

Report to Willingham Parish Council

With Mike Tidball (former WAG Secretary and de facto Chair) and Amanda Radford (former WAG Treasurer) sadly leaving the village, WAG has had to reform.

Current committee:

Chair - Paul Knighton

Treasurer – Richard Foster

Sustainability Lead and Acting Secretary – Alex Mueller

Community Orchard Lead – Graham Mumby

Social Lead – Sue Berry

Social Media and Advertising Lead – Prakash Nayee

Operations Lead – Howard Berry

Agricultural/Horticultural Lead – Jeremy Sweet

We have collated an email list of 200+ volunteers, some of whom have expressed a positive desire to be “Friends of WAG”, and thus be our first point of contact when help is required.

We are in the process of forging stronger links with other groups in the village – the Church and their nascent restoration fund committee, and the Gardening Club with a view to resurrecting the Horticultural Show in some form. Hopefully more progress will ensue after May this year.

WAG was largely responsible for organising the Queen’s Jubilee Picnic held on the Recreation Ground (in rather inclement weather) on 5th June, with thanks to WPC for underwriting the costs of the event in full. Accounts were duly submitted.

We also – as usual – provided the framework for the Feast in October 2022 with, this time, a craft market on the Green, joined as is traditionally the case by an art exhibition, a photography exhibition and library activities. As usual, Thurston’s Funfair provided an excellent focal point of the programme. The Repair Café on Sunday 2nd October was a great success. The Ceilidh held on Friday 14th October was a three-way collaboration between WAG and fundraisers for two charities, Ukraine Direct and Unique Feet, and helped to raise funds for all three organisations. We coordinated with the Church so that their Harvest Festival tied in with Feast Sunday. And we also advertised Willingham Social Club’s Beer Festival and Custard Comedy events as part of the programme, with thanks to all organisations involved.

We held another Repair Café on 23rd April, again with great success and numerous grateful repairees, and are preparing a celebration on the Rec of the Coronation of King Charles III and Queen Camilla on 7th May 2023, with arrangements for events progressing reasonably well. And again, with thanks to WPC for underwriting costs for the latter up to a notional budget of £1000.

A major planting of bulbs took place in the Community Orchard in April this year, funded by a grant and the Adopt-a-Tree Scheme, with thanks particularly to Marion Barber for helping with the organisation of the effort. A group of volunteers has been found to empty the dog poo bins and generally keep an eye on the state of this excellent village facility. Bulb planting will continue in the autumn. Thanks go to volunteers Andrew and Amanda Harris for organising the Adopt-a-Tree Scheme, and who continue to respond to requests. We are also grateful to Edd Gilbert of Queenholme Farm for his continued input and to all volunteers who have contributed to maintaining the orchard and woodland. Longer-term arrangements have been put in place whereby

responsibility for the orchard has been passed to WPC supported by WAG volunteers accredited to WPC utilising a budget provision under Greens and Boundaries.

WAG have supported the efforts of Cllrs Linda King and Val McKee leading up to the opening of Barton Field, a new green space gifted to the village, accessed from Black Pitt Drove. Mike Tidball was principally involved in the sourcing and installing of an information board, built in his new garage in Needingworth – possibly Mike's last official involvement with WAG and WPC. Once again, we thank him on behalf of the whole village for his many invaluable contributions to the community.