



2019



Willaston in Bloom

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1.0 Welcome

Willaston is proud to be entering North West in Bloom (NWIB) again this year after receiving a third Gold award at the Awards presentation held in Southport on 2nd November 2018.



It gives me great pleasure to be leading Willaston in Bloom once again this year and to welcome you to our floral semi-rural village. Since NWIB judges last visited in July 2018, there has been an array of exciting new developments such as a new WW1 memorial and the introduction of more sustainable planting – all of which will be discussed and illustrated within this report.

I would like to thank our contractor – Crewe Road Nurseries for devising, planting and maintaining the majority of seasonal displays around the village. I would also like to thank the Street Cleansing team at Ansa for their support, our local sponsors, volunteers and finally to Willaston Parish Council for their ongoing commitment to Willaston in Bloom.

I hope you enjoy learning about the 2018/2019 Willaston in Bloom achievements and invite you to explore our greenspaces and its flora.

CLlr Craig T Bailey JP MCI Hort AMLI
Chairman of Willaston in Bloom & Willaston Parish Council

2.0 New developments

2.1 Woodland Path – The Spinney

After receiving a very kind donation of bark chippings from a local arboriculturist, we were able to finally bring to life our woodland path, which connects the Spinney to Crewe Road.

We have added branch edging to the path so as define the path and will continue to add more as we find further stray branches!

It may only be a small path but it is our little woodland haven in Willaston and the preferred route for dog walkers and dogs alike.

This new woodland path brings greater functionality to the space and allows residents to get closer to nature.



2.2 Perennial Beds

In response to judges' feedback last year, for 2019 we have committed to reducing the amount of seasonal bedding we were using around the village and increase more sustainable flora.

We opted to introduce two perennial beds, which were planted with various herbaceous perennials including *Centranthus ruber* 'Coccineus', *Geranium macrorrhizum* and *Sedum* 'Autumn Joy'.

We were very lucky to have students from neighbouring Reaseheath College prepare and plant these beds. The students are currently studying RHS Level 2 Practical and found this opportunity invaluable experience. This work formed part of the students' assessment.



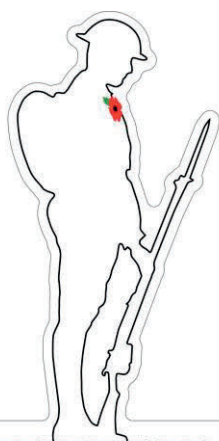
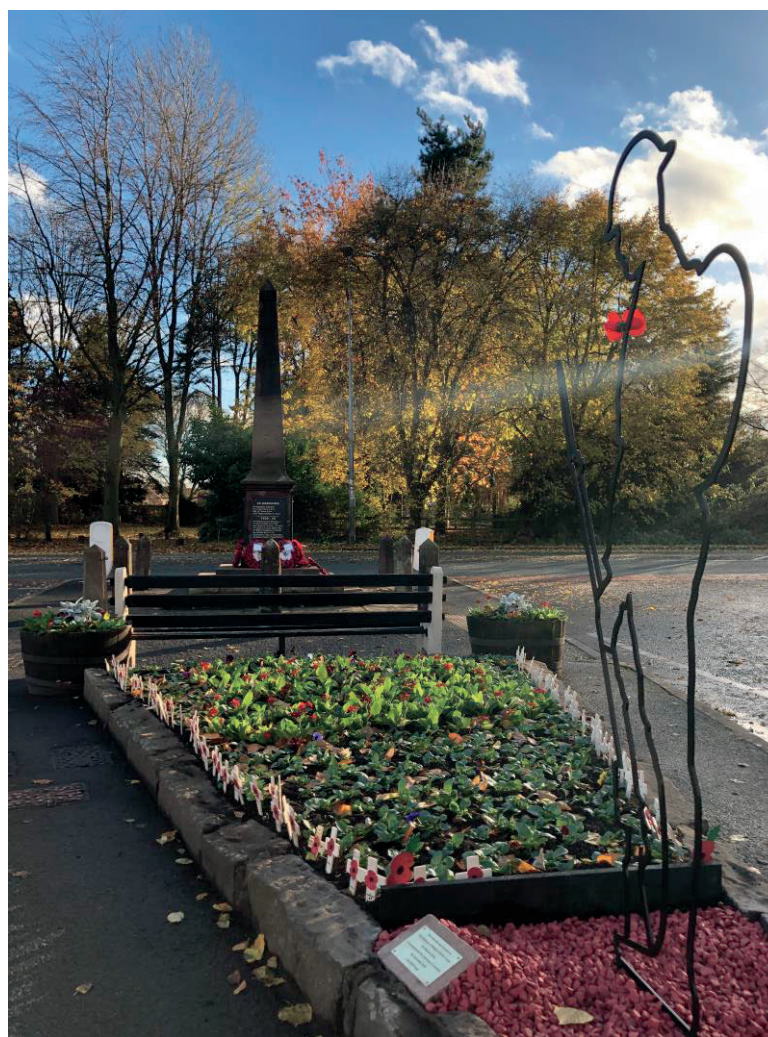
2.3 Community Planters

For 2019 there were several planters that we opted not to have planted by our contractor, as we wanted to put them out to the community so that local residents could become more actively involved in displays near their homes. We were pleased to get a positive response and we now have residents involved ranging from sourcing of plants, planting to watering and weeding on a regular basis.



2.4 Civic Flagpole & Memorial

To commemorate the centenary of armistice the Parish Council in conjunction with Willaston in Bloom installed a new civic flagpole and a 'There but not There' Tommy statue. The Chairman of the Parish Council unveiled these on the 11th November 2018. This will be a permanent feature to the war memorial area and perfectly compliments the floral displays that sit alongside.



THERE BUT NOT THERE

2.5 Other Developments



The locomotive wheels in the Coppice Road beds have been painted a slick black, which gives them a fresh new look and emphasises them as a heritage feature.



The benches on Mike Heywood Green are a popular spot for residents to sit. They were in need of some TLC this year so have had a rub down and lick of paint.



2.6 Greenspace Investment – The Maze

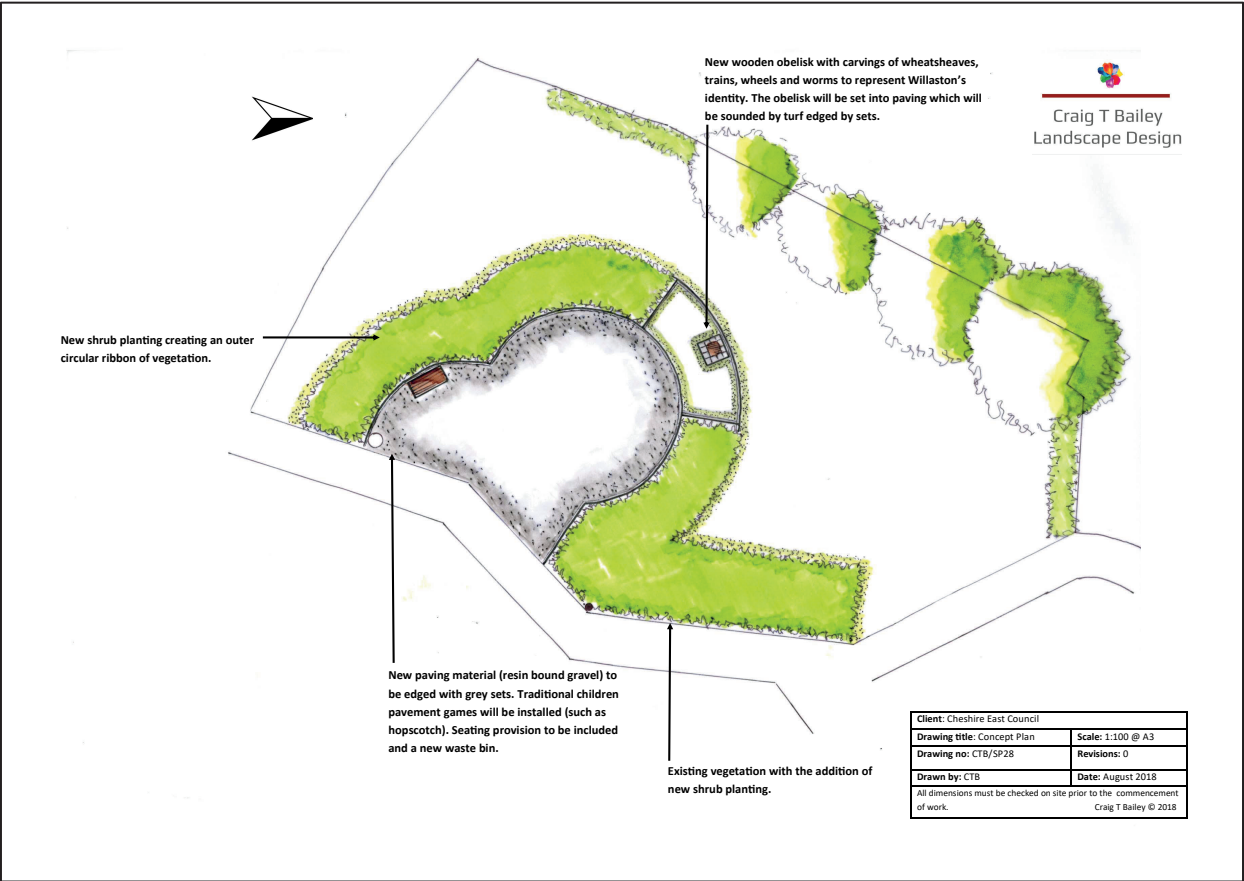
In August 2018, design proposals were produced for enhancing the Maze area off Victoria Mill Drive, which needs greenspace investment.

The proposal is to use s106 monies to remove the existing wooden maze, resurface the area and introduce spray painted surface games for children to benefit from, as well as increase the amount of perennial planting in the area. The proposal will also include seating provision in the area and a new waste bin.



The sculpted totem pole will be retained as the main focal point of the space.

The Council is currently working with Cheshire East Council to release the funds and enable construction to commence.



2.7 Social Media Engagement

In February 2018, the Friends of Willaston in Bloom was established via social media, in a move to appeal to residents online who may wish to volunteer with as much or as little commitment as suits them. Since launching, it has gone from strength to strength, with many residents interacting and engaging with our work. This has also allowed new residents to the village to become aware of Willaston in Bloom, the work that we do and what opportunities there may be for them to get involved.



2.8 Dedicated Bloom Noticeboard



For the residents who may not be as technically savvy or in the Facebook world, we have introduced a dedicated bloom noticeboard, which is located in a key spot in the village with good passing footfall. Via this noticeboard we keep residents up to date with our latest projects as well as anything that we need some help with. We have been pleased with the response that we have received from residents seeing the noticeboard.

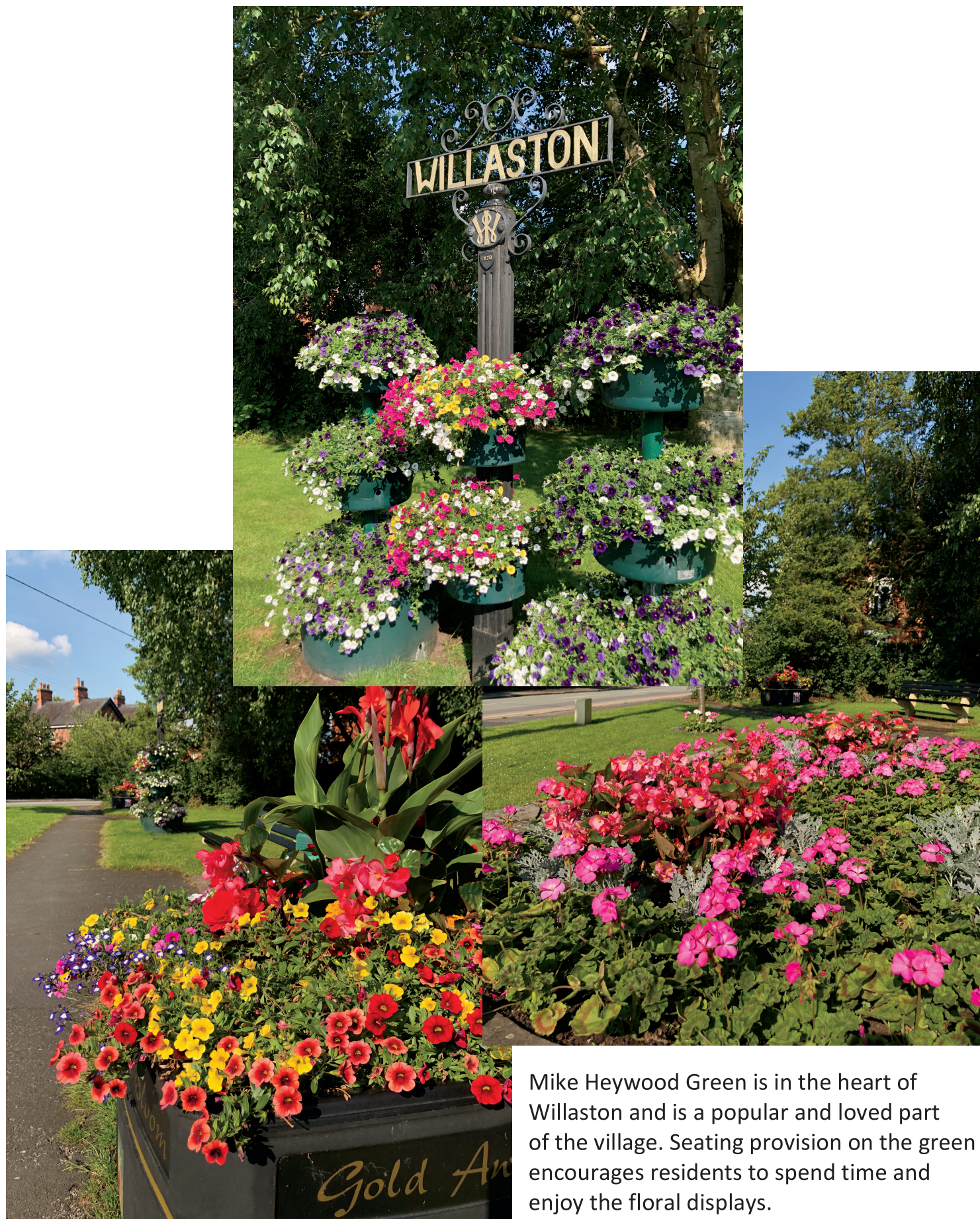
3.0 Horticultural Achievement

3.1 Spring displays

Spring displays of Narcissus, Primulas and Winter pansies provided vibrant up-lifting colours around the village in the colder duller months.



3.2 Summer displays – Mike Heywood Green



Mike Heywood Green is in the heart of Willaston and is a popular and loved part of the village. Seating provision on the green encourages residents to spend time and enjoy the floral displays.

3.3 Summer displays – War memorial



3.4 Summer displays – Wheel Beds



3.5 Summer displays – Coppice Road



Barrels of colour mark out the end of Coppice Road. Mid way along the road residents find our edible herb bed, which is now in its 2nd year.

A range of herbs including mint, parsley, rosemary and sage are available for residents to snip away at to take home and utilise in their cooking!



3.6 Summer displays – Cedar Court



The entrance to Cedar Court is fortunate to be flanked with two tiered planters, which ensure a floral welcome to all who pass through.



3.7 Summer displays - The level crossing



The level crossing in the centre of the village retains its strong character with traditional picket style white fencing giving unobstructed views of passing trains.



3.8 Summer displays – Tricketts Lane



3.9 Summer displays – The Spinney



The Spinney continues to be a Bee haven with an abundance of successive wildflowers in our dedicated bed.



3.10 Summer displays – ‘W’ Bed

The busy Peacock roundabout features our topiary ‘W’ bed which this year is surrounded by Begonia ‘non-stop’.

This makes for an impressive welcome into the village.

The bed is set against a sea of wild flowers, which softens the roadside.



4.0 Environmental Responsibility

4.1 Biodiversity

In 2016 we introduced a wildflower scheme on The Spinney to create visual interest and provide ecological habitat. Last year a new contract grown scheme of annual and perennial wildflowers were planted which has provided a second year of successive flowering since May. A new wildflower scheme was sown earlier this year on what were grass verges around the Peacock roundabout. This has reduced mowing costs and provides increased habitat for pollinators, as well as giving increased aesthetic interest to passing pedestrians and motorists.

We have once again aimed for reduced mowing on the Spinney and around the boundary of the Playing Fields for the benefit of wildlife, resulting in a strengthened local ecosystem.

Bat and bird boxes around the village continue to be well used during the spring months.

4.2 Sustainability and Recycling

All bedding plants have been sourced locally from Willaston's Crewe Road Nurseries, limiting transportation costs whilst also supporting the local economy.

The plant re-homing initiative continues to minimize green waste from our winter/spring displays, and it is also planned to take place at the end of the summer season. Green waste produced from beds and planters has once again been kindly collected by the Street Cleansing Team from Ansa to be used to make fresh compost to be used within the Borough.

Ansa collects domestic garden waste every two weeks from March to December with a considerable number of residents making full use of this service to dispose of green waste.

5.0 Community Participation

5.1 Remembrance Sunday



At 1:00pm on Remembrance Sunday the community came together to honour the fallen from two world wars.

Willaston Scouts led the laying of crosses - one for each named on the war memorial, followed by wreaths laid by civic leaders and local residents.

Willaston in Bloom ensures that this important greenspace looks its best for events such as this.



5.2 Christmas lights and Carol Service

In early December 2018 Willaston in Bloom members and volunteers put up the village Christmas lights on Mike Heywood Green for the festive period. On the 13th December around 60 residents of all ages turned out to partake in some festive carol singing in the heart of Willaston. Mulled wine and mince pies were provided on the Green by one of Bloom's sponsors.



5.3 Beech Tree Close

In 2018 residents on Beech Tree Close received a level 3 Advancing ‘It’s Your Neighbourhood’ Award for their commitment to their floral displays and tree planting in their central greenspace.



5.4 Willaston Allotments

Also in 2018 the Willaston Allotments received an ‘It’s Your Neighbourhood’ award as level 4 Thriving. Our allotment holders pride themselves on the maintenance and management of their plots, with some winning multiple awards at RHS Flower Shows and featuring on BBC broadcasts of Shows.



5.5 Allotment Awards

In August 2018 experienced Willaston in Bloom team members along with an invited guest judge Jake Jackson representing Channel Islands Plants, undertook judging of allotments so as to identify the best plots.

The winners were announced at a special Parish Council meeting held in November 2018.

During the meeting the North West in Bloom Gold Award was officially displayed, along with the 'its Your Neighbourhood Awards' given to the Allotments and Beech Tree Close.



6.0 Our contractor

Over many years, Willaston based Crewe Road Nurseries have been supplying high quality plants to Willaston in Bloom. Established in 1986, they are a family-run nursery specialising in high-quality bedding plants, hanging baskets and tubs, serving local homes and businesses.

This is the 2nd year where Crewe Road Nurseries are our main contractor responsible for devising the bedding schemes, supplying plants, plant establishment and maintenance for the summer season. This then allows volunteers to focus greater time on other activities and new projects.



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