

GREATER WILLINGTON PARISH
24th May 2022
Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting

IN ATTENDANCE

Councillor Ken Henfrey, Councillor Angela Smith, Councillor Margaret Elgie,
Councillor Emma Berry,
Andy Logan, Karen Logan, Andy Bridger, Pam Bridger, Anthony Hurworth,
Paul Hurworth, Kay Wigham
Emma McCann (Deputy Town Clerk)
Helen Cogdon (Town Clerk)

WELCOME

Councillor Smith opened the Parish meeting and welcomed those in attendance.

The Clerk outlined comfort and evacuation procedures.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Charles Hales, Councillor Emma Jordan, Councillor Ursula McCardle, Councillor Pauline Savage, Councillor Stephen Jackson, Councillor Dorothy Hales, Councillor Tinsley, County Councillor Gunn.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL AND OF PREJUDICIAL INTEREST

None received

3. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING ON THE 18th MAY 2021

In order to facilitate business, the minutes of the last Annual Parish Meeting had been ratified at the next meeting on the 8th June 2021.

The minutes of the 18th May 2021 as printed and circulated were approved and taken as a true record.

4. THE CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Councillor Smith presented the report on behalf of Councillor Henfrey she said;

It is with pleasure I present the 2021/22 Annual Report.

Greater Willington Town Council was established in 2017.

This is the first year of business for the new council members who were elected unopposed in May 2021. Our thanks are extended to parish residents who volunteered their time to stand to become a Town Councillor and take an active part in supporting the Town Councils neighbourhood and environmental activities. Following the election there were still seats available and these were filled later through co-option.

Signed by the Chairman

Dated 14th June 2022

Despite the fact that existing Councillors operate in a volunteer capacity we are always looking for more volunteers to work with us and to undertake voluntary work in the community. Volunteers are always welcomed and matched with work that relates to their personal interests and skills.

A big thank you to existing volunteers whose enthusiasm and efforts to invest time to make the parish a better place for families to live is much appreciated.

The last two years has been dominated by Covid 19 and our community's response to the pandemic. Following the success of the Town Council Covid Response Force initiative. The Councils part time staff, like yourselves, continued to work from home during this very difficult time.

GWTC are the qualifying body for Oakenshaw Neighbourhood Plan 2020-2035. This has now received the inspector's final approval. Congratulations to all who spent tireless hours in making this happen.

2021-22 saw GWTC start to refurbish Town Council office and facilities at 67 High Street, Willington. This will be a permanent home and community asset. This work has been the Councils Priority to create a more accessible and usable Council Office with community involvement and engagement. The Council plan to reintroduce Councillor Surgeries, PACT meetings and Citizens Advice and room hire as soon as it is safe to do so.

The management of allotments is an important competence of the Town Council. We let ninety-six allotment plots at Springfield, Oakenshaw and Park Top. We also own and lease the Rosedale and Victoria Allotment Site. This continues to be a key role for the Town Council providing an important facility for the Town. The allotments played an important part in many families struggles to be outside safely during the pandemic. Last year saw the Council offering allotment tenants a rent-free year which we hoped would go a little way toward helping families in need. Councillor Hales and Councillor Berry are your Councillors with responsibilities for allotments and are always happy to talk to you.

The Town Council are aware how important it is for all elements of the community to work together. We therefore continue to support community groups through the Civic Fund, Community Fund and Sponsorship. Also, with our partnership work project partners including Durham County Council and County Councillor Tinsley and Councillor Gunn. Durham County Council, Care Connect who monitor the towns CCTV provision. Durham Constabulary and the Durham Police Commissioner, Joy Allen who attended meetings with residents experiencing anti-social behaviour issues and visited people at home to promote the "In the Know" scheme. Durham Constabulary PACT meetings Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service who can we relied on to attend our regular Community Events throughout the year. Durham County Council, Street Lighting who help us provide the Willington Christmas Illuminations.

Signed by the Chairman

Dated 14th June 2022

Greater Willington Environmental Improvement Group who restocks the parish planters twice a year and work with the Council on wider environmental improvements around the parish.

County Durham Citizens Advice Service who assists many residents with budget, health and education needs.

The Open Door Church with whom we maintain a close mutual working relationship.

Helen Cogdon, Town Clerk and Emma McCann, Deputy Town Clerk have worked hard, on behalf of Greater Willington and the Town Council. They have delivered their best often throughout challenging circumstances. Staff provide the administrative and advisory support to the Council and its members, produce the necessary reports and minutes for meetings, fundraise and deliver any agreed project work. Officer time is also dedicated to solving the day-to-day problems of local residents giving advice and guidance and on a happier note organising away days and community initiatives.

I would also like to give thanks to Cllr Angela Smith, Deputy Mayor who has stood beside me this year and supported fellow members.

I have enjoyed representing you and the Town Council over the past year. More details can be found in the Annual Report.

5. COMMUNITY FORUM

Councillor Smith was delighted to see such a good turn-out.

In summary those present suggested the following.

- An events team with community and youth members on board.
- To develop youth engagement programmes e.g. ASDAN & POPE
- Improved communication to include the use of Noticeboards, Web Page, Events Diary and more use of Willington Library.
- To remove quads from town green and motor bikes on railway line.
- To promote Neighbourhood Watch and In The Know, including reporting on 101.

6. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Town Council 14th June 2022 at 6.00pm

Annual Parish Meeting 16th May 2023 at 6.00pm

Meeting closed at 6.45 pm

Signed by the Chairman

Dated 14th June 2022