

Minutes of the meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council held in the Community Hall on Tuesday 15th July

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

Police: Sergeant Duncan Wallace (until 1922)

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence: Mr. Denis Filer and Mrs. Helen McCash.

2 Public Participation

None.

3 Chairman's/Clerk's Report

None.

4 Declaration of Interests

None.

5 Report from Sergeant Duncan Wallace

Mr. Smith welcome Sergeant Duncan Wallace to the meeting.

Sergeant Wallace gave the Parish Council a brief rundown on police activities since 1st April 2014.

For our village, 26 incidents have been recorded on the police system since 1st April. However, 5 of these are recorded as non-crime incidents. Sergeant Wallace explained that domestic issues are not reported as criminal offences, but the details are kept on file so they can be referred to when a case needs to be built against an offender who is later involved in domestic violence.

Sergeant Wallace said he had been in contact with Mrs. McCash regarding various issues within the village.

Mr. Stock asked if there was any update on the drug problems within the village. Sergeant Wallace said that the police had continued to work on this problem and a dealer had been arrested.

Sergeant Duncan left at 1922.

6 Minutes of the last meeting

a) Acceptance.

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 17th June 2014**
Parish Councillors approved the minutes.

b) Review of actions

1. Renew ferreting licenses

The Clerk said that she had issued ferreting licences to Bob Adams, Peter Phillips and Roger Bridges.

However, no signed licenses have been returned to date.

The Clerk to chase.

Action: J. Allsop

2. Ask Mark Blacktin to prepare and varnish the village benches

Mrs. Dinnin confirmed that Mark Blacktin is able to do the work. She will be making a site visit to confirm what work needs to be done.

Mr. Smith said that the memorial bench near the teen shelter is broken. Mr. Stock said that this seat was purchased by Deborah Freeman in memory of her parents. Mrs. Dinnin to contact Mrs. Freeman to see if she wishes to replace the seat.

Action: C. Dinnin

It was agreed to put memorial bench in memory of Nigel Poulton on the September agenda. **Agenda: 09/14**

c) Action points resolved

1. Ask Gary Smith, window cleaner to clean the Community Hall windows
2. Order the two Nigel Poulton stone plaques for the Community Hall
3. Write to Churches Serving Watton-at-Stone and the Methodist church re use of Community Hall
4. E-mail all councillors an electronic copy of standard planning letter to residents
5. Write to the Head Teacher at Watton-at-Stone re Parish Council trophy
6. Display notice of conclusion of audit on Parish Council notice board
7. Obtain the cost of a new recycled plastic bench for outside the Grey House
8. Contact Highways re Walkern Road hedge obscuring visibility whilst exiting Beane Road
9. Inspect the disused allotment area and decide what action is required
10. Write to Allotment holders who are not cultivating their plots
11. Report the non-emptying of three of the litterbins in the village
12. Report corroded roundabout signs on the Highways faults system
13. Write article for Parish News

d) Action points outstanding

1. **Chase HCC re street lighting invoices:** Outstanding **Action: J. Allsop**
2. **Complete online child protection training**
 Mr. Meischke said he was required to complete a child protection course because of his involvement in teaching children archery. He therefore suggested that he should become the Child Protection Officer for both the Parish Council and Community Hall Trustees.
 The Community Hall Trustees approved this course of action, and Parish Councillors endorsed Mr. Meischke's appointment as Child Protection Officer. Mr. Meischke was duly appointed as the Child Protection Officer for the Parish Council and Community Hall Trustees.
3. **Contact the Abel Smith estate re fallen tree on Parish Council land at Rivershill:** outstanding.
 This item to be removed from the agenda.

7 Planning

a) Applications

i) 37 Station Road (3/14/1133/FP)

Erection of one dwelling

Mr. Harris showed the plans to Parish Councillors. This application is for the erection of one additional dwelling on a site that has already been granted permission for an end of terrace property. In effect building a new house in the back garden of the original plot for 37 Station Road.

After discussions, Parish Councillors agreed to write to the planning department as follows.

'The Watton-at-Stone Parish Council objects to this application because it is considered to be an over-development of the site and not in keeping with the area and existing houses.

The site already has planning permission for a house to be attached to No 37 (i.e. extending the end-terrace), meaning that there will now be two properties on the plot. The addition of yet another (third) property can only be seen as an over-development and one which is not sympathetic to the style and layout of the established properties around the site.

We are content to accept two properties on this site but not three.'

Action: J. Allsop

Mr. Stock and Mr. Knight agreed to meet with the residents affected by this application.

Action: D. Stock/I. Knight

Note: As a result of visiting residents of Glebe Close, the following paragraph was added to the Parish Council's letter of objection.

'The neighbours opposite the site in Glebe Close feel that it is an unnecessary over-development of the area given the scale of the Gatekeeper development immediately to their rear.

They will be making their own representations.'

ii) 101 High Street (3)14/1181/LB) – Listed Building consent

Regularisation of the formation of en-suite bathroom to master bedroom with external soil and vent pipe and ventilation grille to flank wall (driveway side)

Mr. Harris said that this retrospective application was not subject to the Parish Council's planning protocol, and therefore no response is required.

iii) Crowbury, Church Lane

Single storey rear extension to form pool room and single storey lean to passage to the rear yard

Mr. Harris said that the single storey extension will not be visible to anyone outside the boundaries of the Crowbury's land and therefore proposed a 'no comment' response. This was agreed by Parish Councillors and the Clerk was instructed to respond to the planning department accordingly. **Action: J. Allsop**

b) Decisions

i) Heath Mount School (3/14/0676/LB) – Listed Building consent

Internal alterations - removal of dividing screens to two principal rooms to ground floor to return rooms to their original form including making good works **-East Herts Council permission granted**

ii) 43 Rivershill (3/14/0948/FP)

One and a half storey rear extension **-East Herts Council permission granted**

c) Withdrawn

i) Watton Cottage, Perrywood Lane (3/14/0858/FP)

Installation of a complete insulation and render system to the external face of the house

8 Specific items

a) Traffic along Station Road and the High Street

The Parish Council expressed its frustration about the continued lack of progress on this matter and are becoming increasingly concerned about the apparent lack of responses with regard to its request for a site meeting with the local authority and other interested parties.

After further discussion, and with due respect to the efforts of Ken Crofton (our Hertfordshire County Councillor), it was decided that we contact Oliver Heald MP and request a site meeting with him so that we can highlight the on-going problems and concerns about pedestrian safety along Station Road and discuss ways in which we can move forward to resolve the situation.

Mr. Stock to write the letter, together with appropriate attachments, to Oliver Heald MP. **Action: D. Stock**

b) Awarding of the Parish Council trophies

Mr. Knight presented the Parish Council trophies during the Community Service on Sunday 7th July, as follows.

- The Watton-at-Stone Parish Council Good Citizenship Award was presented to Poppy Parfitt.
- The Watton-at-Stone Parish Council Outstanding Effort Award was presented to Elliot King.

Keep-sake trophies were presented to the children with the awards.

c) 1-3 Mill Lane

Mr. Smith said that the current upsurge of interest in this site was driven by plans to improve the environmental aspect of the River Beane. It was hoped that a scheme could be developed that could benefit the river and realise some planning potential on the site. This originally involved the culvert under the site but on inspection, this was found to be in very poor condition and will become a liability to the owner. In a meeting with John Bryden from the Environment Agency, it was agreed that the likelihood of residential planning consent was extremely low and consequently ambitious plans to improve the river and millpond at this point are unlikely to be realised. As a result, we should revert to their original plans to improve the river upstream of Mill Lane by cutting back the riverbank vegetation and introducing artificial meanders. This combined with plans to reduce abstraction in the Beane valley should dramatically improve its condition. It was agreed that the P3 grant should be used to restore the riverbank footpath, which will by default reduce vegetation along stretches of the river.

d) Report on meeting held on 8th July to discuss the HCC public consultation on Children centres

Mr. Smith said that he attended the HCC public consultation of Children centres meeting on 8th July. He said that the meeting was poorly attended with only Wilf Emsley, Ken Crofton and himself attending with HCC and Beane Valley officials.

Beane Valley Children's Centre said that they have contact with 90% of the families in the area. As well as running play sessions, they also help guide families with their problems

There are some 80 centres throughout Hertfordshire funded by the County Council. Presently they are run independently but in a bid to reduce costs by 15% they are to be reorganised into groups with similar profiles that will share resources and management. Beane Valley Children's Centre are keen to be the lead partner in this amalgamation and if successful, would continue to be based in Watton-at-Stone.

9 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		Postage – sportsfield extension lease	2.34
			2.34
Cheques issued			
Debenhams Ottoway	Lease for sportsfield extension		960.00
BDO LLP	Annual Audit fee		240.00
Ted Brown	Strimming and weed-killing		55.00
Bob Thornton	Donation towards weed killing		10.00
St. Albans Diocesan	Allotment rent - 1/2 year		300.00
1st call signs	Sing for MPPA		21.60
Amazon	100 laminating pouches		12.10
Wages and Salaries	July 2014		1186.23
Frank Cooper and SON	June - 5 x grass cutting		336.00
Adam Welch	Grass cutting and strimming work		1,200.00
BSWW Parish News	Inserting annual reports in the Parish news		50.00
Blue Bury Contractors	Lammas and Watton Green Grass cutting		1,140.00
Concord Trophies	Engraving 2 perpetual trophies & purchase 2 keep-sakes trophies		47.88
Post Office	Tax and NI		163.11
			5,721.92
Cheques received			
Hertfordshire County	Litterpick annual payment		1,374.88
Hertfordshire County	P3 grant		1,000.00
Sports and Social Club	Sportsfield facilities		362.50
			2,737.38

Watton-at-Stone Community Hall

Petty Cash – Receipts		Petty Cash -Payments	
Carla Beach – Pavilion	126.00	Gary Smith – window cleaning	60.00
Vicki Roos – Meeting room	60.00	HCC – Cleaning materials	51.30
Michael Hills – Main Hall and Pavilion	52.00	Postage – return of Tennis net	12.98
	238.00		124.28
Cheques issued			
Devine Decoration	External decoration work		1,800.00
Herts Fire Protection	Annual fire equipment service + 1 new fire extinguisher		175.44
PRS for Music	Annual music licenses		250.44
Wages	July 2014		360.6
Rustic Stone	2 slate plaques engraved 'The Nigel Poulton Community Hall'		600.00
			3,186.48
Cheques received			
Sports and Social Club	Hire of Community Hall facilities		362.50
Mrs. Hunt	Main Hall		30.00
Watton School	For Watton Youth Drop Inn – Main Hall and Pavilion hire		397.80
Watton School	For Dots and Tots – Main Hall and Pavilion hire		351.00
			1141.30

Parish Councillors approved the above payments.

- **3-monthly statement of accounts for the Parish Council and Community Hall**

Mr. Smith read out Mr. Filer’s report of the first three-month accounts for the year 2014/15.

With some seasonal work making expenditure look very high, the 1st quarterly accounts gives little guide to the years results, so no need for us to worry yet.

- **3-monthly inspection of the Parish Council and Community Hall accounts**

Mrs. McCash was unable to do the three monthly inspection because the bank statements did not arrive in time. Mrs. McCash will do the inspection before the next Parish Council meeting. **Action: H. McCash**

Community Hall Trustees

Mr. Harris reported on the following items concerning the Community Hall Trustees.

- **External decoration work at the Community Hall**
Devine Decoration Service has completed this work, which included the application of two coats of Sadolin wood-stain to the high-level windows, fascia and soffits on both sides of the building, and to the windows and doors on the lower car-park side of the building.
- **Professional cleaning and Window cleaning**
As from September 2014, there will be changes to the cleaning arrangements at the Community Hall
- **Disabled car park sign**
Mark Blacktin was actioned to paint the disabled car park sign before this meeting. However, the work is still outstanding. Mr. Meischke to chase. **Action: J. Meischke**
- **Quotation for Replacing the Pavilion window frames**
Mr. Meischke said that he had received one quotation for the replacement windows. However, our requirements had been misunderstood, so a revised quote is now expected. It was agreed that the Trustees look at the existing windows and agree the exact requirements. **Action: Trustees**
Mrs. Stanley to give Mr. Meischke the names of window contractors who may be willing to quote. **Action: M. Stanley**
- **Stone plaques for The Nigel Poulton Community Hall**
Mr. Meischke said that two slate plaques are on order from Rustic Stone.
If the signs arrive on time, they will be unveiled at the Community picnic on Thursday 31st July 2014.
- **Hirer request for a set of keys**
The Trustees agreed that Vicky Roos could have a set of Community Hall keys. She will have to pay for the cost of having them cut and will be required to sign the key holder agreement and the Policy and Agreement for cutting a set of keys. Parish Councillors endorsed the Trustees decision.
The Clerk to notify Vicky Roos accordingly. **Action: J. Allsop**

Recreation & Amenities

Mr. Knight reported on the following items.

- **Installation of new play equipment on the Sportsfield**
The safety surface for the new junior climbing frame extends to the existing football pitch touchline. Kompan to be asked to re-site the climbing frame to alleviate this problem. **Action: M. Smith**
The Football Club were concerned that the Parish Council never involved them in their plans for additional play equipment.
Mr. Meischke said that the area between the football pitch and the play area is very tight. He suggested that the pitch touchline be reduced by 1 meter either side (2 meters in total) to help create a cap between the pitch and the play area. This was agreed by Parish Councillors. Mr. Meischke and Mr. Smith agreed to speak to the Football Club. **Action: J. Meischke/M. Smith**

Environment Sub-Committee

Mrs. Dinnin reported on the following items.

- **River Beane**
This item was covered under 8 c, Specific items - 1-3 Mill Lane.
- **High Street flower beds**
Mrs. Dinnin said that Adam Welch has done a good job of the flowerbed maintenance in the High Street.
- **Grass cutting on the Lammas and at Watton Green**
Blue Bury Contractors have done the grass cutting on the Lammas and at Watton Green.
- **War Memorial**
Mr. Smith said that he had treated the weeds around the War Memorial with roundup weed-killer. Unfortunately, he accidentally dripped some of the weed-killer on one of the hedging plants and it is now looking very unhappy,
When the weed killer has taken effect and the gravel stone area is free of weeds, it will be ready for laying the additional stones required. Mrs. Dinnin and Mr. Stock to inspect the site and agree the colour of the stones to be purchased. **Action: C. Dinnin/D. Stock**

- **Allotments**

Mr. Smith said that he had carried-out some weed killing on the disused area of the allotments.

- **Hedge**

Several hedges are overgrowing the footpaths or roads in the village.

Mrs. Dinnin and Mr. Smith agreed to inspect the hedges and instruct the Clerk to write to the property owners as required.

Action: c. Dinnin/M. Smith/J. Allsop

New Homes Bonus Committee

All Parish Councillors have been e-mailed a copy of the following report from Mr. Filer.

‘The first meeting of the above committee was held Wednesday 9th July 2014 and was attended by Messrs Smith, Meischke, Filer, Knight, Stock, Ms Waltham and Mrs. Allsop.

In discussing strategy, it was agreed that we must ensure that we cover all relevant organisations in the village. It was agreed that Mr. Filer would draft a note for Parish News inviting relevant organisations to bid for funding for appropriate projects. It was felt that in the current financial year a total of several thousand pounds (possibly up to £10,000) could be made available for all these projects.

Mr. Knight/ Mrs. Allsop agreed to check whether churches could be included in this scheme.

There was a full discussion on suggested items that might be carried out using funding from the New Homes bonus and the following were agreed as the current priorities (in order of priority:-

1. Bus Shelters – Mr. Smith/Mrs. Allsop to check type and prices
2. Double Glazed Windows in Memorial Hall – Mr. Filer to obtain prices
3. Development of Nigel Poulton Community Hall – Mr. Meischke to follow up on cost data, and Mr. Smith to obtain costs for consultants’ recommendations to develop the Hall.
4. New Tennis Court – Mr. Knight to follow up on grants and final cost.

It was agreed that a second meeting would be held at 7.00pm on Tuesday 9th September 2014.

In the absence of Mr. Filer, Mr. Stock elaborated on the discussions that took place on 9th July.

It was agreed that the Clerk contact East Herts Council to find out if churches can benefit from the New Homes Bonus funding.

Action: J. Allsop

b) Routine Reports

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

Mr. Smith and Mr. Stock did the emergency escape lighting tests and manual alarm prior to the meeting.

- ii) **Monthly village-report**

Ms. Waltham completed the report.

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

- **Litterbins** – several of the litterbins in the village have not been emptied. The Clerk to contact East Herts Council request that they empty them. **Action: J. Allsop**
- **Allotments** – most of the allotments are in excellent condition, however some of them are very bad.
- **The Mill** – A member of the public said to Ms Waltham that the Mill Lane site is an eyesore.

- iii) **Weekly sportsfield**

Mr. Meischke said that he has asked Ted Brown to weed kill around the Community Hall building.

- iv) **Website**

None.

- vi) **Highway and Lighting faults**

None.

10 Correspondence received

a) Debenhams Ottaway - new sportsfield extension lease

Debenhams Ottaway have returned a signed copy of the new sportsfield extension lease. The Clerk to give the lease to Mr. Meischke so he can put it in the safe. **Action: J. Allsop/J/ Meischke**

b) East Herts Council - District Planning Executive Panel - Thursday 17th July

Mr. Smith said that in their pre meeting report, East Herts Council have noted the responses from parishioners and the Parish Council re the draft Parish Plan.

c) EHAPTC meeting on 10th September 2014

Mr. Smith said that the East Herts Association of Parish and Town Councils (EHAPTC) would be holding its next meeting on 10th September at 1000 in the East Herts Council Chambers. Any Parish Councillors wishing to attend the meeting to contact the Clerk. **Action: Parish Councillors**

d) HCC – Parish and Town Council Charter consultation

Mr. Smith said that he had completed the HCC Parish and Town Council online consultation.

e) East Herts Rural Parish Conference – 12th September 2014

Mr. Smith said he would be attending the East Herts Rural Parish Conference on Friday 12th September. Any Parish Councillors wishing to attend with Mr. Smith, to contact the Clerk. **Action: Parish Councillors**

11 Village organisations

- **Wotton-at-Stone War Memorial Hall Management Committee:** Nothing to report.
- **Wotton-at-Stone Scout & Guide Group:** Nothing to report.
- **Wotton Youth Drop Inn:** Nothing to report.
- **River Beane Restoration Association** Nothing to report.
- **Wotton-at-Stone School Governors:** Nothing to report.
- **Wotton-at-Stone Neighbourhood Watch:** Nothing to report.
- **Wotton-at-Stone Allotment and Garden Association:** Nothing to report.
- **Wotton-at-Stone Pre-School Playgroup:** Nothing to report.
- **Wotton-at-Stone Sports & Social Club:** Nothing to report.
- **Police Authority:** Nothing to report.

12 Items for Parish News

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

- New homes bonus **Action: D. Filer**
- Trophy awarding **Action: J. Allsop**
- **The meeting closed at 2100.**
- **The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Tuesday 16th September 2014.**