

Minutes of the meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council held in the Community Hall on Tuesday 19th June 2012

Present: Mr. Michael Smith (Chairman) Mrs. Christine Dinnin
Mr. Denis Filer Mr. Ian Knight
Mrs. Helen McCash The Clerk (Mrs. Jane Allsop)

Members of the public: Mr. Ralph Abel Smith

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence: Mr. John Meischke, Mr. Nigel Poulton, Mr. Iain Harris, Mr. David Stock, and Ms. Emma Waltham.

2 Public Participation

None.

3 Chairman's/Clerk's Report

None.

4 Declaration of Interests

Mrs. McCash declared a pecuniary interest in item 9 a, Budget and Finance Sub-Committee - External audit of the Community Hall accounts for the year ended 2011/12 by McCash and Hay (Mrs. McCash's husband, Murray McCash, prepared the audit of the Community Hall accounts).

5 Report from Mr. Ralph Abel Smith

Mr. Smith welcomed Mr. Ralph Abel Smith to the meeting and invited him to speak.

Mr. Ralph Abel Smith described his proposal for a large scale planting of native woodland on the land between the eastern edge of the village and the bypass, from the Walkern road to the Ware road, with planting to commence in November this year. The woodland will be registered as the Jubilee Woodland through the Woodland Trust and entered in the Register to mark the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II. A village meeting in September was proposed to outline the project and to assess what involvement the villagers might like. The Parish Councillors present were very supportive and look forward to the commencement.

Note: The village open meeting has been fixed for Friday, 14th September at 7.30 pm in the Pavilion.

Mr. Abel Smith left the meeting at 1945.

6 Minutes of the last meeting

a) Acceptance

- **Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 15th May 2012**
Mr. Filer proposed that the minutes be accepted and signed by the Chairman as a true record. Mrs. Dinnin seconded the motion and all present were in favour.
- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 15th May 2012**
Mr. Filer proposed that the minutes be accepted and signed by the Chairman as a true record. Mrs. Dinnin seconded the motion and all present were in favour.
- **Exclusion of press and public minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 15th May 2012**
Mr. Filer proposed that the minutes be accepted and signed by the Chairman as a true record. Mrs. Dinnin seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

b) Review of actions

1. **Meet Tim Clark on site on the Parish Council land at Rivershill**
Mr. Meischke was not present at the meeting to report on this item. This item to remain an action point.
Action: J. Meischke
2. **Grease bearings on see-saw at play area on sportsfield**
Mr. Smith said that after inspection he had decided that the see-saw bearings should be greased professionally because they are encapsulated and difficult to take apart without the correct tools. It was agreed to take no action until after the annual play area inspection has been completed.
Mr. Filer said that whilst carrying-out the monthly- village report he inspected the see-saw and it was not squeaking at that time.
3. **Ask Ted Brown to paint the three benches, the planter and the Information Board on the Lammas**
The Clerk said that Mr. Poulton has instructed Adrian Thompson to paint the benches, the planter and the information board.

c) Action points outstanding for more than two months

None

d) Action points resolved

1. Draw up a list of actions in the event of an emergency
2. Discuss location of bench adjacent to Oak tree on site with C-trees
3. Write to the Head Teacher of Watton School requesting news updates
4. Arrange for the ferreting licences to be signed by Mr. Adams and Mr. Phillips
5. Draft article re road works and partial closure of Station Road
6. E-mail Ian the editor of the Parish News re the Station Road article
7. Ask Mr. Morrissey to amend Annual return
8. Send completed Annual return and all relevant documentation to BDO
9. Amend the 2011/12 Asset register to include fire safe
10. Prepare 2012/13 Asset registers showing purchase prices excluding VAT: **outstanding.**
11. Renew Parish Council insurance with AON Limited
12. Contact the organiser of the Watton-at-Stone family fun day re use of Community Hall
13. Accept Adrian Thompson's quotation to paint the external unisex toilet
14. Contact Frank Cooper re cutting the grass prior to the Jubilee picnic on 3rd June
15. Contact Groundwork Trust re former bike ramp area on the Lammas
16. Provide quotation to grass seed former bike ramp area on the Lammas
17. Contact Maurice Gordon re approval and location of memorial bench
18. Ask Ted Brown to carry out weed-killing as necessary
19. Upload the Standing Orders (dated May 2012) to the website
20. Put Allotment lease in the safe
21. Ask Debenhams Ottaway for an electronic version of the new allotment lease
22. Download from the internet the sites identified in Watton-at-Stone for development
23. E-mail Parish Councillors the sites identified in Watton-at-Stone for development
24. Forward the details of the Village Network meetings to War Memorial Hall Committee
25. Put Scout and Guide AGM papers on circulation
26. Action points arising from exclusion of press and public minutes
27. Write Parish News article
28. Write to all village organisations re Parish Council representatives

7 Planning**a) Applications****i) 7 Rivershill (3/12/0887/FP)**

Single storey front extension and the enlargement of front dormer window

Mr. Knight said that the previous application for an extension at 7 Rivershill, submitted in March this year, was for a two-storey and single-storey front extensions and a rear canopy. This showed a redesign of the front of the house that was not in keeping with nearby properties and the application was subsequently refused by planners.

The latest application is again for a major redesign of the frontage, which would affect 9 Rivershill by reducing their view and be out of keeping with nearby properties.

Mr. Knight said he had made contact with Vernon Dunhill (20 Rivershill), Mike Inman (16 Rivershill) and Peter Howard (9 Rivershill, adjacent to 7 Rivershill) to show them the latest plans. They will all be writing letters of objection to the planners.

Mr. Knight said that the Parish Council should respond in a similar vein as before objecting the application for the following reasons.

- The proposed development is not appropriate.
- The major redesign of the front of the house is out of character with the other nearby houses on that side of the road. In addition, there is increased overlook at the front of No 9 Rivershill with reduction of view.

The Clerk to write accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

b) Decisions

None.

c) Appeals**i) Land East of Walkern Road and North and, West of High Elms Lane, Benington**

Erection of a single wind turbine of up to 86.5m in height, substation, access tracks and ancillary infrastructure

Mr. Harris e-mailed the Clerk stating that he could see no need for any new response to the Wind Farm application because our original response will be submitted to the enquiry. This was agreed by Parish Councillors.

8 Specific items**a) Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebrations held on 3rd June 2012**

Mr. Smith said that in spite of heavy rain, all those who attended the Queen's Diamond Jubilee came determined to enjoy themselves. Mr. Knight said that full marks should be given to all those who were involved in organising the event. Special thanks go to the volunteer bands that provided excellent entertainment on the day.

C-Trees attended and explained to villagers the work that would be done to protect the oak tree over the coming months. They also brought a variety of small trees which they gave away. They have since emailed to say how much they enjoyed the day.

Mrs. Dinnin suggested that the Parish Council should write to all artists who entertained at the Jubilee celebrations as well as those who helped with its organisation. Mrs. Dinnin agreed to give the Clerk a list of the names of all those who were involved. **Action: C. Dinnin/J. Allsop**

Mrs. Dinnin said that she had handed out the Jubilee mugs to the school and play school as well delivering them to village children who went to school outside the village.

She said that there were a few mugs remaining, some of which Parish Councillors had purchased at £2.50 per mug. Mrs. Dinnin said that there is a surplus of approximately 10 mugs, which she suggested should be given to the Jubilee judges. This was agreed. Mrs. Dinnin to act accordingly. **Action: C. Dinnin**

b) Strimming work on Parish Council land at Rivershill

Mr. Meischke was not at the meeting to report on this item.

This item to remain on the agenda.

Agenda: 07/12

c) Employee Performance Review

Mr. Smith said that he had reviewed the Clerk's performance over the past year and the performance review form remains unchanged.

d) Parish Council response to land identified by East Herts Council in the Strategic Land Availability Assessment

Mr. Smith and Mr. Poulton attended the East Herts Local Plan & Neighbourhood Plans.

Mr. Smith e-mailed all Parish Councillors notes of the meeting provided from one of the main drivers. He asked Parish Councillors to read this document and contact him with any comments they have on this issue.

Action: Parish Councillors

e) Memorial benches in the village

Mr. Smith said that the Ansell family had been very upset to receive a letter from the Parish Council regarding the state of their Father's Memorial bench, sited on Parish Council land in front of Beane Cottage (Walkern Road). This seat was donated by Mr. and Mrs. Taylor (Beane Cottage). The Ansell family contacted the Clerk to complain about the suggestion that they should replace or remove the bench, which is currently in very poor condition.

Mr. Smith said that the Parish Council needs to adopt a policy for Memorial benches and suggested that once a Memorial seat has been donated to the Parish Council and added to its insurance policy, it should be the Parish Council's responsibility to maintain or replace that seat as necessary. This was agreed by Parish Councillors present at the meeting. However, if the family who donated the seat wishes to continue to maintain the memorial seat, they can do so for as long as they wish.

The case of the Bob Ansell memorial seat is unusual, in that the family did not donate the seat themselves. Mr. Smith said he had written to the Ansell family apologising for causing them distress and assuring them that the Parish Council will be taking full responsibility of replacing the seat and reinstating their Father's plaque. Parish Councillors present agreed with the action taken by Mr. Smith.

It was noted that Mr. and Mrs. Taylor's property, Beane Cottage, is currently being advertised for sale. The Parish Council granted a licence to Mr. and Mrs. Taylor giving them non exclusive use of the Parish Council registered land from the bridge to the boundary of Beane Cottage and authorising them to carry out fencing landscaping and planting on that land. This Licence is for an initial term of 5 years from 1st February 2009.

It was agreed to write to Mr. and Mrs. Taylor asking them to ensure that they inform any prospective purchaser that this strip of land is not in their ownership.

Action: M. Smith

9 Reports

a) Sub-Committees

Budget & Finance

Mr. Filer reported on the following items.

- **Monthly accounts**

Watton-at-Stone Parish Council		
Petty Cash – Receipts		Petty cash – Payments
None		None
Cheques issued		
Aon Limited	Annual insurance	757.76
Wages, salaries & allowances	June 2012	1055.89
Silk Street Jazz	Entertainment for the Jubilee celebrations on 3rd June	540.00
The Street Performers	Entertainment for the Jubilee celebrations on 3rd June	660.00
Third Hertford Scout Group	Large tents for the Jubilee celebrations on 3rd June	235.00
Frank Cooper & Son Limited	Grass cutting on 11th, 18th and 25th May 2012	183.60
C-Trees	Trees and sundries	104.47
J. Allsop	Phone charges to 05/05/2011	21.90
Post Office	79 x 46p = 1st class stamps used in year 2011/12	36.34
Post Office	200 x 46p = 1st class stamps	92.00
BSWW Parish News	Jubilee flier in 5 editions of the Parish News	100.00
BSWW Parish News	Parish reports insert in the June edition of the Parish News	<u>45.00</u>
		<u>3831.96</u>
Cheques received		
Sports and Social Club	Hire of sportsfield facilities	337.50
Paul Watt	Allotment rent for 2011/12	<u>16.50</u>
		<u>354.00</u>
Watton-at-Stone Community Hall		
Petty Cash – Receipts		Petty Cash –Payments
Sharon Ling – Pavilion	60.00	HCC- cleaning materials <u>46.86</u>
Jim Keen - Main Hall	60.00	<u>16.76</u>
Floodlighting to 15.05.12	63.00	
Circle Anglia – Pavilion	<u>8.00</u>	
	<u>191.00</u>	
Cheques issued		
Adrian Thompson	Decommission outside gents toilet	200.00
Gary smith	windowing cleaning	58.00
James Turner		60.37
Wages	June 2012	336.60
		<u>654.97</u>
Cheques received		
Ansvar	Insurance Claim – flood damage	799.33
Ansvar	Insurance claim – loss of income due to flood	39.00
Sports and Social Club	Hire of Community Hall facilities	337.50
Dave Boddy	Main Hall and Pavilion	367.20
Mr. Jaques	Pavilion hire	32.00
Watton School for Dots and Tots	Pavilion hire	56.00
Mrs. Stevens	Main Hall and Pavilion	58.00
Mrs. Hunt	Main Hall and Pavilion	<u>30.00</u>
		<u>1719.03</u>

Parish Councillors approved the above payments.

- **Payments**

Mr. Filer proposed that the Clerk be required to seek the agreement of two Councillors, one being a member of the Budget and Finance Sub-Committee, before any exceptional payment under £250 is made.

- **External audit of the Community Hall accounts for the year ended 2011/12 by McCash and Hay**
 McCash and Hay have completed the audit of the Community Hall accounts for the year ended 31st March 2012. A copy of these accounts is attached to these minutes. **See attached**

Mr. Filer proposed that Mr. Smith sign the audited accounts for the Watton-at-Stone Community Hall.
 Mr. Knight seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

Both copies of signed accounts to be sent to McCash and Hay, requesting that Murray McCash sign the bound copy of accounts and return it to the Clerk. **Action: J. Allsop**

- **Asset registers**

The Clerk has completed the 2012/13 draft Asset register for the Parish Council but still needs to complete the Community Hall register. **Action: J. Allsop**

This item to be put on the July agenda. **Agenda: 07/12**

Community Hall Trustees

- **Damaged emergency light in Sports Hall**

Mr. Smith said that the emergency light over the exit door onto the School Lane side of the Sports Hall has been damaged. Mr. Meischke is purchasing a replacement light and will arrange for it to be installed.

Action: J. Meischke

Recreation & Amenities

Mr. Knight reported on the following items.

- **MPPA – surface**

The small damage to the MPPA surface has not been repaired due to the very wet weather conditions.

- **Sportsfield maintenance**

Mr. Smith has re-seeded the goalmouth area that got damaged during the Queen’s Golden Jubilee celebrations.

- **Sportsfield hedge**

Mr. Smith said he had inspected the hedge and there is one large hole in the hedge, which he suggested should be filled with a Pyracantha shrub in autumn this year.

This item to be placed on the September agenda. **Agenda: 09/12**

Environment Sub-Committee

Mrs. Dinnin reported on the following items.

- **Bench seat adjacent to the Oak tree on sportsfield**

C-Trees have confirmed that the memorial bench adjacent to the sportsfield Oak tree needs to be removed on safety grounds and relocated.

Mr. Smith agreed to remove the bench and store it in the decommissioned outside toilet, until an alternative location can be agreed. He also agreed to see if he could dig out the concrete plinth.

Action: M. Smith

The Clerk to write to Michelle Hart, who donated the bench in memory of her husband Paul, informing her of the situation. **Action: J. Allsop**

Mr. Smith, Mrs. Dinnin and Mr. Knight to look at location sites overlooking the MPPA.

Action: M. Smith/C. Dinnin/I. Knight

- **Great Innings play area – gates**

Jon Hart East Herts Council) e-mailed the Clerk a quotation, on 25th May, for the supply and installation of two gates on the Great Innings play area. The Parish Council, at its May meeting, agreed to pay for the purchase and installation of the two gates at an estimated cost £1602 plus VAT. However, the quotation received was £1870 plus VAT, so the Clerk obtained e-mail approval from Parish Councillors to accept it. The gates will be supplied with a yellow powder coating (at a cost of £180 plus VAT), which is for the benefit of partially sited people.

- **Allotment and Garden Association**

Mrs. Dinnin said that at the Allotment and Garden Association AGM held on 22nd May, the problem of overgrown hedges at the entrance of the Allotments was raised. It was agreed to write to the residents responsible for maintaining the hedges and to Circle Anglia, who manage the Glebe Court hedges.

Action: J. Allsop

Mrs. Dinnin to give the Clerk the addresses of the residents that need contacting.

Action: C. Dinnin

Mrs. Dinnin said that the Allotment and Garden Association have asked if some hardcore could be put down on the pathway because it is quite eroded. Mr. Smith and Mrs. Dinnin to inspect the path to see what can easily be done to improve it.

Action: C. Dinnin/M. Smith

Mrs. Dinnin to ask Adam Welch to trim both sides of path.

Action: C. Dinnin

b) Routine reports

i) Emergency escape lighting tests and manual alarm call tests

Mr. Smith and Mr. Meischke carried-out the emergency escape lighting tests and manual alarm call tests prior to this meeting.

ii) Monthly village-report

Mr. Filer completed the report on 16th June.

Only the adverse items highlighted in the monthly village-report are minuted.

- **Cricket shed** - Graffiti still remains.
- **Play area** - weeds need killing
- **Notice board at Community Hall** - Damage to glass.

The Clerk said that vandalism to the notice board glass occurred over a year ago.

- **MPPA** –White lines need repainting.

Mr. Knight will arrange for the white lines to be painted when appropriate.

Action: I. Knight

- **War Memorial** – A bit untidy.

Mrs. Dinnin to ask Adam Welch to tidy the area.

Action: C. Dinnin

iii) Weekly sportsfield-report and action

None.

v) Website

None.

v) Website diary

None.

10 Correspondence received

a) East Herts Council – activities for the elderly

All Parish Councillors have been copied with East Herts Council letter concerning activities for the elderly. The Clerk to give East Herts Council a list of all the activities the elderly currently get involved with in the village.

Action: J. Allsop

b) Herts & Middlesex Wildlife – Water Vole survey on the Lammas

Herts & Middlesex Wildlife will be carrying out a water vole survey along the riverside stretch of the Lammas. They have also obtained permission to carry-out a survey of the Abel Smith stretch of the riverside.

c) Network Rail re rubbish in Perrywood Lane

Mr. Filer said that the Parish Council wrote on three occasions to Network Rail asking them to clear the rubbish left by their contractors. The final letter gave Network Rail 30-days to clear the rubbish, otherwise the Parish Council would arrange for it to be cleared and invoice them accordingly.

Mr. Filer said that just over a week ago Network Rail contractors cleared what remained of the rubbish. However, most of it had blown away in the recent high winds.

d) East Herts Council – grant for Jubilee celebrations

East Herts Council have awarded the Parish Council a £300 grant towards the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Celebrations in the village.

e) East Herts Council – The New Standards Regime

Prior to the meeting, all Parish Councillors were e-mailed a copy of a letter, dated 22nd May, from Simon Drinkwater (Director of Neighbourhood Services, East Herts Council). The letter advised the Parish Council that they are required to adopt a new Code of Conduct and enclosing a copy of the East Herts Council Member’s Code of Conduct, which comes into effect on 1st July 2012. **See attached Code of Conduct**

Mrs. McCash proposed that the Parish Council adopt the East Herts Council Member’s Code of Conduct of conduct with effect from 1st July 2012. Mr. Knight seconded the motion and all present were in favour.

Page 10 of the Parish Council's Standing Orders will need rewriting to include the new Code of Conduct.

Action: M. Smith/J. Allsop

The adoption of the revised Standing Orders to be placed on agenda for the July Parish Council meeting.

Agenda: 07/12

f) E-mail for Hannah Brownlow re fund raising for additional play equipment

All Parish Councillors were sent a copy of the following e-mail from Hannah Brownlow (dated 12th June).

It was agreed to put the opening of a new bank account on the July Parish Council agenda. **Agenda: 07/12**

11 Village organisations

- **Watton-at-Stone War Memorial Hall Management Committee:** Nothing to report.
- **Watton-at-Stone Scout & Guide Group:** Nothing to report.
- **Watton Youth Drop Inn:** Nothing to report.
- **River Beane Restoration Association:** Nothing to report.
- **Watton-at-Stone War Memorial hall**
Mrs. McCash was sorry to report that the Memorial Hall has recently suffered from vandalism.
- **Watton-at-Stone School Governors:** Nothing to report.
- **Watton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Watch:** Nothing to report.
- **Watton-at-Stone Allotment and Garden Association:** Nothing to report.
- **Watton-at-Stone Pre-School Playgroup:** Nothing to report.
- **Watton-at-Stone Sports & Social Club:** Nothing to report.
- **Police Authority:** Nothing to report.
- **East Herts Council – Training Event: Localism and Planning for Councillors**
Mr. Smith said that East Herts Council have given the Parish Council two days notice of councillor training that will take place on Thursday 21st June. No Parish Councillors present at the meeting were able to attend at such short notice.

12 Items for Parish News

The following item was identified for inclusion in the July 2012 issue of the Parish News.

- A thank you to everyone who helped to make the Jubilee picnic event on Sunday 3rd June.
Action: J. Allsop
- **The meeting closed at 2042.**
- **The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Tuesday 17th July 2012.**