

**MINUTES OF WISTASTON PARISH COUNCIL'S ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**  
**HELD AT WISTASTON MEMORIAL HALL ON THURSDAY 18TH APRIL 2024, AT 8.00 P.M.**

**Present:** Cllr. J. Moore (Chairman)  
 Cllrs. D. Houston, D. Lucas, G. Roberts, D Millington, B Squirrell

**In Attendance:**

Kerri Wilcox (Clerk) 4 representatives of Wistaston Organisations.

**1 APOLOGIES**

Cllrs Mrs Margaret Simon, Borough Councillor Alan Coiley, Park Ranger

**2 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 20th April 2023, be approved, and signed by the Chairman as a true record (the clerk had printed the incorrect minutes, so they are to be approved at the next Council meeting.

**3 POLICE MATTERS**

No Police attended the meeting.

**4 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the 128<sup>th</sup> Annual Parish Meeting. He reported that the number of Councillors has reduced from 15 to 12 and at the beginning of the year the Council had 7 Councillors, but it has increased to 8 with the addition of Cllr Robinson. We have Cllr Simon and Coiley as our Borough Councillors. There have been a few changes over the last year especially with the stepping down of Bill Heath from the Wistaston in Bloom group, the Conservation group have kindly agreed to take on a lot the work of Wistaston in Bloom but there is still an urgent need for Volunteers if we are able to run it as well as Bill did. We have entered the Britain In Bloom (Northwest) competition this year but we have no one to show them around so it is going to prove a challenging year. We no longer have a Speedwatch team due to the lack of volunteers and we have also not held a Civic Service due to not being able to get the local school involved. We have had to increase the precept slightly due to the increase in costs. We have helped a lot of organisations with grants this year especially WSLA with their recently completed drainage project. There have been frequent changes to our local Police team over the last 12 months and we hope that once we have a regular team that they will resume police surgeries. We are looking into another SID post and have added an Elizabeth II Memorial seat to our capital projects scheme. The Wistonian of the year is Dane Chaplow. We would like more Councillors to join the Council and support the organisations. The Park Ranger and Conservation group have requested a storage unit of some type to store all the equipment. The Woodland survey is due to take place next month. The Litter Group do a wonderful job and this year's figures are down on the previous years but there is still a lot of littering taking place and a lot of dog waste bags. 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 2022/2023 were made available for inspection and no questions were raised.

#### 5 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES

- (i) **Wistaston Scout Group** – The Clerk read out a report from the Scout group which said that the Scout movement is part way through a project transformation to be complete by 2025 which changes to their recruitment programme and changes to the titles of leaders. All the sections have enjoyed camps throughout the year and this year's camp will be in Wales. They have awarded 20 Bronze Chief Scout awards (Beavers), 1 Silver (Scouts) and 8 Gold (Scouts). The Scouts in general have been given a bad press recently with the tragic loss of an Explorer Scout (Greater Manchester) which highlighted the need for risk assessments, the 35<sup>th</sup> already have this in place. They thanked the Parish Council for the donation towards gas boilers that they use on camp. The Scouts also thanked all their leaders including their wives, husbands, partners, girlfriends and boyfriends to their continued support.
- (ii) **Wistaston Conservation Group** – David O'Hara reported that they have had another successful year, the number of followers on facebook and volunteers have increased. There have been lots of memorial trees planted and the Conservation group have received a considerable donation for the purchased of Oak Trees which have been ordered. The Northwest part of the Joey is getting very flooded and the whole recreation area is suffering with drainage issues. He reported that his has never seen so much water in the 50 years that they have been attending the Joey. More birdboxes are planned but they do keep getting vandalised.
- (iii) **Wistaston Memorial Hall Report** – Judy Gratton thanked the Parish Council for their continued support. They are continuing with the change to a Charitable organisation, and they thanked the Parish Council for sorting the Land Registry. The sum insured has increased, and they have increased the hire fee in January 2023, which is fixed for 2 years, there has been an increase in bookings particularly Childrens parties. The Rebuild project is gathering pace so they are only spending when necessary.
- (iv) **Wistaston Sports & Leisure Association** – Cllr Squirrell reported that had been a successful but difficult year. The big success was that they finally completed the project to connect to the main sewer which was made possible due to a grant and a loan from the Parish Council who he thanked for their support. The bookings for the room hire and multi-use games area has got back to pre-pandemic levels but the football pitch bookings were down slightly due to losing one of their regular teams. Despite an increase in bookings it has been a difficult year financially, they started the year with £39,000 in the bank and ended it with £3000 as all the reserves were used for the drainage project and the utility bills increased from £8000 to £14,000 and the insurance went up by 26%, it was also not helped by a grant for the Football pitch maintenance being held up and payment problems with one of the hirers, it did make it difficult to make our loan payments to the Parish Council but we did manage it. We are going to look in to the Broadband this year as finances did not allow last year. They are also hopeful that a leaky roof will be repaired this year.

- (v) **Wistaston Bowling Club** – Michael Simpson reported that the bowling green is in its 65<sup>th</sup> year and continue to attract new members, they have members ranging from age 27 – 93 and they are soon going commence the school sessions. They are entering 9 teams in competition's this year and hope to be successful. They are planning to hold their open day this year and they thanked the Parish Council for their donation. It has been financially difficult over the last 121 months due to an increase in costs.
- (vi) **Wistaston Community Council** – The new Chairman Greg Casewell introduced himself and reported that they have welcomed a lot of new members, and they will be holding the Village Fete this year. They have received several donation requests from local organisations, and they thanked the Parish Council for the grant. They also obtain donations through the co-op when local people shop there. Greg asked about the SID post data and the Chairman reported that at present we have no PCSO so there is no one to pass the data onto so they could speedcheck at the times when speeding is frequently taking place. He asked if the Litter picking group collect a lot of vapes which David O'Hara answered that they do and he also asked if there was a plan for where meetings will take place whilst the memorial hall rebuild project is taking place which Cllr Houston said they are looking for alternative venues.
- (vii) **Memorial Hall Rebuild** – Cllr Houston reported that the hall will be staying open until at least the end of 2025 but they will give everyone 6 month's notice of the closure. The results of the public survey have been given to the architect and they have a grant co-ordinator helping with the grant application to the National Lottery Community fund. The survey produced 386 responses covering about 1000 people, 83.02% said that the hall was a valuable asset. There are a few options being discussed and one was to move the Tennis Court to the school which the previous headteacher was keen on but the new headteacher has not responded to any of our attempts to open up discussions which has led to a 6-month delay whilst we were waiting for a response. The Tennis and Bowling club have been very helpful, and we will hopefully decide on a rebuild option at our next meeting so the architect can draw up the design. We are looking at options of the Church Hall or the Brittles for meeting places whilst the hall is being rebuilt.

## 6 OPEN DISCUSSION

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

**The meeting closed at 8.44 p.m.**