

Minutes of the meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council held in the Community Hall on Tuesday 15th March 2016

Present:	Mr. Michael Smith (Chairman)	Mrs. Christine Dinnin
	Mr. Denis Filer	Mrs. Catherine Hammon
	Mr. Ian Knight	Mrs. Margaret Stanley
	Mrs. Helen McCash	Mr. David Stock
	Dr. Emma Waltham	
	Mrs. Jane Allsop (Clerk)	
Members of public:	PC Gemma Wardell (until 1925)	
	County Councillor Ken Crofton (until 1948)	
	Rik Sharma, Watton-at-Stone Post Office (until 1948)	
	Simi Sharma and Gill Burnett, Londis (until 1948)	
	Jenny Leanne Pipe and David Lee, 114 High Street (until 1948)	
	Vernon Dunhill (until 2008)	

1 Apologies for absence

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

2 Public Participation

None

3 Chairman's/Clerk's/District Councillors Report

Mr. Smith said that he would read from District Councillor Michael Freeman's report directly after item 5 a, Minutes of last meeting – acceptance and before 5 b i, Review actions.

4 Declaration of Interests

Mrs. McCash declared a pecuniary interest in item 8 a, Budget and Finance Sub-Committee - External audit of Community Hall accounts for the year ended 2014/16 (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 16th February 2016**
Parish Councillors agreed that the minutes be approved.

Police report by PC Gemma Wardell

PC Wardell said that there were two recorded crimes showing for Watton-at-Stone in the past month. However, one of these needs to be reassigned because it actually happened in Stevenage.

The overall crime figures for East Herts this year show an increase of 12.6%. However, Hertford Rural district, which Watton-at-Stone falls under, shows a decrease in crime levels of 14.5%.

The police are continuing to issue fixed penalty notices when vehicles are parking too close to the Station Road junction with Clappers Lane.

Mrs. McCash asked why cars parked on the Station bridge are not being ticketed. They cause a dangerous visual obstruction to vehicles exiting Church Lane. PC Wardell said she would speak to DC Richardson about this.

PC Wardell said that the police would be paying more attention to the Great Innings play area now that the evenings are getting lighter and will issue Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) as and when required.

Extract from Mike Freeman's report

Mr. Smith read an extract from district Councillor Freeman's 'Report to Parish Council meeting 15th March 2016'

“White lining at the junction of High Street and Walkern Road.

Despite being reported by numerous residents and me, HCC continue to say that this junction is not unsafe. I have therefore raised the matter with County Councillor Ken Crofton who has agreed to include the work in his locality budget. The work will be programmed in April for completion that month or in May (depending on weather).

HCC advise generally that there will be little money available for white lining in the coming year.”

Mr. Crofton said that he had asked Ringway, the Highways maintenance contractors, to include the white lining of the High Street/Walkern Road junction in their April/May 2016 schedule, however, the funding does not come out of his locality budget. He told Parish Councillors that he was grateful that District Councillor Freeman was trying to resolve problems like this for the Parish but suggested that the quickest route would always be to contact him direct.

- **Traffic in Station Road**

Because all Parish Councillors were in receipt of copies of his correspondence with HCC and Ken Crofton concerning our meeting with members of the Highways design team on 25th February, Mr. Stock said that he did not feel it worthwhile to report on the details of that meeting again. A copy of the HCC minutes together with a copy of our notes* on that meeting are attached. **See attached**

(* Ken Crofton wanted it to be known that he disagreed with the text that said that it was his idea for double-yellow lines to be positioned outside the business premises in the High Street.)

Mr. Stock said that in general both parties (i.e. the Parish Council and Hertfordshire Highways) are in agreement with the proposals for Station Road and the High Street.

However, the items outstanding which continue to concern us greatly are the problems caused by the on-street parking in Station Road adjacent to the Gatekeeper Meadow development, the siting of the mini-roundabout at the Great Innings/High Street junction and the on-street parking, congestion and traffic conflicts in the High Street between the Station Road and Rivershill junctions.

The Parish Council view continues to be that the stretch of Station Road between the railway bridge and the Clappers Lane junction should be returned to its original two-carriageway width, without lay-bys and with double-yellow lines on both sides of the road. The proposal to include lay-bys or half-width lay-bys continues to stun the Parish Council because it still ignores the strong arguments and complaints voiced by Parish Councillors and residents alike.

Mr. Stock addressed Mr. Crofton directly on this and repeated our views on the subject and asked why there was an insistence to have lay-bys that would do little or nothing to ease the current on-going issues of traffic conflicts and pedestrian safety in that location and/or commuter parking. Mr. Crofton repeated his view that the scheme was Parish Council lead and that he would support whatever proposal we were happy with. However, in answer to a question from Mr. Stock, Mr. Crofton said that he remained in favour of the inclusion of lay-bys. Although he was happy to hear that Mr. Crofton would support our choice of option, Mr. Stock and the rest of the Parish Council remain concerned that our much-stated and favoured/preferred option would not be presented to us by Hertfordshire Highways. He also requested that we be consulted early on in the presentation of the options rather than being 'at the end of the chain'.

Mr. Stock suggested that an article be submitted to the Parish News to make residents aware that the Parish Council is still pursuing the Station Road and High Street traffic problems with the Hertfordshire Highways. This was agreed **Action: D. Stock**

Mr. Stock said that he had asked Hertfordshire Highways for an indication of when they will get back to us with firm proposals for the Station Road and High Street schemes. They will contact him when they have considered the points raised by us (especially bearing in mind the provision of new additional commuter-parking as part of the evolving Neighbourhood Plan) during our meeting with them and completed further investigations.

Mr. Smith said that if the options presented to us included lay-bys and thus not our preferred option, then we could challenge the decision with the local ombudsman as Hertfordshire Highways has never explained why the 'yellow line option' is NOT acceptable.

Mr. Smith also made the point that we had still not been given a detailed breakdown of the results of the public consultation re Station Road and the High Street. Mr. Crofton said he would look into this and see what he could do. **Action: County Councillor Crofton**

- **High Street**

Before handing over to Mrs. Stanley, who is the lead Parish Councillor re the High Street, Mr. Stock asked Mr. Crofton to confirm that the High Street scheme would be going ahead as planned, subject to further thoughts on the positioning of the Great Innings/High Street mini-roundabout and with the exception of the double-yellow line passing-places ('bolt holes') which were 'removed' from the scheme following objections from the shopkeepers and publicans. Mr. Stock repeated his suggestion (first raised during our meeting on 25 February) that we should have a site meeting with representatives from the Parish Council and the business owners, Ken Crofton and members of the Hertfordshire Highways design team to establish a means of resolving the increasing problems of congestion and traffic conflicts in the High Street as a matter of urgency. This was agreed and a site meeting is to be arranged. **Action M. Stanley/D. Stock**

Mrs. Stanley was concerned that, unless measures to alleviate the traffic problems at the southern end of the High Street were re-instated in the current scheme, it was possible that they would not be implemented at all.

Mr. Crofton expressed his disappointment that he had not been included in the meeting held on 25th February but confirmed that his understanding was that the double-yellow line passing-places had only been put on hold, awaiting the Parish Council's recommendation for a revised scheme. He implied that the passing places could still be implemented as part of the High Street scheme. Mr. Crofton confirmed that any proposed scheme should be Parish Council led and that he would support the wishes of the Parish Council.

Mrs. Stanley said that the Parish Council was suggesting approximately three passing spaces, to allow traffic to pass safely when the area becomes congested with parked cars, the location of which would be guided by the expertise of the Highways engineers and take local opinion into account. She confirmed that local businesses were greatly valued in the community and the Parish Council would not wish any proposals to have an adverse effect on them. The Parish Council was, however, mindful of its responsibility for the safety of the wider community and the needs of local residents.

The owners of commercial properties in the vicinity had put forward suggestions for the location of passing places, which could be considered at the proposed site meeting.

- **Sir Nigel Gresley Day**

Mr. Smith invited Mr. Dunhill to speak.

Sir Nigel Gresley designed the most famous British Locomotive, the Flying Scotsman, which has now been restored to its former glory. Mr. Dunhill said that he and Mr. Meischke had spoken about the idea of having a Sir Nigel Gresley Day because the Flying Scotsman is due to travel through Watton-at-Stone during May and the 5th April this year commemorates the 75th anniversary of Sir Nigel Gresley death at Watton House.

Mr. Dunhill said that he got in touch with Steam Dream, the train trip operators, and they said there might be two scheduled trips that would come up the Hertford loop and pass through Watton-at-Stone with the possibility of one being an evening event and the other during the day. However, the routes for the Flying Scotsman have not been fixed yet. Mr. Dunhill asked if the train would be allowed to stop at Watton-at-Stone and Steam Dream asked what would be the purpose of stop. Mr. Dunhill suggested to Parish Councillors that the Flying Scotsman train operators could be presented with a plaque to be taken up to London.

As the timetable for the Flying Scotsman has not been fixed, it might be possible to get Network Rail to schedule a 'stop' or 'go slowly' through Watton-at-Stone station.

Mr. Dunhill said that the train goes from Victoria to Cambridge; however, it is serviced from Waterloo Station. The woman he spoke to at Stream Dreams said that she thought the Flying Scotsman might be going through Watton-at-Stone around 1130.

Mrs. McCash checked the schedule trips on the internet via her mobile phone and said that it would appear that the flying Scotsman has scheduled trips on both 19th and 25th May and that they would be stopping at Hertford North on 19th May.

Mr. Smith said he had investigated getting a Blue National Heritage style plaque made in memory of Sir Nigel Gresley and suggested that it could be located at Watton-at-Stone station. National Heritage are not interested in producing a plaque and have suggested we could have our own plaque made by one of the numerous plaque makers. The plaque could also be put up at the station on the Sir Nigel Gresley Day. Mr. Smith reminded Parish Councillors that the residents at Watton House do not want a commemorative plaque.

The local schools, both Watton-at-Stone JMI and Heath Mount could be involved in a Flying Scotsman painting competition with memorabilia prizes of the Scotsman.

Vernon left at 2008.

b) Review of actions

- **Report from District Councillor Michael Freeman**

Mr. Smith read out the following report from District Councillor Michael Freeman

Actions from last meeting:

- **Skips on Driveways** – advice from EHDC has been obtained and passed to Cllr Stock (refer to item 5 b 2, Review of actions - Investigate problem of skips on driveways.
- **New fencing to rear of Great Innings Multi Play area** – this was installed as part of the planting behind the new MUGA. The fence effectively blocks a track which had been created into the field behind (Monk's field) but this was never an established right of way and no further action is necessary.
- **New locations for dog waste bins** – EHDC have agreed to install an additional bin on Church Lane at the end of the path which runs beside the school. Routine checks are being carried out first to ensure there are no underground pipes/services.

Other issues for reporting:

- **Great Innings.** I have met with Circle Anglia to review the general tidiness of the estate following earlier reports of fly tipping of furniture and other large items including a caravan chassis. Most of the furniture and the caravan chassis have now been removed by EHDC and Circle themselves will be removing a fridge. One litterpick has been carried out and we will be keeping the situation under review with Circle.

- **New dog orders.** From April the law will require all dogs to be microchipped and EHDC have organised a number of free “clinics” for this.
From the same time, it will not only be an offence to allow a dog to foul a footpath but also to go out with a dog without carrying bags to “pick up.” Enforcement will of course remain problematic but this is an additional tool for council officers to use where education fails.
- **Parking on pavements and grass verges.** EHDC have recently agreed to trial a ban on pavement and verge parking, targeting “hot spots” in each ward to begin with. I will be asked to nominate our own “hot spots” for consideration and will liaise with the PC when I have further information.
- **Village Library.** Has got off to a good start. A meeting was to be held on 14th March to review progress and agree next steps including additional opening hours.

Review of actions

1. **Agree and apply for Police Commissioners funding re road improvements**
Mr. Smith reported that Mr. Freeman had put together a £2,500 grant application for funding to install flashing light speed controllers in the village to keep drivers within the local speed limits.
2. **Investigate problem of skips on driveways**
We have been given to understand that if a skip is parked on a drive because of work being carried out on that property, then there is no problem. However, it would appear that if such a skip is being used to dispose of rubbish etc. generated as part of a business activity, then planning permission is required.
3. **Chase Kompan about the repair work identified in the annual playground inspection**
The Clerk said that she had e-mailed Ray Parker at Kompan but had received no reply. The Clerk to chase.
Action: J. Allsop
4. **Investigate new fencing at the back of the multi play area on Great Innings**
Refer to item before 5 b i, Report from District Councillor Michael Freeman, Actions from last meeting - New fencing to rear of Great Innings Multi Play area.

c) Action points resolved

1. E-mail February Police report to all Parish Councillors
2. Report overgrown hedge belonging to 37 Station Road which is obstructing the footpath in Glebe Close
3. Write to East Herts Council planning department re 3 applications for Gregorys Farm
4. Arrange meeting between HCC and Parish Council re traffic issues
5. E-mail all allotment holders re disused Allotment land
6. Modify Village directory as required
7. Write to the owners of 48, 50 and 52 Rivershill re Parish Council owned land adjacent to their properties
8. Put up East Herts Council dog micro chipping posters on the Parish Council noticeboards
9. Ask East Herts Council to survey the village dog waste bins to identify new locations
10. Upload Trustees Survey to Watton-at-Stone website and place a link on Facebook
11. Accept P. J. Andrews’ quotation to replace low level sections of roofing on the Community Hall
12. Ask roofing contractors if they can replace missing section of roof capping
13. Monitor yellow and blue dam across the River Beane
14. E-mail Gas and electricity meter readings to the Clerk
15. Inspect safety surface under large swings
16. Inspect graffiti on double bike ramp
17. Chase East Herts Council about replacement bin for Mill Lane and send photograph of damaged bin
18. **Ask Adam Welch to cut back path by MPPA**
Mrs. Dinnin said she instructed Adam Welch to cut back the path to the tennis courts. However, the Tennis Club had already done the work. Mr. Knight said that Ian Vosper (Tennis Club) arranges for the footpath to be cut back every year.
It was agreed to write a letter of thanks to Ian Vosper (Tennis Club). **Action: J. Allsop**
19. **E-mail Dr. Waltham’s report re progressing a new website to all Parish Councillors**
Due to other Parish Council commitments, Dr. Waltham said that she has not had time to progress this item forward and asked if this item could be deferred for 6-months’ time.
Mr. Smith suggested that Dr. Waltham look at the ‘Go Daddy’ website who may be able to update the Watton-at-Stone website. **Action: E. Waltham**
20. Arrange for Trustees survey to be published as an insert in the Parish News
21. Write article about installation of replacement seats with recycled plastic ones

d) Action points outstanding**1. Investigate matting for the goal mouths**

Mr. Smith said that he had looked into purchasing matting; however, the only matting he has found so far can only be purchased in large quantities.

Mr. Knight said that he had e-mailed the Herts FA advisor on pitch maintenance about matting but had not received a reply yet

Mr. Smith and Mr. Knight to pursue this item.

Action: M. Smith/I. Knight

2. Look at the 15-year estimated long-term capital expenditure plan

This item to be put on the agenda for the May 2016 Parish Council meeting.

Agenda: 05/16

6 Planning

Mrs. McCash reported on the following items.

a) Applications

None.

b) Decisions**i) Gregorys Farm, Whempstead (3/15/2397/LBC) - listed building and conservation area**

The retention of internal alterations, and proposed external alterations, in conjunction with the proposed change of use and conversion of this curtilage listed building to form an independent residential dwelling house.

- East Herts Council – granted

ii) Gregorys Farm, Whempstead (3/15/2396/FUL)

The retention of internal alterations, and proposed external alterations, in conjunction with the proposed change of use and conversion of this curtilage listed building to form an independent residential dwelling house.

- East Herts Council – granted

iii) Gregorys Farm, Whempstead (3/15/2582/FUL)

Conversion of buildings from ancillary to residential accommodation.

- East Herts Council – refused

7 Specific items**a) Traffic along Station Road**

Refer to items after 5 a, Minute of the last meeting – Acceptance.

b) Traffic along High Street

Refer to items after 5 a, Minute of the last meeting – Acceptance.

c) Neighbourhood Plan update

Mrs. Hammon reported on the meeting of the full “Scrutiny Committee” of the Neighbourhood plan group, which took place on 9th March. Members of the “Steering Committee” provided an update on the progress made to date. Charles Clark opened the meeting and then Mrs. Hammon explained that the application for formal designation of the Neighbourhood Plan area (following the parish boundary) had been submitted to EHDC and the public consultation was underway. In terms of overall timings, the NP team was keen to make prompt progress but it appeared that once the final draft plan is passed to EHDC it could take a further 15 months before it is formally accepted. Mrs. Hammon explained that the group's plan was therefore to aim for an ambitious 12 months to finalise the plan before it is passed to EHDC. In terms of next steps, phase 1 involves gathering evidence and collecting ideas through wide public consultation. Mehron Kirk (who has extensive professional experience of this sort of consultation) explained that an open day was planned for Saturday 23rd April in the Community Hall (1000 until 1300), to launch a 6 week consultation process. Members of the wide NP group would then between them aim to survey around 400 members of the village as well as retail businesses, tradespeople, landowners and other employers in the parish such as the schools and medical practices etc. In addition, evidence would be gathered from existing sources, potentially new evidence commissioned from CDA Herts. David Humber reported on some of the existing evidence regarding transport. At the end of the consultation and evidence gathering, Mr. Kirk's experience is that clear themes will emerge. Phase 2 of the process will involve development of the emerging themes and policies for the NP, together with identifying any additional evidence required, and a further round of public consultation. Phase 3 will involve drafting the plan itself and assembling all supporting documentation. There will be a formal 6-week public consultation on the final draft, after which the plan will be finalised and submitted to EHDC. It was also discussed that the pupils of WAS primary school had been invited to design a logo for the NP project. A website and e-mail addresses were being set up. Questions were answered on the presentation. Mrs. Hammon reported that, overall, the meeting was felt to have gone well and that there was a good pool of people involved with a very well suited range of relevant skills and professional experience. It was agreed that the Open Day on 23rd April should be advertised in the Parish News.

The Parish Council agreed that the scrutiny committee could make expenditures up to the value £200 through the Clerk.

d) Village Directory

All Parish Councillors were e-mailed a copy of the amended Village Directory prior to the meeting, and had no further amendments to make. Mr. Knight to arrange for the Village directory to be published in the April edition of the Parish News.

Action: I. Knight

e) Parish Council land

This item was discussed under ‘Exclusion of Press and Public’.

f) Sir Nigel Gresley day

Refer to items after 5 a, Minute of the last meeting – Acceptance.

8 Sub-Committees

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			
J. Allsop	www.watton-pc.org.uk domain name (1 year)		5.99
Blue Bury Contractors	Install 3 seats clearance work on the Allotments		2,922.00
Wages	February/March 2016		262.40
Mark Blacktin	Install new children’s bench & seat (Sportsfield &		188.00
J. Allsop	24 x 1st class stamps		15.12
Jim Morrissey	Internal Audit for the year ended 31st March 2015		100.00
Hertfordshire County Council	Energy & maintenance for street lighting 01.04.15-		1,285.14
East Herts Council	Empty three dog-waste bins 56 times (01.04.15-		563.65
Hertfordshire County Council	5 reams of A54 copy paper		9.54
Adam Welch	Remove lower conifer branches (sportsfield) final		240.00
Bob Spinks (for Cricket Club)	NHB 2015 - GRANT		<u>734.00</u>
			<u>6,325.84</u>
Cheques received			
Allotment holder	Allotment rent		<u>15.75</u>
			<u>15.75</u>

Watton-at-Stone Community Hall

Petty Cash – Receipts		Petty Cash -Payments	
Floodlighting donations 19/01 – 16/02	240.00	Items for Library shelves:	
Carla Beach - Pavilion	126.00	Timpson - keys	18.70
Phillip Little - Main Hall	24.00	Chas Lowe	<u>12.00</u>
Vince Geoff – Main Hall	28.00		<u>30.70</u>
Tony Silvestri - Pavilion	32.00		
Watton House – meeting room	10.00		
Caroline Hayes – Main Hall + Pavilion	39.00		
Caroline Hayes – donation	1.00		
Jono Forde – Main hall	9.00		
Anna Lambert – Main Hall + Pavilion	<u>45.50</u>		
	<u>554.50</u>		
Cheques issued			
P. J. Andrews (MS)	Deposit for Community Hall roof		3562.50
Wages	February/March 2016		190.80
Total Contract Cleaners	Hall cleaning in January 2016		120.00
Mark Blacktin	Additional shelving for the internal storeroom		200.00
Carpet Time	exhibition carpeting for the Main Hall		398.00
Hertfordshire County Council	2 child tables- 299.26 (NHB 2015) + cleaning materials- 39.12		338.38
James Turner Limited	Investigate problem with hall heater fan		<u>86.40</u>
			<u>1333.58</u>

Cheques received		
Zumba	Main Hall hire	210.60
Dave Boddy	Main Hall	100.00
Youth Club	Main Hall and Pavilion	<u>112.50</u>
		<u>423.10</u>

Parish Councillors agreed the payments.

- **Financial Risk Assessment – approval required by Parish Council**

It was agreed to defer this item to the April Parish Council meeting.

Agenda: 04/2016

The Clerk to e-mail the current Financial Risk Assessment to all Parish Councillors.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Appointment of Internal Auditor for the Parish Council accounts for the year ended 2015/16**

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 31st March 2016, to be submitted to Jim Morrissey for auditing.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Appointment of the External audit of the Community Hall accounts for the year ended 2015/16**

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 31st March 2016, to be submitted to McCash and Hay for auditing.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Asset Registers**

Refer to the item below item.

- **Insurance policies for the Community Hall and Parish Council**

Mr. Filer said that the Clerk had combined the asset registers for the Parish Council and Community Hall to enable her to obtain quotations for a combined Parish Council and Community Hall insurance policy.

The current two policies in some instances duplicate the cover required. In addition, some items like the rebuilding of the Community Hall are over insured at £900,000 and this has been reduced to £700,000 on the Asset register.

The process of obtaining quotations for a combined policy is not a straightforward process because the Community Hall policy is due for renewal on 1st April and the Parish Council’s policy is not due until 1st June 2016.

Norris and Fisher who currently cover the Community Hall insurance are unable to quote for a combined insurance cover.

The Clerk obtained quotations from Zurich and AON. Zurich’s annual premium would be £2062.85 for one year’s cover and £1871.60 for a 3-year long-term agreement. They also quoted for cover for the one year’s cover for the Community Hall adding the Parish Council on when it was due in June (10 months cover).

AON Limited supplied a quotation of £191.19 to cover the Community Hall for a period of two months.

Mr. Filer said that if the Parish Council accept AON’s quotation then we could obtain several combined quotations for the renewal date on 1st June. This was agreed by all Parish Councillors.

The Clerk to accept AON’s quotation and arrange to pay the additional premium.

Action: J. Allsop

- **PRS for Music licences**

Mr. Filer said that the Clerk has been sent a PRS for Music leaflet from another hall, which indicates that local councils who run halls do not have to pay music licenses. It was agreed that the Clerk should investigate further before paying the annual PRS for Music licence.

Action: J. Allsop

- **CVS for Broxbourne and East Herts**

The two year CVS for Broxbourne and East Herts subscription of £30 for the years 2016 to 2018 remains the same as for years 2014 to 2016.

It was agreed to renew the two-year membership.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Gas and electricity contracts**

Mr. Filer said that the Clerk had negotiated new two-year contracts for the supply of both gas and electricity at the Community Hall with the supplier EON. The contract prices are as follows.

- Gas 2-year contract 2.84p kwh 27p daily standing charge
- Electricity 2-year contract 9.81p kwh 27p daily standing charge

The above contracts will have a further 4% discount applied to the kwh price, for paying by direct debit.

The new contract start date for the Gas is 8th April 2016 and for electricity is 26th April 2016.

Community Hall Trustees

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

- **Minutes and report on meeting held on 27th February 2016**

Because all Parish Councillors were in receipt of the minutes prior to this evenings meeting Mr. Stock wanted to restrict the Trustee's reports to the following items.

- **Fun & Fayre Day**

Dr. Waltham had sent all Parish Councillors a copy of the e-mail Mr. Meischke had prepared to outline the proposals for a commercially-run Fun & Fayre Day on Sunday 31st July at the Community Hall and on part of the sportsfield. The event organiser is Rachel Davis of RLD Events.

Mr. Stock said that judging from the resultant exchanges of e-mails on the subject, there appeared to have been a number of misunderstandings by some Parish Councillors about the use of the Community Hall and the area of the sportsfield involved, and the amount to be charged by us for their use by a commercial organisation.

Dr. Waltham explained that only a small section of the sportsfield will be fenced off and would be approximately the same size as the footprint of the Community Hall. Also during the event, the public will retain full and free access to all of the play equipment, the MPPA and the remainder of the unfenced-off area of the sportsfield.

Mr. Knight said that he had not yet received confirmation from Vivian Monk, who is the Diocesan tenant, about the use of the church-field as a car park. If permission is received, it will be subject to the weather not being wet; because this could damage the field.

After discussion, Parish Councillors agreed with the proposed hire-charge, which is based on the figures we advertise and because this is a trial-event the like of which we have not experienced before.

The Trustees and Parish Councillors need to agree commercial rates for the use of the Community Hall.

Trustee's Agenda

Dr. Waltham said that the event organiser will not be using the Pavilion and it will therefore be possible for the Friends of the Nigel Poulton Community Hall to generate some income by selling tea and coffee.

Mrs. McCash said that the Sunday services on 31st July have been moved to another church to enable the church car park to be used for the event and that Watton Place Clinic is happy, on request, to make its car park available for Sunday events.

- **Gas and electricity contracts**

This was discussed under item 8a, Budget and Finance Sub-Committee.

Mr. Stock thanked the Clerk for the work she had put in to achieve the prices for the new gas and electricity contracts.

- **Roofing**

Mr. Smith said that P. J. Andrew's had completed the installation of the replacement roof on the Pavilion-side of the building.

There is a 25-year guarantee on the roof, however it should last for at least 40 years.

- **Purchase of Exhibition carpeting for the Main Hall**

The Parish Council approved, via e-mail, the Trustees recommendation to purchase two rolls of exhibition-carpeting at £199 per roll, including VAT and delivery. The carpeting has been purchased and is now being stored in one of the internal storerooms. Mr. Smith and Mr. Meischke are to roll-out the carpeting in the Main Hall and cut it into appropriate lengths.

The main reason for the purchase of the carpet is for use by East Herts Council at the Parish Conference in September. However, it is hoped that we can now expand the use of the Community Hall by allowing unrestricted footwear and the use of tables and chairs in the Main Hall.

Mr. Stock said that it also takes the pressure off having the floor replaced in the short-term.

Recreation & Amenities

Mr. Knight reported on the following items.

- **MPPA**

Mr. Knight said that he will look at replacing the broken floodlighting bulb in April/May.

- **Sportsfield**

Mr. Smith and Mr. Knight to look at the goal mouths in April/May

Agenda: 04/2016

Environment Sub-Committee

Mrs. Dinnin reported on the following items.

- **Allotments**

The following was sent via e-mail (on 8th March) to all those that have provided an e-mail address, one mobile phone text message and copies of the e-mail were hand delivered to two allotment holders home addresses.

“Dear Allotment holder,

Disused area of the allotments

The Parish Council has not made a decision on what to do with the recently cleared area of the allotments. However, they are considering the use of the land for sporting facilities and if this was the case, the area would be fenced off and the only access to the site would be from Church Walk.

Discussion about the future of this area will form part of the Neighbourhood Plan for Watton-at-Stone and will be discussed by that committee.”

Several negative replies have been received in response to this e-mail.

Mrs. Dinnin said that she has been unable to let three vacant allotment plots.

Mr. Smith said that while there are unused and abused allotments, the Parish Council should not consider making any new allotment plots.

Allotment holder Mr. John Love has requested 30 more iron stakes to repair the rabbit fencing. Mr. Smith said that these cost approximately £4 each. Parish Councillors agreed the purchase of the iron stakes.

Action: M. Smith

Bidwells, who act on behalf of the St Albans Diocesan Board, have written to advise that the allotment rent will be increasing from £600 to £670 per annum from 1st April 2016.

Mr. Smith to turn the Allotment water supply back on as soon as possible.

Action: M. Smith

- **P3 grant**

Mrs. Dinnin has submitted a P3 grant application for £1,000 to repair and upgrade wooden kissing gates on Church Field, one at the High Street end and one at the entrance to the Churchyard. This should really be done by the Diocesan Board, if it does not go through we will have to bounce it back to them.

Also on Church Field at footpath 21 entrance, replace broken wooden stile with metal kissing gates.

New Homes Bonus Sub-Committee

Mrs. Stanley said that she would be meeting with the Football Club to give them a full explanation as to why they did not receive any funding from the 2015 New Homes Bonus grants.

b) Routine Reports

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

Mr. Smith and Mr. Stock completed the tests directly after the meeting.

ii) **Gas and electricity meter readings**

Mr. Meischke to be asked to take the meter reading before the end of March. **Action: J. Allsop/J. Meischke**

iii) **Fire Inspection**

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

iv) **Monthly village-report**

Mrs. Stanley completed the report on 14th March 2016.

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

- **Sportsfield – grass** – recovering - goal mouths need attention

- **Rainbow multi-play and slide** –hole in tarmac around centre.

Mr. Meischke to inspect and arrange for any repairs to be carried-out.

Action: J. Meischke

- **Parish Council external notice board at Community Hall** - Perspex on notice board damaged

Mr. Smith and Mr. Meischke to inspect and repair this notice board.

Action: M. Smith/J. Meischke

- **Allotment** – mixed but OK for the time of year.

- **Mill lane** – one litterbin overflowing and some fly tipping under 2nd bridge near Scout Hut. Fence rail broken.

- **War memorial** – some weeds starting to grow.

- **Ornate village sign** – grass verge churned-up plus molehills.

vi) **Weekly sportsfield**

Nothing to report.

vii) **Website.**

Nothing to report.

viii) **Facebook**

Dr. Waltham and the Clerk will continue to upload relevant articles to the Parish Council's Facebook page.

ix) **Highway and Lighting faults**

None.

9 Correspondence received

a) **HCC – Temporary road closure notices**

The Clerk to forward the HCC temporary road closure notices e-mails to Parish Councillors.

Action: J. Allsop

10 Village organisations

• **Watton-at-Stone War Memorial Hall Management Committee**

Mr. Stock attended the committee meeting held on 2nd March and was happy to report the following.

- The new flooring is a great improvement.
- Internal decoration works are nearly completed.
- Two table-trolleys have been purchased.
- The external fascia-boards will be replaced when the weather is warmer.

11 Items for Parish News

The following items were identified for inclusion in either the April or May 2016 issues of the Parish News.

- Installation of Replacement seats with recycled plastic ones -
This article has already been submitted to the Parish News editor for April publication.
- Reminder that completed Community Hall survey forms need to be returned
- Traffic problems in the village

Action: I. Knight

Action: D. Stock

The meeting closed at 2200

The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Tuesday 19th April 2016.