meeting held on 6th April 2016, however, to hold the Annual Parish Meeting at 6.00pm and the Annual General Meeting at 6.30pm on 18th May 2016.

It is proposed to keep the Town Council meeting dates for the new Municipal year as the first Wednesday of the month but this will be fully approved at the Annual General Meeting in May 2016.

Posters will be displayed in the noticeboards will dates of the meetings.

Members of the public are welcome to attend and observe the Council meetings. Each Agenda has a Public Participation item. If you wish to address the Council please contact the Town Clerk no later than 12 noon on the day of the meeting so that time can be allocated for your request to speak.

Household Waste Recycling Centres

The Town Council still receive questions from residents on the local Household Recycling Centres in the area.

Following the closure of Todhills Tip in 2013 the closest ones to the GWTC area are;

- Romanway Industrial Estate, Tindal Crescent, Bishop Auckland
 - Tudhoe Industrial Estate, Spennymoor
- Opening hours of both sites are;
- April to September – 9.00am till 6.00pm
 - October to March – 9.00am till 3.30pm

Garden Waste Collections

Durham County Council offer fortnightly garden waste collections to more than 190,000 eligible properties in County Durham between spring and autumn.

There is a fee for this service. An annual subscription charge is £20 which is for 17 collections.

If you have not already signed up for this scheme and would like to, please visit www.durham.gov.uk/gardenwaste or telephone Durham County Council on 03000 261000.

Councillor Angela Smith



I have been part of GWTC for two and half years and I have been very pleased with how well it serves both Willington and the wider communities.

The Town and County Councillors are always looking at ways that we can support local people, charities and various organisations.

There have been many events organised to engage the community, which have been well attended.

We are a proactive Council and our aim is to look at ways to encourage companies to invest in our local area and ensure that Willington and the surrounding areas continue to be a safe and a prosperous place to live.

There are a few developments I would like to see that I think would improve Willington, the first is the High Street, I feel that it is very run down and needs some upgrading. It is the focal point of our area and it is the first thing people see when visiting or moving into our area.

It would be good to engage with local people to see what their views are on this.

The second development would be to see a purpose built building, which would have many activities that would engage the young people of our community.

I am employed as an LSA, at St John's Catholic School and I have the privilege of also being on the Governing Body of this School and Evergreen/Oaks School, which has just recently become a Federation School.

I ensure I support and encourage both Schools, to make sure we get the best outcomes for all our students.

I have recently completed a Leadership course, which means I can help support Duke of Edinburgh candidates through their Bronze/Silver award.

I am training to do the C2C cycle ride, I am doing this challenge to raise money for the Duke of Edinburgh.

This organisation is celebrating its Diamond Anniversary and is asking people to step up to the challenge to raise £60, to help raise funds for disadvantaged children, so they are able to participate in completing their Bronze or Silver Awards.

Councillor Janet Townsend

I have been learning about the Town Council, as regards to allotments and the physical state of the town, together with support for activities including grants for voluntary bodies.

I have been supporting important improvements we make in the town, such as the Chair of the County Council opening the South



Dene repaired bridge, the annual Civic Service and Carol Service. I contributed to the changes in parking by joining all the inspections. I attended a training session in County Hall about tax.

I retired from the University of Durham ten years ago and joined the University of the Third Age (U3A). I recommend it as a vigorous group catering for the health and mental wellbeing of senior citizens.

Councillor Kenneth Henfrey

I have lived in the Willington area all of my life. I worked as an electrician until an early retirement through ill health.

I have been a school governor for the Church of England School and Parkside Academy as Health and Safety Governor. This year I will retire as governor after 29 years.

I have recently received a certificate for 50 years as a labour party member.

I have served two terms as Deputy Mayor with my wife Margaret representing the GWTC area. I and my wife Margaret still enjoy a game of Bowls when the opportunity arises.

I am looking forward to representing GWTC in our new premises and to help and serve the people of our parish.



Councillor Contact Details

Following Councillor Joe Buckham's resignation in March 2015 due to on-going medial issues and Councillor Lilian Bennett's resignation in May 2015, Councillor Janet Townsend and Councillor Margaret Elgie were both co-opted on to the Council in June 2015.

Councillor Fraser Tinsley Town Mayor

4 Raby Terrace, Willington, Crook
Willington, Co. Durham, DL15 0HR
H: 01388 746431
M: 07412712169
frasertinsleylabour@gmail.com

Councillor Ken Henfrey Deputy Town Mayor

14 York Terrace, Willington,
Crook Co. Durham, DL15 0HT
H: 01388 747216

Councillor Joe Cogdon

Ennerdale, Cumberland Terrace,
Willington, Crook, Co. Durham, DL15 0P
M: 07881631106
joecogdon@btinternet.com

Councillor Arthur Graham

Lyncrest, North Lane, Willington, Crook
Co. Durham, DL15 0HJ
H: 01388 745969

Councillor Mark Etherington

4 Rosedale, Spennymoor,
Co. Durham, DL16 6SB
M: 07739991351
markadam@hotmail.com

Councillor Matthew Todd

7 Jubilee Terrace, Willington, Crook
Co. Durham, DL15 0QW
M: 07922693069
matthewtodd14@hotmail.com

Councillor Colin Carr

40 Abbots Green, Willington,
Crook Co. Durham, DL15 0QZ
H: 01388 745226
M: 07946082683
colincarr@hotmail.com

Councillor Margaret Elgie

5 Helmington Grove, Sunnybrow,
Crook, Co. Durham, DL15 0ND
H: 01388 746851
M: 07769735853
elgieflg5@aol.com

Councillor Angela Smith

1 Kensington Terrace, Willington,
Crook, Co. Durham, DL15 0PJ
H: 01388 746297
o.smith154@btinternet.com

Councillor Janet Townsend

62a Low Willington, Willington,
Crook Co. Durham, DL15 0BG
H: 01388 746479
janet.townsend@durham.ac.uk

Councillor Patricia Greensmith

62 Armstrong Drive, Willington
Crook, Co. Durham, DL15 0GB
H: 01388 746835
M: 07425139223
cacrish07@outlook.com

Sign up to the Councils waiting list for your allotment

Grow your own vegetables, fruit or flowers - an allotment could be just what you need.



The Town Council produces an Allotment Newsletter each year which includes helpful tips and advice for our tenants.

We include reminders on allotment Rules and details of the Allotment Growing Awards competition which takes place during the inspections.

The winning gardens were of an exceptionally high standard once again.

Well Done Everyone.

The inspection for 2016 has been set for Thursday 14th July 2016.

If you are interested in an allotment, please contact the Town Council on 01388 417725 to register and your name will be added to the waiting list.



Last Year's Allotment Winners

Following another successful inspection on Thursday 16th July 2015, the allotment competition winners were;

Oakenshaw

1st Prize Plots 5 & 6 Mr & Mrs R Kitching
Highly Commended

Plots 45 & 46 Mr & Mrs D Berry
Plot 40 Mr P Maddison

Best New Plot Plot 38 Mr & Mrs C Marshall

Park Top

1st Prize Plots 2 & 3 Mr J Beard

Springfield

1st Prize Plot 4 Mr J Blakey
Highly Commended

Plot 14 Mr B Smith
Plot 31 Mr P Atkinson

Best New Plot Plot 5 Mrs V Hall

1st Prize winners received a cheque for £25. Highly Commended and Best New Plot winners received a cheque for £20.

National Allotment Week

National Allotment Week 2016 will run from 8th- 14th August.





HALLOWEEN ON THE GREEN

The Town Council went Pumpkin Crazy last Halloween as we aimed to get as many people involved with Halloween Pumpkins as possible.

FANCY DRESS, SCARY PUMPKINS & SPOOKY HIGH STREET

To encourage people to get involved with the Halloween activities we provided pumpkins to the local Schools, Spectrum Leisure Centre and local Businesses on the High Street and Commercial Street.

A number of events were organised and many people attended the different activities around the town.

A big thank you goes to Arthur Burnham who worked with the Town Council to help promote the Halloween activities in the area. He and his friends delivered over 200 pumpkins in order to facilitate the events.

The main event was on Friday 30 October 2015. A storyteller came to perform some spooky stories to the children. Even the adults seemed to enjoy the stories. Hotdogs and soup was served to all before heading to the Town Green for further activities.

The children took part in a scary fancy dress competition and the judging of the scariest pumpkins.

The event was hosted by the Town Mayor, Councillor Fraser Tinsley who enjoyed dressing up himself as Dracula.

Again the turnout was huge and everyone had fun dancing in traditional Halloween spirit thanks to the music of Thriller being played from the newly purchased Amplifier.

An all-round successful event once more.

The winners from the Town Green event were as follows;

Carved Pumpkins

- 1st Lois Devonport – Aged 9
- 2nd Cameron Brunskill – Aged 10
- 3rd Maddie Wymer – Aged 9

Fancy Dress

- 1st Abbie Waller – Aged 8
- 2nd Cameron Brunskill – Aged 10
- 3rd Daisy Mulholland – Aged 5

Children who were unable to attend the Town Green events were given the opportunity to send photographs of their pumpkins into the Town Council.

The amount of entries were phenomenal and difficult to judge due to the high standard of effort put into each pumpkin.

The winning entries were;

8 years and younger category

- 1st Oscar & Ewan McDonough
- 2nd Emily Fox
- 3rd Eleanor Mudd

9-15 years category

- 1st Joshua Caton
- 2nd Emily Stothard
- 3rd Alesha Colley

Local Businesses were also invited to create a spooky High Street and with great imagination this was achieved. It is great to see businesses come together for this tradition and increase the spirit of the community.

The winning entries were;

- 1st Discount Motor Spares
- 2nd Britton & Robson Chemist
- 3rd The Cutting Company

Greater Willington Town Council would like to thank everyone involved in this event for taking part and helping to promote activity within the town.



Schools

St Stephens Church of England Primary School



To mark the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death, our school has joined the RSC Dream Team 2016 and are taking part in a nationwide celebration of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'.

Children took part in workshops at Newcastle Theatre Royal and will perform their piece of A Midsummer Night's Dream, alongside other schools, at King James Academy in March

Year 6, Year 1 and Year 2 have held 'family learning' sessions in school where parents were invited to come in to work with their children to discover more about the topics they are learning in class.

Year 5 and 6 enjoyed taking part in a first aid course provided by St. John's Ambulance. Children were taught basic first aid and life-saving skills.

We invited our local MP, Pat Glass to visit our school to deliver an assembly focussing on Democracy and British Values.

As part of our RE curriculum, Year 3 children visited St. Stephen's Church and the Hindu Mandir at Newcastle and Year 4 enjoyed a trip to Durham Cathedral.

Year 3 children took part in a dance festival at Parkside and Year 6 enjoyed a day at Bowes museum discovering the history of the museum and the Bowes family.

Sunnybrow Primary School



Sunnybrow Primary School have just been awarded Young Carer Charter Status. This reflects our recognition that many of our pupils have caring responsibilities at home which can affect their education.

The award acknowledges the work that we do in school to ensure that these pupils are fully supported and are able to reach their full potential.

We have also gained the Investing in Children award. This award shows that pupils in our school have a voice, that the school

Parkside Academy

Pensioners have returned to school for a day of Christmas dinners and bingo put on by pupils. Students at Parkside hosted the event in December for 65 elderly people with a view to breaking down the age barrier and reducing isolation in older people at Christmas.

The students from school's XL group served dinner to the visitors before hosting games including bingo in the school hall. Gifts were generously donated by M & M Chemists. Each visitor also got a Christmas food hamper with the ingredients donated by students, staff and Sainsbury's Bishop Auckland.

The event also received £150 worth of funding from Greater Willington Town Council and County Councillors Olwyn Gunn and Fraser Tinsley.

Donna Heslop, Director of Partnerships for Parkside, said it had been a big success. She said: "This day has been all about bringing people from different generations together for fun and festivities.

This is the fifth year we have done this with each year going from strength to strength. As always everyone has enjoyed the day. It is really good for us to give something back to the community. A would like to say a huge thank you to local businesses and sponsors who helped us with the event."



values their opinions and that children are involved in decision making processes where possible.

We have also been working very hard on the International Schools Award and have recently been awarded Intermediate level. We have a link with Kiungururia Primary School in Kenya. A teacher from our link school has visited us and Miss Ball has recently visited Kenya. The children in both schools have learned a great deal about the differences and similarities between the two schools and their localities.

Methodist Church

Over the week-end of Saturday 23rd and Sunday 24th January, a new Methodist Church opened in Willington, Co. Durham – "Willington Open Door Methodist Church". This was to replace the old Church which had become unfit for purpose.

The week-end celebrations took the form of a coffee morning on the Saturday – to allow the community to be the first people to view the premises and to hear of the exciting things which it is hoped will take place in the new building. Over 100 people came to view and share with us our exciting venture.

In the afternoon there was an official opening with invited guests, funders and all those who have helped move the project on to completion. This was led by the Revd. Michael Pullan and more than 100 guests enjoyed this wonderful Service and shared in refreshments afterwards.

On the Sunday morning there was a Dedication Service for the building and its contents, led once again by Revd. Michael Pullan and Ruth Gee, the District Chair of the Methodist Church. In the afternoon members from across the Circuit came together for a celebration service and were joined in song by the Witness Choir.

This modern building can be divided into four rooms of various sizes (or one large hall with a separate lounge area) and can be used for a variety of meetings and activities. There is an industrial kitchen suitable for cooking facilities and a small car park. The building also houses good quality audio-visual equipment, plasma screens and performance lighting.

A telephone is due to be installed in the building and the number will be 01388 745460 – meanwhile for details of room hire please contact Mrs Haggerstone on 01388 746687 or e-mail glynufc@gmail.com . If you would like to view the premises, please call in to one of the monthly coffee mornings which are held on the 1st Saturday of the month.

Remembrance Sunday



Willington Care Village

Willington Care Village yearly look back and what we have planned for 2016.

We have had several visits from animals to brighten our days here at Richmond Court, starting with the lovely litter of puppies that visited us on 24th June 2015.

We also had several visits from therapy ponies during 2015, the first visit featured here on the 9th August 2015. All were a complete hit and were enjoyed by all of our residents.

We also had the pleasure of a visit from MP Pat Glass on February the 27th and our own Greater Willington Mayor Fraser Tinsley and County Councillor Olwyn Gunn also attended.

MP Pat Glass had decided to visit after hearing such good things about Richmond Court and Willington Care Village. It was a pleasure to have them all here and on the day they visited we had a special birthday and they joined in the celebrations.

We invited some local children to visit us and enjoy a puppet show on December 23rd 2015 and this was a huge success bringing the generations together.

We have so much planned for 2016 from National Care Homes open day which this year coincides with the Queens 90th birthday on the 17th June 2016. We will also be having a fate this day. We would like to invite the general public to come and help us celebrate, there will be lots of fun things happening throughout the day. Fate opens from 10:00am



The Remembrance Day Service took place on Sunday 8th November 2016 at Willington Cenotaph, Low Willington. Greater Willington Town Council paid for and organised the event with help and support from the Royal British Legion, Honorary Poppy Organisers and St Stephens Church, who worked together to bring this event in order to pay tribute to the men and women who lost their lives protecting others.

Last year a Commemorative Planetree was planted as a lasting memory to the WW1 Centenary. This year

parishioners were asked to congregate round this Planetree for the unveiling of a Plaque which was inscribed as follows;

There was an incredible turnout from residents, local businesses and community groups. Many of which were laying wreaths.

The Service was led by Father David Spokes and Councillor Joe Cogdon officiated as Master of Ceremonies. Aycliffe and Brancepeth Brass Band one again provided the musical accompaniment to the service and also led the procession to St Stephens Church where another Service took place.

A donation was made to the Brass Band from the Town Council in recognition of their dedication, support and professionalism during this poignant event.

Our thanks are extended to Durham County Council for organising the Temporary Road Closure Order, St Stephens Church for leading the Service and making parishioners welcome in the Church.

If you know of anyone wanting to lay a wreath in 2016, please pass your details to the Town Council and someone will be in touch closer to the time of planning the event.

Royal British Legion

Every Year we work with the Willington Crook and District Branch of the Royal British Legion to stage the Remembrance Sunday Commemoration.

The Royal British Legion Bikers Branch will be holding a major even in the town on 16 April. Riders will call at the Willington War Memorial between 11.30 am and 1 pm to pay respects to George Burdon McKean who was born in Willington and was awarded a Victoria Cross for bravery in 1918.



GWTC are supporting the event by putting on a short presentation about George Burdon McKean at the Black Horse Pub at 12 noon on Saturday 16 April.



Community Fund Awards

A Community Fund Grant is available to community groups in the Greater Willington area. It is for a maximum of £500. If applications are below £500, then grants will not exceed 75% of the total project costs. This grant can be applied for every twelve months.

- Application forms can be collected from the Town Council office or downloaded from the website at www.gwtc.co.uk.
- Greater Willington Environmental Improvement Group received £500 for the provision of a handrail at the steps leading into the South Dene, restocking all 12 planters in the GWTC area and daffodil planting.
- 4th Willington Scouts received £500 towards to the cost of taking the scouts away on a residential weekend to Ennerdale and take part in a teambuilding exercise.
- SLAM CDT received £500 towards the fitness day which took place on 9th September 2015. The money was used to provide banners and t-shirts to promote the day.
- Willington Methodist Church received £500 towards the installation of a video and audio system that would be available in the community room for training and conference purposes.
- Willington Football Club received £500 towards the cost of providing a paved pathway behind the changing rooms at their grounds.
- Willington Disabled Club received £500 towards the cost of room hire. They have recently moved their weekly social gatherings to the new Methodist Open Door Church. Their successful application will help them pay towards their first years room hire.
- CHI Taekwondo received £500 towards hall hire and equipment. They needed 12 Kick Paddles, 64 Floor Mats, 12 Body Protection sets.

Civic Fund Awards

The Civic Fund is an award of up to £50 towards small activities and events. Resident groups in the area are welcome to apply. To apply for a Civic Fund donation please send a covering letter to Helen Cogdon, Town Clerk detailing the group and how it is managed. Also tell us what the money will be used for.

- Byers Green Football Under 10 Hawks received a £50 donation towards the costs to travel to Blackpool for a tournament. Some children who play in the team are resident in Willington.
- Spectrum Roller Staking Club received a £50 donation towards the purchase of new kits.
- Willington Disabled Club received a £50 donation towards their annual Christmas lunch.
- Parkside Academy received a donation of £50 towards their Older Persons Lunch.
- Great North Air Ambulance received a donation of £50 towards their running costs.
- North of England Brass Band Champions received a £50 donation towards running costs of an event.
- Butterwick House received a donation of £50 towards their running costs.
- Durham Cathedral received a donation of £50 towards their running costs.
- St Johns Sixth Form College students received £50 donation towards a school trip to Peru.
- Neighbourhood Watch, Stanley Way received a donation of £50 towards the purchase of new security equipment which will be used by residents living in our Parish.
- Willington Luncheon Club received a donation of £50 towards a celebration meal when they moved into the new Methodist Open Door Church in January 2016. In February 2016 the Club has been in existence for 14 years which is a notable achievement for the volunteers who run the club.
- The Childrens Foundation received a £50 donation towards their 'because minding matters appeal'.
- Lydia Street Playgroup received a £50 donation towards an Opening Event which took Place on Wednesday 24th February 2016.
- Willington and District Angling Club received a £50 donation for the purchase of trees which they will plant along the river bank.



Christmas Competition

The Christmas Competition was opened to Parkside Academy to produce this year's Town Council Christmas Card. The theme for the card was Seasons Greetings from Willington. The entries were judged by councillors at the meeting in December 2015.

The winners of the Christmas card competition were as follows;

- 1st Imogen Davison
- 2nd Jack Evans
- 3rd Lucy Moses



Pantomime 2015

M&M Theatrical Productions came to Willington Working Men's Club on Saturday 5th December 2015 to provide a pantomime to the residents of our area.

Many children and even adults enjoyed the performance of Aladdin.

Following successful funding applications from County Councillors Tinsley and Gunn, we were able to sell tickets for this event at £1.50 for children and £2.00 for adults.

Willington Working Men's Club donated £150 towards this event.

Some of the feedback received was;

- Very Entertaining

- Cheap and affordable prices – well worth the money
- Fantastic
- Thoroughly enjoyed it
- Great venue

Pantomime 2016

Following the success of the 2015 Christmas Pantomime, GWTC have decided to hold another.

M&M Theatrical Productions will return again on 3rd December 2016 to perform 'Beauty & The Beast'.

Tickets will go on sale later in the year.

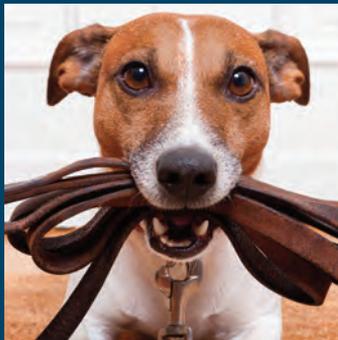
Please keep a look out for posters so you can get your tickets before they sell out.

Christmas Tree and Illuminations

Greater Willington Town Council purchased new Christmas Lights to extend the display which is provided each year.

We also realised that some of the old lights were not lighting correctly from the previous year so we purchased new and improved lights to brighten up the Main Street in Willington.

The Council has received positive comments from residents and people passing through the town regarding the lighting display which is nice to hear at this festive time of the year.



Dog Bags

Greater Willington Town Council has increased the number of dog bags that they purchase on an annual basis. We have seen many more people coming to buy the dog bags which are just 50 pence per pack and each pack contains 50 dog bags each.

If you would like to buy some biodegradable dog bags then call into the Town Council office between 9am and 3pm Monday to Thursday.

Christmas Carol Service



The Civic Carol Service took place at Willington Methodist Chapel on Friday 11th December 2015 at

6.00pm. The service was led by Reverend Janet Titterton. This was one of the last events at the Methodist

Church before the big move to the new Methodist Open Door Church in January 2016.

The service was followed by the switching on of the Christmas Tree Lights which were turned on by Mason Campion.

Aycliffe and Brancepeth Brass Band played Christmas Hymns and music throughout the event and received a donation from the Town Council for this.

Residents then joined Councillors at the Masonic Hall for light refreshments. The Town Council extends their thanks to Lodge members for the use of the facilities.