

**Minutes of the meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council held in the Community Hall on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2014**

**Present:** Mr. Michael Smith (Chairman) Mr. John Meischke (Vice-Chairman)  
 Mrs. Christine Dinnin Mr. Ian Knight  
 Mrs. Helen McCash Mrs. Margaret Stanley  
 Mr. David Stock Ms. Emma Waltham  
 The Clerk (Mrs. Jane Allsop)

**Members of public:** District Councillor Rik Sharma

**1 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence: Mr. Denis Filer and Mr. Iain Harris.

**2 Public Participation**

None.

**3 Chairman's/Clerk's Report**

Mr. Smith officially announced that Nigel Poulton died at 0800 on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> March. He handed round a condolence card for Parish Councillors to sign, which they did in complete silence.

Mrs. Dinnin confirmed the funeral arrangements, which are for a private cremation for family only, followed by a Memorial Service at the Parish Church of St Andrew and St Mary at 1430.

The following notice will be placed on the village website.

‘After a long illness Nigel Poulton died on Sunday morning the 16th March.

Nigel served as a District and Parish Councillor for many years and was devoted to everyone in Watton-at-Stone. He was always there to listen and advise and give practical help no matter who you were.

Sadly, we have grown used to not seeing him dashing round the village, but his friendliness and cheerfulness have left us all with so many memories and a legacy which we will never forget.

Our thoughts go out to Ann and her family at this very sad time.’

**Action: J. Allsop**

**4 Declaration of Interests**

Mrs. McCash declared a pecuniary interest in item 9 a, Budget and Finance Sub-Committee - External audit of Community Hall accounts for the year ended 2013/14 (Mrs. McCash is a partner at McCash and Hay).

**5 Minutes of the last meeting**

**a) Acceptance**

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> February 2014**

Parish Councillors approved the minutes.

**b) Review of actions**

- 1. Chase East Herts Council re S106 funding for bus shelters in the High Street**

Mr. Smith said that he had e-mailed Mr. Chappell (Development Manager at HCC’s Highways Department) on 14<sup>th</sup> March as follows.

‘I draw your attention to the statement you made in an earlier e-mail

"Please be aware that the s106 sum for Sustainable Transport is not a contribution solely towards traffic management measures aimed at addressing high speeds but is also intended to support improvements to public transport. It should not be assumed therefore at this stage that the full sum of £119 ,250 would become available to support road improvements aimed at reducing vehicle speeds."

Bearing this in mind and with the encouragement of Councillor Crofton Watton at Stone Parish Council seek the provision of two bus shelters in the village so that the use of public transport can be a better experience. Furthermore you may consider a revised bus route to take in the new Gatekeeper development and the station. As considerable housing is planned for the village we feel that all practical measures to encourage the use of public transport should be made.

On another subject can you confirm that traffic monitoring as proposed in your last e-mail has been undertaken and inform us of the results and conclusions please. We the Parish Council are coming under increased pressure to resolve the crossing issue as the County Council has made no progress in procuring a new 'lollypop" lady.’

Mr. Smith to chase Mr. Chappell for a response.

**Action: M. Smith**

- 2. Seek HCC permission to install a notice board on the grass verge in Station Road**

The Clerk reported that she had e-mailed HCC twice but to date had not received a response. The Clerk to chase.

**Action: J. Allsop**

3. **Contact Mr. and Mrs. Taylor re the signed agreement**  
Refer to item 7 b, Specific items - Agreement for use of land adjacent to Beane Cottage.
4. **Write short comparison between old and new sportsfield extension leases**  
Refer to item 7 f, Specific items - Lease for the sportsfield extension.
5. **Purchase new multi-function printer/scanner/fax machine**  
A new LaserJet multi-function printer/scanner/fax machine has been purchased. The old LaserJet machine, which still works as a printer and copier, is in the meeting room at the Community Hall.
6. **Attend Child Protection safeguarding training course**  
This item to be discussed at the next meeting of the Community Hall Trustees. **Agenda; Trustees 04/2014**
7. **Chase Bentleys Heating Systems for quotation to fit new boiler system**  
Refer to item 8 a, Community Hall- Request for quotations for installation of new boiler system.
8. **Contact Heath Mount School re availability of their sporting facilities:** Outstanding. **Action: M. Smith**

**c) Action points resolved**

1. Contact all entries in the Village Directory
2. Give final version of the Village Directory to Mr. Knight for printing
3. Arrange for the Village Directory to be included in the Parish News
4. Chase outstanding lighting faults with Highways
5. Chase East Herts Council re a District Councillor poster for Rik Sharma
6. Invoice Sports and Social Club for keys
7. Write to Chief Inspector Gerry McDonald
8. Ask Ted Brown to clear leaves around MPPA
9. Ask East Herts Council to remove rubbish on the Hockerill footpath
10. Alter website heading 'Village events and notices' to read 'News'
11. Advertise links to draft District Plan on website under 'News' heading
12. Chase outstanding highways faults on Hazeldell and Moorymead Close
13. Write to David Gregory re his request for a commemorative plaque
14. Respond to public footpath order consultation re Gregory's Farm
15. Notify HCC re attendance to Town and Parish Councils' conference on 7<sup>th</sup> April
16. E-mail allotment holders
17. Write parish news insert re District Plan

**d) Items outstanding for more than two months**

**1. Chase first call signs re permanent sign for MPPA**

1<sup>st</sup> Call Signs, Knebworth, have quoted £18 plus VAT to make a permanent sign with the following wording on it.

"In poor weather conditions, players use the courts at their own risk.

Parish Council"

Parish Councillors instructed the Clerk to order the sign from 1<sup>st</sup> Call Signs.

**Action: J. Allsop**

**2. Chase Rik Sharma for his Councillor posters for the notice boards**

The Clerk said that she managed to persuade East Herts Council to make a poster for Rik Sharma.

The Clerk to put the poster on the Parish Council notices boards.

**Action: J. Allsop**

**3. Invoice Sports and Social club for additional keys supplied: completed.**

**4. Contact Wilf Emsley re Community Hall hiring times**

Mr. Meischke said that he would complete this action point, but asked for this item to be removed from the agenda. This was agreed Parish Councillors.

**5. Arrange for disabled sign to be painted on the tarmac surface of the car park**

Mr. Meischke said that now that the weather is drier, he hoped to be able to complete this action point soon.

**Action: J. Meischke**

## 6 Planning

In the absence of Mr. Harris, Mr. Stock reported on the following items.

### a) Applications

#### i) 4 Newmans Court (3/14/0454/FP)

Conversion of existing garage to study and minor internal alterations.

When presenting the plans, Mr. Stock pointed out that Newmans Court is in an off-road development and the location of No4 and its parking facilities (which appear to include a wooden garage) were such that this application was unlikely to affect the residents nor have an impact on on-street parking in the High Street.

It was agreed that the Clerk sends a 'No comment' response to the planning department. **Action: J. Allsop**

### b) Decisions

None.

## 7 Specific items

### a) Traffic along Station Road and the High Street

The Highways Department at Hertfordshire County Council have still not responded to the Parish Council's letter re traffic along Station Road and the High Street.

### b) Agreement for use of land adjacent to Beane Cottage

Mr. and Mrs. Taylor have signed both copies of the agreement for use of Parish Council land adjacent to Beane Cottage and returned one copy to the Clerk

### c) Draft District Plan and public meeting

Mr. Smith reminded Parish Councillors that the public meeting, organised by East Herts Council, to discuss the draft District Plan will be held on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> March at 2000 at Datchworth Village Hall. Signs advertising the meeting have been put up around the village.

The Parish Council will be holding its own Public meeting on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> April at 2000 in the Community Hall. Mrs. McCash, Mrs. Dinnin, Mr. Knight and Rik Sharma gave their apologies for this meeting.

Mr. Knight to place an advert in the Parish News.

**Action: I. Knight**

Mr. Smith to place a notice in the Hertfordshire Mercury advertising the meetings on both Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> March and Friday 11<sup>th</sup> April.

**Action: M. Smith**

Mr. Smith has drafted a response to the draft District Plan based on the Parish Council's first impressions and Mr. Stock has edited the draft. A copy of the draft response has been uploaded to the website under the 'News' section. The Parish Council will wait until after the public meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> April to gauge public opinion before finalising their response to East Herts Council.

This item to be placed on the agenda for the Parish Council meeting in April.

**Agenda: 04/2014**

### d) Section S106 funding

East Herts Council have not yet confirmed in writing or via e-mail that the S106 funding towards the sportsfield play area improvements has been granted. The Clerk to chase.

**Action: J. Allsop**

### e) Sportsfield play area improvements

Mr. Smith said that the Wotton-at-Stone Playground working-group have raised sufficient funds to pay for the toddler piece of equipment. The remaining pieces of play equipment will be funded from the S106 funding. As soon as East Herts Council confirm the funding, Kompan's three quotations (SQ213938, SQ216742 and SQ216743) will be officially accepted.

This was agreed by Parish Councillors.

### f) Lease for the sportsfield extension

Mr. Smith read out Mr. Harris' proposal as follows.

That the Parish Council approves the lease in the form of the draft provided to its clerk by Debenhams Ottoway on 15 January 2014 and reported on by Mr. Harris in his e-mail of 23 February, subject to minor drafting amendments proposed by Mr. Harris, and the Chair and any other member of the Parish Council be authorised to execute the final version."

Parish Councillors endorsed Mr. Harris' proposal.

The Clerk to write to Debenhams Ottoway according.

**Action: J. Allsop**

### g) Wotton-at-Stone Conservation Area appraisal

Mr. Smith said that the public consultation exhibition held at the Community Hall on Friday 7<sup>th</sup> March was reasonably well attended with quite a few interested people present. He said that Dr Anthony Norden (10 School Lane) has written a letter objecting to the removal of part of School Lane and Old School Orchard from the Conservation area.

Mr. Smith suggested that the Parish Council write thanking Rebecca Mason (East Herts Council) and her associates for taking the time to explain the reasons for the review of the conservation area in Watton-at-Stone and the Parish Council supports their efforts to preserve and protect important features within the village.

The Parish Council's one reservation concerns Old School Orchard, in particular No. 4, which comprises virtually intact the original School Hall at which many of the residents received their primary education.

Whether or not the whole area or just the school building should remain in the conservation area is for East Herts Council to decide. Certainly Dr. Norden believes the area should remain in its entirety.

Parish Councillors agreed Mr. Smith's response and Rebecca Mason to be e-mailed accordingly.

**Action: M. Smith/J. Allsop**

## 8 Sub-Committees

### a) Budget & Finance

In the absence of Mr. Filer, Mr. Smith reported on the following items.

- **Monthly accounts**

#### Watton-at-Stone Parish Council

Petty Cash – Receipts		Petty cash - Payments	
None		None	
<b>Cheques issued</b>			
SLCC	Annual Subscription		18.00
Wages/salaries	February salary and home office allowance		1106.09
BSWW Parish News	print and distribute village directory		50.00
Ivoryegg	HP Laser Jet multifunction printer		206.78
Amazon	2 x printer cartridges for multifunction printer		89.99
East Herts Council	Empty 3 x dog waste bins on 65 occasions		556.20
Affinity Water	Allotment water charges – 30 <sup>th</sup> August 2013 to 1 <sup>st</sup> March 2014		<u>34.79</u>
			<b><u>2061.85</u></b>
<b>Cheques received</b>			
None			

#### Watton-at-Stone Community Hall

Petty Cash – Receipts		Petty Cash -Payments	
Floodlighting donations to 21/01 to 5/03/2014	300.00	HCC – cleaning materials	<u>51.47</u>
Vince Geoff – various facilities	31.00		<b><u>51.47</u></b>
Carla Beach – Pavilion and meeting room	150.00		
Paul Reid – Meeting Room	8.00		
Vicki Roos – Meeting room	63.00		
Sarah Blanchard – Main Hall and Pavilion	64.00		
Anne Heigham – Main Hall	<u>15.00</u>		
			<b><u>631.00</u></b>
<b>Cheques issued</b>			
James Turner	Rectify problem with men's toilets		145.03
Wages	February/March 2014		368.13
			<b><u>513.16</u></b>
<b>Cheques received</b>			
Rebecca Evans	Main Hall and Pavilion hire		45.00
Cricket Club	Re purchase of cricket roller		800.00
Dots and Tots	Main Hall and Pavilion hire		208.80
Watton School	Main Hall and Pavilion hire		869.41
Watton Youth Drop Inn	Main Hall and Pavilion hire		367.20
Karate	Main Hall hire		108.00
Watton House	Meeting room		10.00
Mr. and Mrs. Beckett	Pavilion hire		24.50
Mrs. Peters	Main Hall and Pavilion hire		52.00
Dave Boddy	Main Hall and Pavilion hire		336.60
			<b><u>2821.51</u></b>

Parish Councillors approved the above payments.

- **Parish Council grant to the Community Hall**  
 Mr. Filer had said that there are sufficient funds in the Parish Council account to pay the remaining Community Hall annual grant. Parish Councillors agreed the payment.  
 The Clerk to act accordingly. **Action: J. Allsop**
- **Asset registers**  
 Mr. Meischke said that he had given the Clerk amendments to the Asset registers. The Clerk to e-mail a copy of the amended Asset registers to all Parish Councillors for approval at the April Parish Council meeting.  
 The Clerk to include the following items on the asset registers and include them on the insurance registers.
 
  - Lamppost installed in the car park - £800
  - Line marker asset register and insure. **Action: J. Allsop**
- **Community Hall insurance renewal**  
 Norris and Fisher have sent the Community Hall insurance renewal papers from Ansvar Insurance Limited. Mr. Filer said we are on a long term undertaking (LTU) which expires in 2015. The premium for last year was £1297. However, it has been reduced to £1,179.18 for the year commencing 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014. Parish Council approved the renewal of the Community Hall's insurance cover with Ansvar Insurance. The Clerk to renew the policy accordingly. **Action: J. Allsop**
- **Internal Audit of Parish Council accounts for the year ended 2013/14**  
 It was agreed to re-appoint Mr. Jim Morrissey to carry-out the internal audit of the Parish Council accounts. The Clerk to arrange for the Parish Council accounts, for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014, to be submitted to Jim Morrissey for auditing. **Action: J. Allsop**
- **External audit of Community Hall accounts for the year ended 2013/14**  
 It was agreed to re-appoint McCash and Hay to carry-out the audit of the Community Hall accounts. The Clerk will arrange for the Community Hall accounts, for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014, to be submitted to McCash and Hay for auditing. **Action: J. Allsop**
- **Renewal of annual licence for live music and recorded music**  
 Parish Councillors agreed to renew the annual music licence with PRS for Music. **Action: J. Allsop**
- **East Herts Council rates**  
 The annual demand for rates has been received from East Herts Council at £1253.20 for the year, payable in 10 monthly payments. This is an increase of 2.5% on the previous year.  
 The Community Hall benefits from an 80% rate relief.

### Community Hall Trustees

Mr. Harris asked Mr. Meischke to report on the following items.

- **Cleaning**  
 Mr. Meischke said that he had received two quotation for deep cleaning all the rooms in the Community Hall (including cleaning materials) as follows.
 
  - **Total Contract Cleaners**  
 £225 for the initial deep clean, subsequent cleans would cost £130 each, plus £25 per visit for regular weekly/daily cleaning of the Community Hall facilities.
  - **Solutions for Property Ltd**  
 £610 for a one off deep clean.
 After discussion, Parish Councillors agreed to accept Total Contract Cleaners. If the quality of work is good then one-off cleaning sessions may be considered.  
 Mr. Meischke to notify Total Contract Cleaners and Solutions for Property Limited accordingly and liaise with the Clerk re dates when the Community Hall is not in use. **Action: J. Meischke**
- **Estimates for external decoration of Community Hall**  
 Mr. Meischke said that two estimates have been received for the external decoration of the Community Hall. Both quotations are for the following work.
 
  - Apply two coats of Sadolin wood stain to all windows at top floor level and fascia and soffit boards to do both sides of the building
  - Apply two coats of Sadolin wood stain to all lower car park windows and doors, car park side only.

- **Devine Decoration Services - £1,500.**

However, Devine Decoration Services have an additional charge of £420 to fit 12 eyehooks at high level for attaching a harness for decoration and repair works at the Community Hall. This would be six eyehooks fitted on each side of the building, fixed to the joints at roof level.

- **Peter Philips - £1700**

Peter Philips does not feel the need for eyehooks or scaffolding.

After discussion, it was agreed that Devine Decoration Services should be asked to re-quote for doing the wood staining work and if this requires him fitting 12 eyehooks then this should be included in the total price and the eye hooks should be removed after use.

**Action: J. Meischke**

- **Request for quotations for installation of new boiler system**

Mr. Meischke said that he now has two quotations for the installation of a new boiler system.

This item to be discussed at the next meeting of the Community Hall Trustees, who would make recommendation to the Parish Council.

**Agenda: Trustees 04/13**

- **Vandalism at the play area**

Mark Blacktin has repaired the area of vandalised safety surface under the Rainbow multi-play and slide. Mark Blacktin originally repaired this area at the end of 2013.

- **Cricket Club roller**

Mr. Smith said that the Cricket Club have ordered their new roller. They had originally asked the Parish Council or Community Hall to purchase the roller on their behalf so that they could claim the VAT back. However, on investigation Mr. Smith has verified that it is not lawful to do this without retaining the ownership of the roller. The Cricket Club have therefore decided that they will pay for the roller themselves.

However, before coming to this decision, the Cricket Club had already given £800 to the Community Hall and the Clerk had placed the order for the new roller and paid the £800 deposit payment out of the Community Hall account. In addition, East Herts Council had authorised that their £3,500 grant payment be made directly to the Community Hall account. On receipt of this payment, the Clerk will forward a cheque of £3,500 to the Cricket Club, which will then end the Community Hall's involvement in the purchase of the roller.

- **Dogs**

Beane Valley e-mailed on 12<sup>th</sup> March to complain about an incident that occurred during their baby massage session. People wait in the main entrance corridor to see the chiropodist, who uses the meeting room. Some of them bring dogs into the corridor which quite often bark which is not conducive to baby massage sessions.

It was agreed to check the hire agreements re dogs having access to the building.

**Action: J. Allsop**

It was agreed to put up signs stating 'No dogs except assistance dogs' at the Community Hall entrances.

**Action: J. Meischke**

The chiropodist who hired the meeting room to be notified that dogs are not allowed in the building.

**Action: J. Allsop**

## Recreation & Amenities

Mr. Knight reported on the following items.

- **Playing Field – goal mouth maintenance**

Mr. Smith said that it is his intention to add some topsoil to the area before reseeding the goalmouths.

- **Review the condition of the sportsfield and agree a schedule of maintenance**

Mr. Knight and Mr. Smith will inspect the sportsfield to agree a schedule of maintenance for this year

**Action: I. Knight/M. Smith**

- **Bike ramps**

The following is a minute extract from the July Parish Council meeting.

'Parish Councillors discussed the current problem of Youths congregating on and around the bike ramp area, drinking alcohol and breaking glass bottles. Mr. Smith offered to remove the bike ramps and store them in his barn until the Parish Council can decide what to do with them. Parish Councillors agreed with this course of action. Mr. Smith to act accordingly.

**Action: M. Smith'**

It transpired over the summer holidays of 2013 that small children were playing on the bike ramps, mainly to climb over them and this has remained the case. After discussion, Parish Councillors agreed to reverse their decision of July 2013 and retain the bike ramps on the sportsfield.

## Environment Sub-Committee

Mrs. Dinnin reported on the following items.

- **Report of meeting with Charlie Bell and John Bryden**

Mrs. Dinnin said that she, Mr. Smith and Mr. Knight met with Charlie Bell (Living Rivers Authority) and John Bryden (Environment Agency) to discuss plans for the River Beane. The Clerk was also present at the meeting.

The plans for bypassing the weir and allowing the main flow of the river to go behind the old Mill site and into the culvert that flows into the Mill Pond were discussed. The river would be diverted away from the bottom of the gardens at 55 - 85 High Street, which are south of Mill Lane and re-join at approx. the bottom of 93 High Street. All of these properties belong to the Abel Smith estate, with the exception of Cannon House (67-71 High Street) which is in private ownership.

It was felt at the meeting that this was a far too drastic course to take and Charlie Bell and John Bryden revisited the site after the meeting and came up with an alternative plan. With the main flow of the river going over the Scout Hut land before going back to its original course at the back of the High Street houses.

Mr. Smith met Mr. Abel ~Smith, who owns the Scout Hut and its surrounding land to discuss the plans and he is happy in principal about the proposals but would need to see more detailed plans before he gives his approval.

John Bryden has agreed to have some more detailed plans drawn up which will take about 2-3 months and then he hopes these plans could be made available for a public consultation meeting.

The change in the river course will allow fish to swim up steam of the Mill and into the stretch along the Lammas bringing more life to the river. Fish are currently unable to swim upstream because the weir blocks the passage upstream. It is planned to install a fish ladder at a later stage to make the river accessible to fish beyond the Walkern Road Bridge.

- **Report of meeting with Anthea and Bob Thornton, River Beane Restoration Association**

Mrs. Dinnin said that Anthea and Bob Thornton are keen to do a test planting area of alternative plants to Hog Weed. If successful, it is hoped that the residents who like the look of the Giant Hog Weed may plant the non-invasive environmentally friendly alternatives. Bob Thornton has been given a kit, which allows him to weed kill the Hog Weed and has the appropriate qualifications to do the work.

Anthea and Bob Thornton would like to plant two plots, approximately 10 metres by 1 meter each, of the alternative plants tucked out of the way near the bench at the Mill Lane end of the Lammas. These plots would be fenced and gated with an information notice attached.

Parish Councillors agreed that Anthea and Bob Thornton could do their trial plantings on the Lammas.

Mrs. Dinnin to notify them accordingly.

**Action: C. Dinnin**

- **Urgent tree work needing to be done on the Lammas**

Mrs. Dinnin said that while she was walking on the Lammas, she realised that there was a lot of tree damage because of the winter storms. Some of the trees are in need of urgent attention. She has submitted a P3 (Parish Paths Partnership) grant application for the maximum funding of £1,000 towards the cost of the work.

Charlie Bell (Living Rivers Authority) and the Environment Agency to be asked if they intend to do some tree work as part of their scheme to improve the flow of the Rivers Beane.

- **Allotments**

Mrs. Dinnin said that she had let out all the allotments, however today she was notified that one of the allotment holders wishes to give up his two half plots. There has been another enquiry for an allotment, so hopefully the two half plots will soon be let out again.

- **Varnishing of the Ornate village sign**

Mrs. Dinnin said that Bob Adams has agreed varnish the Ornate village sign but asked for Glyn Mould's instructions on how the work should be done. The Clerk to give Mrs. Dinnin a copy of Glyn Mould's e-mail of instructions.

**Action: J. Allsop**

Mrs. Dinnin to pass Glyn Mould's instructions to Bob Adams.

**Action: C. Dinnin**

## b) Routine Reports

- i) **Emergency escape lighting tests and manual alarm call tests**

Mr. Smith and Mr. Meischke did the emergency escape lighting tests and manual alarm.

ii) **Monthly village-report**

Mrs. McCash completed the report on 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> March 2014.

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

- **Sportsfield** – Cricket table was being rolled.
- **Play area** - Lots of mud on teen shelter and supernova.
- **MPPA** - surface looked good. Tennis nets had holes.  
Mr. Knight said that new tennis nets have been purchased.
- **Allotments** - good for the time of year.
- **Culverts** - quite good. Lots of dog mess around entrance to the Lammas.

iii) **Weekly sportsfield**

Nothing to report.

v) **Website**

Upload article in memory of Nigel Poulton.

**Action: C. Dinnin/J. Allsop**

vi) **Website Diary**

None.

vii) **Highway and Lighting faults**

Mr. Smith said that Oliver Heald MP e-mailed on 14<sup>th</sup> March as follows.

‘I have been asked by Hertfordshire Highways to remind my constituents that the best way of reporting road defects is online at [www.hertsdirect.org/highwaysfaults](http://www.hertsdirect.org/highwaysfaults)

I would be grateful if you would be able to draw this information to the attention of your residents.’

Mr. Stock said that further to the work to repair some of the potholes and kerb-side erosion problems in Hazeldell that he had reported/progressed previously, he felt that we now need to attempt to resolve the issues outstanding. At least one of the repairs carried out has already been broken-up by traffic passing over it (not very impressive) and the remaining areas of kerb-side erosion ignored by Hertfordshire Highways need to be repaired before they get worse. The periods of heavy rain during the winter has helped to make kerb-side erosion worse and stones from these areas are being thrown up onto the road surface. He remains disappointed that some of the repairs fell short of convincing him that the work was done in the most cost-effective manner, e.g. why was only 6M of a 7M length of kerb-side erosion repaired, leaving the remaining 1M to become worse?

It was agreed that Mr. Stock identifies the problem areas in Hazeldell so the Clerk can report them via the faults system.

**Action: D. Stock**

Parish Councillors were asked to look at the roads, footpaths and lighting in their areas to identify any problems in need of reporting in the same way.

**Action: Parish Councillors**

Parish Councillors agreed that recent resurfacing work at the three roundabouts in the High Street looked good.

## 9 Correspondence received

a) **Dr Anthony Norden – re Watton-at-Stone Conservation Area appraisal**

Refer to item 7 g, Specific items - Watton-at-Stone Conservation Area appraisal.

b) **East Herts Council – Improvements to Great Innings play area**

Ms. Waltham reported at the February Parish Council meeting that she and Mr. Smith had met with Ian Sharratt to discuss East Herts Council’s proposals for upgrading the Great Innings play area.

Jackie Bruce, Service Development Officer, East Herts Council e-mailed on 12<sup>th</sup> March as follows.

‘I am e-mailing to let the Parish Council know about an exciting new project we are currently working on to improve the East Herts Council owned play areas at Gt Innings in Watton-at-Stone.

We have been able to secure some external funding through “section 106” compensatory funding to move this project forward. This is money set aside through the planning process to enhance local play relating to the development of new housing in Station Road. As you will be aware, some of this money has also been allocated to the Parish Council to enhance other open spaces in the village.

We have meet with some of the Parish Councillors to informally discuss our ideas and are now writing to residents to share our ideas and ask for comments – please see attached letter and illustrations of the proposed new play equipment and suggested locations within the play areas. We have also been speaking to local Police Officers and the Youth Connexions Youth Worker and all are fully supportive of our plans.

We plan to tender the project in April with construction completed before the summer holidays so the local children have a great new facility to play on.

If you have any questions or comments please get in touch with Ian Sharratt or myself.’

The Parish Council noted the contents of the e-mail.

- **A602 improvements**

All Parish Councillors have been forwarded an e-mail (dated 12<sup>th</sup> March) from Alissa Ede, Programme Manager, Major Projects Group, Hertfordshire County Council. The e-mail outlines the proposals for improvements along the A602, which are to the following roundabouts/junctions.

- Hertford Road roundabout between the A602 Broadhall Way and Hertford Road
- A119 roundabout between the A602 Ware Road and A119 Hertford Road
- Ware Road junction
- Sacombe Pound junction
- Stony Hills junction
- Anchor Lane roundabout
- Westmill Road junction
- A602/A10 junction

Mr. Smith said that the HCC website link in their e-mail identifies the individual junction improvements planned and a further link shows a map outlining the individual improvements.

- **Blue plaque**

David Gregory, who requested that a commemorative plaque in memory of Sir Nigel Gresley at Watton House, wrote to thank the Parish Council for their efforts.

## 10 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**

Mr. Meischke said Youth attendance has greatly increased in the last two week.

Some of the Watton Youth Drop Inn members are using the Main Hall fire exit door to go in and out of the building. To prevent them from doing this, Mr. Meischke is investigating having an alarm installed on this door.

- **River Beane Restoration Association** Nothing to report.
- **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.

## 11 Items for Parish News

The following items were identified for inclusion in the April 2014 issue of the Parish News.

- **Tribute to Nigel Poulton** - Mr. Smith to write the article accordingly. **Action: M. Smith**
- **Public meeting to discuss Draft District plan** - Mr. Knight to write the article accordingly. **Action: I. Knight**

- **The meeting closed at 2050.**
- **The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> April 2014.**