WILLINGALE PARISH COUNCIL

Email clerk@willingaleparishcouncil.org.uk

Minutes of Annual Parish Assembly
Held Thursday 30th May 2024 – Willingale Village Hall

In attendance: Cllrs D Stokes, J Bianchi, S Bosworth, R Tilbrook, Clerk to the Council C Milligan and 14 members of the public.

1) Apologies were received from Cllrs L Fresco, N Pavyer and D Watson

2) The meeting was opened at 7.30pm by Cllr David Stokes, Vice-Chair of the Council, who welcomed everyone.
Cllr D Stokes explained how the Council meets every other month with items being discussed and considered including planning applications, finances, concerns the council receives from residents etc.
Over the past year the Council has looked at fly-tipping issues, chasing this with Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) to have it removed. Planting of a tree in celebration of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and installing the information board for the airfield memorial. The production of What's on in Willingale has now been taken over by Lesley and Tom for which the Council is very grateful. Potholes are continually reported, and the Council does try to do as much as it can to have them filled. The verges were cut by the contractor and the council is in the process of having a new finger post installed for Beech Road. They are also looking at reinstating one at Millers Green and Fyfield Road. EFDC Highway Rangers have been engaged to install the finger posts which are being made by a local joinery firm.

Cllr J Bianchi was thanked for his continuation of monitoring and maintaining the play equipment. The new Clerk, Clare Milligan, was introduced and Cllr S Bosworth was thanked for continuing to organise the village litter picks.

The Affordable Housing project was still in its early stages. After consultation it was found there was a clear need, and Hastoe Housing Association were now in the process of negotiating with landowners.

The council had its Annual Council Meeting on 14th May 2024 and Cllr Nick Pavyer was voted in as Chair with Cllr David Stokes as Vice-Chair. Cllr D Stokes said it had been a privilege and a pleasure serving and representing the community on the Council over many years.

3) The minutes from the meeting on 19th May 2023 were presented, agreed and signed.

4) The Clerk talked through the end of year finances. The opening balance at the bank in April 2023 was £14,079.57 and closing balance as at 31st March 2024 £14,686.74.

5) The meeting then heard presentations from various organisations in, or connected to the village:

Ayletts Almhouses - These are the four cottages to the right of the Church and were bequeathed by Frederick John Cleminson in 1943 for the benefit of the older generation who were poor. There are 6 trustees and this year they will be looking at making all the cottages watertight. Last year they rendered the outside walls and put new doors and windows in the rear of the cottages. All the cottages are listed and so any works are subject to strict regulations. They are looking to apply for a grant for the works this year.

St Christopher's Bellringers – It had been a successful year with an increase in members. They have been learning new music and came 2nd in a competition they entered at Moreton. A visiting bellringing group rang a full peel which was extremely beautiful. There is a new Captain, Secretary and Treasurer. There are new heaters and new ropes fitted. New members are always warmly welcome to come along and have a go eveyt Wednesday evening.

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Essex Police – PC Warren Shepherd was unable to attend but submitted a written report. It was pleasing to now that crime was down year on year, and the new scheme for marking business property appeared to be a success.

Friday Catch-Up Club – It had been a great year with between 15 to 20 attendees each week. A lighter brunch offering including fruits is now available. They continue to host the Coffee with Cops and have had a dementia adviser come and speak. EFDC scrutiny Committee came to speak with the volunteers as they entered the Community and Volunteer Award. It is open every Friday. Please let Dawn Stokes know if you wish to stay for the lunch. It is fantastic how the young and the old generation engage with each other.

Friends of St Andrews – the Church is owned by the Churches Conservation Trust and are hoping to have the weather-boarding updated around the church this year. There has been no discussion about the hole inside the roof. The volunteers who undertake the beautiful displays were thanked.

St Christopher's Church – It had been a good year with various speakers attending, concerts taking place and services. New pew cushions have been purchased, and paths being cleared, and trees cut back. Reverend Stewart Gibbs leads the services. 23rd June there is a Hymns and Pimms evening and all are welcome.

Willingale Tea Rooms – The tea rooms have been established for 15 years and run by volunteers. It is open 3rd Monday of every month 10am to 12pm with homemade cakes and pastries all served with tea and coffee. The cost is just £2 with no plans to increase it. Volunteers and visitors have increased with 2 new residents who left lovely positive feedback. They are looking at ways to promote the tea rooms by using the Village WhatsApp group as well as putting a sign up on the edge of the village. It is a wonderful way of spending time and making new friends with residents and finding out what is happening in Willingale.

The Village Day Organising Committee – Val Thomas has been leading the group for 25 years and over that time there have been many changes due to changes in people's, tastes and expectations. However, it still holds a special place in people's hearts. It is a joint venture between the Village Hall and the Church. Last year was slightly quieter than normal but the dog show is always very popular. It always takes place the last Saturday in June and volunteers are always welcomed. It is hard work before, during and after the event and all volunteers were thanked for everything they do.

Whats on in Willingale – Lesley and Tom introduced themselves and thanked Cllr David Stokes for everything he had done over the past couple of years. The handover process was very smooth and the system was all set up. The summer edition is almost ready to go to the printers and this will continue to be delivered by volunteers. It was felt that it was still relevant even though there was the Village Whats App. People were asked to send in any thoughts, ideas and comments.

Willingale Archives – This year has been a reactive year with no specific projects being undertaken. An article on the Normans was produced for WOIW and a spreadsheet has been set up on the history of Willingale.

Willingale Website – The website has been running for 7 years and was originally suggested by the Village Hall Committee. There is a page for the main organisations in the village. St Chritopher Bell Ringers are very active on it. This year they are looking at refreshing it. They are looking for new ideas such things as a blog type feature and reports on events that take place. Ideas are always warmly welcome. There is also the possibility of a link with WOIW.

Willingale Ringing Centre – St Christpoher's Church Bell tower is also the Association of Ringing Teachers centre (ARTS). It offers lessons to people on how to ring the bells. It all takes place on simulators, so the community won't hear anything. After there being bell ringing for the Kings Coronation interest in ringing has increased.

Willingale Sports & Social Club – The group runs a bar every Friday Night and each Sunday afternoon in the Village Hall. Various events have taken place such as Bingo, quiz nights, Far Eastern food night and it is all free to members. There will be a Kaylee in the hall in October and on 14th June a Folk Orchestra will be playing. The Village Hall Committee were thanked for their support. The togetherness of the community is the most important thing.

Village Hall Committee – All trustees are volunteers and they run the hall. The finances are healthy with thanks to the regular hirers. This means that running costs and any repairs can be met. For the future they are looking at replacing the roof which could cost in the region of £200,000. The committee is starting to save for this and looking at any grants that they could possibly apply for. They have had an energy adviser undertake a survey of the building and they are waiting for a report. All lighting has been changed to LED and they are now looking at the heating and making it more energy efficient. Volunteers have cut back the hedges and maintained the car park. Having villagers continue with helping out is an excellent way to save on cost.

Cllr D Stokes thanked everyone for their reports and hard work. It was phenomenal and fantastic as to the amount of clubs, organisations and things going on in such a small village.

6) Public Questions – The Council was asked as to what success they have had with finding the culprits for the fly-tipping. Cllr D Stokes advised that he thought EFDC had some success but it did need for addresses to be found in the rubbish that had been left. The Council has continued to badger EFDC on the issue. He advised that Lucas Lane used to have metal gates but these have been taken away.

A resident asked why there are no CCTV cameras. Cllr D Stokes advised that there had been some temporary covert cameras put up by the police, but these had now gone. This will be investigated further with the police and EFDC.

A question was asked about the appeal re Greenacres. Cllr D Stokes advised that a new date had been set for the appeal, 28th August 2024 and a new planning expectorant would be in attendance. All previous comments will be taken into account. An up-to-date site visit by EFDC will take place and so details will be updated at the appeal. Residents can continue to report any changes to EFDC.

Cllr D Stokes closed the meeting at approx. 8.47pm and thanked those who had attended.
Cllr D Stokes was thanked by the community for his many years of support and dedication.

Signed as a true record…… Cllr……..……Date