

Minutes of the meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council held in the Community Hall on Tuesday 21st July 2015

Present:	Mr. Michael Smith (Chairman)	Mrs. C. Dinnin
	Mr. Denis Filer	Mr. Ian Knight
	Mrs. Helen McCash	Mrs. Margaret Stanley
	Mr. David Stock	Dr. Emma Waltham
	Mrs. Jane Allsop (Clerk)	
Members of public:	Mr. Bill Welch (until 1935)	
	District Councillor Mike Freeman (from 2105 until 2145)	
Police:	Sergeant Duncan Wallace (until 1923)	

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence: Mr. John Meischke (Vice-Chairman).

2 Public Participation

• **Sergeant Duncan Wallace**

Mr. Smith welcomed Sergeant Duncan Wallace to the meeting.

Sergeant Wallace handed round the crime statistics for June and July 2015. He then explained them to Parish Councillors in detail. Crime levels are down over the same periods last year with 50% detected in June and 33% detected in July. DC Kirsty Richardson has been issuing parking tickets up at Station Road.

The discussed Mill lane site has been broken into and needs to be made secure again. Sergeant Wallace asked if the Parish Council were aware of the name of the owner. Mr. Smith said he would arrange for the contact details to be e-mailed to him.

Action: M. Smith

Travellers have parked opposite the old Roger Harvey’s site at Bragbury End. The Police have served them with eviction notices and are watching to see where they next intend to move. The Gamekeeper for the Wallace family land arranged for a large lorry load of soil to be dumped in the entrance of one of their fields to stop any vehicles gaining access. Sergeant Wallace said he had spoken to the Head Keeper at Woodhall Park to make them aware of the situation. It was felt that the accessible part of Mick Ryan’s land is probably too much of a slope but the police will be keeping an eye on it.

The police continue to be robust about drug activities around the village.

• **Bill Welch – planning**

Mr. Smith introduced Bill Welch to Parish Councillors. Mr. Welch thanked the Parish Council for the opportunity to come and talk to them re his concerns about the possible building on the Green Belt land.

Mr. Welch reminded Parish Councillors that over a year ago 600 residents signed a petition against the development of Green Belt in the village for housing. He said he lives in Lammas Road and residents often ask him what is going on re the District Plan. During that time, he has not heard anyone in favour of building on the Green Belt.

He said that he has held his own campaign about this issue and is a ‘pain in the side’ to East Herts Council and Sir Oliver Heald MP. He said it was understandable that people expect their District and Parish Councillors to express their views on this issue. He said that those who were at the Datchworth meeting would have heard him relay the farce re the proposed 10,000 development in Stevenage, which was effectively brought down by the District Council.

Now East Herts are trying to build on the Green Belt and justifying it by having a review of the Green Belt. The Government framework still gives an assumption against Green Belt development and our MP, Sir Oliver Heald is against it.

Mr. Welch said that it did not matter what he or the Parish Council felt on the issue of planning, it was what the local community thinks that matters and they have already given their outcry on this development. He said that the government’s overall view is that they do not want to build on Green Belt.

Mr. Welch said that it was up to the Parish Council and more importantly our District Councillor to squash any ideas for building on the green belt. Understandably, District Councillor Mike Freeman will come under great pressure to support their views.

Mr. Welch said that he was pleased that the Parish Council would be arranging a public meeting in October to discuss the outcome of the District Plan. He said that if the outcome is that the village is in favour of development then we need to ensure that it is appropriate. If they are against then there will need to be a campaign to tear apart East Herts Council’s policy and effectively protest against it. Mr. Smith said that the Parish Council would be discussing the neighbourhood plan and other issues at this meeting. Mr. Welch said that he believed that East Herts Council would be looking at the District Plan in September. Mr. Smith confirmed that Mr. Welch was correct in this fact.

Mr. Welch left the meeting

Mr. Smith said that HCC are looking at developing their yard site in Station Road.

3 Chairman's/Clerk's Report

Mr. Smith said that the Village Hierarchy Study 2015 to be discussed under item 7 i, Specific items.

4 Declaration of Interests

None

5 Minutes of the last meeting

a) Acceptance

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 16th June 2015**
Parish Councillors agreed that the minutes be approved.

b) Review of actions

1. **Install reducer on water tank on allotments:** completed

2. **Contact Ian Sharratt to arrange a meeting to discuss Great Innings play area**

Dr. Waltham said she contacted Ian Sharratt (East Herts Council); however, he is unwilling to meet. She said he feels that the problems are all behavioural and this is up to the police to resolve. East Herts Council are pleased with the play equipment they installed last year.

Dr. Waltham also asked for the blue painted equipment to be changed to a less obtrusive colour such as green. She was informed that this could not be done as the blue finish was put on prior to the equipment installation. It is also not possible to remove the seating pods, as they are an integral part of the fencing.

The residents that back onto the Great Innings Park feel it is much noisier since the new equipment was installed. Most of them are pleased with the planned planting scheme, which should eventually dull down some of the noise level as well as obscure the area from residents' gardens. One resident felt that they now had to accept that the noise level would continue and learn to live with it. Several other residents are eager to move property and one household moved last year after the play area was upgraded.

Mr. Smith suggested that she get District Councillor Mike Freeman on board. Dr. Waltham agreed to contact him and canvas local residents for their opinion. Dr. Waltham to draft a letter to be sent to all residents in the locality of the Great Innings play area. She also agreed to arrange a meeting with Julie Pomfrett (Anti-Social Behaviour and Projects officer at East Herts Council). **Action: E. Waltham**

Mrs. McCash suggested that Dr. Waltham speaks to Richard Singleton who is a former councillor and lives opposite the park.

3. **Keep in contact with Charles Clark for an update re School Parish Council representative**

Mr. Smith said that the Ofsted report, which has downgraded the school, was distressing. There were two inspectors, one said the school was in good order and the other downgraded it. The school is appealing this decision.

4. **Contact school re dog-warden visit**

Dr. Waltham said that the school would be happy to receive a visit from the dog-warden.

5. **Contact East Herts Council Dog Warden**

The Clerk said she had spoken to the Linda Last, the Animal Warden at East Herts Council. She said that it would be more appropriate if the Police visit the school because they do talk to schools on this subject.

She said that she was happy to meet with Parish Councillors but wanted to know the exact reasons for the meeting. Parish Councillors agreed that they would like to discuss how to deal with dangerous dogs as well as the dog-waste issue in Parish Council litterbins. The Clerk to contact Linda Last. **Action: J. Allsop**

The Clerk said that Ted Brown empties the litterbins on the sportsfield into his pink bags rather than removing the blue litterbin bags and replacing them with pink ones. This is why he particularly dislikes the dog-waste in these bins.

Ted Brown informed the Clerk that he had already filled the litterpick wheelie-bin and had two pink bags beside it by Monday morning. East Herts Council will not be collecting the rubbish until Thursday. The bags not in the wheelie-bin are vulnerable to animals ripping them open to obtain food material. East Herts Council empty the litterbins once a week, but Ted Brown is currently emptying the sportsfield bins twice each day. It was agreed to ask East Herts Council if they would provide an additional wheelie-bin and if Ted Brown can remove the full blue litterbin bags and replace them with pink ones. **Action: J. Allsop**

6. **Deliver Neighbourhood Plan flier if Scout and Guide group are unable to so**

Mr. Smith said that the idea of asking the Scout and Guide group to deliver leaflets was almost a complete disaster. The Beaver leader, Phillip Howell, will have delivered in Great Innings, Rivershill and Long Meadow areas but the other Scout and Guide groups unable to commit.

Mr. Smith went through the list of roads in the village and Parish Councillors agreed which areas they were able to deliver the flier too. **Action: Parish Councillors**

7. Reply to Bob Adam's letter re ferreting

Defer to items 8 a, Environment Sub-Committee - Ferreting licences.

8. Chase Robert Bridges re ferreting licence

Defer to items 8 a, Environment Sub-Committee - Ferreting licences.

9. Write paragraph on Fly posting for minutes/notice board and Parish News: completed

The Flyer poster has been put up on the notice boards

10. Arrange for change of bank signatories: outstanding

The Clerk required a signed copy of the minutes to forward to the bank, which she can now provide.

Action: J. Allsop

11. Forward any ideas for improving the use of the Community Hall to the Trustees

Refer to items 8 a, Community Hall Trustees - Development of the Community Hall.

12. Ask Mark Blacktin to reinstate railings on Watton Green

Mr. Smith said that he has removed the railings on Watton Green as the path onto it is well defined.

13. Ask Mark Blacktin to repair the High Street bench seat outside the Counting House

This memorial seat has been repaired, however it is in poor condition and beginning to rot.

Mrs. Dinnin to speak to the Moray family re this memorial seat to find out if they would like to replace it.

Action: C. Dinnin

Mrs. McCash said that the Planter next to the seat is also in need of attention.

14. Remove and replace screws where necessary in wooden kicker boards at MPPA: completed.

15. Arrange for post and rail fence by Harry's bench to be repaired: completed.

16. Inspect floodlighting bulb with brown patch

Mr. Knight said that the brown patch is on the light fitting guard cover and not on the bulb itself. He said the condition would be monitored. The brown mark is indicative that the bulb may need to be replaced.

17. Remove notices on MPPA fencing and put up new ones: completed.

Mr. Knight needs to generate a new notice.

Action: I. Knight

18. Obtain quotations for having the swings painted

Mr. Smith said that Mr. Meischke was obtaining quotations for the painting of the swings as well as quotations to replace the swings.

Action: J. Meischke

19. Arrange for referees changing room to be cleared: outstanding.

Action: I. Knight

20. Write to Thames Water re their fence at Moorymead close

The Clerk said that Thames Water had phoned to acknowledge receipt of our letter and said that they would reply to us by 17th July. However, they have not done so. The Clerk to chase.

Action: J. Allsop

c) Action points resolved

1. Arrange to install Glasdon litterbin on sportsfield and fit back to back litterbins
2. Contact school re dog-warden visit
3. Contact Dog Warden
4. Contact Jeff Hughes re Parish Councillor Vacancy and advertise if required
5. E-mail all Parish Councillors any applications received to fill PC vacancy
6. Arrange a meeting of the New Homes Bonus Sub-Committee
7. Write to planning department re 15 Beane Road
8. Write to planning department re 62 Great Innings North
9. Arrange a meeting with HCC re Station Road
10. Arrange meeting with Ben Biggins (HCC) re High Street
11. Arrange for the neighbourhood fliers to be printed
12. Ask Scout and Guide group to deliver Neighbourhood Watch flier
13. Write to ferreting licensees
14. Amend Planning Policy re garage conversions
15. Write to Lindsey Holt, Abel Smith Estate re hedges that need cutting back
16. **Ask the doctors surgery to arrange for the tree/shrub group to be cut back**
Mrs. McCash said that some work has been done, however the Abel Smith Estate, who own this property, intend to do some major tree/shrub cutting back around the entrance of the Doctors' surgery in the near future.
17. **Inspect overhanging tree at 1 Hazeldell and write to them if required**
Mrs. McCash said that the owners of 1 Hazeldell cut their tree back the day after the June Parish Council meeting and no further work is required at this time.
18. Write to Mr. Brett re hedge cutting

19. Send agreement re use of Parish Council Land to purchases of Beane Cottage
20. E-mail BDO re asset values
21. **Liaise with Mr. Stock re Child safe-guarding policy**
Refer to item 8 a, Community Hall – Child safe-guarding policy.
22. Inspect Allotments re disused area and look at Allotment lease
23. Arrange a meeting of the New homes Bonus Sub-Committee
24. Do emergency escape lighting test and manual alarm call tests
25. Give the Clerk the Gas and electricity meter readings
26. Get Rosemary Brown to sign the fire inspection booklet
27. Remove corner seat from Pavilion 6- monthly check
28. Obtain de-scaler solution and ask Rosemary Brown to clean the shower heads
29. Put up new Parish Councillor notices in the Community Hall
30. Inspect staining on wall below roof tiles
31. Fill in missing soil between concrete at MPPA and field
32. Arrange for branch by Harry's bench on the sportsfield to be cut back
33. **Ask Mr. Abel Smith if Air Ambulance can have a clothing recycling bank adjacent to the Scout Hut**
Mrs. McCash said that the recycling bin has been installed. The Air Ambulance would like to put up posters advertising the location of the recycling bin on the village notice boards. This was agreed.
Mrs. McCash to obtain posters accordingly. **Action: H. McCash**

d) Action points outstanding

1. **Continue to chase HCC re Station Car Park sign in Station Road until installed**
To date the Station Car Park sign has not been re-installed. The Clerk said that she e-mailed Chris Simpson (Senior Engineer, Development Management, HCC) again to ask for an update on the reinstatement of the Station Car Park sign. He in turn e-mailed Malcolm Nicholls (Barratt Homes) asking for an update.
The Clerk to continue chasing until the sign is installed. **Action: J. Allsop**
2. **Upload Parish Council toolkit documents to the Parish Council website**
This action point is in progress. The Clerk to e-mail all Parish Councillors a copy of the link to the new webpage. **Action: J. Allsop**
3. **Update Parish Councillors toolkit folders**
This action point will be completed after the documents have been uploaded to the Watton-at-Stone website, so that the webpage and the folders contain the same information.
4. **Produce contents list for Parish Councillors Tool Kit folder and webpage**
This action point is in progress. **Action: M. Stanley/J. Allsop**

6 Planning

Mrs. McCash reported on the following items.

a) Applications

- i) **3 Hockerill (3/15/1026/HH)**
Two -storey rear extension
Mrs. McCash said that the residents either side of 3 Hockerill were contacted. One had no comment and the other was pleased with the application.
In accordance with the Parish Council's Planning Protocol, Mrs. McCash liaised with Parish Councillors re a 'No comment' response. Mrs. Stanley and Mr. Knight were in agreement and the Clerk was instructed to respond to the planning department at East Herts Council accordingly.
- ii) **37 Moorymead Close (3/15/1276/HH)**
Single storey rear extension and front porch extension (Amendment to approved scheme 3/15/0419/HH)
Mrs. McCash said that this application is a minor amendment to an already approved scheme.
In accordance with the Parish Council's Planning Protocol, Mrs. McCash liaised with Parish Councillors re a 'No comment' response. Mr. Filer and Mrs. Stanley were in agreement and the Clerk was instructed to respond to the planning department at East Herts Council accordingly.

b) Decisions

- i) **Builders Yard, Perrywood Lane (3/15/0719/FUL)**
Demolition of existing asbestos-sheeted storage building and replacement with two detached houses with integral garages and associated landscaping works **- East Herts Council – granted**
Mrs. McCash said that there were two major points attached the planning decision. One was that a bat review is required before any building work commences. The second is concerning the strict regulations on the removal of asbestos.

ii) **Ballacraine, Walkern Road (3/15/0847/FUL)**

Erection of a detached bungalow following demolition of the existing commercial buildings -
East Herts Council – granted

Mrs. McCash said the planning decision for Ballacraine stipulates quite a few regulation on the types of building materials allowed. A bat survey is also required for this site before any works commence.

iii) **62 Great Innings North (3/15/1047/HH)**

Conversion of rear two thirds of garage to living space (retrospective) - **East Herts Council – granted**
 No planning conditions were applied to the decision notice as the work has already been completed.

7 Specific items

a) **Co-option of a Parish Councillor**

The Clerk confirmed that there have been no applications to fill the Parish Council vacancy.

It was agreed that a notice should be put in the Parish News advertising the vacancy and asking applicants to apply in writing by Friday 11th September. **Action: I. Knight**

Mr. Stock agreed to produce a poster (for display on the notice boards within the village) advertising the current vacancy for a Parish Councillor. **Action: D. Stock**

Note: Mr. Stock has asked Mr. Knight to use the text from the poster as an entry in the next edition of the Parish News.

Mr. Smith to contact Jeff Hughes to find out if the Parish Council can continue to run with only nine Parish Councillors if nobody comes forward to fill the vacancy. **Action: M. Smith**

b) **Traffic along Station Road**

The meeting with HCC to discuss their latest review of possible solutions to the on-going problems we have highlighted re the traffic issues and pedestrian safety in Station Road and the High Street, took place at the Community Hall on Tuesday 7 July as planned. This meeting was well-attended (i.e., 4 people from HCC and 5 Parish Councillors, plus our District Councillor) and lengthy, and proved to be very useful. It enabled all parties to clarify their positions and give detailed input on all of the issues raised.

Note: Prior to our meeting this evening, Mr. Stock had briefed those Parish Councillors who were unable to attend the meeting on 7 July.

Mr. Stock said that last week Ben Biggin (HCC) e-mailed him the draft minutes of the meeting for his review and comments, but unfortunately, he received them just a few hours prior to leaving for a short holiday. Because he only got back home just before the start of tonight’s Parish Council meeting, Mr. Stock had not yet had a chance to respond; although a quick glance through the draft showed that there are some errors, clarifications and omissions to be addressed. Mr. Stock will e-mail his comments and revisions to the minutes back to Ben Biggin within the next two days. **Action: D. Stock**

When Mr. Stock receives the revised minutes from HCC he will e-mail a copy to all Parish Councillors. **Action: D. Stock**

He suggested that the revised minutes from HCC be attached to these minutes as a record of the outcome of the meeting held on 7th July. **Action: J. Allsop**
See attached

c) **Traffic along High Street**

All of the Parish Councillors in attendance at the meeting on 7th July [refer to a) above] were pleased to see that HCC had considered and taken into account the issues we had previously highlighted about the problems of traffic and parking in the High Street.

d) **Neighbourhood Plan update**

Refer to item 2, Public Participation.

The Parish Council to arrange a public meeting in late October. **Action: Parish Councillors**

e) **Review planning policy including the conversion of garages into living spaces**

Further to his action point from the Parish Council Meeting in June, Mr. Stock said that we could delete references to ‘garage conversions’ by simply removing Appendix B from our planning policy.

‘APPENDIX B: Parish Council Policy re Garage Conversions Because there are significant problems with regard to on-street parking throughout Watton-at-Stone it is the Parish Council’s policy to object to applications to convert garages into living space or similar uses which would result in the loss of an off-street parking place. When the houses were built, the inclusion of a garage in their design was intended to improve the parking facility for that property and thus added to the appeal of the original planning application. Notwithstanding this policy, each application will be judged on the location of the property and any related parking/traffic issues.’

In future, any planning application involving the conversion of a garage into living space etc. will be reviewed by the Parish Council on a case-by-case basis.

The Clerk to modify the planning protocol accordingly and raise it to Edition 6. **Action: J. Allsop**

f) Hedge cutting

A letter has been sent to Mr. Brett regarding the cutting of the hedge on the boundary of his property with the adjacent footpath. Mr. Brett phoned the Clerk and asked that any work is carried out when he is at home.

Mrs. Dinnin to obtain a quotation of £65 or less from Adam Welch. If he is unable to do the work for this amount then Blue Bury Contractors will do the work.

Action: C. Dinnin

The Clerk asked if letters could be sent out to those Walkern Road properties whose shrubs are causing visibility problems exiting Beane Road.

Mrs. Dinnin, Mr. Knight and the Clerk to have a site visit to agree who the letters should be sent too.

Action: C. Dinnin/I. Knight/J. Allsop

g) Parish Council land adjacent to Beane cottage

Mr. and Mrs. Sell, who have confirmed that they wish to enter into the same agreement as Frances and David Taylor for the use of the adjacent Parish Council land, will be moving into Beane Cottage on 31st July 2015.

The Clerk to arrange for Mr. and Mrs Sell to sign the agreement on or directly after 31st July.

Action: J. Allsop

h) Thames Water investigation re sewer across the sportsfield and adjacent to the Community Hall

Thames Water have confirmed that they are responsible for the sewer that runs across the sportsfield and adjacent to the Community Hall and then exits onto School Lane at its junction with Old School Orchard.

They have inspected the sewer with a camera from the manhole cover at the back of the Community Hall flowerbed to the manhole cover in School Lane. Part of the concrete parget (the smooth rounded surface of the drain) is missing in a large ‘V’ shape at this junction. This could cause toilet paper to get trapped in the ‘V’ and then builds up until the sewer is blocked.

Thames Water also put a camera down a further section of sewer in School Lane, from the manhole cover at its junction with Old School Orchard, to the one opposite the entrance to the Community Hall car park. There was some silt in the bottom of all of sections they inspected, which they explained was debris from roof drains that run into the sewer system. These were all pressure washed until they were clear.

Thames Water will be arranging to repair the damaged concrete parget.

The Clerk to contact Thames Water to find out when the work is scheduled to be done.

Action: J. Allsop

Mr. Smith said that he had put a large piece of concrete over the manhole cover at the back of the Community Hall flowerbed. This will hopefully stop any future sewage spills coming onto the footpath adjacent to the Community Hall.

i) Village Hierarchy Study 2015

All Parish Councillors were forwarded an e-mail, dated 6th July, from George Pavey, about the Village Hierarchy Study that East Herts Council are undertaking. Their aim is to identify, via a points system, which villages are best placed to sustain additional housing. The results of the study will form part of the evidence base for the District Plan.

Mr. Smith said that he would like to liaise with District Councillor Mike Freeman to draft the Parish Council’s response to East Herts Council. He said that the methodology for this study’s scoring system is flawed and makes the scoring for Watton-at-Stone unreasonably high. This was agreed by all Parish Councillors present.

Action: M. Smith/M. Freeman

8 Sub-Committees

a) Budget & Finance

Mr. Filer reported on the following items concerning the Budget and Finance Sub-Committee.

- **Monthly accounts**

Watton-at-Stone Parish Council

Petty Cash – Receipts		Petty cash - Payments	
None		None	
Cheques issued			
Glasdon UK Limited	1 large Jubilee litterbin		412.00
Longmores	Registration of Parish Council land in Watton-at-Stone		681.60
Adam Welch	½ year maintenance schedule minus leaf collection		1,250.00
HCC	Lighting maintenance and energy for year 01.04.14 to		1,433.90
Adam Welch	Trim hedge and strim behind Glebe Court at Allotment		80.00
St. Albans Diocesan	Allotment rent - 6 months		300.00
BDO LLP	Annual audit fee		360.00
Mark Blacktin	Install new bracket to bench opposite the G&D Pub		120.00
Wages and salaries	July 2015		<u>1553.61</u>
			<u>6,191.11</u>

Cheques received		
Sports and Social Club	Sportsfield facilities	362.50
Sports and Social Club	Sportsfield facilities	<u>362.50</u>
		<u>725.00</u>

Watton-at-Stone Community Hall

Petty Cash – Receipts		Petty Cash -Payments	
Carla Beach – Pavilion	126.00	Sainsbury - Flash	4.00
Vince Geoff - Main Hall	104.00	HCC – cleaning materials	44.39
Michelle Ballenger	52.00	HCC – cleaning materials	<u>5.76</u>
Phillip Little – Main Hall	<u>24.00</u>		<u>54.15</u>
	<u>306.00</u>		

Cheques issued		
Mick Taylor	Decorate one window	40.00
Total Contract Cleaners	Hall cleaning in June 2015 - 1st, 8th, 15th, 22ns and 29th	150.00
East Herts Council	Rates	128.00
UK City Roofing	Roof repairs	264.00
Wages	July 2015	365.71
		<u>947.71</u>

Cheques received		
Sports and Social Club	Community Hall facilities	362.50
Sports and Social Club	Community Hall facilities	362.50
Karate (Peter Khera)	Main Hall	142.20
Badminton	Main Hall	94.50
Mrs. Smith	Main Hall & Pavilion	<u>56.00</u>
		<u>1017.70</u>

Parish Councillors agreed the payments.

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

Mr. Filer went through the first quarter’s income and expenditure items for the Parish Council and the Community Hall accounts. He explained that the first-quarter accounts are not a good reflection of 25% of the year’s income and expenditure. For example, the Precept is paid twice a year, representing 50% of the total income and seasonal expenditure items such as grass cutting do not occur during the winter months.

The Community Hall’s Main Hall and Pavilion hiring income will be considerably lower in the 2nd quarter due to fewer lettings during the summer holidays.

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

Mrs. McCash said that she carried-out the three-month inspection of the Parish Council and Community Hall accounts and they were in good order.

A copy of Mrs. McCash’s reports to be included in the Community Hall and Parish Council accounts for 2015/16.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Risk Assessment and Long Term Capital Expenditures**

Mr. Filer said that he had looked at the Parish Council’s Risk Assessment and Financial Management document and could not see anything that needed changing.

Mrs. McCash said that the item concerning the Clerk’s salary and pay roll needs revising and agreed to write a modification for inclusion in the Risk Assessment and Financial Management document.

Action: H. McCash

All Parish Councillors were e-mailed a copy of the Long-Term Capital Expenditure document dated 2010. It was agreed that the items identified in columns >10 years should be moved over to >5 years, likewise >15 years should be moved to column >10 years. The costings on many of the items will need revising. For example, the estimated cost of replacing the boiler is shown as £5,000 whereas the Community Hall Trustees obtained quotations a year ago in the region of £10,000.

The Clerk to e-mail this revised document to all Parish Councillors for their comments and suggested additional items.

Action: J. Allsop

Parish Councillors to study the Long Term Capital Expenditure document and e-mail their suggestions to all Parish Councillors and the Clerk.

Action: Parish Councillors

Because of recent and forecast levels of expenditure, Mr. Filer feels that there is a need to substantially raise the precept for 2016/17 to enable a significant increase in our reserves. He said that after this initial increase to the precept, the following years will retain that increased level enabling us to continue build-up on the reserves.

Mr. Stock said that the Trustees are to review the hourly-rates as part of a general review of the current usage of the Community hall and its facilities and by comparing them with those charged for similar facilities in our area. They will be discussing this issue at their meeting on 10th August. **Action: Trustees**

- **BDO – audit completion**

At the June Parish Council meeting, it was reported that BDO had asked for an explanation as to why £19,692.80 of money spent on play equipment does not show up on the asset register. Mrs. McCash composed a letter to BDO, which the Clerk sent out.

The Parish Council has now received 'a clean bill of health' from BDO who have signed off the annual statutory approval of the Parish Council accounts for the year ended 31st March 2015.

The Parish Council are now required to display a notice of conclusion of audit on the Parish Council notice board for a period of two weeks. **Action: J. Allsop**

Parish Councillors approved BDO LLP's report on the audited accounts for the year ended 31st March 2015.

- **Phone line**

Mr. Filer said that he obtained Parish Councillors approval via e-mail, for the Clerk to change the phone line the Parish Council pay for from the Virgin Media to BT. There will be no extra cost to the Parish Council.

Community Hall Trustees

In the absence of Mr. Meischke, Mr. Smith and Mr. Stock reported on the following items concerning the Community Hall Trustees.

- **Child safe-guarding policy**

Mr. Stock said that the action point 'Liaise with Mr. Stock re Child Safe-Guarding Policy' was incorrect: It should have stated that 'Parish Councillors to e-mail their comments to Mr. Stock within one week of the June Parish Council meeting'. Therefore he had only received comments from 2 or 3 Parish Councillors. (Dr. Waltham said that she did not respond because she did not know what to say.)

He then said that in the light of previous discussions about the contents and whether or not there is a need for us to have such a document, it is very important that comments are received from all Parish Councillors before he can, or is prepared to, progress the matter further. To this end he asked Parish Councillors to review the document as a whole or as a minimum, the first three clauses and let him have their views/comments.

There seems to be a continuing and general unease/uncertainty about what we should have or if we need a policy at all, especially as we as Parish Councillors and/or Trustees have no dealings with children. With this in mind Mr. Stock has subsequently asked that when a Parish Councillor e-mails their comment to him, they copy (including retrospectively) all other Parish Councillors so that not just he alone is aware of the general mood, comments and arguments.

Mrs. Stanley said she did a Google search for other Parish Councils' Child safe-guarding policies and some were much simpler than our draft policy. Mr. Filer said that the War Memorial Hall leave the onus on the hirer.

It was agreed that all Parish Councillors should give Mr. Stock their comments on the first three clauses within one month of this meeting and copy all Parish Councillors with their response.

Action: Parish Councillors

Regardless of whether or not we proceed with a Child Safe-Guarding policy, Mr. Stock remains of the opinion that our current 'policy' as presented on the website is not fit for purpose.

- **Pavilion wall of windows and doors**

The installation remains on schedule for one week in August. Mr. Smith said that the building will be kept secure all the times during the installation.

- **Painting of one external window**

This item has been completed.

- **Development of the Community Hall**

Mr. Smith said that Dr. Waltham has written a brilliant e-mail to all Trustees concerning the development of the Community Hall and this is a very good starting point. He asked Dr. Waltham to forward her e-mail to all Parish Councillors. **Action: E. Waltham**

- **Roof repair**

Mr. Smith said that the staining to the front wall of the Community Hall was caused by damage to the roof tiles. UK City Roofing Contractors have replaced the broken tiles.

Mr. Smith said that he might have led the Parish Council astray by indicating that the Community Hall roof needed replacing. The main problem is the way in which the roof tiles were originally fitted. To replace any broken tiles is a difficult and timely process, as the tiles need fitting from the bottom upwards.

The roof tiles on the two lower sections of the roof need replacing regularly as they are broken due to items being thrown up on the roof.

- **Legionnaire disease**

Mr. Smith said that Mr. Meischke was concerned about the possibility of Legionnaire's disease in the shower system. The Legionella bacteria grow in warm water systems that are not used regularly. He has suggested that the showers should be flushed out regularly to prevent this from happening.

Mr. Smith suggested that the cleaners could flush the showers though each week. Mr. Smith to liaise with Mr. Meischke. **Action: M. Smith**

The showerheads have been de-scaled; however, two of the heads may need replacing.

Recreation & Amenities

Mr. Knight reported on the following items.

- **MPPA**

Notice boards: Mr. Knight said that the notice referring to the use of the MPPA in poor weather conditions had been removed. He will arrange for a newly-worded sign to be put up in its place.

Action: I. Knight

Mr. Knight said that due to the changes in the times that league matches are played, the start of the Sports and Social Club priority usage times need to be changed from 1400 to 1300. Mr. Knight to produce a new notice to reflect these times.

Action: I. Knight

- **Moss kill**

Mr. Knight said that some moss is growing on the MPPA and therefore a moss-kill will be carried out in early September.

Action: I. Knight

Mr. Stock left the meeting.

Environment Sub-Committee

Mrs. Dinnin reported on the following items.

- **Trees on Watton Green**

Mrs Dinnin was sad to report that four of the six trees planted in February this year are in a very poor state and the memorial Oak tree is also in a bad condition. Mr. Smith said that the recent spell of hot dry weather has left the ground too dry for these young trees to survive because their roots have not had enough time to grow down to the lower soil levels where more water is retained. He agreed to water all of the trees by using a large water tank on the back of his pick-up truck. However, this may be too little too late.

Action: M. Smith

Mr. Smith said that he had also noticed that the Nigel Poulton tree was suffering from lack of water. He deposited a large amount of water around the tree. The tree does seem to have revived having received this extra water.

It was suggested that the Parish Council could use some of the New Homes bonus money to repair the Rustic Bench around base of tree on Watton Green. This item to be placed on the September agenda.

Agenda: 09/12

- **The Lammas**

Mrs. Dinnin said that while she was visiting the Lammas with Mr. Smith and Mr. Meischke, they met Chris Westwood who is a consultant for Affinity Water and explained to him the work that the Parish Council were doing on the Lammas. He was unaware of the plans for improving the river or the proposals for notching the wear.

Mr. Smith said that it is up to Herts and Essex Wildlife Trust to keep Affinity Water informed of any work planned for the River Beane reaches.

Bob Thornton is due to start weed-killing the Giant Hog-Weed and Himalayan Balsam along the banks of the River Beane in the next few days.

District Councillor Mike Freeman arrived at meeting 2105

- **Allotment**

Mrs Dinnin said that the grass between the allotments and uncultivated areas on their allotments were getting in a terrible state so she had asked the Clerk to send out a letter to Allotment holders via e-mail asking them to rectify this problem and keep the footpaths clear. Allotment holders have reacted very positively and the pathways between the allotments are now looking in good order.

Mrs. Dinnin said that she had looked at the disused section of the allotments with Mr. Smith and Mr. Meischke. She had also looked at the allotment lease, which allows any unused areas of the allotments to be used for other purposes. She suggested that the area could be fenced off and put to an alternative use. The former entrance onto Church Walk could be re-opened to allow access to the site. Ideas for alternative use for this area are:

- Set aside with grass being cut twice a year (similar maintenance to Watton Green and the Lammas)
- Recreation area
- Car parking area
- Cricket Club bowling area
- Additional burial area, possible for cremation use only

Mrs. McCash suggested the burial area for cremations. She said that the church graveyard will be full within the next 10 years and it will be the responsibility of the Parish Council to provide for burial grounds.

Mr. Smith estimated that it would cost approximately £1000 to clear the disused area of the allotments and fence it off.

Mrs. McCash and Mr. Knight to pursue with the Church the possibility of the disused allotment area being used as a cremation burial ground. **Action: H. McCash/I. Knight**

Mrs. Dinnin said that the Cricket Club plan to discuss the possibilities of using this land for a bowling area at their next meeting.

- **Ferreting licences**

Peter Phillips e-mailed on 29th June informing the Parish Council that he has given his ferrets to friends and therefore does not wish to renew his ferreting licences.

Mr. Smith read out a letter from Roger Bridges, who is interested in talking on additional ferreting licences. The Clerk said she had spoken to Mr. Bridges who had asked if the Lammas slope was ferreted by anyone. He said he had ferreted this land in the past with the Abel Smith Estate manager and also had permission to ferret their paddock at the far end of the Lammas. Many years ago, the Abel Smith Estate had agreed that the Parish Council could issue licences to ferret the paddock at the far end of the Lammas and the Parish Council had been allowing Bob Adams to ferret this land.

It was agreed to issue Roger Bridges with licences to ferret, Watton Green, the Cottage site, the Lammas, the paddock at the far end of the Lammas and the Allotments. **Action: J. Allsop**

It was agreed to inform Bob Adams the areas that Roger Bridges is permitted to ferret. **Action: J. Allsop**

New Homes Bonus Sub-Committee

Mrs. Stanley reported on the following.

- **Report and minutes of New Homes Bonus Sub-Committee held on 14th July 2015**

All Parish Councillors have been e-mailed the minutes of the New Homes Bonus Sub-Committee meeting held on 14th July 2015. Parish Councillors who attended the meeting approved the minutes, which were then signed by Mrs. Stanley.

Mrs. Stanley went through each item discussed and the following recommendations were approved by Parish Councillors.

- £10,000 of New Homes Bonus funds to be put towards the funding of the replacement wall of windows and doors in the Pavilion.
- The Parish Council to compile a wish list of proposed projects to benefit the whole community and consider funding them from the New Homes Bonus.
- The Parish Council to make available up to £10,000 of New Homes Bonus funds to be shared amongst village organisations Each application to be considered on its own merit including those organisations which received funding in the last round.

Mrs. Stanley said that she and the Clerk are working on modifying edition 2 (December 2014) of the document titled 'Application for funding from the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council' to incorporate the numbered item in the document within a form **Action: M. Stanley/J. Allsop**

Mr. Stock has agreed to update the poster used in 2014 New Homes Bonus funding to include a title. **Action: D. Stock**

An advert to be placed in the September issue of the Parish News **Action: M. Stanley/J. Allsop**

- **New Tennis Court funding**

Mr. Smith said he could see no reason why the tennis court project should not be pursued. The Parish Council is already paying rent for the land in their new lease for the sportsfield extension. Mr. Knight confirmed that the Tennis Court have up to £10,000 of funds. However, the likely building costs, which will include an archaeological survey, will probably be in excess of £40,000. Mr. Smith suggested that the Parish Council apply for S106 funding and some New Homes Bonus funds could also be used.

It was agreed that Mr. Knight obtain quotations for the new tennis court, as soon as possible, to enable the Parish Council to apply for the S106 funding. **Action: I. Knight**

- **Redevelopment of the Community Hall**

Mr. Smith said that he was pleased to note that the Trustees were meeting solely to discuss and bring forward plans to improve the letting of the Community Hall. It is our major asset but requires some 20% of our budget to keep it running.

Report from District Councillor Mike Freeman

Councillor Mike Freeman attended our meeting to run through the proposed Village Hierarchy report commissioned by East Herts DC., the purpose of which is to list villages according to the facilities they had such as shops, schools, transport etc. In his opinion, the methodology was not appropriate and skewed the report to Watton-at-Stone’s disadvantage. He agreed that he and Mr. Smith should contact EHDC with alternative proposals.

Councillor Freeman explained that whilst he could and would report opinions voiced within the village concerning development, he could not personally make a statement as that would be construed as Pre-determination and could be used by developers to legally challenge planning refusals. It is when the Draft Plan is considered at full council where all the facts are declared that he can then voice his opinions without fear or prejudice.

Councillor Mike Freeman left the meeting.

b) Routine Reports

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

The Clerk said that Mr. Meischke e-mailed her stating that he carried-out the emergency escape lighting tests and manual alarm earlier today.

ii) **Gas and electricity meter readings**

Mr. Meischke has today e-mailed the gas and electricity readings to the Clerk and she has uploaded them to the Community Hall’s account on the Eon website.

iii) **Fire Inspection**

Mr. Meischke was not present to report on this item.

iv) **Monthly village-report**

Mr. Knight completed the report on 19th July.

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

- **Railings adjacent to the Community Hall** – in need of painting.

Mr. Smith and Mr. Meischke to inspect.

Action: M. Smith/J. Meischke

v) **Weekly sportsfield**

Mr. Meischke e-mailed the Clerk to inform her that Ted Brown had nothing to report on his weekly inspections.

vii) **Website**

The Clerk to pursue with the uploading of documentation to the website.

Action: J. Allsop

viii) **Highway and Lighting faults**

Mrs. McCash said that the pelican crossing in the High Street stopped working a few days ago. Someone did come to repair it, but failed to do so. The pelican crossing columns now have orange covers over the lights. She asked the Clerk to find out what was happening and when it will be repaired.

Action: J. Allsop

9 Correspondence received

- **Letter from Roger Bridges re ferreting**

This item was discussed under item 8 a, Environment Sub-Committee – Ferreting Licences.

10 Village organisations

Nothing to report.

11 Items for Parish News

The following items were identified for inclusion in the September 2015 issue of the Parish News.

- Parish Council vacancy
- New homes bonus funding

Action: I. Knight

Action: D. Stock

The meeting closed at 21:50.

The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Tuesday 15th September 2015.