

Minutes of the meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council held in the Community Hall on Tuesday 18th April 2017

Present:	Mr. Mike Smith (Chairman)	Mr. John Meischke (Vice-Chairman)
	Mrs. Christine Dinnin	Mr. Denis Filer
	Mr. Ian Knight	Mrs. Helen McCash
	Mrs. Margaret Stanley	Mr. David Stock
	Dr. Emma Waltham	Mrs. Jane Allsop (Clerk)
Police:	None	
Public:	District Councillor Michael Freeman until 2015	

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence: Mrs. Catherine Hammon.

2. Public Participation

None.

3. Chairman's/Clerk's Report

None.

4. Declaration of Interests

Mrs. McCash declared a pecuniary interest in item 8 a, Budget and Finance Sub-Committee - Internal and external auditors for the Parish Council and Community Hall accounts for the year 2016/17 (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 21st March 2017

Parish Councillors agreed that the minutes be approved.

b) Review of actions

1. Replace missing sections of sportsfield fence

Mr. Smith said that this item is outstanding due to Blue Bury Contractors being very busy. He said that if they fail to do the work-in the next few weeks, he will find another contractor to do the work.

Action: M. Smith

2. Consider fitting seat in the new bus shelter opposite the Bull Public House

It was agreed to ask HCC to fit a seat in the bus shelter opposite the Bull Public House. **Action: M. Smith**

3. Remove the seat outside the Grey House and adjacent to the new bus shelter

Mr. Smith said that this item is outstanding because on each occasion he has gone to remove the seat outside the Grey house, someone had been sitting on it.

4. Purchase a new Parish Council notice board to replace the one located by the village shop

The notice board is ordered and paid for and will be delivered at the end of April.

5. Meet to discuss new deposit account for the Parish Council and a credit or debit card

This item is outstanding.

Action: D. Filer/J. Meischke/J. Allsop

6. Give McCash and Hay the Parish Council and Community Hall accounts for auditing

The Clerk said she would be depositing both the Parish Council and Community Hall accounts at McCash and Hay on Thursday 20th April for auditing.

Action: J. Allsop

7. Inspect Oak tree by MPPA re possible dead sections

This will be done when the tree is in leaf.

Action: C. Dinnin/ M. Smith

8. Chase Paul Reynolds re pressure washing War Memorial

Mrs. Dinnin said she had spoken and e-mailed Paul Reynolds but the work is outstanding. She agreed to chase.

Action: C. Dinnin

9. Inspect tree that has fallen onto shed at the back of War Memorial hall site

Mrs. Dinnin and Mrs. McCash have independently looked at the site. The fallen tree belongs to Glebe Court and is not on the Memorial Hall shed, but has fallen to the side of it. It was agreed to ask Glebe Court to remove the tree.

Action: J. Allsop

10. Inspect weeds around the War Memorial

Mrs. Dinnin said that the War Memorial and garden are in a bad state and there are a lot of weeds. She said she could ask Adam Welch to do the work but it would be an extra cost as it is over and above his usual maintenance work. District Councillor Mike Freeman offered to do the work for no charge. Parish Councillors accepted this generous offer.

11. Put up planned installation date for replacement play equipment on Parish Council Facebook site

The Clerk said she put up a statement on Facebook on Easter Sunday.

Mr. Smith said that as promised by Kompan, work has started to replace the arson attached play equipment. The damaged equipment was removed today and the new equipment is due to be delivered to Blue Bury Farm on Thursday 20th April. Mr. Smith will arrange for items to be brought down to the sportsfield. The following week, commencing 24th April, the new safety surface will be installed.

12. **Notify allotment holders of price increase:** Outstanding.

Action: J. Allsop

c) Action points resolved

1. Write to EHDC re planning application for 98 Hazeldell (3/17/0539/HH)
2. Contact HCC re waiting restrictions to be applied to the High Street

d) Action points outstanding

1. **Chase Mark Blacktin for quote to reinstate fibreglass loft insulation in the changing room corridor**
Refer to item 8 a, Community Hall – Loft lagging.
2. **Chase D. P. Electrics re main hall lighting**
Refer to item 8 a, Community Hall – Pavilion and Main hall lighting.

6. Planning

Mrs. McCash reported on the following items.

a) Applications

i) 132 High Street (3/17/0815/HH)

Erection of a single storey oak frame extension to replace existing conservatory

In accordance with our Planning Protocol, Mrs. McCash asked Mr. Meischke to visit the neighbours of the property involved in this application. Although he was able to visit one of the neighbours (who had no objections to the application), Mr. Meischke said that the property on the other side, i.e., 132a High Street, was empty. According to Mrs. McCash, 132a is not occupied by the owner and he is living in rented accommodation in the High Street.

This application is to replace an existing conservatory with a wooden-framed one. Parish Councillors agreed that because this was a direct replacement for an existing construction, they would make a 'No comment' response.

The Clerk to write to East Herts Council accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

ii) 37 Station Road (3/17/0802/FUL)

Erection of a single storey dwelling

In accordance with our Planning Protocol, Mr. Stock and Mr. Smith visited the neighbours directly affected by this application (Mr. Stock and Mr. Smith visited No.4 and 6 Glebe Close on 15 April, and Mr. Stock visited No.2 the following day).

The residents consulted were very much against the application for a number of reasons, and on planning grounds felt strongly that this was an overdevelopment of the site (amounting to having 3 houses on a plot that originally accommodated 1 property), it is not in keeping and will lead to additional and already serious parking problems in Glebe Close.

Parish Councillors viewed the plans for this proposed bungalow at the rear of 37 Station Road and discussed it accordingly, and noted that the footprint of the building is almost the same as that of the previous application for a 2-story building submitted and refused in 2014.

After discussion, Parish Councillors unanimously agreed to write to the planning department at East Herts Council objecting to the application for the following reasons.

- It is an over-development of the site/area, i.e., The original plot of No.37 already has an additional house on it from a previously-granted application (i.e., the extended end-of-terrace house attached to No.37) meaning that if the subject application was to be granted, there would be 3 properties on the original plot of No.37.
- We are content with 2 properties on the site but not 3.
- It is not in keeping with, or sympathetic to, the street scene and style of the surrounding properties.
- It will inevitably lead to an increase in on-street parking in an already very congested and narrow road. Currently the residents of Glebe Close suffer from problems caused by double-parking and vehicles parking on the grass verges.

Also, informing East Herts Council that, in accordance with the Parish Council's protocol, we have visited the Glebe Close residents opposite the site to get their views on this application. They have the same concerns as us (as above) and also feel that there has already been a substantial and unnecessary loss of hedging/trees on the roadside boundary of the site and feared there would be more if this application was to be granted.

Mr. Stock agreed to write a letter accordingly for the Clerk to e-mail to the planning department.

Action: D. Stock/J. Allsop

b) Decisions

i) Cannon House, 67-71 High Street (3/17/0093/LBC)

Replacement of wooden bay windows to front elevation

- East Herts Council – granted

7. Specific items

a) District Councillor Michael Freeman’s Report

Refer to District Councillor Freeman’s attached report.

See attached

District Councillor Freeman left the meeting.

b) Station Road update

Mr. Stock said that although work in Station Road seems to be progressing well, he was unable to get a reply from Bradley Joseph (HCC) before this meeting re an update on the following points that had come to his attention.

- During previous discussions with HCC it was agreed that there was a need for double yellow-lines on the stretch of Station Road on the opposite side of the road to No 39 and 41 and between the entrance to Hazeldell and the 'Yard'. This was to prevent the problematic on-street parking being displaced to this area of Station Road. This does not appear to be being implemented and Mr. Stock has asked whether or not anything is happening on this.
- He has asked HCC if the existing centre white-lining is going to be removed and replaced by new lining which will actually be in the centre of the carriageway. Not to do so is going to give rise to new problems because the two lanes would be of unequal widths.
- He together with a number of residents and Parish Councillors have commented on the apparent poor quality and finish of the tarmac platform ("school-crossing point") in Station Road.

Mr. Stock to contact Bradley Joseph for a response.

Action: D. Stock

The problems associated with the bus-stop markings adjacent to the ticket office appear to have been resolved.

In response to a question raised by Mr. Stock about the presence of the 10-mph speed-limit and the residents-only parking signs at the entrance to Clappers Lane, Mr. Smith said that the Gatekeeper Meadow estate is in private ownership and not controlled by Highways and residents pay for its upkeep.

Mrs. McCash said that she had received complaints that commuters are parking in Great Innings now that Station Road is unavailable. Mr. Stock said that similar is happening in Hazeldell and it was agreed that this needs to be monitored along with all other parking issues in the village.

c) High Street update

As for the above, Mr. Stock had been unable to get a reply from Bradley Joseph (HCC) before this meeting re an update on the following points that had come to his attention.

- The double yellow-lines that have been painted are of very poor quality/alignment and appear to be too narrow and close to each other. He has asked whether or not this is acceptable to HCC and would the lines be enforceable as they stand.
- At present, no double yellow-lines have been painted around the junction with Rivershill. So he has asked when this will be done.

Mr. Stock to contact Bradley Joseph for a response.

Action: D. Stock

Further to his Action Point from our previous meeting re what decision had been taken on the waiting restrictions in response to the formal complaints received by HCC, Mr. Stock said that he had received the following response.

In liaison with the County Councillor for Watton-at-Stone, and with the support of the HCC Executive Member for Highways, the decision reached is to proceed with the proposed waiting restrictions to implementation, notwithstanding the formal objections received. Whilst all opinions and feedback received is valued, ultimately it may not be possible to accommodate these without compromising the primary objectives of the proposal, which is to assist traffic flow along High Street during the busier peak period. At this location, proceeding with proposals in our view is considered an appropriate approach to achieve these objectives, although we do appreciate that this way forward does not align with the objectors’ desired outcome. We have notified both objectors of our decision.

The proposed waiting restrictions would be introduced and monitored for several months to assess their impact. In the event of problems arising as a result of these restrictions, it is possible to pursue amendments to remedy these issues (or to simply reverse the changes) at a later date, once their nature, extent and severity are known and would be subject to further consultation.

A further Public Notice will be advertised to coincide with the implementation of the required physical works relating to the proposed waiting restrictions. The Public Notice will also advise the date when the Orders will become effective and, in turn, when the waiting restrictions will be enforceable.

Councillors agreed that it was disappointing that the Parish Council as the initiators of the Station Road and High Street schemes (as part of the 'partnership') was not informed of the objections and the resultant discussions leading to them being ignored. As stated previously, the Parish Council remains confused as to why the original scheme presented to us (which we were told could not be changed for a number of reasons) was then changed substantially and all we could do now is to monitor the situation and identify any problems, if and when they arise.

Bradley Joseph has informed us that the waiting restrictions in the High Street and Station Road are scheduled to come in to force this week.

e) Neighbourhood plan – progress report

Dr. Waltham read from Mrs. Hammon's progress report as follows.

1. We discussed the latest position regarding AECOM. In conversations with AECOM, Dr. Waltham has established that Watton-at-Stone qualifies as a complex Neighbourhood Plan because we have been asked to release green belt land without specific direction from the district authority as to which plot or how many houses must be provided for. This increases the amount of grant funding available from £9k to £15k with possibly more available in the next financial year. The greenbelt assessment and a viability assessment will be free and the grant is not needed for those aspects. The AECOM work is likely to be received within 4 months. We discussed that until we have formally professional views on the green belt release issue it is very difficult to anticipate how the greenbelt issue will play out. Key considerations are that (a) the village would prefer not to release any greenbelt land, notwithstanding the consensus that it might be necessary; (b) all our greenbelt land performs its function to an important degree; (c) there is a conundrum in that the Walkern land is more contained and any development would have less impact on the village vs releasing Woodhall land has much greater scope to generate wider, compensating benefits for the village. The deal offered to us by EHDC is that we release green belt land in exchange for community benefits.

2. We discussed the need to make sure that s106 monies generated from any development are properly spent on projects desired by the Community. This requires them to be listed and costed in the NP. The AECOM viability assessment will be a key part of this work.

There was discussion of what the Gatekeeper S106 monies have been spent on and a suggestion that the PC should write to EHDC and HCC to request an account of the outstanding monies and how they will be spent. [Note: this breakdown has been provided by Mike Freeman/Mike Smith]. There is a deadline for spending such monies [of 10 years] and developers are increasingly clawing back unspent S106 contributions. (I queried whether such money could be spent on BT upgrades to install high speed broadband throughout the village but apparently this would not be possible).

3. We discussed the January meeting with Woodhall Estate plus Strutt & Parker and Alan Baxter. I reported the Clerk's news that Woodhall have booked the Community Hall for consultations about their plans for the Stevenage field) on 28th and 29th April (the first for their tenants; the second for the village). The Clerk has since passed on that these meetings have been postponed to 5th and 6th May).
4. We discussed the need to keep the website updated. It was agreed that Dave Humby's summary of the 2nd consultation would be finalised and posted on the website. (this has not quite been done but is imminent). A summary may also be published in the parish news.
5. We discussed whether the NP should have a stall at the fete but decided there would be no focus for the discussions.
6. We decided to hold a meeting for the scrutiny committee and all those who have asked to remain involved and informed about the NP preparation. An invitation will be sent to all those whose e-mails have been collected by the NP team. It will not be public as such or more widely advertised, but open to all who are interested. The feeling is that those who are interested have made themselves known. The meeting will present the results of the 2nd consultation and an update of the other work underway. It will be held at the school, during the week of 22 May.
7. While we wait for AECOM to report on the green belt issues, we will seek to advance the other policies. For example, the Walkern NP has policies on housing design and style, community assets and spaces, protected views, environmental issues etc.
8. Finally, we discussed whether we needed to accelerate the NP work, which will be driven by when the AECOM work is done (4 months estimate). The view of the professionals in this area is that Watton is not vulnerable to developers taking advantage of the lack of an NP because we are surrounded by green belt land. No major development is possible without release of green belt land, which has been passed to the NP process by EHDC. So we are not vulnerable to uncontrolled development as occurred in e.g. Buntingford.
9. The next NP meeting will be on Wednesday 10th May.

f) Defibrillator/kiosk adoption update

Mr. Smith said that he had received the following e-mail from British Telecom, which they should have e-mailed direct to the Clerk as the first point of contact.

“Dear Jane

Thank you for your e-mail.

I have registered your application and we have arranged for the consultation to take place.

We will let you know as soon as we receive their decision or when the consultation has expired.”

Refer to item 7 a, Specific items - District Councillor Michael Freeman’s Report.

g) Installation of replacement play equipment on sportsfield

Refer to item 5 b 11, Review of actions - Put up planned installation date for replacement play equipment on Parish Council Facebook site.

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	
Allotment rent	15.75	None	
Donations towards	<u>344.55</u>		
	<u>360.30</u>		
Cheques issued			
Bidwells	Glebe sportsfield rent - 1/2 year		125.00
Adam Welch	leaf clearance		150.00
Ted Brown	Clear mud from car park, cut grass around Community Hall		25.00
Sports Courts	final payment for new tennis court		1,200.00
J. Allsop	BT phone call - January to March 2017		32.25
Jim Morrissey	internal audit of the Parish Council accounts - year end		100.00
RBRA	replacement cheque for 501371 - see above item		25.00
Wages and Salaries	March 2017		682.15
			<u>2,339.40</u>
Cheques received			
HMRC	VAT rebate for 01/04/16 to 31.01.17		11846.20
Donation	Towards play equipment		50.00
Sports and Social Club	Hire of sportsfield facilities		370.00
			<u>12266.20</u>

Watton-at-Stone Community Hall

Petty Cash – Receipts		Petty Cash -Payments	
		None	
Carla Beach – (4 weeks)	166.00	Knudge Ltd (1 st call signs) car-park sign	69.60
Tony Silvestri – Pavilion (4 weeks)	40.00	Dreamer – keys for electronic lock	<u>23.96</u>
Clare Young – Main Hall (2 weeks)	20.00		<u>93.56</u>
Forever Active	352.00		
Scouts – Main Hall hire	15.00		
Floodlighting donations to 05/04/17	120.00		
	<u>713.00</u>		
Cheques issued			
A. P. Access	remove pavilion lock, fit new lock, fit handle to door		100.00
D P Electrics	supply and fit electric lock to external toilet door		456.00
British Telecom	internet connection		265.56
Wages	March 2017		378.75
			<u>1200.31</u>
Cheques received			
Gibbs Estate	Main Hall and Pavilion hire		12.00
Sports and Social Club	Hire of the Community Hall facilities		370.00
			<u>382.00</u>

Parish Councillors agreed the payments.

- **12-monthly statement of accounts for the Parish Council and Community Hall for year ended 31st March 2017**

Prior to the meeting, all Parish Councillors were e-mailed a copy of the Parish Council and Community Hall statement of accounts for the year ending the 31st March 2017.

Mr. Filer went through the expenditure and income items for both the Parish Council and Community Hall accounts and explained the variations in the statements.

A summarised version of the 12-monthly statement of accounts for the Parish Council and Community Hall for the year ended 2016/17, will be presented at the Annual Parish meeting on 16th May.

Action: J. Allsop

- **BDO – external audit papers for year ending 31st March 2017**

BDO wrote on 22nd March informing us of the details for the annual audit for the year ending 31st March 2017. The public inspection period starts on 5th June and ends on 14th July. The completed Annual Return and all relevant documentation needs to be sent to BDO by 29th May 2017.

Action: J. Allsop

Mr. Filer asked Parish Councillors if he could send a letter of thanks to Jim Morrissey, who has been carrying out the internal audit of the Parish Council accounts since 2003. This was agreed.

Action: D. Filer

Community Hall Trustees

Mr. Meischke reported on the following items.

- **External toilet door electronic locking mechanism**

Mr. Meischke said that D. P. Electrics had fitted the electronic lock to the external toilet door. They also fitted an isolator switch which overrides the locking mechanism. Unfortunately, members of the public, (presumably youths) have found the switch which is located in the toilet entrance area meaning that the toilets have remained unlocked.

Mr. Meischke to speak to D. P. Electrics to ask them to relocate the switch into the adjacent storeroom (the decommissioned gent's toilets)

Action: J. Meischke

- **Pavilion and Main hall lighting**

Mr. Meischke said that D. P. Electrics, when fitting the Pavilion lighting, were asked to fit the lights so that they were level, meaning that the length of cable they hang from graduated along the length of the ceiling slope. Unfortunately, they did not do this because the manufacturers supplied the lights with fairly short fixed length cables which was not long enough to allow this effect. D. P. Electrics have quoted £350 to change the lighting as originally intended.

Parish Councillors left the meeting room to inspect the Pavilion lights and agreed that they did not have a problem with the irregular heights of the lights but the electrical cable, which is currently grey, needed changing to white.

Mr. Meischke to instruct D. P. Electrics accordingly.

Action: J. Meischke

- **Forever Active report**

The Forever Active programme continues to be well attended with revenue for March taking a record £352.

- **Disabled car parking sign and parking**

It was agreed to ask Mark Blacktin to repaint the disabled car park sign.

Action: J. Meischke

Mr. Meischke said that we are now down from three to one van parking regularly in the Community Hall car park. He said that it was almost impossible to stop people parking in a private car park. Mr. Smith suggested that a height restriction barrier might be an option. It was agreed that this might be a solution to the problem. Mr. Meischke and Mr. Smith to investigate further.

Action: J. Meischke/M. Smith

- **Loft lagging**

Mark Blacktin has quoted £80 to refit the loft lagging and board the area where the loft ladder goes up to prevent the lagging getting pulled down again. Parish Councillors agreed to accept this quotation.

Mr. Meischke to instruct Mark Blacktin accordingly.

Action: J. Meischke

- **Floodlighting coin meter boxes**

Mr. Meischke said that he had removed both floodlighting coin meter boxes and rebuilt them so they accept both the new and old £1 coins. Parish Councillors thanked Mr. Meischke for doing this work and thus avoiding the cost of getting an external contractor out to adapt them.

- **Cleaners**

Mr. Meischke said he was impressed with the quality of work from the new cleaners, Little Gems. The cost of their work, which includes cleaning materials, is more than Total Contract Cleaners were charging. However, Total Contract Cleaners under estimated the time required to do the work and the hall had been getting progressively dirtier. It took Little Gems hours to get the Community Hall back to a good standard of cleanliness. Mr. Meischke said he would like to offer Little Gems a yearly contract. It was agreed that Mr. Meischke and Mr. Smith should meet with Little Gems to discuss this further.

Action: J. Meischke/M. Smith

Mrs. Dinnin said that the showers were cold at 1800 one evening when the cricketers needed to use them.

Mr. Meischke said that he would check the timeclock and reset it if required. **Action: J. Meischke**

Mrs. Dinnin said that the hot water in the kitchen is too hot. Mr. Meischke to turn down the thermostat.

Action: J. Meischke

Recreation and Amenities Sub-Committee

Mr. Knight reported on the following items.

- **Sportsfield**

Mr. Knight said that he and Mr. Smith need to decide by the end of April, what needs to be done to the sportsfield grass this season.

Action: M. Smith/I. Knight

- **Goal posts**

Mr. Smith said he had obtained a quotation of £490 from J. Hart and Son Limited (Ware) to “remove the existing goal posts and fit the new ones as per plan, including cement and ballast”. The new post fittings are more intricate than the existing ones and will require four holes in the ground to fit strainers. There is also the added complication that the ground at the Community Hall end of the pitch is not level.

Parish Councillors agreed to accept the quotation. Mr. Smith to notify J. Hart and Son Limited accordingly and oversee the installation.

Action: M. Smith

- **New tennis court**

Mr. Knight said that the new Tennis Court is now in use and the Tennis Club are very pleased with it. He said that some hard standing is required between the two gates to prevent mud going onto the courts when players need to go from one court to the next. Mr. Knight said that the gate at the far end of the double courts is currently locked to prevent mud coming onto the court. Mr. Stock reminded Mr. Knight that this gate is supposed to remain unlocked as it is a means of escape in the event that someone is being bullied and prevented from leaving from the main exit.

Mr. Knight agreed to unlock the gate tomorrow.

Action: I. Knight

Mr. Meischke and Mr. Smith to ask Mark Blacktin to quote for laying some hard standing between the single and double courts.

Action: J. Meischke/M. Smith

- **Boot scrapers**

It was agreed to ask the goal post contractors (J. Hart and Son Limited) to quote for concreting the area around the boot scraper and also look into getting one large boot scraper.

Action: M. Smith

Environment Sub-Committee

Mrs. Dinnin reported on the following items.

- **Lammas**

- **Steps**

CMS volunteers have done a good job of repairing and realigning the Lammas steps.

Tom Goldsmith (HCC Rights of Way Officer) has agreed that the Parish Council can apply for P3 funding to repair the wooden area on the Lammas slope, although technically this is not on a footpath.

Mrs. Dinnin to submit the P3 application forms accordingly.

Action: C. Dinnin

- **Planting along the river bank**

Mrs. Dinnin said that Bob Thornton e-mailed her on 15th April as follows.

‘We are happy to do something. We don't have much in stock at our plants man's house. We will have to buy some in. We are going to see where we could usefully do some other planting at the same time so we will be putting an order in in the next week or so.

Of course they will only be small to start with, and they will never grow big enough to provide a screen. But then that is not the responsibility of the Parish Council.’

- **Removal of fir trees on the sportsfield**

The two fir trees have been cut down and removed from site by Trees Smiths.

- **Allotment**

- **Hedges**

Peter Evernden has cut back his hedge which overhangs the allotments. However, his next-door neighbour, due to ill health, has not cut back his overhanging hedge.

Mrs. Dinnin to monitor the situation.

Action: C. Dinnin

- **Plots available**

Mrs. Dinnin said that she has two vacant plots and one person on the waiting list.

- **Public liability insurance**

The Parish Council each year reimburse the Allotment and Garden Association the cost of its public liability insurance, which this year is £78.50. Parish Councillors agreed to reimburse them accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

New Homes Bonus Sub-Committee

Nothing to report.

b) Routine Reports

i) Emergency escape lighting tests and manual alarm call tests

Mr. Smith and Mr. Meischke have carried-out the emergency escape lighting tests and manual alarm call tests.

ii) Gas and electricity meter readings

The Clerk to e-mail either Mr. Meischke or Mr. Smith, at the end of each month, to ask them to take the gas and electricity meter readings.

Action: J. Allsop

iii) Weekly reports - Fire Inspection and shower tests

Nothing adverse to report.

iv) Monthly village-report

Mr. Knight completed the report on 18th April.

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

- **Fencing at top of the sportsfield** – refer to item 5 b I, Review of actions - Replace missing sections of sportsfield fence.

- **Bike ramp** – The bike ramps with the bar across the middle is damaged.

Parish Councillors agreed that this bike ramp should be removed and scrapped before someone hurts themselves.

Mr. Smith to arrange for the bike ramp to be removed prior to the annual playground inspection.

Action: M. Smith

- **Tennis court signs** – need improving

Action: I. Knight

- **War Memorial garden** – weeds need tackling. Refer to item 5 b 10, Review of actions – Inspect weeds around the War Memorial.

v) Weekly sportsfield

Nothing to report.

vi) Website/Facebook

None.

vii) Highway and Lighting faults

None.

viii) Dog fouling

Parish Councillors agreed that the village appeared to be much improved and the dog bag dispenser on footpath 27 adjacent to the school and near Glebe Court is being well used. Mr. Meischke said that there was an exception in that a Rivershill resident is allowing their dog to foul the footpath between Rivershill and the High Street.

9. Correspondence received

a) East Herts Council re Annual playground inspection

Jackie Bruce (Service Development Officer, EHDC) e-mailed on 6th April advising that the annual playground inspections in East Herts are due to take place over a three-week period towards the end of April. The price for each playground inspection has increased by 2.5% this year to £42.54 plus VAT (an increase of £1.04 plus VAT), which includes an equipment risk assessment and a pdf copy of the report.

The Clerk has asked Jackie Bruce to delay our inspection until the beginning of May because of the installation of the replacement play equipment.

b) Quotation for installing new football posts

Refer to item 8 a, Recreation and Amenities Sub-Committee – goal posts.

- **Anonymous letter signed a concerned parishioner re common land at Whempstead**

Mr. Smith read out the following letter.

‘Please see attached maps and old google street view of Homeleith Cottages in Whempstead which I believe are in your parish.

I travel this road daily and over the last couple of years have noticed quite a change.

I remember a few years ago the owner opposite at the Old Chapel had issues when trying to take over common land in this area.

The field access has now been gated off and part of the common land have been fenced off into Homeleith Cottage garden.

Please investigate.’

The Parish Council has had issues over 20 years ago with common land adjacent to the Old Chapel site and agreed that they did not want to enter into such arguments again. Mr. Smith agreed in the first instance to make contact Ken Crofton asking the County Council, being the lead authority, to take action if they are the appropriate body.

Action: M. Smith

- **Fencing off Perrywood Lane**

Marshfield Homes Limited have written to the Parish Council about the ownership of the boundary between Watton Green and the land they are currently developing, fencing this boundary and the naming of the new development.

After discussion, it was agreed to write as follows.

“The Parish Council agrees that the split chestnut post and rail fence would suit the surroundings well. However, the existing fence is not in the Parish Council's gift and we firmly believe it belongs to the Monk family. Consequently, our approval should not be taken as a consent for the removal of said fence, that can only be agreed between you and the Monk family.

The Parish Council has no objection to the name Hilltop Walk if other parties are in agreement.”

Action: M. Smith

10. **Village organisations**

Nothing to report.

11. **Items for Parish News**

No items were identified for inclusion in the June issue of the Parish News.

The meeting closed at 2130.

The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Tuesday 16th May 2017.