

Message from the Chair

Hello to all Willsmerians. I've been elected chair for the 2018/19 term of this Willsmere Owners Corporation Committee of Management. I've experienced being on lots of committees through my work and in volunteer organisations. This is my third term on this committee, and the twelve members are a great bunch. The committee is full of committed, hard-working and capable volunteers dedicated to improving Willsmere. Three of the members are new to the committee, and they're shaping up to be great additions. Willsmere is a unique, heritage listed, ten-hectare complex of buildings and grounds. Willsmere is a community of 600+ people of all ages, sharing the many facilities. Willsmere is also a workplace for our facility manager and various contractors.



Adam Robert-Jones Dean, 2018

At our AGM, the committee heard clearly that we need to communicate more with residents and owners. We'll be making sure we do that this year. **Please register at www.Willsmere.net** to receive important email updates and visit www.willsmere.net/residents/news to stay up to date with official news. We also want to hear from you. We're planning on issuing a survey soon, and we're also scheduling periodic Owners' Communication Forums.

The committee members and others have lots of good ideas on how to improve our home as a place and as a community. Some things need to be done, and other things would be nice to get done. This committee will be working to make sure the essential tasks get done efficiently and on time. We'd love your help. We welcome your constructive participation in the sub-committees.

Informed by survey results and our ideas for improvements, we want to prepare a medium to long-term strategic plan for Willsmere, outlining the steps we'd need to take to get there. We've made a start with a 6-hour Sunday session attended by most CoM volunteers. We'll involve the community as soon as we have our thinking advanced enough.

The plaque by Willsmere's front door looks like new! That's an example of the refreshing, proactive initiative organised by Kristen "Krissy" Riddell, our new Owners Corporation Manager. She's hit the ground running, with knowledge, energy and positivity. Krissy walks through Willsmere most Thursday mornings, and she's always up for a chat to hear your views. So am I. You can find me walking around with the Grounds Subcommittee the first Sunday of every month at 9am. You're welcome to join us – we meet at the fountain.

Nathan Alexander, Chair, Willsmere Committee of Management

Sub-Committees and their Objectives

The CoM has established the following subcommittees and objectives. Your *constructive* participation is welcome, bearing in mind the legal requirement to serve the interests of all Owners rather than personal interests. Already there is action in each area as noted below.

Security Sub-CoM (Marcus, Angela, Andrew Brydon)

1. Consider the need for additional cameras, and define who has access
 2. Ensure the Salto system is effective, and fobs/buzzers are audited
 3. Develop a solution to the frequently failing vehicular gates
 4. Investigate options for better security around perimeter fences
 5. Review and communicate processes for ambulance and emergency services access
- The audit of fobs and buzzer code change are done and will be scheduled to recur annually, plus a bicycle audit.
 - New cameras are being installed in the library and entranceway to improve security generally, including deliveries, and to prevent inappropriate use of these areas.
 - **Free wifi will be soon available in the library** with standard appropriate public use restrictions.

- A preventive maintenance program, which has never existed, is being implemented to reduce the incidence of gate failures and increase response times should this happen.
- Willsmere is fortunately a remarkably safe place to live, as comprehensively examined in the newsletter of Feb 2018, which can be found here: www.willsmere.net/residents/newsletters. If you would like to participate in, or lead a Willsmere Neighbourhood Watch program, please contact any of the CoM.
- Quotes are in hand for improving the fencing around the basketball court.
- An updated “fridge magnet” is under preparation to ensure everyone is clear who to call in emergencies.
- Our intercom is old and increasingly difficult to repair. Modern, cost-effective replacements are being examined such as a system that calls phones from which the resident can remotely open the door.

Pool Sub-CoM (Nathan, Andrew Barrington)

1. Prepare a business case examining an upgrade versus refurbishment of the pool and surrounds
2. Conduct any surveys, Special Resolutions, community consultation or such that may be necessary to make a decision

No decisions have been made. Options are being developed on which Owner and Resident opinions will be sought.

Finance Sub-CoM (Angela, Marcia, Rachel)

1. Oversee the financial management of the Willsmere Owners Corporation (ongoing)
2. Establish expenditure approval policies, including quote and tender requirements (done)
3. Ensure adequate accrual for, and allocation to the LTMP (ongoing)
4. Decide on any investment, or reinvestments while ensuring adequate liquidity (ongoing)

Buildings and Vehicle Accessibility Sub-CoM (Marcus, Jack, Nathan, Angela)

1. Examine the possibility to reconnect to Main Drive, including thorough consultation, detailed business case, cost-benefit valuations, security, etc.
2. Oversee completion of the heritage and townhouse building restoration (done)
3. Oversee any major works necessary or as scheduled in the LTMP (in-hand)
4. Address the need for approval from Heritage Victoria for all internal modifications (pending)

Results of the **traffic survey** conducted by traffic modelling consultants, TTM Consulting P/L, showed:

- Residents from 68 of 256 responded with an estimated weekly vehicular travel of 121 vehicles owned/kept at Willsmere = 1.75 per dwelling.
- Estimated travel was 3,400 weekly vehicle trips, with rates of 4 daily trips per vehicle, or 7 daily trips per household (slightly higher than expected, but consistent with metropolitan standards).
- The directional distribution of vehicle trips was classified per the figure below.
- Conservatively allowing for 60% of the trips between Willsmere and Melbourne, Richmond etc. to be redirected from use of The Boulevard to Princes Street and Studley Park Road, 50% of the trips currently between Willsmere and the south east using Hutchinson Drive, and all of the trips between Willsmere and the south east using Wiltshire Drive to be diverted to Main Drive, TTM estimate:
 - Main Drive would have an additional 580 vehicle trips per day.
 - Approximately \$100,000 per annum worth of vehicle trips, at \$0.70 per km would be saved by the connection.
 - Capitalized at 7% per annum that has a Net Present Value (NPV) of about \$1.5M.
- The above places no value on the time of car drivers or passengers, and no value on the strategic advantage of having a third connection for a community of 256 households.
- The cost of making a connection in a suitable manner, including reinstatements around the recreational facilities in Willsmere at the south-eastern corner, is likely to be covered within a budget of \$250,000 depending on the extent of landscaping and other reinstatement work.



- The additional traffic on Main Drive is of no consequence to levels of amenity safety or capacity.
- Heritage Victoria have indicated that they have no objection to the concept in principle.
- Owners will be consulted before any decisions are made.

Communications Sub-CoM (Jack, Marcia, Andrew Barrington, Rachel)

1. Manage ongoing updates to www.Willsmere.net (done), including a simple publication procedure
2. Create a plan to connect Willsmere to hi-speed internet (pending)
3. Coordinate the issuing of periodic newsletters (you're reading it!)
4. Coordinate yearly participation in Open House Melbourne (done)
5. Create and coordinate a Willsmere community engagement process

On the evening of 26th July, the first Willsmere Owners Community Forum was held in the library. This first session was more of an informative introduction to the forum. Future sessions will have more time for discussion and questions from the community, so make sure you're thinking about any questions or suggestions you have which you would like the Committee to cover next meeting. A call for input will come out a few weeks prior to the next meeting to be held about every 3 months.

During the Open House Melbourne weekend, July 28 & 29, over 430 visitors were welcomed and escorted by knowledgeable volunteer tour guides through our heritage site. This marks our fourth successful participation, including an *exclusive* Open House Willsmere event last March. For the first time this year we also had a coffee and snacks van out the front, which was a huge (caffeine) hit with residents and visitors. Well done to the team of more than 18 volunteers who shared the fun and opportunity to learn more about this remarkable place.



Grounds Sub-CoM (Nathan, David, Mitra AO, Mitra J, Andrew Barrington)

1. Develop and maintain a Gardens Long Term Plan (GLTP)
2. Oversee the contract for maintenance of the entire gardens and lawns with adequate KPIs

The contract with Lucida Landscapes is now in place, and performance regularly reviewed. On the first Sunday of every month at 9am the sub-com and anyone else who is interested meet at the fountain to tour the grounds.

An arborist inspection recently took place of our trees listed on the state heritage list. Works are needed on most trees, especially the peppercorn near the bluestone cells. <http://vhd.heritagecouncil.vic.gov.au/search?kw=willsmere>.

With the lawns slowing during winter and the leaves finally down, the gardeners have spent a lot more time on the garden beds and less on mowing and raking. Hedge trimming is largely complete, with just a few plants to go. The battle against long-ignored weeds and weed trees continues. For example, the Lucida team spent nearly a day extracting self-sown Privet, Viburnum, Cotoneaster and Pittosporum trees from under the Oleander hedge near to the function room. This kind of work may go unnoticed but will make long-term maintenance much easier and help prevent damage to infrastructure such as walls and paths.

The plum trees have been correctly pruned and big efforts have been made on both sides of the fountain courtyard garden just inside the front entrance. The remaining mulch has been distributed, allowing delivery of new mulch that is ready for top dressing to keep weeds down and improve appearances.

The mulcher attachment to the ride-on mower has been effective and efficient. This will reduce removal of clippings, reduce mowing frequency, return nutrients to the lawns, and aid moisture retention. A hand-held Stihl leaf-sucker has been purchased for small pockets of leaves that seem to accumulate in corners.

Next on the agenda is the lemon grove and surrounding gardens, and appropriate fertilizing and control of weeds in the lawns, among other tasks.

Sustainability Sub-CoM (Marcus, Jack, David, Mitra AO)

1. Examine solar power options for the WOC, including the possibility to meter surplus to residents
2. Explore broader sustainability options and possible funding available

There has been no progress on this topic with volunteers occupied elsewhere. If you have some expertise and would like to get involved, please speak up!

Protocols, Rules and Risk Sub-CoM (Mitra AO, Marcia, Andrew Barrington)

1. Review existing Willsmere "Rules" and manage the process for change should this be decided
2. Review proposed "Rules breach" process and provide recommendation to CoM
3. Review proposed "Car breach" process and provide recommendation to CoM
4. Review the function room and other common area protocols and draft changes if required
5. Develop a policy on acceptable use of common areas
6. Review / develop a new resident induction process and paperwork
7. Develop a strategic plan / vision for Willsmere

The various existing policies, procedures, rules and regulations are all loaded on our web site:

www.willsmere.net/residents/rules-regulations. Some aspects of these are outdated or inadequately addressed so an overhaul is needed, as well as better provision for safety and liability limitation. Some new guidelines are also needed such as the process by which CoM candidates are nominated and inducted.

General News

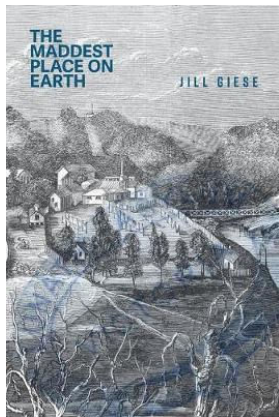
New Facility Manager – Jay Murray



At a formal review of the performance of Focused Facility Management (FFM) it became clear there was room for improvement, substantiated by specific examples and measures. The CoM thanks Joel for his contributions and is very pleased to announce **Jay Murray** as our new facility manager. He will transition into the role in early September. Jay brings experience in both facility management and resident services and is looking forward to using these skills to manage the uniqueness of Willsmere. Our Facility Manager contact details remain the same: facility.manager@willsmere.net or 0466 554 534. Please **use the Helpdesk to log all maintenance requests** www.ownerscorp.com.au or **1300 00 6426** - they will contact Jay after hours if necessary. When not managing properties, Jay is an Essendon supporter and loves being in the outdoors. Please make Jay welcome.

Long Term Maintenance Plan

Willsmere, like all larger Owners Corporations, is obliged to have a Long Term Maintenance Plan (LTMP) and to periodically update this. The scope of this plan is to maintain existing facilities. In 2017 a comprehensive, and overdue review was undertaken by a professional quantity surveying firm, Donald Cant Watts Corke Pty Ltd. At the 2017 AGM, inclusion of the LTMP in the Notice Of Meeting was wrongly omitted. Those attending did not resolve to adopt the LTMP on the night, which is understandable given the complex nature of the document. It was subsequently attached to the minutes provided to all Owners. It was suggested that adoption be put to a ballot, which is neither necessary nor usual. Since then, no correspondence has been received and the CoM has resolved to adopt the LTMP, which is not a fixed schedule of expenditure but a professional estimate that allows for rational financial planning.



"The Maddest Place on Earth". Such is the title of the new book by author and clinical psychologist, Jill Giese. Through three factual portraits of a patient, an undercover journalist, and a medical superintendent, Jill narrates a fascinating account of the beginnings of Willsmere, established with the best of intentions but succumbing to some unfortunate realities of colonial Melbourne. Thanks to one of our resident historians and newly appointed custodian of the Willsmere Museum, Barbara Burton, Jill addressed an enthralled audience of Willsmerians last July 1st in our library. Her book is available from Readings: <https://www.readings.com.au/products/25380182/the-maddest-place-on-earth>. Following this theme, coming up as part of the Melbourne Writers Festival is "The Muse in Museum: The Ghosts of Kew Asylum" on Sun 2 Sep, 11.30am at the Melbourne Museum. It is an examination of Melbourne's history of, and attitude towards mental illness. <https://mwf.com.au/program/the-muse-in-museum-the-ghosts-of-kew-asylum-9951>.

Courtesy Bus

On July 25th, VCAT ruled on the process the Committee of Management (CoM) used in 2017 to transfer the courtesy bus service to an externally contracted service. Although the CoM followed advice given at the time with the best intentions,

VCAT ruled that this was not the correct process for starting a new service. It deemed that the service was new and differed substantially to that previously offered as the old bus was owned and run by Willsmere. VCAT ruled that the current bus service contract must cease at the end of the contract. The bus service or something similar may be reinstated at any time by owners passing a special resolution. This may be prior to the cessation of the current contract or at any time in the future.

The CoM and MICM are clarifying the contract cessation date with the bus company and looking at the next steps. In any case, the service will continue at least until April 2019. We will communicate further information when it becomes available.



The **Grey-headed Flying-fox** Project Officer for Yarra Bend Park, Stephen Brend, kindly shared his passion for our nocturnal neighbours with Willsmerians last June 20th in our library. Stephen informed us about bat breeding, feeding, migration, diseases, habits, management and about Parks Victoria plans for the area as both a bat habitat and tourist attraction. Thanks to our own batman and new resident, Andrew Barrington, for coordinating this fun event.

Yoga

After ensuring appropriate professional insurance certificates are in place and availability of facilities, the CoM have authorised yoga classes to be available to residents for a \$10 donation. Normally classes take place in the function room but during these colder months they will be held in the library, Wednesdays from 6.30-7.15am.



Stargazing



On a frigid May 13 evening, thanks to Willsmere's avid amateur astronomer, Rattanawan Rattakul (Quen), about 50 of us participated in a world record breaking stargazing event. Preceded by an entertaining introduction from renowned astronomer, Professor Rachael Livemore from the University of Melbourne, the official Stargazing event was broadcast live from just below the former central services wing. Unfortunately, the night was overcast but all those who attended have telescopes to peer into the galactic wonder come clearer (and warmer!) conditions.

Community Garden

The community garden needs your help! Immediately adjacent to Willsmere in Parks Victoria land, with their terrific support and cooperation, we have sown the seeds of a community garden and now have the chance to secure substantial funding as part of the Victorian-first community grants initiative. To support this project, **before September 17**, visit <https://pickmyproject.vic.gov.au/rounds/pick-my-project/ideas/willsmere-kitchen-garden-resurrecting-a-historic-community-garden> and vote!

Operating fees per lot p.a., average
\$2,675
\$2,962
\$2,970
\$3,040
\$3,077
\$3,146
\$3,199
\$3,258
\$3,571
\$3,732
\$4,558

Are Willsmere Owners' Corporation levies high or low?

At the time of the analysis in 2017, acknowledging the limitations of comparing what we regard as a unique estate and carefully selecting a reasonable size group of 10 comparable estates, Willsmere had the second lowest average annual operational expenditure ("OpEx") at \$2,962 per lot per annum, which was 12% lower than the average of \$3,323, or about \$92,000 lower in total over 256 lots. The OpEx at Willsmere is currently about two-thirds of the total annual expenditure, with the remainder covering long term maintenance costs.

When compared by age, expenses tend to increase, however Willsmere was the second oldest of the places compared.

When compared by total number of dwellings per OC, expecting economies of scale with increasing number, Willsmere was cheaper than the places with more dwellings. In conclusion, the OC OpEx fees at Willsmere are regarded as lower than peers.

Upkeep and updates

Have you noticed: Our new Victorian flag? The refreshed herb garden near the former fever tents? New rain sensors to reduce unnecessary watering? Street signs out the front have been replaced? Line markings throughout the site are

refreshed? Pathways cleaned and potentially slippery lichen removed? Our main entrance interior has been repainted? Emergency exit lighting has been audited and updated? These are just some of the many tasks that occur sometimes unnoticed. For more examples, visit <https://willsmere.net/residents/news/93-owner-s-corporation-manager-report>.

Coming up

Clearing high gutters and cleaning inaccessible windows/skylights will be scheduled for this spring, combined with minor repairs to the roof so that use of expensive high-access equipment can be optimized and the potential for damage from this heavy equipment minimized. Please note that during the window cleaning, which will be notified in advance, you are responsible to **remove any fly-wire screens to allow access**.

Purchasing Power

There is strength in numbers - and purchasing power too. Some CoM members had the brilliant idea to coordinate buying of common utilities to get a better deal. More news on this to come.

Rules and Regulations

We live in a community, all bound by the same rules, so that we can live in harmony and respect. Our rules, published here www.willsmere.net/residents/rules-regulations, are under review by the sub-com mentioned above, meanwhile there are some aspects that will not change and must be tightened up:

1. **Safety.** All significant obstructions or trip hazards that hinder access routes, especially in case of an emergency, must be removed. Such obstructions may void insurance coverage and **render the infringer solely liable**.
2. All unauthorized **modifications to common areas**, including gardens, will be corrected. This includes gardens in front of townhouses which are not common property.
3. All plants or other **objects on exterior window sills** must be removed as these accelerate degradation, especially after the recent repainting, and may be safety hazards.
4. **Clutter, rubbish, junk, and laundry** must be removed from private and common areas.

Hard rubbish

The area next to the maintenance shed is one of the first impressions seen by visitors to Willsmere, and it is often ugly. While we await a more permanent solution to a partitioned, gated hard rubbish and green waste area, please note that dumping more than 24 hours before the **scheduled collections, listed here** www.willsmere.net/residents/rubbish-recycling, will no longer be tolerated. **Costs of \$300** or more may be levied for removal of hard rubbish dumped outside scheduled collection dates. High-resolution security cameras operate in this area so please be respectful of your fellow residents and mind the dates.

Insurance

An important notice to all owners will soon be issued by email regarding the increase in insurance costs for the common area and high excess for water-related claims. Please ensure you read and understand this information.

Photography Competition

With the refurbishment of our main entrance, and removal of dated pictures that had no connection to Willsmere, the CoM is pleased to announce a photography competition! Details will soon be announced. Winners will have their picture framed at large scale to be displayed in the main entrance hallway.

To keep costs down and prevent waste, this will be the LAST PRINTED newsletter.

Register at www.Willsmere.net for important email updates.

