

WILLINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

2021 - 2022



PARISH COUNCILS – WHO ARE THEY?

Parish and Town Councils are the level of local government closest to the needs of local people. Parish and Town councils are created in law and are required to act within the laws by exercising the powers and functions which have been conferred on them by Acts of Parliament. However, these laws give the Parish and Town council a wide remit within which to improve the lives of their local community. The Council collects a precept each year (a sum collected with the council tax each year from the householders in the parish) specifically intended to maintain and improve facilities and services for local people. The precept for 2022/2023 is £156,000.

Parish and Town Councils are the least bureaucratic and the cheapest form of local government in existence. All sums collected are invested in the needs of the Parish itself. They are elected bodies and as such are responsible and responsive to their local electorate.

WILLINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Willingham Parish Council is made up of 15 Councillors all of whom are volunteers. The period of office of a Councillor is normally 4 years, but if they have been co-opted or elected at a bye-election, they will serve until the next normal election. Due to the Northstowe Governance Review the Council held their elections a year early in May 2021. The term of office will run for 5 years to bring the next election in line with District Council Elections.

The Council currently employ four part time members of the staff:

The Clerk – Mandy Powell

The Compliance Administrator – Annika Osborne

The Finance Officer – Sarah Rutherford

The Litter Picker – Mark Mumford

You can contact the Parish office by email or phone:

Clerk@willinghamparishcouncil.gov.uk

01954 261027

CHAIR'S REPORT

Although the pandemic is far from over, life is beginning to return to a version of normality. Parish Council meetings are no longer being held virtually. Despite the shortcomings of remote video meetings, they did make access for Parishioners extremely easy. The Government has failed to see this, and we are legally obliged to have physical meetings. Sadly, we have neither the facility nor funds to make meetings remotely accessible.

I must again acknowledge the invaluable support of the Parish Council office whose workload has only increased as more responsibilities are shuffled down the local authority infrastructure hierarchy. Increasing population, modern risk assessments and reporting requirements add to the demands and to help cope with this we are currently recruiting a Deputy Clerk. When successful, we will be able to keep the Office open during staff holidays and ensure continuity into the future.

The flooding of 2021 has not been forgotten. Anglian Water have replaced pumps at the pumping stations and completed phase 1 of their investigation covering the flow of the network including rainfall data. This year they are investigating infiltration from ground and surface water. When their report on the capacity and sustainability of the drainage in the village arrives, we will update the village via the Willingham News.

Initiatives and ongoing activities during the last year include:

Highways

- Signs warning drivers to slow down on West Fen Road where children are playing were finally installed after much prompting.
- The installation of a footpath to the Community Orchard, now including a 40mph buffer zone, was signed off and is now waiting only for a window in the contractor's availability for work to commence. As advance warning, when this does take place the B1050 to Earith will be closed for the hopefully short duration.
- It appears that this year we have been successful in our Local Highways Improvement bid for speed control to make Station Road less accessible for HCVs and reduce traffic volume. Whether this was the result of our questioning of the County Council and our MP we will never know, but it was certainly because of a great deal of work by Councillor Harris.

Environment

- The Ploughman Hall heating was replaced with an efficient and low energy system, funded by a Zero Carbon Community (ZCC) grant.

- Many of the oaks originally planted on the Meadow Road site did not survive the rain and drought. These have now been replaced along with some additional trees. This time the weather has been kinder, so we hope for better results. Sadly, fly tipping in the entrance and nearby verges has been a problem which we hope to combat with a remotely viewable CCTV camera.
- Barton's Field has had the redundant shed removed and a side hedge, partly funded by another ZCC grant, was installed. A hedge was planted at the far end – please note that there is no access across the fields there – but regrettably stolen within days. A replacement is planned.
- All the lighting in the Pavilion has been replaced with energy efficient LED units.
- Land alongside the Lode by the QEII field is being prepared for a wildflower strip.
- Six flower tubs brightened up the village, planted by WAG and funded by a Community Chest grant.
- We are investigating the possibility of installing electric vehicle charging points at the Ploughman Hall car park. This is still a very new project with no definite conclusion yet reached.

Social and Wellbeing

- Waiting times and phone accessibility at the GP Surgery are a persistent and ongoing problem for all in the village. We invited the surgery to a recent Parish Council meeting, and they will be holding a meeting of their own, to inform villagers of their plans. We will continue to monitor the situation and press for a satisfactory solution.
- A defibrillator was donated by the Football Association to Willingham Wolves, and it has replaced the existing council defib on the Pavilion. The spare unit has now been installed at the primary school.
- The fourth defibrillator for the redundant phone box on the High Street is still working its way through bureaucratic mazes yet we remain ever hopeful that it will appear one day soon.
- The Parish Council fund 14 community lifeline units for residents who need them.
- We again donated £3,000 to Over Day Centre which supports many of our elderly residents.
- The Community Warden now has 10 users in Willingham and Over providing companionship and support with everyday errands.

Community

- The Community Plan group have been working hard and we expect their results in the next month or so. The findings will guide and influence the Parish Council's priorities over the coming years.
- The new plans for a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) will be submitted soon. This is now a netball and tennis surface which will be better able to cope if there is future flooding.
- We provide free use of the recreation ground and pavilion for the youth football teams.
- Community Groups are given one free booking in the hall each year to help them raise funds for their groups.
- The Council has a grant budget each year which is allocated to applicants on a case-by-case basis in line with their grant policy.
- We provide financial support to Willingham News so that it can continue its excellent job of providing the magazine to every household each month.

Derek Law
Chair

CEMETERY

Topple Testing

The Parish Clerk and I have started checking the safety of burial plot memorials.

We have currently covered about 50% of the oldest parts of the cemetery.

Where a concern about a memorial was identified, it has been photographed identified on our map and recorded in a file in the office. A safety warning notice has also been erected by the memorial.

Where it is possible, burial right owners will be contacted and requested to carry out remedial work.



Weather conditions

Some extremes in the weather conditions over the past few years has resulted in uneven settling of soil in several of the newer burial plots.

This presented a problem for grasscutters as machinery could get stuck in the dips. Notices warning about the hazard of the undulating ground have been posted on all the entrances to the cemetery.

It is anticipated that these undulations will be filled in.

Path removal

The path along the northeast edge of the cemetery has been removed and the area grassed over.

This has provided at least another twenty burial plots.

Grass Cutting

Buchans have been appointed to cut the cemetery grass.

The previous grasscutters have retired and we are grateful for the effort and work which they put into keeping the grass cut and the cemetery generally tidy.

Our thanks also go to Mark, whose regular emptying of the bins keeps things looking tidy, and to Councillor Simon Clark for some general maintenance with the gates.

Brenda Mansfield.
Cemetery Lead Councillor



GREEN AND BOUNDARIES

Since taking over the role of lead councillor last year on my own it was a tough time but now I have a deputy in Cllr Ramsden and together we have moved forward.

Barton Field

There was a lot of work needed here with lots of rubbish laid over the site. However, with the help of a local farmer who made use of the galvanised sheets that were lying around plus the same from the shed that was in a poor state and taken down by volunteer's from W.A.G. My thanks to them all.



A grant from South Cambridgeshire Council saw the new hedging completed along the boundary with the adjoining field on the northern side of the site. The other side which has just a wire fence will need looking at in the future as the posts have seen better days. This newly acquired site seems popular with dog walkers and residents enjoying the open space.

Pyrethrum Way

Both greens remain in good order, with some minor trimming needed to one of the trees. There are two bins on the first green which would benefit from either being replaced or modifying as neither have inner bins resulting in the contents being blown about. We are currently liaising

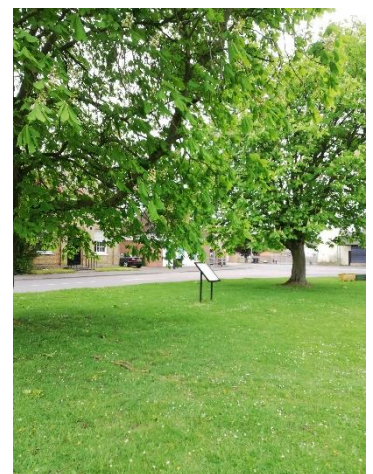
with South Cambs District Council to see what can be done.

The Green

There were a few things that needed addressing on the Green this year. The chestnut tree in the corner had some dead wood that needed removing and the no parking sign has been replaced as it was rotting.

Work has also been carried out to replace the rotten wood on the village pump and to refresh the village sign. Both are now looking good for future years.

The Christmas tree looked really good last year, and my thanks go to the Councillors who kindly gave up their time to install it. It is planned to carry out some minor updating work to the power supply this year and some of the older lights may need replacing.



Meadow Road

There has been quite a lot of work done here during the year. It was quite overgrown in places, and this has kindly been cut back by volunteers so that visitors can enjoy a pleasant walk around the area.

Thanks to a donation of hedging from a parishioner of Meadow Road, approximately 250 small hedging whips have now been planted along the front of the site which will hopefully create a lovely hedge in future years.

Fly tipping continues to be a big problem around the byways in the village and in particular along Meadow Road and in the entrance of the site. It is hoped that this can be addressed with the installation of CCTV and my thanks go to the residents who have donated the telegraph pole and their time to help with the installation.

Community Orchard

The orchard continues to flourish and is very popular with dog walkers and residents enjoying a peaceful walk amongst the trees. The fruit trees were loaded with fruit last year, available for the community to pick.

The County Council have agreed to install a footpath leading to the orchard following the Parish Council's successful A14 Legacy Grant bid and although there have been quite a lot of delays in this being completed it is hoped that it will be in place this year. As there is no official parking at the site this should make it safer and easier for residents to access.



Long Pond

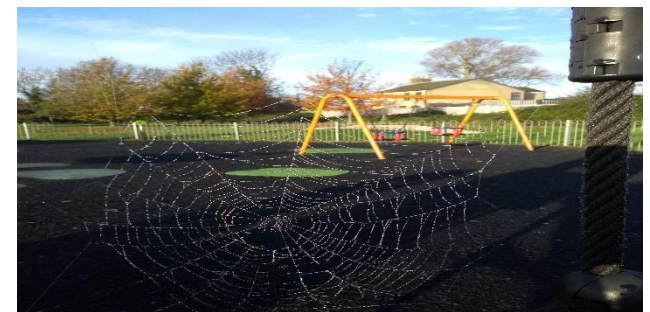
The water level has been high a couple of times during the year and the pond was due to be dredged in the Autumn. The Parish Council are liaising with South Cambs District Council regarding works needed.

Jim Watson
Green and Boundaries Lead Councillor

LEISURE AND AMENITIES

Covid 19

This has continued to have an effect on sporting activities over the year. We have been able to keep the QEII playground open, but the football, cricket and bowls clubs have all been affected, not least by the limiting of fund-raising activities. There have also been restrictions on the use of the pavilion.



Recreation Ground

Flooding

Following the severe flooding of the lower rec in December 2020, in April and May of 2021 we took measures to improve the drainage. The whole recreation ground was verti-drained by drilling a grid of small holes 40 cm deep and back filling with sand, and we are grateful for the help from the Wolves football club in this. Also, the nine underground pipes that drain into the lode were jetted out to improve their performance. Despite this, disappointingly after anything other than a light shower, the lower rec still becomes waterlogged, with small pools of water accumulating in the little hollows that have appeared over the past few years. Thus, it has been unplayable on many occasions. We are fortunate that the upper rec does not get waterlogged so there are some pitches that can still be used, but nothing like the number needed, ideally.



Formal games

Despite the pressures on pitch space already mentioned and the restricted use of the pavilion, the football club managed a full season of training and matches, and thanks are due to Jamie and Ben and the rest of the team for growing the club so successfully. The cricket club played a series of informal matches, having decided not to play in a league. They have struggled for players in the past few years and during the winter were in discussion with Over Cricket Club about a collaboration that would provide a bigger pool of players and also make junior cricket available for Willingham children. The Bowls club too has not been able to run its usual league matches, and its exciting community scheme in collaboration with local surgeries had to be put on hold.

Lack of pitch space

As highlighted in last year's report, Willingham is very short of pitch space and during the summer of 2021 we engaged closely with the updating of the Greater Cambridge Playing Pitch Strategy, providing detailed information, and meeting with the consultants drawing the strategy up. In particular, we put the case for both our proposed tarmac tennis and netball courts and an artificial 3G football pitch. We now await their conclusions.

Cricket nets

It has become apparent that the metal structure supporting the cricket nets has moved off its original base and begun to lean, and we have been in discussions with the cricket club about its repair. The Council has agreed to contribute towards the cost but we have so far been unable to find any contractor, such as a scaffolding company, to undertake the work.

Car parking

The Parish Council continues to press Highways regarding the very poor state of the parking area outside the pavilion. Planings from local road resurfacing works were delivered for us to spread, which was no easy task. But this is only a very temporary solution – passage of vehicles soon dislodges the stones, and the holes reappear.

QEII Field

This continues to be a very popular and well-used facility. Inevitably as the equipment ages repairs are needed and this year, we have spent around £6000 on that. It is likely that a similar annual amount will be needed over forthcoming years. The trees planted by WAG are maturing

and look very attractive. The Parish Council has received a grant from the SCDC's Zero Carbon Communities scheme towards turning the unused space alongside the lode into a wildflower meadow of grasses and perennials. Preparatory work has started but it will be spring 2023 before all the current weed growth is completely removed and final planting can begin.

West Fen Road 'Children playing' signs

Installed at last! In August 2019, the Parish Council applied under the Private Local Highways Improvement scheme to erect, at its own expense, 'children playing' signs on West Fen Road near the QEII field and the rec to alert traffic, which often speeds along that section despite the poor and narrow carriageway. These are now finally in place after about two and a half years.

Fen Gallop

We were delighted that we were once again able to host the hugely popular Fen Gallop at the recreation ground, and many thanks are due to the tireless organisers who took the restrictions imposed by covid in their stride.

Pavilion

It has been a quiet year, and only a few minor repairs have been needed, so some of the budget has been spent on helping to achieve the Council's target of replacing all lighting in council-owned buildings with LEDs. This is particularly important in the pavilion, where the lack of windows in changing rooms and toilets means that it is very easy to accidentally leave lights on.

As mentioned above, for much of this period there have been restrictions on the number of people able to use the pavilion, and we thank the various clubs for their patience.

MUGA

As reported last year, the flooding of the rec in late-December 2020 alerted us to the probability that the proposed sand-dressed surface would be ruined by water ingress in future years. We therefore temporarily withdrew the application and looked again at possible sites that would have minimal impact on pitch area, which is already too small. The outcome was to split the project into two, with the tennis/netball courts on the original site, but with a permeable tarmac surface that could withstand flooding, and a 3G artificial football pitch on the southern side of the upper rec, which never floods so can support that kind of surface. Though the costs of the whole project will increase, it is expected that splitting the sports in this way will make them more eligible for grant funding from the relevant sports bodies.

A revised planning application was submitted in October that covered the tarmac courts, with the expectation of progressing the football pitch plans at a later date. However, the application once again had to be withdrawn in January as more information was required regarding ecology, specifically taking into account that protected species badgers, bats and great crested newts had been reported with 1 km of the site. Also, details of biodiversity net gain/enhancement measures are now required. Some traffic issues were also raised. We are now obtaining the relevant information for resubmission.

Footpath to the Community Orchard

In July 2019, the Council was successful in its application for an A14 Legacy Grant for a proper footpath to the Community Orchard, which is currently dangerous, especially at the end by the orchard where there is now no path at all. As noted in last year's report, complications then arose regarding the scoping and cost, and extra funding was required. This has now been in place for many months, as has the required TRO, but we still await the footpath.



Finally, my thanks are due to my deputy lead councillor, Simon Clark, for his invaluable help in keeping up with the many minor repairs needed, and his support over the year in all aspects of L&A activities.

Linda King
Lead Councillor, Leisure and Amenities

HALLS

Ploughman Hall

The Council have been very pleased to be able to welcome both regular users and one-off hirers back to the hall. Bookings have been very busy over the last few months with most evenings booked out by regular users and weekends popular again with party bookings.



The new heating has finally been installed in the hall and although it did have a few teething problems it is hoped that users will enjoy nice warm space whilst at the same time benefiting from a system designed to reduce the hall's carbon footprint.



Public Hall

The Public Hall continues to be used by the Scouts on a regular basis. The hall has for some time needed a significant amount of upgrading and the Council are currently looking at options for the future given the level of work needed to bring it up to date.



Following a particularly windy weekend repairs were needed to the fence on the rear boundary of the site and new notice boards were put up on the front. As a result of a successful Zero Carbon Grant from South Cambs District Council, the front of the building has been further enhanced by the beautifully planted flower tubs which I am sure you will have all noticed when you walk past. My thanks to the volunteers who planted them up and continue to maintain them for everyone's benefit.

Jamie Smith
Halls Lead Councillor

PLANNING

The Planning Committee met 18 times during the year and considered 78 planning applications, 10 more than the previous year. The first three meetings were virtual, conducted via Zoom, and the remainder in the Octagon. The first five were at 6.30pm and the remainder at the more usual time of 7.30pm. The meetings averaged every 3 weeks and considered up to 12 applications. Members of the public are invited, though rarely attended. When they did, their considered comments enhanced the debate and the decisions reached.

During the year, standing orders were changed so that the Council Vice-Chairman was not a required member of the planning committee. Also, the number of committee members was reduced from 7 to 6 due to the lower numbers of full parish councillors. This has allowed the committee to be quorate with just 3 councillors attending though so far this has not been the case.

Of the applications to be considered, 4 were in outline, 41 full, 7 for trees, 9 agricultural and 15 variations of conditions, etc.

Applications for large development only came from Northstowe for which we make advisory comments. There were two applications for 4 houses, one agricultural change to 3 dwellings, and one for 2 dwellings in Willingham. Otherwise, there were only 5 new houses proposed. Most of the new applications were for extensions. There was one County application for use of land for waste management to which we strongly objected due to traffic concerns.

The committee made no recommendation for 15 of the applications, mostly for applications for conditions to applications previously approved by SCDC. There were 43 recommended for approval and 19 for refusal. SCDC agreed with all those recommended for approval bar 3 and of those recommended for refusal, 5 were approved. There are 8 remaining still "out for consultation" half being recent applications. Eight of the applications were withdrawn after the planning committee had consulted and made recommendations.

The planning committee considers all applications carefully and gives recommendations to SCDC based on the value of the proposals to the village in amenity and design, and the impact of any development on the residents. We are very conscious of the village status as a minor rural community and discourage any development outside the village framework.

Neil Harris
Chair of Planning

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

The Council continues to support the urgent need to tackle climate change using its limited resources while working with others who can help maintain targets and support sustainability of our environment. Alongside these aims we seek to provide a better, attractive environment within our village.

Flower tubs

Our village WAG group obtained a Community Chest grant for six flower tubs around the village, and we have helped facilitate this by providing PC land for their siting, where they can be enjoyed as well as watered and maintained relatively easily. Through the seasonal changes this year we have helped replant these and have received good feedback. More sponsored tubs placed on private land would be most welcome.

ZCC grant

Following our successful grant from South Cambridgeshire District Council to refit a more efficient and low carbon heating system in the village Ploughman Hall last year, we decided to scale back somewhat to apply for a smaller Zero Carbon Community grant for two of the village maintained outside areas – the QEII field and Barton Field. This successful bid was for £4,160 which was supported by Willingham parish funds



of £3,000 from section 106 money, dedicated to open space development. The involvement of WAG in this bid and the subsequent work is much appreciated.

Both projects further our aim to capture carbon, encourage wildlife and biodiversity while offering residents more attractive facilities. Acquiring contractors to carry out work through the covid periods has been tricky so we are pleased there has been progress with these projects, which are described in more detail below.

Biodiversity survey

In early July we arranged for a biodiversity survey by local ecologist Ann Sherwood of all the village maintained large open spaces, detailing all the current plant and tree species and likely wildlife, plus suggestions for future improvements. This useful survey, available to download from the Parish Council website, will be key for any potential developments regarding our open spaces.

Ploughman Hall heating

Over the summer the new infra-red heating system, partially paid for with a ZCC grant, was installed in the Ploughman Hall. There have been a few teething problems and because of changes in hall use due to covid it is difficult to compare this winter with previous winters, but early indications are that the amount of electricity used will be substantially reduced.

QEII Field wildflower strip

Along the West Fen Lode to the east of the very popular QEII field lies a 10m x 1000m² strip which is unused and covered in unwanted weeds. The removal of these mainly nettles and thistles will be best achieved through a series of weed-killing sprays. Following research, this difficult work has been booked for the near future with Mark Drew. Once the land has been cleared a wildflower meadow seed mix for grasses and perennials can be spread and in future years enjoyed by the many who visit the QEII recreation field. Once it is completed we plan to involve residents by providing information on the flowers and grasses, and hopefully animals attracted to the area, and to perhaps encourage them to create their own small wildflower area.

Barton Field

This facility for the village was a recent donation and offers a different facility to the south of Willingham. However, it needed clearing of rubbish, an old shed, and some reorganisation in order to make it not only safer for parishioners but better for wildlife. Our WAG group and local landowners have worked alongside us offering energetic practical help as well as expertise in rewilding and managing open field spaces. Hedging with a varied native hedge along the 350m northern edge was agreed to be the best option. Estimates for the 1,000 plants, guards and canes were sought locally and Simpsons finally was approached for these, and the ZCC grant was put towards the cost. Mark Drew was again contracted to undertake the groundwork. Planting of the small whips and shrubs, together with some donated whips, was successfully completed in January. WAG have been successful in their application for a further grant of £500 from 'Localgiving' organisation which will be used for information display boards on the site. We also plan to involve local residents by devising nature trails.



LED lighting

The council has also looked at ways of reducing our carbon use and a programme to install LED lighting in all council-owned buildings is underway. In March all the lights in the Pavilion were changed to LED.

Other activities

Throughout the year the Environmental Parish Councillors have involved themselves in a wider variety of meetings and discussions. These range from involvement in Greater Cambridge Partnership proposals to improve the bus and cycleway networks, to 'New Life on The Old West' projects. We continue to support practically where we are able, for example with tree planting and recycling. In addition, we greatly value the help we have of local supporters such as landowners, gardening experts, local eco farm owner Christine Hertoghe, Willingham Action Group, and the Willingham Sustainability Group. The Willingham Parish Councillors and Clerks have all pulled together too, adding their encouragement and ideas at every stage.

HIGHWAYS

Traffic Speeds

The Parish Council has continued to monitor traffic speed, volume and pollution levels at various locations in the village. We have 2 speed indicating devices (SID) which indicate speed only and were provided by Mick George to help ensure his vehicles obey his self-imposed speed limit through the village. We also have a programmable Morelock SID that we purchased using our precept. This SID, whilst not able to gather accurate vehicle volumes is judged by experts to be the best speed display on the market.

Since 2018, Community Roadwatch (CRW) has supported us – even through the worst of COVID - with fortnightly visits from St Ives, to move the SIDs regularly, and then to replace the batteries and carry out random speed checks around the village. Also, when requested, to support our LHI bids, they install and then coordinate the data from one of their Mick George-sponsored Armadillo bi-directional traffic loggers that discretely and accurately record the per-vehicle speeds, counts and types of vehicles that pass. The parish council donates £200 per year to support the activities of this unpaid-director-managed, not-for-profit Community Interest Company. The results of all the data collected from our Morelock & CRW's Loggers can be found on the CRW website: www.roadwatch.org.uk/Cambs/Willingham/ that is regularly updated and includes results going back to 2018 when the initial SIDs were handed over to the parish.

Highways Improvement

We submitted a bid for the Local Highways Initiative (LHI) to install speed reducing measures along Station Road from the 30mph signs towards the traffic lights. We are awaiting confirmation but appear to be successful with this. Whilst any measures are going to be ignored by those who don't abide by speed limits and parking restrictions etc., hopefully this will help to make it safe and more pleasant for road users and residents along this road.

If there is a new round of LHI bids later this year, we will submit another scheme. Amongst options to be considered include a footpath to Highgate Farm along Over Road, pedestrian crossing at Earith Road at Fen End, 20mph zone in parts of the village, and various road junction improvements.

Cambridgeshire Schemes

The temporary traffic restriction at Thoday's Close is to be made permanent. The A14 legacy scheme to install a new footpath to the community orchard alongside the B1050 Earith Road should go ahead soon once a contractor has been appointed. This will include a 40mph buffer zone for 400 metres before the 30mph signs at the orchard entrance. Meanwhile, the scheme to repair the B1050 Shelfords Road alongside the river is scheduled for capital budget at a total £6.8M, of which £800K is to be spent in 2022/23, and £6M in 2023/24.

There are plans to privatise parking enforcement in Cambridgeshire. This means CCC would use its own wardens to issue and collect from offenders which should increase the effectiveness of the restrictions. Until this is formalised (by an Act of Parliament) replacing and updating yellow lines will not be done.

Other Initiatives

The Parish Council holds regular meetings with our County Councillor, Neil Gough, together with representatives of CCC highways to discuss local issues such as potholes, road markings, and general maintenance problems. Also, we attend regular meetings with other parishes and County Councillors to try to resolve HCV volumes and problems along the A1123 from St. Ives to Stretham. This group campaigns for HCV traffic reduction within the 'Diamond' between the A14/A10/A141/A142, the major roads in the area. The B1050 through Willingham is a primary link between the A1123 and the A14, and is constantly affected by this traffic.

Neil Harris
Highways Representative

GRANTS AWARDED 2021 – 2022

Grants have been awarded to the following groups during the last 12 months:

BENEFICIARY	AMOUNT
Over Day Centre	£3,000
Community Plan Group	£4,500
Willingham Youth Trust	£6,000
Community Roadwatch	£200
CAMSAR	£250.00
Bowls	£1200
TOTAL	£15,150

The Council continue to provide free use of the Pavilion and Recreation Ground for the Youth Teams in the village as well as reduced charges for community and education groups using the Ploughman Hall. Local Groups also benefit from the reduced cost of using the Public Hall which is currently leased to the User Committee and at present is mainly used by the Scout Group and the renovated section of the Ploughman Hall which is leased to Willingham Youth Trust.

In addition to the above, the Parish Council also pay for the provision of fourteen community lifeline monitors from the District Council for residents who need them.

PARISH COUNCIL ASSETS

Property and Land belonging to the Parish Council

Ploughman Hall- West Fen Road, Willingham, Cambs, CB24 5LP

Date Purchased: Year 2000

Purchase Price: £239,304

Unique Property Reference No: 10003188724

Map reference: E544872 N245256

Freehold

The Ploughman Hall houses the Council office and the sports hall and the Youth facility. The sports hall is available for hire by both regular users and one-off bookings. The Youth facility is leased to Willingham Youth Trust on a 10-year lease. This lease is due for renewal in 2025. The Parish Office is open to the public Monday to Thursday 10am to 1pm

Sports Pavilion – West Fen Road, Willingham, Cambridgeshire CB24 5LP

Date Purchased: 1972

Purchase price: Not known

Unique Property Reference No: 10033035727

Map reference: E540185 N270670

Freehold

The Sports pavilion is a facility provided by the Parish Council in conjunction with a grant awarded by the Sports Council for the use of local clubs and other users and consists of a small meeting room, kitchen and changing room facilities.

The Old Recreation Ground/Community Orchard – Earith Road, Willingham, Cambs

Date Purchased: Not known

Purchase price: Not known

Unique Property Reference No: Not known

Map reference: E540467 N: 271276

Freehold

The Old recreation Ground is situated on Earith Road and was transformed into a community orchard in 2015 in conjunction with Willingham Action Group.

The Recreation Ground – West Fen Road, Willingham, Cambs, CB24 5LP

Dates Purchased: Dec 1997

Purchase price: £26,271

Unique Property Reference No: 10003197804

Map reference: E540136 N270691

Freehold

The Recreation Ground is situated behind the pavilion and the various sections of it were purchased between 1898 and 1997. The Recreation Ground contains several football pitches, cricket pitch and practice nets. The Recreation ground is available for hire by local groups and other users.

Jubilee/QEII Field – West Fen Road, Willingham, Cambs, CB24 5LP

Date Purchased: Not known

Purchase price: £15,000

Unique Property Reference No:10091623511

Map reference: E540187 N270782

Freehold

The QEII Field sits behind the Ploughman Hall and hosts a large play area which was significantly upgraded in 2015. The Field was registered with Fields in Trust in 2014.

Meadow Road Site – Meadow Road, Willingham, Cambs

Date Purchased: January 2015

Purchase price: £50,000

Unique Property Reference No: 100091654618

Map reference: E541884 N270840

Leasehold

The Parish Council purchased a 125-year lease in January 2015 for the site and it has been agreed to develop the site into a community woodland.

The Cemetery – Church Lane, Willingham, Cambs

Date Purchased: Not known

Purchase price: Not known

Unique Property Reference No: 100091611368

Map reference: E540354 N270612

Freehold

The Parish Council own and operate the cemetery in Church Lane which includes a War Memorial.

The Pound – Pound Lane, Willingham, Cambs

Date Purchased: Not known

Purchase price: Not known

Unique Property Reference No: Not known

Map reference: E540172 N270603

Freehold

The Landing Ground – Bridge Farm, Earith Road, Willingham, Cambs
Date Purchased: Not known
Purchase Price: Not known
Unique Property Reference No: 100091420856 (Bridge farm)
Map reference: E540633 N273279
Freehold

The Green – Green Street, Willingham, Cambs
Date Purchased: Not known
Purchase Price: Not known
Unique Property Reference No: 10090708791
Map reference: E540666 N270486
Freehold

The village Green is located on the junction of Green Street and Church Street. There is a village pump and a village sign located on the Green. The Green is the location for the fair during Feast Week in October.

Public Hall – The High Street, Willingham, Cambs
Date Purchased: 1896
Purchase Price: Donated
Unique Property Reference No: 10003189029
Map reference: E540237 N270406
Freehold

The Public Hall is owned by the Parish Council and is leased on a 10-year lease to the Public Hall User Committee. The lease is due for renewal in 2025

Public Open Space Pyrethrum Way – Pyrethrum Way, Willingham, Cambs
Date Purchased: Not known
Purchase Price: Not known
Unique Property Reference No: Not known
Map reference: E540617 N270120
Freehold

The Council adopted and maintains the public open space on Pyrethrum Way

Long Pond – Rampton Road, Willingham
Date Purchased: Not known
Purchase Price: Not known
Unique Property Reference no: Not Known
Map reference: E540874 N270081
Freehold

Barton’s Field – Black Pit Drove, Willingham
Date Purchased: Donated February 2021
Purchase price: Not applicable
Unique property reference:
Map reference: E540751 N269069
Freehold

The field was donated by a parishioner and is used as open public space for parishioners. It has a small wooded area top and bottom and several fruit trees planted throughout the site. Pedestrian access only is via Black Pit Drove

DEFIBRILLATORS



The Parish Council currently own three defibrillators that are available for the public to use. These are sited at the pavilion on West Fen Road, the Library on Church Street and the Primary School in Thoday’s Close. We are currently in the process of adopting the phone box on the High Street which will house the fourth unit.

ACCOUNTS 2021 - 2022

WILLINGHAM PARISH COUNCIL					
Budgetary control statement			At 31st March 2022		
Committee/item	Opening Balance 01.04.21	Balance	Income to 31.03.22	Expenditure to 31.03.22	Balance 31.03.22
Green and Boundaries Committee	4464	4464	3650	6392	1722
Leisure/Amenities Committee	49180	49180		23324	25856
Halls Committee	43769	43769	18761	44794	17736
Cemetery Committee	23314	23314	2426	12797	12943
Salaries	49353	49353		45784	3569
Establishments - Establishments	34700	34700	24	25564	9160
- Insurance	5701	5701		5207	494
- Grant Barton Field			4161	2490	1671
Section 142 - Parish Magazine	0	0			0
Section 137 - Donations	3070	3070	1405	3705	770
Willingham Hub	1034	1034		344	690
Over Day Centre - Donation	3000	3000		3000	0
- Lifeline	3498	3498		2689	809
TOTALS					
RESERVES					
Section 106 - Whites Path	9739	9739			9739
Section 106 - Rockmill End	0	0	37637	9037	28600
Section 106 - Brickhills	19160	19160		3650	15510
New Cemetery	45000	45000			45000
General	44893	44893		2500	42393
TOTAL RESERVES	339875	339875	68064	191278	216661

2nd half precept	0	Debtors	1469
General Account	5000	Prepayments	0
Business Call Account	215198	Accruals	900
Parish Property Account	3748	Creditors	9384
Petty Cash	0	VAT	1531
Credit card	0		
	<u>223946</u>		<u>223946</u>

DISTRICT COUNCIL REPORT

This report covers the last 12 months of activity by your District Council and local Councillors; a year again dominated by the coronavirus pandemic and latterly by the terrible war in Ukraine.

Covid recovery

SCDC has been highly active in the local government response throughout the pandemic and responded quickly and flexibly to the changing circumstances. Business support has been a high priority and the council has administered the distribution £43.9M of government Covid grants and a further £1.4 M to help 102 small local businesses and start-ups to grow. SCDC's business team has organised visits to 2,000 businesses and created the "Open for Business" newsletter. They have also helped set up local markets, assisted 4 start-ups to find premises from which to operate and created the "On Your Doorstep" #shoplocal campaign that helps local shops to recover from Covid19. The Visit South Cambs website at <https://visitsouthcambs.co.uk/> supports leisure and small businesses.

Ukraine refugees

Like other local authorities, SCDC has responded very quickly to the refugee crisis caused by the war in Ukraine. Starting from scratch, arrangements have been put in place for Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, home and welfare inspections and arrangements to make payments to guests and hosts. This continues to gather pace and early teething problems have been overcome. After a slow start caused by hold-ups in visa processing the number of Ukrainian guests is now increasing. SCDC's Communities team is now working on plans to facilitate meetings, either virtual or face-to-face, to allow both Ukrainian guests and their hosts to socialise and support each other.

"Green To Our Core"

In 2018 when the Liberal Democrats took over the administration of SCDC, being "Green to our core" was set as one of the major objectives and the council has adopted Doubling Nature and Zero Carbon Strategies as policies to deliver this aim. 'Doubling Nature' will increase wildlife-rich habitats and the tree canopy across the district and improve access to green spaces for all.

In the last year, a major step in the net-zero carbon strategy - an energy-efficient retrofit of the Council office building - has been taking place and is now almost complete. This includes a solar carport system, which will generate enough renewable electricity to meet 20% of the building's electricity demand. Ground source heat pumps will provide low carbon heating and decrease the building's gas consumption by around 80%. An LED lighting upgrade will reduce the building's current energy consumption by 15%. Improvements to the building's energy management system will maximise renewable energy use and reduce the energy consumption still further.

In 2021 the "Six Free Trees" scheme saw 227 trees planted to add to the 162 trees in 2020.

SCDC has been recognised for its Green policies by receiving a Silver Award in the Green Public Service category at the 2022 annual Improvement and Efficiency Social Enterprise (iESE) Public Sector Transformation Awards. The iESE promotes environmental best practice

across the public sector in the UK and the award shows how SCDC has helped the environment and improved sustainability not only in the Council, but in the wider community too.

You can also read more about SCDC's green projects at: <https://www.scambs.gov.uk/climate-emergency-and-nature/what-are-we-doing-to-tackle-climate-change-in-south-cambridgeshire>

Emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan

The importance of the Local Plan cannot be overstated. They are the basis of decision-making on planning applications, alongside national planning policy and other supplementary guidance. Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council are working together to create a new joint Local Plan for Greater Cambridge. The joint Plan will ensure that there is a consistent approach to planning and building across both areas. A Local Plan is a legal document that all Councils are required to prepare, which sets out the land use and planning policies for the area over a set time period – in this case up to 2041. This includes the number of new homes and jobs that should be planned for, together with the services and infrastructure that are needed to support them. It defines where new development should happen, and where it should not. Such an important document takes a great deal of time to prepare with many stages of preparation and consultation and it is independently tested at a public examination to check that it is sound before it can be formally adopted. The examination will test whether the Plan is realistic, deliverable and based on good evidence.

The existing Local Plan for South Cambridgeshire covers the years up to 2031; the emerging Local Plan, which is for Cambridge City as well as South Cambridgeshire covers the years up to 2041 and proposes an additional 11,596 new homes. Only 384 (4%) of these new homes are proposed for villages (mostly larger settlements and/or close to good transport links) and none are proposed for Willingham. We are focussing on keeping South Cambs rural and protecting the character of villages.

Council Tax

SCDC recently approved its budget for next year and set its Council Tax charge from April 2022. It was raised by 10 pence a week or £5 a year for a Band D property to enable the Council to continue to transform council services and deliver £230,000 of savings every year. The revenue from Council Tax is insufficient to run the services, which is why it has to find additional sources of income through investments and SCDC makes around £5M per year from investments and saved £200,000 per year.

Council Audited Accounts

Since taking over in 2018, the Liberal Democrat administration has been modernising the council on many fronts. A complex transfer of the council's asset register was undertaken, moving from spread sheets to a modern database; this meant that a number of historic issues had to be resolved which delayed the process considerably. Those for 2017/18 were completed in 2020 and those for the year 2018/19 have recently been signed off. A schedule has been agreed for the completion of 2019/20 accounts within 20 weeks.

The council now has a robust modern system in place that is fit for the future.

County Council elections; May 2021

Following elections in May 2021, the administration at Cambridgeshire County Council changed from Conservative to a minority administration led by the Liberal Democrats. From Willingham's perspective the significant change is that the village now has a Liberal Democrat County Councillor, Neil Gough, and we are seeing the benefits, both locally and county-wide of the benefits of having local authorities working together. The clearing of road-gullies and repairs to pot-holes has started, although catching-up will be a slow process after years of neglect. The village's traffic problems will also not be resolved overnight but Neil is making sure that the issue is further up the CCC Highways agenda than it has ever been.

Local elections: Dawn steps down

By the time you read this report the results of the local authority election (5th May) will be known. Dawn Percival decided not to stand again because of work commitments, and I would like to take the opportunity to thank her for her work in the last four years. Apart from local casework, Dawn used her expertise in Human Resources to support a number of committees at the council, which was very much appreciated. I hope that I will still be your councillor after 5th May but, either way, I will take the opportunity to say that it has been a privilege to represent the people of Willingham for the last four years and I thank you all for giving me the opportunity of doing so.

Bill

Bill Handley
District Councillor

COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT

It was a privilege to be elected in the County Council elections in May 2021 to represent our local communities for the next four years. The elections saw the Conservative Group lose its majority on Cambridgeshire County Council.

The County Council's move from Shire Hall in Cambridge to Alconbury finally took place in the autumn - but not for Full Council meetings, for which the 'Multi Function Room' at Alconbury is certainly too small for meetings with COVID social distancing, and possibly even permanently. The Annual Meeting of the Council in May 2021 was held amid the war planes of the Imperial War Museum at Duxford.

The new Joint Administration has been taking stock of the Council it has inherited. We invited in a 'peer challenge' panel of expert councillors and council officers from the Local Government Association to look at the operation of the Council and advise on priorities. They did so and came back in spring this year to update on how we were doing. We also convened an Independent Remuneration Panel, as we are required to do, to review councillor allowances. Unlike the previous administration we agreed their recommendations unaltered.

The Council's Chief Executive retired during the year, and we appointed a new Chief Executive Stephen Moir who started in post in February 2022. Unlike his predecessor, Stephen will serve Cambridgeshire County Council only, not Peterborough too. This is part of a process of disentangling many of the joint staffing structures set up by the previous administration, so that we and they can focus on Cambridgeshire priorities.

A new Joint Administration of Liberal Democrat, Labour and Independent councillors is now running the Council, and the three groups signed an Agreement including a policy framework, protocols for working arrangements, and a new committee structure.

I am a member of the Constitution & Ethics Committee and a working group on Heavy Goods Vehicles. I am also a Board Member of This Land, the property development company that is owned by the County Council.

Strategy & Resources

The new Council inherited a budget gap of £22.2M for this year. We managed to balance the budget this time, but very significant financial challenges lie ahead. The budget gap we inherited was set to rise to £86M by 2027, and our 'peer challenge' team identified this as an issue 'of significant magnitude'. The Council increased its portion of Council Tax in February, by 1.99 per cent for general services, and three per cent for adult social care. This was a difficult decision to take during the current cost of living crisis, but many people struggling most with increased bills and prices are those who are most likely to need council services, and likely to pay a lower council tax increase. The Council's budget for this year included a £14M 'Just Transition Fund' to tackle inequality, improve lives, and care for the environment.

The new Joint Administration commissioned an independent review of the Council's development company This Land. The review made a number of recommendations, most to be carried out within three months.

Adults & Health

One of the major changes the new administration made to the Council's committee system was to combine the former Adults Committee and Health Committee into a single committee, making the most of the close relationship between health provision and adult social care. The Committee has been working hard towards the introduction of the Government's Integrated Care System across health and care providers in Cambridgeshire. We also welcomed a new Director of Public Health, Jyoti Atri, into post.

The COVID pandemic has had a devastating effect in terms of loss of life, long-term health challenges, and the emotional impact on families. Workforce challenges in health and care are acute, as people are reassessing their careers and life choices. International recruitment has been adversely affected first by Brexit and then Covid. The Council has worked extensively with partner agencies to support the COVID effort, though with all precautions now removed in England case numbers have surged in recent months.

The Joint Administration has adopted a 'health in all policies' approach. We are investing in the development of 'Care Together', with Community Catalysts supporting local social care micro- enterprises as an alternative to large agency staff models, and rolling out the Real Living Wage to social care workers. We have established increased support for unpaid carers, and expanded the Direct Payment option to more people. And we have invested further in the Enhanced Response Service as an alternative to reliance on an over-stretched A&E.

The Council has invested afresh in public health programmes, including more NHS health checks, and local grants for community wellbeing activities. It has also started to assess the impact of government reforms on our social care responsibilities, in which it's clear there will be very significant new responsibilities and costs without new funding.

Children & Young People

A major focus of this committee during the year was to ensure funding of vouchers over school holidays for families eligible for free school meals. This happened throughout 2021/22 and is guaranteed throughout 2022/23. The Council has also worked with local providers on to establish the Holiday Activity & Food programme for the children of families on benefits- related free school meals. The numbers of children in Cambridgeshire eligible for free school meals has continued to increase significantly across the county - by one-third in East Cambridgeshire since March 2020.

The Council has carried out a high- profile drive to recruit more local foster carers and ensure more children and young people in care can remain within the county.

A full and comprehensive review of admission arrangements for all own admission authority schools has been agreed, to include the published definitions of existing school catchment areas, and admission policies for schools with a sixth form. The Council is also proposing to commission new and additional places to meet rising demand for specialist placements for children with special educational needs.

Environment

The new Environment & Green Investment Committee has been exceptionally busy this year, with a large number of practical projects as well as new strategies. The committee is responsible for climate change and renewable energy, strategic planning, flood and water, biodiversity, waste, antiquities, and surprisingly digital infrastructure and broadband.

The Council's high-profile scheme to get the community of Swaffham Prior off oil and onto a new renewable energy community heating system continues to progress well, with a £3.2M Government grant awarded. Other energy schemes include the installation of solar panels on Park & Ride sites, small-scale solar farms with private wire connections to commercial customers, and replacement of gas and oil boilers in schools and in the Council's own premises around the county. We have also run another round of Solar Together, the group buying scheme for homeowners wanting to invest in solar panels and battery storage.

The committee developed two important strategies this year - a revised Local Flood Risk Management Strategy, and an updated Climate Change & Environment Strategy. The

Flood Risk strategy was accompanied by local initiatives to promote and fund community flood groups, visits by the Floodmobile to demonstrate options for fitting flood prevention measures in domestic properties, and clarification of the responsibilities of riparian owners for maintaining their watercourses. I was successful in getting projects on the resilience of the Cottenham Lode to climate change and a local flooding study in Cottenham added to the work plan contained in the Flood Risk Management Strategy.

The approved Climate Change & Environment Strategy sets a new and more ambitious target for a net-zero carbon Cambridgeshire by 2045, aiming to work with businesses and communities to bring this about.

Constitution & Ethics

An issue dominating Cambridgeshire politics since the whistle was blown in 2018 is 'Farmgate' —the award to then County Council deputy leader Roger Hickford of the tenancy of a County Council- owned farm in Girton. The new Joint Administration took office committed to publishing the facts, and this has now happened. Mr Hickford was found by independent investigators to have broken the councillors' Code of Conduct in seven different ways, including bullying and improper use of position for personal advantage. Mr Hickford resigned from the Council before the election.

Highways & Transport

The new Council is facing up to the many challenges left by its outgoing administration. Not least of these was the atrocious state of the county's 100,000 gullies, whose lack of maintenance contributed to the flooding of winter 2020/21. These are now being mapped and cleared, including one which was in such a bad state a metal detector was required to actually find it.

We have established a new funding pot for local communities to bid into for 20MPH zones, to make these more widespread and easier to obtain. I am part of a working group which will publish a proposed new policy on heavy goods vehicles in villages, which will align with the Combined Authority's forthcoming Local Transport & Connectivity Plan.

Various treatments of various roads and pavements are being planned for the next two years.

Traffic in Cambridge is set to grow by 30 per cent in the next ten years, and there is a serious lack of funding for public transport. Without this, many people who cannot drive, or cannot afford to buy, insure, or fill up a car, are left with limited or no options for travel. The Greater Cambridge Partnership has been consulting for some time on ways to relieve traffic congestion in Cambridge and improve public transport into the city. These consultations are still ongoing. Initial plans will see the introduction of significantly improved bus services to Cottenham and fare reduction and simplification options to make travel by public transportation more attractive.

The County Council is initiating the process for the introduction of Civil Parking Enforcement in the South Cambridge area. This will enable better enforcement of illegal and inconsiderate parking; something that has not been a police priority. The initial costs of the scheme will be funded by the Greater Cambridge Partnership.

We have also seen the opening of the Histon Road improvements for buses and active travel. Work on a similar scheme for Milton Road was given the go-ahead at the last GCP Board meeting.

Combined Authority

A new Mayor was elected in May 2021. This resulted in the scrapping of the CAM Metro and the '£100K homes' project, the latter taken up by East Cambs District Council. A new Chief Executive was also appointed, and the Combined Authority has decided to make its permanent home in offices in Huntingdon.

Neil Gough
County Councillor

PARISH COUNCIL CONTACT DETAILS

Clerk: Mrs Mandy Powell

Parish Council Office
Ploughman Hall
West Fen Road
Willingham
CB24 5LP

Tel: 01954 261027

email: clerk@willinghamparishcouncil.gov.uk

website: www.willinghamparishcouncil.gov.uk