

Minutes of the meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council held in the Community Hall on Tuesday 21st November 2017

Present:	Mr. Mike Smith (Chairman)	Mr. John Meischke (Vice-Chairman)
	Mrs. Christine Dinnin	Mr. Denis Filer
	Mr. Ian Knight	Mrs. Margaret Stanley
	Mr. David Stock	Dr. Emma Waltham
	Mrs. Jane Allsop (Clerk)	
Public:	District Councillor Michael Freeman (until 2023)	
	Farid Tilavi, Senior Engineer at HCC and Trevor Brennan, Strategy & Programme Manager at HCC (until 1956)	

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence: Mrs. Catherine Hammon and Mrs. Helen McCash.

2. HCC discussion re Station Road and the High Street

Mr. Smith welcomed HCC representatives Trevor Brennan and Farid Tilavi to the meeting. County Councillor Ken Crofton was unable to attend due to the need to be at other meetings.

Trevor Brennan introduced himself and said that he had come into the post of Strategy & Programme Manager to cover the areas of East Herts and Broxbourne. Neil Richardson had previously dealt with this role together with other roles at HCC. There was then a lengthy discussion about the background to the Station Road and High Street programmes and the on-going delays and failures during their ‘completion’ to date.

Station Road

Mr. Brennan said he had looked at the Station Road scheme and apologised for the way it had been delivered and that the work was not to the standard expected. The works were principally delivered by Ringway, who had sub-contracted the work. Mr. Tilavi had done much investigation into why the work was not done properly. He also said that the supervisor for this project did not do the job correctly and was subsequently dismissed by the sub-contractor.

The history, problems and issues (much of which is recorded in our files and previous minutes) were discussed in detail and questions asked of HCC as to how so much had gone wrong. Most of the problems and issues concerning the failures in the Station Road programme had been highlighted by the Parish Council, principally by Mr. Stock, and the officers of HCC.

Parish Councillors were surprised by the way in which the work was carried out and the protocols involved, and that it seems that HCC is only able to identify problems etc. once the work has been completed and the contractor has cleared the site and left. The need for corrective work (‘snagging’) is then identified and scheduled for completion at a later date. Mr. Brennan explained that to rectify the problems Ringway had to book a time with HCC and this is where the delay comes in. Ringway, who themselves will pay for the corrective works, has appointed a new sub-contractor and work is scheduled to start in Station Road tomorrow, the 22nd of November and is scheduled for completion by 30th November. Ringway has agreed that they will have a representative inspect the site daily.

Mr. Stock pointed out that no notices had been displayed to warn of upcoming Station Road closures; the only recently-installed notices advised of road-improvement works. Mr. Brennan and Mr. Tilavi to look at this urgently. (Note: road-closure notices appeared the next day.)

Once again, the Parish Council expressed its dismay at the length of time it had taken HCC to deliver a solution to the problems caused by the erroneous widening of Station Road adjacent to the Gatekeeper Meadow development. Mr. Tilavi said that HCC is contractually obliged to deliver schemes within a three-year period. In the case of Station Road, the process started in 2014/15, the pre-prep stage, 2015/16 being the prep stage, and 2016/17 being the delivery. So as far as HCC is concerned they are not late in delivering the Station Road project. However, the Parish Council’s view on the time taken starts from when it raised the issues and made the initial official complaints to HCC back in 2013. It was also stated that some of the Parish Council’s proposed solutions were met with a degree of opposition from County Councillor Ken Crofton (e.g., expressing support for laybys and not double-yellow lines) and some members of the HCC team (e.g., again laybys and not double-yellow lines, and the re-positioning of the footpath opposite Rectory Lane). This was not helped by the number of key-personnel changes since 2013. However, as far as the Station Road programme is concerned, most of the Parish Council’s proposed solutions were eventually delivered.

Mr. Brennan said that he is astounded by the way in which things had turned out and repeated his/HCC’s apologies for the failures of the contractors and was confident that the situation was about to be resolved. Mr. Stock said that he was happy to accept the apology and this was agreed by all Parish Councillors present.

It was agreed that Mr. Stock continues to work with Mr. Tilavi (and if necessary, Mr. Brennan) until the Station Road project reaches a satisfactory conclusion. **Action: D. Stock**

Mr. Smith asked if Ringway should be fined over its incompetence. Mr. Brennan said that in the grand scheme of things, it was not worth doing so, but better to work with them to resolve these problems. Ringway has approximately 30 projects on the go at any one time. When a contractor is on the site he is the owner of the site and HCC cannot interfere.

Also see item 8 b, Specific items – Station Road update.

High Street

Some time ago Neil Richardson (HCC) met with the Parish Council and presented the internally-agreed scheme for the High Street and which could not be changed as it had been the subject of a safety-audit and the result of much work and investigation. Members of the parish council fully supported the proposed scheme. However, and further to this, County Councillor Ken Crofton then met with local business owners and the scheme was changed, without the involvement of the Parish Council, and installed as it is today.

Notwithstanding the complaints received to-date and the problems encountered, Mrs. Stanley said that the Parish Council will continue to monitor the High Street situation until the New Year and will get back to Mr. Tilavi with all problems and concerns, so that a scheme can be agreed on to resolve the issues caused by the double-yellow lines and timed parking-restrictions.

She said that numerous people are ignoring the parking restrictions and tonight there were six cars parked during the parking exclusion times. Since the scheme has been installed there have been very few parking tickets issued. Mr. Brennan said that ultimately HCC ask EHDC to sort out the enforcement of any parking restrictions. Councillor Freeman said there are currently eight enforcement-officers covering the whole of East Herts and there is no funding to increase this number. Mr. Stock repeated the Parish Council's view that its original request for 'bolt holes' with double yellow lines should be re-evaluated and in such a way that their implementation would have a minimum effect on local businesses.

The Parish Council feel that the current scheme is not working, particularly at weekends when there is football or cricket games on the sportsfield plus the Bull pub is busy with customers. There is a constant stream of traffic and parked cars and the time-restricted zones are not in force making the area very dangerous for pedestrians and difficult for drivers to negotiate safely.

It was reported that last week someone was collecting their bin from the pavement and had to jump back to avoid a lorry that had mounted the curb. Mrs. Stanley urged that the proposal to install metal posts be reconsidered to prevent drivers mounting the pavement. HCC said that there was specific guidance including measurements for the installation of bollards and it was thought that the pavement at this point might be too narrow for bollards to be installed. Parish Councillors expressed their strong views that pedestrian safety on the pavements was paramount. Mr. Tilavi to investigate further.

Mr. Stock to e-mail Mr. Tilavi with a copy of the observations of Mrs. Hammon concerning traffic-flow in the High Street and also a problem re pot-holes in Station Road. **Action: D. Stock**

Mr. Brennan and Mr. Tilavi left the meeting at 1956.

3. Public Participation

None.

4. Chairman's/Clerk's Report

None.

5. Declaration of Interests

None.

6. Minutes of the last meeting

a) Acceptance

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 17th October 2017**
Parish Councillors agreed that the minutes be approved.

b) Review of actions

1. Inspect Zig-zag steps by Tennis Courts

Mr. Meischke said that this action point is outstanding. However, he had spoken to Mark Blacktin briefly on the subject to ask him to consider the options.

Mr. Knight said that the installation of an internal gate in the fencing between the courts would negate the need to have the external gates left open and therefore there would be no need for the steps. He agreed to ask Ian Vosper's opinion on the steps. **Action: I. Knight**

Mr. Meischke, Mr. Smith and Mr. Knight to discuss the issue further.

Action: J. Meischke/ M. Smith/I. Knight

2. Obtain a quotation to connect the K6 Red former phone box to an electricity supply

Mr. Smith said he had applied to Network Power East to provide the Kiosk with an electrical connection. Refer to item 8 e, Specific items - Defibrillator/kiosk update.

c) Action points resolved

1. Renew the SiteGround hosting for another three years
2. Give Mr. Filer items for Budget items for 2018/19 before the end of October
3. Put up two 'no cycling' signs for the tennis courts
4. Inspect Zig-zag steps by Tennis Courts
5. Ask Councillor Freeman about parking tickets issued since the new High Street scheme
6. Include number of parking tickets issued in December issue of the Parish News
7. E-mail Farid Tilavi re High Street
8. Write to planning department re Cannon House 69-71 High Street (3/17/2188/HH)
9. Write to planning department re 23 Lammas Road (3/17/2263/HH)
10. Write to planning department re Amon Luin, Walkern Road (3/17/2320/HH)
11. Write again to Ken Croton, with a copy to Ralph Sangster, concerning Station Road
12. Obtain update from HCC re Station Road corrective work
13. Arrange to meet again with RVTV Security re installation of CCTV system at the Community Hall
14. Investigate the legal aspect concerning data protection requirements prior to installing a CCTV system
15. Accept D. P. Electrics quotation and order the hire of the access tower
16. Arrange for installation of chicken wire along the bottom sections of the single tennis court
17. Order replacement portable floodlighting tripod
18. Investigate the purchase of numbered marker posts for the allotments
19. Chase Paul Reynolds re cleaning the War Memorial
20. Ask Mark Blacktin to relay loose paving slab around the War Memorial
21. Give Mrs. Dinnin any items to be included in annual grass cutting and maintenance work schedule
22. Place advert in the December issue of Parish News re annual grass cutting and maintenance work
23. Place notice on Parish Council's Facebook re annual grass cutting and maintenance work

• **Cars parking on pavement in the High Street**

Dr. Waltham said that it was reported to her that cars are parking on pavement in the High Street, almost opposite the Great Inns roundabout. Councillor Freeman said that this offence is one that should be reported directly to the police and he agreed to inform PCSO Sally Brooks accordingly.

Action: M. Freeman

Specific items - District Councillor Michael Freeman's Report

• **Parking enforcement in the High Street**

Councillor Freeman said that he has sent detailed information to Mrs. Stanley on the number of tickets issued to date, our overall resource position, and the effect which the increased priority likely to be given to parking outside schools etc could have on our own parking problems.

He will continue to ask for periodic "blitzes" by our enforcement officers as well as organising some informal action to speak to motorists who park outside the shops during restricted hours. There have also been issues with the behaviour of some of the delivery drivers attending the shops, which I will try to get resolved.

• **Library**

The library continues to do well, although space is an increasing problem in view of the large number of donations we continue to receive. Councillor Freeman currently uses the loft as "overflow" as well as for storage and is in discussion with Mr. Meischke on ways of making better use of the loft space.

• **Train services**

Govia/Thameslink have appointed a project manager to deal specifically with the replacement bus services from Hertford to Stevenage and from Watton to Stevenage. Councillor Freeman will be joining the working party along with reps from EHDC/HCC.

A meeting is due to take place at the end of November between our MPs, the Rail Minister and Network Rail to investigate if there is any way the work at Stevenage can be brought forward to be completed as soon as possible after the introduction of the new timetable. (A similar meeting arranged for early November failed to take place because Network Rail did not turn up).

Councillor Freeman continues to be frustrated by people putting out false rumours on the future of train services from Watton. He recently received a telephone call from a Watton resident who had been "told by someone in Hertford" that the link between Hertford and Stevenage is to be cut permanently. This is utter nonsense and does not help us at all.

- **Fly tipping at the Scout Hut**

Councillors may have received reports of another fly tip, close to the Scout Hut. The rubbish was originally dumped on private land, which is outside the scope of EHDC’s operations, but it was agreed that if the rubbish could mysteriously be moved onto public land – which it now has – they would come along and collect it.

- **Speed Monitoring**

In May this year, a letter was sent to the Parish Council advising that the funding for a new fixed Speed Indicator Device, to be installed in Walkern Road close to Beane Road, had been approved.

After much to-ing and fro-ing Councillor Freeman eventually established with the sender of that letter that the information was wrong.

The police, and the County Council, have found that a certain amount of “familiarity breeding contempt” has crept into these devices so that they now have a policy of moving them around to maintain the element of surprise.

The May letter should have said that funding had been agreed for a new base and fitting in Walkern Road, to which the device currently on the corner of Motts Close will shortly be moved. It will continue to be moved around as the need dictates and we envisage doing similar at other locations in the village.

Councillor Freeman has been advised that the Parish Council will be invited to pay the cost of each move after the first one, but suggests we take no further action on this while he explores this stipulation further.

Councillor Freeman continues to be active with the speed monitoring itself – nearly 15,000 vehicles checked by his team to date. The police are strengthening the letters which are sent to errant motorists (e.g. warning them that if they were caught doing more than 20mph over the limit by a police officer rather than a volunteer they would automatically lose their licence. Councillor Freeman recorded one doing 52mph in the last few days).

- **District Plan – Examinations in Public**

Councillor Freeman said that the examination of the District Plan has now been completed and we await the Inspector’s formal responses to the issues and amendments which came up in the course of the various sessions. EHDC officers have made the changes iteratively as the sessions progressed so one hopes the Inspector’s formal responses will not be long in forthcoming.

A key development for Watton-at-Stone is that the Inspector has confirmed that Green Belt boundaries can only be changed by the District Council and not through the Neighbourhood Planning process, thereby overturning the advice given by an earlier Inspector.

At the last Parish Council meeting, it was reported that EHDC would be drafting a policy amendment proposing that any changes to Green Belt boundaries are made at the first review of the District Plan which will be five years after its adoption. This will no longer happen and instead it has been agreed that Green Belt boundary reviews will take place within 5 years of the plan being adopted.

Dr. Waltham said that following these changes the Steering Group are re-assessing their approach. If the Neighbourhood plan makes a recommendation regarding Green Belt change there is no guarantee it will be implemented. If it says no to Green Belt release one or two developers are likely to object to the plan. The Steering Group will discuss the Neighbourhood Plan at a village meeting on 5th December at Watton-at-Stone school. Whatever is decided at the meeting, the Neighbourhood Plan will put forward policies for the village to protect it from development that is high-density or not in keeping with the village.

- **Dog fouling**

Dr. Waltham reported that there has been an excessive amount of dog fouling on footpath 17 by the school. Mrs. Stanley said that she had received a request from a member of public for another dog bin down at Mill Lane.

It was agreed to put an article in both the Parish News and upload it to the Parish Council Facebook page. Refer to item 9 b, vii – Reports – Website/Facebook.

Councillor Freeman left the meeting.

7. Planning

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

a) Applications

i) **Watton At Stone Scout Group Mill Lane Watton At Stone (3/17/2372/FUL)**

Replacement garages/stores

Prior to the meeting, Mrs. McCash had e-mailed all Parish Councillors details of the plans and recommended the Parish Council support this application.

After discussion Parish Councillors agreed to “strongly support” the application.

The Clerk to write to East Herts Council accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

ii) Gregorys Farm (3/17/2624/LBC)

Alterations to LPA approval 3/15/2396/FUL (the retention of internal alterations, and proposed external alterations, in conjunction with the change of use and conversion to form an independent residential dwelling house) Alterations to include raising of roof ridge to create accommodation at first floor, replacement of weather boarding reconfiguration of fenestration and insertion of roof windows

Mr. Smith said that he had looked at the plans for this application, which involved lifting the roof by half a meter.

Prior to the meeting, Mrs. McCash had e-mailed all Parish Councillors details of the plans and recommended the Parish Council makes 'no comment' on this application. This was agreed by Parish Councillors.

The Clerk to write to East Herts Council accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

b) Decisions**i) Land adjacent to 16 Newmans Court (3/17/2050/FUL)**

Erection of a pair of timber gates across the access road into the private car park -EHDC permission granted

ii) 14 Hazeldell (3/17/2088/HH)

Single-storey front infill extension with pitched roof -EHDC permission granted

iii) Ballacraine, Walkern Road (3/17/2462/NMA)

A non-material amendment to 3/15/0847/FUL change of roof tiles from Redland double Roman (not in production and not suitable for pitch of roof) to Redland Regent Rustic Red -EHDC permission granted

c) Withdrawn**i) Cannon House 69-71 High Street (3/17/2188/HH)**

New annex building in rear garden

8. Specific items**a) District Councillor Michael Freeman's Report**

Refer to item directly after 6 c, Action points resolved.

b) Station Road update

Prior to the meeting Mr. Stock e-mailed to all Parish Councillors a copy of Farid Tilavi's response to his list of some of the faults, problems and issues concerning Station Road and the High Street. Apart from some misunderstandings, Mr. Tilavi agreed with the points raised and confirmed the corrective action to be taken by HCC.

Mr Stock also included County Councillor Ken Crofton's reply to our letter expressing dissatisfaction with his previous responses to our letter to him on 26th July; in which we highlighted various problems and issues, and our concern about/disappointment in the poor outcome of the Station Road and High Street programmes and therefore the need for a substantial amount of corrective work involving further inconvenience to our parishioners. Mr. Crofton said that as the result of internal discussions it had been apparent and accepted that the contract supervision could have been better. Mr. Crofton is prepared to meet with us so that we can raise these or any other concerns but felt that we were now fully advised by his response and there was little else he could add.

Mr. Stock disagreed with part of Mr. Crofton's response in which he said that "...we should understand that we should only have a limited input into these projects and have no executive powers to manage or control the work." Mr. Stock accepted that we had no executive powers but, as with Station Road and the High Street programmes, we must continue to work closely with HCC to highlight and attempt to resolve local issues and problems as they arise. After all it was us, the Parish Council, who raised the need for action in the first place and as local representatives we have the first-hand knowledge/experience of problems and thus possible solutions. He felt that if we had not been involved to the degree that we were, he doubted that we would be so close to achieving a satisfactory conclusion re the problems in Station Road. These views were agreed by those Parish Councillors present.

Also see Agenda item 2 - HCC discussion re Station Road and the High Street.

c) Traffic along High Street, including the mini roundabouts

Refer to item 2, HCC discussion re Station Road and the High Street.

d) Neighbourhood plan (NP) – progress report

Refer to penultimate bulleted item before item 7. Planning - District Plan – Examinations in Public.

e) Defibrillator/kiosk update

Mr. Smith said he had contacted Network Power East today to obtain an update on his application to have an electrical connection in the Kiosk. He was informed that it may take some time for our application to be processed and find out the connection costs.

Mr. Smith and Mr. Meischke said that they cannot see any reason why the defibrillator should not be installed in the kiosk as soon as possible, prior to power being installed. Ostensibly, the power is required for a heater to reduce the risk of batteries deteriorating in outdoor applications. In practice this has not been a problem.

Mr. Meischke said he hoped to have the defibrillator installed before Christmas. **Action: J. Meischke**

f) CCTV

Mr. Meischke said that it was agreed at the October Parish Council meeting that some of the Trustees and Mr. Smith meet again with RVTV Security to discuss the need for a HD screen, the cost of adding a camera to the west side of the building and the cost of replacing individual cameras when they get damaged.

Following this meeting RVTV Security’s e-mailed their revised quotation (dated 24th October) for the following,

• CCTV Specification list	• 3 x 80m ir Bullet camera Varifocal
• 1 x 8 Way DVR 4tb	• Lockable cabinet
• 1 x 22” HD Screen	• Cables, Materials & associated fixings
• 2 x Fixed HD IR domes	• Installation, Commissioning & User Training

The above works will conform to Health and Safety Regulations

Total £2590 (plus VAT)

Parish Councillors accepted the quotation via e-mail and the CCTV system has now been installed and is fully functioning.

6 CCTV signs have been purchased from 1st Call signs, at £12 per sign (plus VAT). Mr. Meischke said that two more signs need to be purchased, for the play area and tennis courts with the wording changed from “these premises are” to “this area is”.

Action: J. Allsop

Mr. Smith said that a CCTV data protection document to fit the Parish Council’s needs would be e-mailed to all Parish Councillors for their approval.

Action: M. Smith

It was agreed to upload an article to the Parish Council’s Facebook re the installation of CCTV at the Community Hall.

Action: E. Waltham/J. Allsop

g) Scouts and Guides Bonfire night overview

Mrs. Dinnin said that the Richard Wing, Scout and Guide Group, had contacted her to say that the firework event was a great success and had raised around £2500. The Group appreciate the £500 Parish Council donation and understand the reasons why they will not be donating towards this event next year. They will be reserving some of the money raised at this year to seed the 2018 fireworks, subject to getting the right approvals to run the event again.

The Clerk said that she had not given the Scout and Guide Group the £500 yet. She agreed to contact their treasurer, Christine Emsley, as soon as possible to arrange payment.

Action: J. Allsop

The Scout and Guide Group will be signing a new lease with the Abel Smith estate within the next 2-3 weeks. The lease will run from 1st January 2018 for 30 years.

Planning permission has been submitted to EHDC to replace the old garage/stores, which is in bad repair and the internal stores inside the hut with new stores. The Parish Council have agreed to strongly support their application.

The Scout Hut will not be demolished in January however a feasibility study for building a new Scout and Guide hut will commence at the beginning of next year after the lease has been signed.

9. Sub-Committees

Budget & Finance

Mr. Smith said Mr. Filer will be stepping down as Chairman of Budget and Finance Sub-Committee when he retires as a Parish Councillor in May 2018. He will have been a Parish Councillor for nearly 20 years and was co-opted in September 1998.

With Mr. Filer’s retirement, the role of Chairman of Budget and Finance Sub-Committee will become vacant. Parish Councillors need to consider if they would like to take on the role or if someone just oversees the position without formally being chairman.

• Monthly accounts

Watton-at-Stone Parish Council

Petty Cash – Receipts		Petty cash - Payments	
2 Allotment holders – rent	<u>34.50</u>	24 x 1 st class stamps	<u>15.60</u>
	<u>34.50</u>		<u>15.60</u>
Cheques issued			
Ram International	replacement tripod for portable floodlight		120.00
Wages and salaries	October 2017		1229.96
1 st Call signs	No cycling sign for tennis court		43.20
Frank Cooper	2 x Football pitch marking		84.00
Affinity for business	water - allotments		115.32
Royal British Legion	poppy donation		80.00
Mark Blacktin			30.00
Frank Cooper	2 x sportsfield grass cuts in October 2017		141.60
SiteGround	Website hosting for 3-years		210.17
Adam Welch	Grass cutting, flowerbed maintenance and leaf clearance		<u>1350.00</u>
			<u>3404.25</u>
Cheques received			
Steve Brett	Hedge cutting		65.00
17 Allotment holders	Allotment rent 2017/2018		575.95
1 former Allotment holder	Clearance work to allotment		30.00
Football Club	Donation towards 2 x Football pitch marking		<u>70.00</u>
			<u>740.95</u>

Watton-at-Stone Community Hall

Petty Cash – Receipts		Petty Cash -Payments	
Carla Beach – (5 weeks)	167.50	None	
Tony Silvestri – Pavilion (5 weeks)	50.00		
Marie Ladler – Main Hall & Pavilion	54.00		
Kelly Rosberg – Main Hall & Pavilion	52.50		
Clare Young – Main Hall	12.00		
Rebecca Evans – Main Hall & Pavilion	37.50		
Michelle Cook - Pavilion	21.00		
Emma Sodeke– Main Hall	15.00		
Youth Football – Main Hall	20.00		
Donations re toy use	5.00		
Floodlighting to 13/11/17	180.00		
Forever Active - October	516.00		
	<u>1130.50</u>		
Cheques issued			
Wages	October 2017		473.93
E-on	electricity		85.64
E-on	Gas		60.14
J. Allsop	1st call signs - CCTV signage		86.40
J. Allsop	Bowls Mat		<u>685.00</u>
			<u>1391.11</u>
Cheques received			
Claire Murphy	Main Hall and Pavilion		90.00
Peter Khera	Main Hall		177.65
Caroline Payton	Main Hall and Pavilion		172.50
Paula Sutton	Main Hall		205.20
Felicita Dixon	Main Hall and Pavilion		22.00
Peter Goodge (NEXTHR)	Pavilion		28.00
Felicita Dixon	Main Hall and Pavilion		22.00
Antonia Smith	Main Hall, Pavilion and meeting room		<u>90.00</u>
			<u>807.35</u>

Parish Councillors agreed the payments.

The Clerk to send Mr. Knight the invoice for the replacement tripod so he can chase the football club for payment.

Action: J. Allsop/I. Knight

- **Meeting date to discuss 2018/19 budgets**

Mr. Filer said that he and the Clerk had spent 2.5 hours putting together a preliminary budget ready for discussion at the Budget and Finance Sub-Committee meeting on Tuesday 28th November.

Community Hall Trustees

Mr. Meischke reported on the following item.

- **Disturbance during party in Community Hall**

Parish Councillors were all informed about the disturbances that occurred in the village when a party held at the Community Hall on 28th October, was gate-crashed by approximately 100 youths who heard about the event via social media. The police cleared the youths from the village with the use of police dogs and riot shields. The police confirmed that there was no wrong doing on the part of the hirer and that Mr. Meischke and the Clerk had vetted the hirer correctly prior to the event, which was for a party for three 16-year-old girls. The gate crashers left over 500 laughing gas canisters on the sportsfield after the event, but very little evidence of alcohol. Mr. Meischke said that the Trustees will need to discuss at their next meeting if they can apply any restrictions re hiring the hall for teenage parties. He said that a similar event, which occurred in Broxbourne, is reported in the Mercury newspaper this week.

Mr. Filer said that the War Memorial Hall specifies that all events finishing at 2200.

Mr. Meischke said he had responded to Dr. Norden (10 School Lane) re his concerns about the event and had also spoken to Mrs. Beatty (1 Old School Orchard) and the residents at the Club House (1 School Lane). Andrew Bateman (103 High Street) e-mailed the Clerk re damage to his son's car which was parked in the High Street during the event.

- **Main Hall lighting**

D. P. Electrics have fitted the new LED emergency lights and new batteries for emergency fluorescent in Main Hall, installed 40 new lamps and starters plus supplied 4 new emergency batteries as per their quotation of £860 (plus VAT). Mr. Meischke said he hired a scaffolding tower from Jewson's which D. P. Electrics put together so that they could install the lights.

- **Changing rooms**

The Cleaners reported that the footballers had left the away changing rooms in a terrible mess, with mud all over the ceiling, walls and floors. The cleaners rang Mr. Meischke after they had cleaned up the mess. They had taken photos of the changing room but had only provided one of the floor to show Mr. Meischke. Mr. Meischke has asked the cleaners not to clean the changing rooms if they are found in a very dirty condition until either he, or one of the Trustees, have inspected the facilities and taken photographs if necessary. Mr. Knight said that teams can get reported to the Football Association if they leave facilities in a bad condition.

Mr. Meischke suggested that we could ask the Football Club to take before and after photographs of the changing rooms as proof that no damage has occurred at an event. Mr. Knight said that the football managers we have at the moment are very sensible and it might be in their interest to take photos.

- **Library items in the loft**

Mr. Meischke said that there are probably four times as many books in the loft as in the library and they need to be kept in a tidier condition so that books can be accessed easily when needed. It was further agreed that there should be a finite number of books stored in the loft.

It was agreed that Mr. Meischke source some cheap shelving to store the books on. **Action: J. Meischke**

- **Car park light**

Mr. Meischke said that when D. P. Electrics went to replace the lamps in the outside lights, they found that the units had rotted because there was no drainage hole in the bottom of the fitting. They have ordered new light fittings which they fit as soon as possible.

Mr. Smith said that Mr. Meischke's volunteering at the Community Hall has almost become fulltime.

Mr. Meischke said that some of it was because several items have all come at the same time. Mr. Smith said that the Trustees need to talk about this issue at their next meeting.

Agenda: Trustees

Recreation and Amenities Sub-Committee

Mr. Knight reported on the following items.

- **Tennis Court/MPPA**

There are lots of leaves in the aggregate channels around both Tennis Courts. It was agreed to ask Ted Brown to clear them and weed kill where necessary.

Action: I. Knight

Blue Bury contractors have installed chicken wire around the bottom 3 foot of the new tennis court fence to prevent leaves blowing onto the court.

Sports courts have completed the repair work to the join between the court and the small section of damaged surface on the new court. They have also given Mr. Knight some spare court paint.

The Tennis club have asked if they can purchase and install a new notice board, similar in style to the Parish Council notice board located new the village shop. The Clerk to give Mr. Knight the name of the company she purchased the notice board from.

Action: I. Knight

There is some moss growing on the courts and a moss kill may be required in Spring next year. Mr. Knight said that there are funds in this year's budget for the work and he had asked that a similar amount be put in the 2018/19 budget.

- **Sportsfield**

Mr. Smith said that Jarrett Fencing have installed the post and rail fence on the boundary between the horses' field and the section of sportsfield the Parish Council rent from the Diocesan board (behind the new Tennis Court). All temporary fencing has been removed from site and the tennis court project can now be considered complete.

- **Cricket nets**

Mrs. Dinnin said that her husband, Kevin Dinnin, is expecting to hear from Clare Pullen (EHDC) soon re the outcome of the Cricket Club's application for funding towards the cricket nets project.

Environment Sub-Committee

Mrs. Dinnin reported on the following items.

- **Allotments**

Mrs. Dinnin said that all allotment holders have paid for and retained their plots and there are currently five people on the allotment waiting list.

She suggested that the Parish Council e-mail all allotment holders asking if anyone would consider giving up their plot to accommodate those on the waiting list. Anyone who does give up a plot would be refunded the rent already paid for this year. This was agreed by Parish Councillors. **Action: C. Dinnin /J. Allsop**

Mrs. Dinnin said that most allotment holders are cultivating their allotment, however there are approximately three who do not do so properly.

Mr. Stock said that while carrying out the monthly village-report he noted that, notwithstanding the time of year, the condition of the allotments varied from very good to poor (approximately 70/30) with some plots not appearing to have been worked on for some time. He was impressed to see that some allotment holders had, or were in the process of, improving their plots significantly, e.g., building individual wooden-sided raised-beds; which he thought was a good idea. One allotment holder has installed heavy-duty wooden posts around a plot for some reason and it appeared to be a case of work in progress. Mrs Dinnin said that she was not aware of this and would take a look. **Action: C. Dinnin**

Questions were asked about what was allowed on the allotments in terms of structures etc. and what condition an allotment should be left in when a holder decides to give it up.

- **War Memorial**

Paul Reynolds has done an excellent job of cleaning the War Memorial and it looked very good for the Remembrance Sunday Service.

Mrs. Dinnin said that she had raised approximately £3,660 in this year's village Poppy appeal.

It was agreed to send an official letter of thanks to Paul Reynolds.

Action: J. Allsop

Mr. Smith suggested that the newly cleaned stonework could be sealed to keep it cleaner for longer. He agreed to investigate the cost of materials and labour.

Action: M. Smith

- **Village maintenance contract**

The village maintenance contract is up for renewal in 2018. Mrs. Dinnin said that she had gone through the items that Adam Welch currently does and added the extra leaf clearance work around the village pump and the doctor's surgery as well as the cutting back of shrubbery at Great Innings on its boundary with the Grey House. She said she had not received any other suggestions from Parish Councillors.

The following notice will appear in the December issue of the Parish News.

“The Watton-at-Stone Parish Council invite interested parties to tender for grass cutting, strimming, flower bed maintenance and leaf clearance work to be carryout out in the village during 2018. Please e-mail or phone Jane Allsop for further details - clerk@watton-pc.org.uk / 01920 830330. Quotations will need to be submitted by Friday 12th January 2018.”

It was agreed to ask Adam Welch and Frank Cooper and Son Limited to provide one-year and three-year quotations for strimming, mowing, flowerbed maintenance and leaf clearance, as per the updated schedule.

Action: C. Dinnin/J. Allsop

Adam Welch has given Mrs. Dinnin an approximate figure for the annual maintenance work, which will be used for budget purposes only.

New Homes Bonus Sub-Committee

Nothing to report.

b) Routine Reports**i) Emergency escape lighting tests and manual alarm call tests**

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

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) Health and Safety for village halls

Mr. Meischke said that the Community Hall's external lights are not working. As reported earlier, new lights are on order. Refer to item 9 a Community Hall - Car park light.

v) Monthly village-report

Mr. Stock completed the report on 17th November,

He said that the overall condition of the village was very good for the time of year and therefore only highlighted the following parts of his report.

Community Hall car park - The white van was still parked in the car park.

Community Hall roof - He was concerned to see that a number of large stones had been thrown onto to new roof above the main entrance. It is assumed that these were thrown in an attempt to damage the high-level windows.

Mr. Meischke said that before the cameras were put up the installers noticed there was damage on the low-level roof on the car park side of the building. P J Roofing has been asked to provide us with a quotation to repair the roof.

It was agreed to ask P. J. Roofing to remove the stones when they carry-out the repair work to the roof.

Action: J. Meischke

Tennis courts - Obviously some leaf fall, especially on the steps.

Mr. Knight to ask Ted Brown to clear around the tennis court areas.

Action: I. Knight

Allotments - Refer to the Environment Sub-Committee report in these minutes.

War Memorial - This is very clean since the pressure washing. However some gaps have appeared between some of the paving slabs, i.e. the cement has come out.

Mr. Stock said that the previous round of planting is now well-established and suggested that we consider further planting to fill gaps/replace shrubs that are not doing so well (e.g., holly).

Hebe was proposed as an example replacement because it adds density and colour.

Agenda: Environment Sub-Committee

General - Mr. Stock was sad to say that the only dog-fouling he had seen was at the Rectory Lane end of Footpath 17, i.e., adjacent to the school, and could not understand why this should be so.

The Village Pump and the surrounding area looked in a very poor and overgrown/neglected state. Mr. Smith said that Lindsey Holt had stated that the Village Pump most probably did belong to the Abel Smith Estate. The Clerk said she had letters on file going back over 20 years agreeing to this statement and had already e-mailed copies to Mr. Smith.

Mr. Meischke said that John Love and his team have planted crocuses around the Village Pump, Ornate Village Sign and War Memorial on behalf of the Ware Rotary Club.

It was agreed to send John Love a letter of thanks.

Action: M. Smith

vi) Weekly sportsfield

Nothing to report.

vii) Website/Facebook

- Website**

Mr. Stock has prepared his first proposal of the 'data-mapping' for the new website and it has been accepted by the other members of the Working Group (i.e., Dr. Waltham, Mr. Smith and Mr. Meischke). A meeting between the Website Working-Group and Beanebytes (a Website-design company) has been arranged for Tues 12th December. Mr. Stock to provide Beanebytes with a copy of the 'data-mapping' prior to that meeting. **Action: D. Stock**

- **Facebook**

Articles on the following to be uploaded to the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council's Facebook page.

- CCTV
- Dog fouling on Footpath 17.

The Clerk to draft the articles and pass them to Dr. Waltham for her comments.

Action: J. Allsop/E. Waltham

viii) **Highway and Lighting faults**

Mrs. Dinnin said that she e-mailed the Clerk to say that one of the lights in Mill Lane is out. She said that the lane is very dark without this light. The Clerk has reported this light out on the highways online service.

Mrs. Stanley agreed to report the light out on the A602 at the junction with Whempstead Road.

Action: M. Stanley

ix) **Dog fouling reports**

Refer to item directly before item 7 – Dog fouling.

10. Correspondence received

None.

11. Village organisations

- **Forever Active**

Mr. Meischke said that Forever Active activities continue to be well attended.

We have two new hiring's starting in the hall in the New Year. Tumble Tots will be hiring the Main Hall for 4 hours on Thursday mornings. Bounce are increasing their weekday sessions and will be holding a class on Wednesday mornings. They already have morning sessions on Monday and Friday as well as Thursday evening. There has been an enquiry to start up Dots and Tots together with messy play activities on a Tuesday morning.

- **War Memorial Hall Management Committee**

Mr. Stock attended the AGM of the War Memorial Management Committee on 15th November.

The committee has continued its efforts to maintain the building in a good condition, both internally and externally, and tackle issues as they arise so as to improve the appearance and use of the facilities provided. Bookings continue to be good as does the financial health of the accounts.

The Trustees passed on their thanks to the committee for its efforts and the way in which it continues to manage the War Memorial Hall.

Mrs. Helen McCash was elected as Chairman, Mrs. Pam Filer as Treasurer, Mr. Peter Doolan as Secretary and Mrs. Christine Grant as the Bookings Secretary.

12. Items for Parish News

The following item was identified for inclusion in the February 2018 issues of the Parish News.

- Defibrillator
- Dog fouling

Action: M. Smith

Action: E. Waltham/J. Allsop

The meeting closed at 2140.

The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Tuesday 12th December 2017.