



## Community Governance Review of Willaston

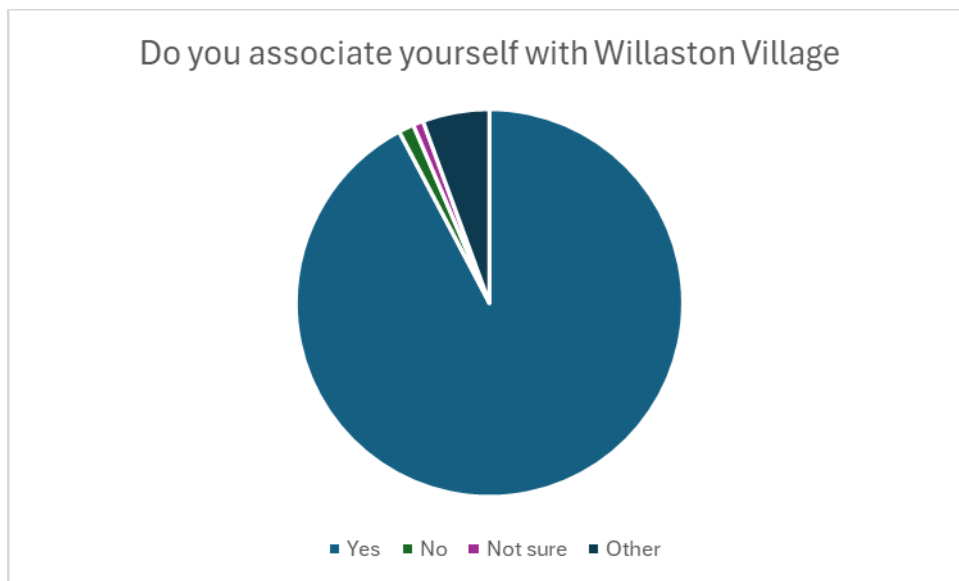
(Consultation responses Stage 1)

December 2025

A public consultation was run from 12 September – 5 December 2025. Each household in the area of Willaston was written to and invited to complete the consultation questionnaire. A total of 219 responses were received, representing an 18% response rate from the 1,257 households contacted. Each household received one consultation document and was invited to submit a single response. Two households submitted more than one, and for fairness, their answers were combined so that only one entry per household was included in the analysis.

Ten questions were included in the consultation form and responses to all questions have been summarised and included below. For the first consultation exercise, questions were left broad for people to give their open and honest responses.

### Question 1 Do you associate yourself with Willaston Village?



## Question 2 – In what way do you associate with Willaston Village?

The majority of respondents stated that they associate themselves with Willaston Village mainly as residents. Many respondents have lived in the village for long periods, often decades. Respondents reported that they have either:

- Lived in Willaston for 30–50+ years
- Lived in Willaston for their entire lives or since childhood.
- recently moved into the village and already feel connected.

The above results demonstrate that in Willaston village there are residents who have a strong deep connection with it and there is a long standing community which has strong emotional ties.

Many of the respondents described having an involvement in community groups, voluntary roles, and local organisations, including:

- Friends of Hadlow Road Station (FHRS)
- Willaston Residents Society / Willaston Matters
- Willaston WI
- Local Rotary Clubs
- PTA and school-based volunteering
- Memorial Hall Committee
- Church groups, choir, verger roles
- Village events (Christmas lights, festivals, fundraising, litter picking)

A small number of respondents work in Willaston including at the village school or pre-school; running local businesses or properties (e.g., cafés, surgeries, garages) or volunteering or working in community facilities.

A high proportion of the local residents engage with local services and groups including:

- Shops (Spar, pharmacy, hairdressers, cafés)
- Medical services (GP surgery, dentists, physiotherapists)
- Village hall and Memorial Hall
- Pubs and cafés
- Churches
- Local green spaces including Willaston Meadow, Wirral Way, footpaths, Hadlow Road Station
- Children attending Willaston CE Primary School
- Participation in Rainbows, Brownies, Beavers, Cubs, Scouts
- Multigenerational connection – parents, grandparents, and sometimes great-grandparents living in or coming from the village

**Question 3 – Households in unparished areas of the borough have a variety of options to raise any local concerns or have their say about local matters. Households were asked whether they know who to speak to regarding any local matters?**

Of the 213 responses to this question, the majority (124 respondents) indicated that they knew how to raise local issues and who to contact. Many respondents reported having previously engaged with their ward councillor, Member of Parliament, or the Council through its reporting system.

However, a significant minority expressed uncertainty. Forty seven respondents stated that they do not know who to contact regarding local matters, and a further 42 said they were unsure. This highlights a notable gap in awareness, communication, and local confidence. It may be linked to the recent disbandment of the Willaston Residents Society and the passing of the local ward councillor, both of which appear to have reduced clarity around local representation and the option available for raising concerns.

**Responses:**

- Yes – 124
- No – 47
- Not sure / blank – 42

**Question 4 – Households were then asked whether they happy with how their matters were dealt with and resolved.**

A large proportion of respondents did not answer this question, however those who did, their satisfaction is summarised below:

Yes: 52 (37.1%)

No: 31 (22.1%)

Not sure / mixed / sometimes: 32 (22.9%)

Not applicable (e.g., didn't contact / never raised / N/A): 25 (17.9%)

The responses provided have been summarised in the below table

<b>Positives</b>	<b>Negatives</b>	<b>Mixed experiences</b>	<b>Had no contact with local governance arrangements</b>
Issues were eventually addressed, often with the support of the local councillor. The local councillor was reported as extremely helpful	There has been some limited action on issues such as drainage, hedges, pavements, planning concerns, overgrown footpaths, and road maintenance.	Some respondents noted that some matters get partly resolved but this depends on who was contacted.	Some respondents had not needed to raise an issue.
Several residents praised the efforts and responsiveness of the late ward councillor, noting he "did his best" and was helpful and good at getting things resolved	Respondents reports that they felt ignored, passed around or receiving no meaningful response to their issues or concerns.	Local matters can often be resolved when contact is made directly with a councillor but ineffective via the council website.	They knew how to raise matters but had a reason to.
Some respondents had not needed to raise issues but felt confident they could if required.	Respondents reported that they feel frustrated that political boundaries and the limited resources have impacted and weakened local representation.	Responses to local matters can be slow or inconsistent. Whereas some issues are dealt with quickly with others taking months to resolve	Many respondents stated that they had not had a need to contact anyone so therefore were unable to comment.

		or remain unresolved	
Village notice boards helpful so were previous Resident Association meetings	Some respondents felt that there are some long standing issues where nothing has been resolved despite repeated reporting		
	Issue with previous planning applications were highlighted		



**Question 5 – Households were then asked whether they felt that they had an adequate say in local issues in Willaston and how local services are delivered**

For those respondents who answered the question about satisfaction, their responses are summarised in the table below

Category	No of responses	Description
Yes	20	Respondents who feel they have an adequate say in local issues.
No	94	Respondents who feel they do not have an adequate say in local issues.
Not sure	48	Respondents who were unsure whether they have an adequate say or not
Not applicable	11	Respondents who have not raised issues, are too new to judge, or do not participate.

**Total number of responses to this question: 173**

The responses show a clear majority (over 54%) that they do not feel they have an adequate say in their village issues, alongside a significant proportion who are uncertain or disconnected. Only a small minority feel positively engaged and feel that they have a say.

Some respondents felt that the dissolution of the Willaston Residents Community (WRCS) and the loss of the local councillor have left a gap in communication, village representation, and community cohesion.

From the responses received on this question, some key themes have emerged from the responses:

- Lack of communication (for example: no regular newsletters, no active forum, no questionnaires). There is no central point of contact for the village apart from the local councillor. There is no village newsletter or website.
- There is a need for a local body with real influence, such as a Village or Parish Council.
- Some respondents feel that there is a real desire for a discussions or debates on local matters.
- Concerns were raised about the lack of active representation regarding local matters.
- There was mixed awareness of current processes regarding who to contact for support. Some respondents stated that they knew how to contact the council but other stated that they find it difficult or ineffective.
- A lot of respondents stated that they were not sure who to contacted which highlighted a widespread uncertainty and inconsistency in communication or resident involvement.
- Some matters were reported as outstanding and unresolved such as hedges, drainage and pavement/road issues

- Some felt that the current system for raising local issues was too large and slow.
- Some responded stated that Willaston needs a small local council to respond to local issues.

**Question 6 – Households were asked to provide examples of where local issues can be raised or where they may be able to have their say on local matters. They were also asked if they have engaged with any of the organisations and bodies listed on the consultation document regarding local issues.**

The responses to this question have been quantified into the below table:

**Total responses analysed: 215**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>% of total</b>
Yes	156	72.5%
No	52	24.1%
Not sure	2	0.9%
Not applicable/unspecified	5	2.3%

The majority of people who responded to this question indicate they were engaged or knew how to engage/raise issues (such as emailing their local councillor, reporting faulty lights/road conditions or engaging with church/community hubs). A few residents stated that they would like to get involved more in Willaston matters.

However, 24% of those who responded stated that they did not know who to engage with. Respondents stated that some reporting systems felt slow and ineffective and it was noted that some respondents also felt that some local groups weren't inclusive or not proactive.

Some responses including comments relating to traffic issues, challenges with undoing decisions relating to traveller sites.

Finally, some responses said they were not sure how to and who to raise issues with, so typically their experiences were mixed.

**Question 7 – Households were asked to indicate from a list who they have engaged with over local Willaston matters and 170 responded confirmed who they have engaged with.**

The responses to question 7 have been summarised in the table below. Most respondents confirmed that they have engaged with the local ward councillor and the borough council (Cheshire West and Chester Council) at some point. Other organisations and bodies were also identified as a mechanism for residents to engage with.

Organisations and bodies	Mentions	% of lines
Ward Councillor	113	66.5%
CWAC (Council)	110	64.7%
Residents Association / WRCS	62	36.5%
MP	60	35.3%
Willaston Matters	32	18.8%
Churches / Church magazine	27	15.9%
Local Area Committee	8	4.7%
Police / PCSO / Neighbourhood Watch	3	1.8%
Your Willaston a Community Interest Company	3	1.8%
Patient Participation / Surgery group	2	1.2%
Housing Tenant Associations	2	1.2%
N/A / Only school	2	1.2%
Water Company / Environment Agency	1	0.6%
Friends of Willaston Meadow	1	0.6%
Tennis Club	1	0.6%
Cafe	1	0.6%
WI / Rotary	1	0.6%

**Question 8 – Households were asked to confirm how satisfied they were with the engagement they had with the organisations and bodies identified in the above table:**

A total of 168 responses to this question was made and 50 left blank. The responses have been summarised in the below table.

<b>Satisfaction Level</b>	<b>Count</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Satisfied	50	29.8%
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	41	24.4%
Somewhat dissatisfied	40	23.8%
Very satisfied	20	11.9%
Very dissatisfied	17	10.1%
Blank responses	50	

Responses to Question 8 showed that overall satisfaction with engagement with other organisations, bodies, or individuals was mixed.

Thirty percent of respondents advised that they felt satisfied with the engagement they had with organisation and bodies over local matters. However a quarter of respondents (24%) felt neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

A further 23.8% said they were somewhat dissatisfied. The smallest proportions selected were either very satisfied (12%) and very dissatisfied (10%).

**Question 9 – Households were asked if they would like to see any improvements to their local community governance arrangements and community cohesion for Willaston and their responses have been summarised below.**

For this question, most of the respondents stated that they were broadly in favour of a new formal, locally accountable governance structure being established. The most frequently suggested options were:

- **Parish Council** (the most popular)
- **Village Council**
- **Community Council**
- **A new Community/Residents Association** (similar to the previous Willaston Residents Society)

However, there were many respondents who did not express a strong preference for a specific model, as long as it provided effective and transparent support to local matters, and that it was democratic, cost effective and represented ALL residents and stakeholders in Willaston.

Many respondents confirmed their reasons for wanting a new locally accountable governance structure. They felt that:

- There is a desire from a large proportion of the respondents for a stronger local voice, especially regarding planning, developments, green belt protection, community issues and traffic/road safety. The responses suggested a new organisation could have that voice.
- The local borough council does not act on local concerns, though in previous questions some residents had stated that they successfully used the Council's "Report it" platform.
- following the loss of the former Residents Association, a vacuum was highlighted and residents felt that they had nowhere to go with local matters. Also many mentioned the recent sad death of their local councillor and again this appeared to have left a vacuum for local residents.
- If a new locally accountable governance structure was created, many said it needed powers, it should reflect the concerns of ALL residents and it should be able to influence local decisions.
- Many also states that any new governance structure should have democratically selected members – they should not be self appointing.
- Improvements to local communication and engagement was raised and any new structure should hold regular meetings in public, be transparent and provide clear points of contact for residents.
- Some residents expressed a desire for a new organisation which would not involve any costs to them.

- An option suggested was a 'Community Council' which took into account young people.
- Numerous respondents raised concerns about planning matters and planning applications and that they would like a new organisation to have a voice regarding these matters.

While the majority of respondents indicated that they would welcome a new structure, several concerns were also raised:

- **Potential costs:** Respondents expressed concern about any additional costs that might arise if a new legal body which can raise a precept (such as a Parish Council or similar body) was created. A number of respondents expressed a preference for a Residents' Association approach, particularly if it avoided additional local taxation.
- **Political neutrality:** Many felt that any new structure or group should remain non-political and free from personal or commercial agendas.
- **Clear communication:** Respondents emphasised the importance of clear, consistent communication, including clarity around roles, powers, functions, and the timescales for establishing any new structure.

Respondents also identified the areas they were most concerned about in Willaston, which are summarised as follows:

- **Planning matters:** Managing planning matters and potential development pressures and protecting green spaces and the village's character.
- **Village maintenance:** Improvements needed in hedge cutting, drainage, pavements, pothole repairs, grass cutting, and weed control.
- **Traffic and transport:** Concerns about road safety on the A540/Hadlow Road, speeding, and limited public transport options.
- **Community cohesion and activities:** A desire for more village events, youth provision, volunteer networks, and neighbourhood watch schemes.
- **Community facilities:** Protecting and improving assets such as the old Scout Hut site and other general village amenities.

## **Overall Summary**

Stage 1 of the Community Governance Review consultation for Willaston generated a higher than typical response rate, which indicated a strong local engagement with the community governance review process.

The responses received demonstrates clear and consistent support for establishing a new, locally accountable governance structure. The most frequently proposed option was the creation of a new Parish or Village Council.

Respondents reported a strong sense of community identity within Willaston however, they also highlighted notable gaps in local representation, communication, and clarity on how to raise community issues. These gaps were felt particularly since the disbanding of the Residents Association Society and the loss of the long standing local ward councillor.

Satisfaction with existing bodies was generally positive but it did vary, and many respondents felt they did not have sufficient influence over how local matters are addressed. Key areas of concern raised during the consultation included planning matters, village maintenance, traffic and transport issues, community cohesion, and the protection of community facilities.

While respondents were broadly supportive of establishing new local governance arrangements, they emphasised several important conditions which they felt important including: the need for political neutrality, clear and accessible communication channels, well defined roles and responsibilities, transparent decision-making processes, and mostly importantly assurances that any new structure would be cost-effective.