

Minutes of the meeting of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council held in the Community Hall on Tuesday 17th April 2018

Present:	Mr. Mike Smith (Chairman)	Mrs. Christine Dinnin
	Mr. Denis Filer	Mr. Ian Knight
	Mrs. Catherine Hammon (after 1918)	Mrs. McCash
	Mrs. Stanley	Mr. David Stock
	Dr. Emma Waltham	
	Mrs. Jane Allsop (Clerk)	
Public:	4 Members of the Steering Group Committee (until 2052)	
Police:	Sergeant Duncan Wallace and PCSO Karen Broad (until 1725)	

1. Apologies for absence

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

2. Public Participation

Mr. Smith welcomed Sergeant Duncan Wallace and PCSO Karen Broad to the meeting and invited them to report on policing matters after item 5 a, acceptance.

3. Chairman’s/Clerk’s Report

None.

4. Declaration of Interests

Mrs. McCash declared a pecuniary interest in the following items.

- 5 b, 12 Review of actions - Submit Parish Council accounts for the year ended 31st March 2018 to Stuart McCash for the internal audit
- 5 b, 13 Review of actions - Submit Community Hall accounts for the year ended 31st March 2018 to McCash and Hay for audit
- 8 a, Budget and Finance Sub-Committee – PKF Littlejohn – external audit papers for year ending 31st March 2018.

5. Minutes of the last meeting

a) Acceptance

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 20th March 2018**

Parish Councillors agreed that the minutes be approved.

- **Police report**

Sergeant Duncan Wallace said that there was very little to report on since the last Parish Council meeting. One crime was reported when an ambulance crew member was attacked by someone who was drunk and probably under the influence of drugs.

The police have been attending to anti-social behaviour around the Parish Church area. Mrs. McCash said that this has led to the temporary removal of two benches, one in the ownership of the Parish Council which was located at the top of Church Walk. Mr. Smith confirmed that he was storing the bench until it could be reinstalled.

Sergeant Wallace said that yesterday, under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act, residents living at 84 Great Innings South were evicted from the property for three months and the house boarded up.

Residents had complained of a constant smell of cannabis as well as other anti-social behaviour. There were reports of people visiting the house at all hours of the day and night.

Three residents who gave statements concerning the anti-social behaviour need to be commended as it was compelling enough for the Magistrate to agree for those concerned to be evicted from the property.

This process has taken a while, but he was sure that the residents will reap the benefit of this eviction.

The housing association will now go through process to getting the property back from the residents.

Mrs. Dinnin said she had received complaints from allotment holders about anti-social behaviour on the allotments.

Sergeant Wallace said that the police just need to get ahead of the little bit of current anti-social behaviour in the village. Mrs. McCash thanked the police for their on-going help with in this matter.

Sergeant Duncan Wallace and PCSO Karen Broad left the meeting.

b) Review of actions**1. Install new notice board**

Mr. Smith said that the new notice board has been installed and the old notice board moved to the other face of the Community Hall

2. Order and arrange for the installation of new ceiling lamps in the meeting room: completed.**3. Identify someone to monitor dog-fouling on the sportsfield**

Mr. Smith he will liaise with Mr. Meischke about Rosemary Brown and David Payne monitoring dog-fouling on the sportsfield.

Action: M. Smith/J. Meischke

4. Arrange for War Memorial to have a clean before sealing the stonework

Mr. Smith said that the weather has not be suitable to complete this action point.

Action: M. Smith

5. Provide Mr. Stock with text & link information for the Neighbourhood Plan part of the new website: Completed.**6. Modify village directory layout to accommodate additional entries as required: Completed****7. Provide introductory text for the Village Directory on the website and give the Clerk new entries: Completed****8. Produce brief introductory text and a link to HCC site re Lighting and Road Faults: Completed****9. Review recording of planning applications on the website: Completed****10. Upload amended Financial Regulations & Risk Assessment and Financial- Management to website: Completed****11. Update the Asset registers for 2017/18**

Mr. Filer said that he would not be around to complete this action point. This item to be put on the May agenda.

Agenda: 05/2018

12. Submit Parish Council accounts for the year end 31/03/2018 to Stuart McCash for the internal audit: Outstanding.

Action: J. Allsop

13. Submit Community Hall accounts for the year ended 31st March 2018 to McCash and Hay for audit: Completed**14. Contact someone who might be interested in doing the Parish Council audit for 2018/19: Completed.**

The Clerk said that she had sent a text message to the contact Mr. Smith had given her but had not yet received a reply. The Clerk to chase.

Action: J. Allsop

15. Negotiate new electricity contract

Refer to item 8 a, Community Hall - Negotiate new electricity contract.

16. On receipt, e-mail all Parish Councillors the kitchen estimate

Dr. Waltham said that the kitchen contractor has had his briefcase stolen with all his plans in. This item to remain an action point.

Action: J. Meischke

17. Speak to Sports Courts re substandard mortar between the new and old tennis courts

Mr. Smith said that Sports Courts have agreed to redo the substandard mortar between the courts.

18. Obtain quotations from local contractors for work formerly done by Ted Brown

Mrs. Dinnin said that Adam Welch is not interested in quoting for doing the work Ted Brown used to do.

David Payne, who took over many of Ted Brown's private jobs last year, has quoted £15 per hour to do the work formerly done by Ted. It was agreed to accept Mr. Payne's quote for this season and review his work at the end of the year.

Mr. Payne to be told that the grass around the Community Hall and swings need attention as soon as possible.

Action: C. Dinnin/J. Allsop

19. Inspect bottom of Station Road re leaf debris and take action as required

Mrs. Dinnin said that this area looked OK when she inspected it. Mrs. Hammon said that the leaf debris is in the gutters at the bottom of Station Road. Mrs. Dinnin agreed to inspect the area again.

Action: C. Dinnin

c) Action points resolved

1. Ask Mark Blacktin to reinstate wire netting on allotment gate
2. Write to planning department re 1 Motts Close
3. Ask Adam Welch to remove dead Oak branch by entrance to tennis courts
4. Contact Tom Goldsmith (HCC Rights of Way Officer) re P3 application for 2018/19
5. Speak to Adam Welch about the War Memorial Garden
6. Obtain quotations for work to the multi-stemmed Willow Tree
7. Give Mrs. Dinnin list of jobs done by Ted Brown over the past 2 years
8. Allocate allotment plots to new tenants
9. Upload Neighbourhood plan poster to the Parish Council's Facebook page

d) Actions outstanding for more than two months**1. Organise a distribution list for yellow double-sided dog fouling notices**

It was agreed to revisit this item in June.

Agenda: 06/2018

2. Arrange for repair work to the see saw when the weather improves

The see saw repairs have been waiting better weather.

Action: J. Meischke

3. Arrange goal mouth repairs

Refer to item 8 a, Recreation and Amenities Sub-Committee – Sportsfield - Goal mouth repair.

6. Planning

Mrs. McCash reported on the following items.

a) Applications**i) 119F High Street (3/18/0560/FUL)**

Retrospective change of use from A1 (Post office/Bakery) to A3 (Café/Restaurant)

The owners of Crumbs, the café/restaurant, had two years grace before they needed to apply for a change of use. However, they forgot to submit a change of use application after the two-year period ended.

All Parish Councillors have been a copy of the plans and agreed a no comment response.

ii) 1 Homeleigh, Whempstead Road, Whempstead (3/18/0585/HH)

Single-storey side ground extension and 2-storey ground and first floor extension. All uPVC windows to be replaced with aluminium framed windows.

All Parish Councillors have been a copy of the plans and agreed a no comment response.

iii) 23 Lammas Road (3/18/0595/HH)

Erection of two-storey and single-storey rear extensions, following demolition of existing extensions. New rear dormer window.

All Parish Councillors have been a copy of the plans and agreed a no comment response.

iv) 82 High Street (3/18/0644/LBC) - Listed building and conservations

The proposed works included refurbishing the left-hand side toilets to the same specification as the previously refurbished right-hand side toilets.

All Parish Councillors have been a copy of the plans and agreed a no comment response.

Decisions**i) 132a High Street (3/18/0199/HH)**

Demolition of garage and erection of a single storey side and rear extension with car port

- East Herts Council – granted

7. Specific items**a) Station Road update**

Mr. Stock had nothing to report apart from receiving an e-mail from Farid Tilavi (HCC) informing him that:

- “We had a site meeting yesterday to check the defects in Station Road and I am sorry to inform you that the speed cushions are substandard and must be replaced again. The contractor will remove them totally and replace them with the correct material.
- “The potholes in the junction of Glebe Close will be made good by removing the total pavement for approximately 26m². There are some signs of wear in the speed table that will be corrected too. The potholes in bus stop layby also will be part of the defect correction. The rest will be grass seeding & road markings.”

Disappointingly this will mean yet another road closure and assume that we would therefore hear nothing further from Farid until such time that the speed/traffic monitoring can and is carried out.

b) Traffic along High Street, including the mini roundabouts

As reported at the February meeting, Hertfordshire County Council are working on a design for a 3-car bolt hole with double yellow lines along the section outside Londis and Crumbs. Once they have received Safety advice they will feed back to the Parish Council for discussion, which will be followed by statutory public consultation once the changes are agreed. Mrs Stanley was concerned about who would pay for any modifications as Hertfordshire County Council had indicated when they met in February that there would be no funding for modifications to the mini roundabout.

Parking in the restricted area continues to be a problem although Mrs. Dinnin had recently noticed a few cars with parking tickets on them. As the parking restriction signs are only at either end of the scheme with nothing in the middle, Parish Councillors agreed that it was easy to miss the fact that it is a restricted area.

c) Neighbourhood plan – progress report

Refer to item directly after 8 a, Budget and Finance Sub-Committee - Asset registers for 2017/18.

d) Defibrillator/kiosk update

Mr. Smith said that the defibrillator is now installed in the red K6 kiosk and is fully registered with the ambulance service. There is AED signage on the windows of the kiosk and signs at the Community Hall car park and the bottom of Great Innings.

Mrs. McCash said that when someone rang 999 recently, they were informed that there was a defibrillator in the village, however it was not needed as the ambulance response time was very quick.

e) New website

Refer to item directly before item 8 a, Community Hall Trustees - Renewal of memberships for CDA for Herts, CPRE and CVS for Broxbourne and East Herts

f) Parish Council owned street lighting

Mr. Smith e-mailed all Parish Councillors on 13th April informing them that the Clerk was made aware that HCC were willing to take over the Parish Council street lights in perpetuity, thus relieving us of any financial responsibility, providing we first paid for them to be converted to LED lamps.

Mr. Smith, Mrs. Dinnin and the Clerk met with Mark Burrows from Ducreux Limited, to whom the project has been outsourced, to inspect the 26 street lighting columns in Parish Council ownership.

The Parish Council own a mixture of traditional and modern lights and it is the traditional lights which might have caused a problem, but on inspection Mr. Burrows believes them all to be suitable for conversion. To verify this, a structural inspection to establish the structural integrity of each lighting column needs to be done at a cost of £15 per street light. If all the lights pass the total cost to convert the lights would be £7,200 plus £375 inspection costs. Any light that fails the test would cost approximately £1,500 to replace. Although this is a substantial amount of money, the production of the current lighting units has ceased, and the County Council has limited stock, so there will come a time when our lamp posts will not be serviceable. Add to this the cost of electricity and insurance we calculate that savings will amortise the cost over 7/8 years. It is difficult to say what potential costs might be if the lights became unserviceable, but it will be considerable.

After discussion, Parish Councillors agreed that Mark Burrows be instructed to arrange a structural inspection of our Parish Council owned street lights.

Action: J. Allsop

g) Data Protection

Mr. Smith and the Clerk to look at what the Parish Council needs to do to conform to the Data Protection act which comes into force on 25th May.

h) Church Walk bench

Refer to police report directly after item 5 a, Minutes of the last meeting – Acceptance.

8. Sub-Committees

Budget & Finance

Mr. Filer reported on the following items.

• **Monthly accounts**

Watton-at-Stone Parish Council

Petty Cash – Receipts		Petty cash - Payments	
		BT phone calls	30.34
		2 x Laser jet toner cartridges	15.79
			46.13
Cheques issued			
Wages and Salaries	March salary, allowance and £11 mobile phone		1229.96
Fred Burnell	Mole control on sportsfield		84.00
Mark Blacktin	provide and install wire fencing to divide 3 allotment plots into 6,		182.36
Bidwells	Sportsfield extension Glebe rent		125.00
Malcolm Oakman	return of Allotment deposit		50.00
Hertfordshire County	Return of remainder of P3 GRANT		437.45
HMRC	NI - PC and Clerk period ending January to March 2018		220.38
HCC Council	Lighting energy, maintenance & admin charges - 01.04.17-31.03.18		1,484.52
Emma Waltham	NP website hosting £72, domain name was-np.org - £8.39		80.39
Clive Bell	2 x banners from Neighbourhood Plan -from 1st Call Signs		67.20
Microsoft	Microsoft 365 annual subscription		59.99
			4,021.25
Cheques received			
Paul Harrop	Allotment rent and £50 deposit		67.25
HMRC	VAT rebate 02.17 to 02.18		7342.93

		<u>7410.18</u>
Watton-at-Stone Community Hall		
Petty Cash – Receipts		Petty Cash -Payments
Carla Beach – (4 weeks)	126.00	Light shop 8 x 2 pin lights
Tony Silvestri – Pavilion (4 weeks)	40.00	Lamp Company Ni-Cad 2+2 battery
Floodlighting -21.02.18 to 21.03.18	128.00	Lamp Shop 8 x 4 pin lights
Youth Football – Main Hall (3 weeks)	10.00	
Lyn Oakman – Main Hall, Pavilion hire	30.00	
Forever Active – March	429.00	
Felicitas Dixon – Main Hall, Pavilion	22.00	
	<u>785.00</u>	
Cheques issued		
Mark Blacktin	To fit two toilet rolls	30.00
Sports Courts	Moss kill and pressure washing of double courts	750.00
Wages	22.5 hours cleaning @ £8.45 per hour	390.13
HCC	cleaning materials 02/18 and 03/18	<u>198.73</u>
		<u>1368.86</u>
Cheques received		
Annabel Kirk	Donation	5.00
Victoria Hurley	Main Hall and Pavilion	45.00
Felicitas Dixon	Main Hall and Pavilion	22.00
Anna Lambert	Main Hall and Pavilion	52.50
Parish Council	NHB grant for CCTV installation costs	2778.00
Watton House	Meeting room	10.00
Philip Smith – Table Tennis	Main Hall	114.00
Joan Love	Pavilion and meeting room	<u>48.00</u>
Sports and Social Club	Use of Community Hall facilities	375.00
		<u>3449.50</u>

Parish Councillors agreed the payments.

- **12-monthly statement of accounts for the Parish Council and Community Hall for year ended 31st March 2018**

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 2018.

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 2017/18, will be presented at the Annual Parish meeting on 15th May.

Action: J. Allsop

- **PKF Littlejohn – external audit papers for year ending 31st March 2018**

PKF Littlejohn e-mailed, on 28th March, informing us of the details for the annual audit for the year ending 31st March 2018. The public inspection period starts on Monday 4th June and ends on Friday 13th July. The completed Annual Return and all relevant documentation needs to be sent to PKF Littlejohn by 11th June.

Action: J. Allsop

The Clerk said she would be submitting the Parish Council accounts for the year end 31/03/2018 to Stuart McCash for the internal audit within the next week.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Update Asset registers for 2017/18**

Mr. Filer said he was unable to update the Asset registers and would need to leave this this action to whoever takes on responsibility pf Budget and Finance Sub-Committee.

- **Microsoft software**

The Microsoft 365 software on the Parish Council’s Dell laptop automatically renewed at the beginning of April and payment of £59.99 was taken from the Clerk’s credit card. It was agreed to reimburse the Clerk accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Renewal of memberships for CDA for Herts, CPRE and CVS for Broxbourne and East Herts**

It was agreed to renew the annual subscriptions for CDA for Herts, CPRE and CVS for Broxbourne and East Herts.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Asset registers for 2017/18**

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

Agenda: 05.18

- **Chairmanship of Budget and Finance Sub-Committee**

Mr. Filer said that when he resigns as a Parish Councillor at the end of this meeting, a replacement Chairman will need to be found. The natural choice is either Mrs. McCash or Mrs. Stanley.

Mrs. McCash said that she and Mrs. Stanley had discussed the matter prior to this meeting and neither of them want to be chairman of Budget and Finance Sub-Committee. However, they were willing to be joint oversees for the coming year. Mrs. Stanley said that she did not feel she could do full credit to the position until she retires from fulltime work.

Specific items

c) Neighbourhood Plan

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering group presented to the Parish Council notes on policies that would form the basis for discussion at their planned public consultation scheduled for the 1st of May 2018.

e) New Website

Mr. Stock reported as follows.

- Prior to this meeting he e-mailed Parish Councillors informing them that his work and that of Mark Stewart (Beanebytes) on the new website was now complete. He also provided them with a temporary link, so they could preview the new website before its release later this week. All but three Parish Councillors responded to the e-mail and those who did made positive comments and were very happy with the structure appearance and content of the new website.
- He felt that we now have a website that meets our objectives and one that gives us a good foundation for future development as necessary.
- We still need to populate the site with more images, e.g., in the Gallery section where a mixture of old (past) and current (present) photographs would be a good objective.

Mr. Stock is yet to provide images for the Open Spaces and Walks section of the website (he has delayed this until there is better light and more greenery).

Action: D. Stock

- Beanebytes to be asked to go live with the new website before the end of this week. **Action: D. Stock**
- Our site will be down for a short period while the current website is removed and replaced by the new one. The Clerk had made an appropriate entry on the current website to warn users of the down-time.
- The Clerk met with Mark Stewart earlier today for a 'training session' re the new website. This went well.
 - Mark Stewart will provide any post-launch support, if/as required, at a rate of £30 per hour. (Note: Mark has agreed to provide the first 5 hours of support free of charge.)
 - The second payment for the work quoted for by Beanebytes is now due. Mr. Stock said that he himself had spent about five weeks working on the structure and content of the site and had many meetings with Beanebytes during the design and build process. During this period a number of issues needed to be resolved together with the need for unforeseen additional work, about which he had informed Mr. Smith and Mr. Meischke. The additional work amounted to £300 and it was agreed to pay a further invoice from Beanebytes accordingly.

It was acknowledged that Mark Stewart had done a good job on the website and we had developed a good working relationship.

- During the early-stage discussions about the new website much debate took place within the Working Group re the use or otherwise of the current logo. At that time Mr. Stock proposed (and it was agreed) that we should suspend such discussions until we had the new website in place; otherwise the subject of the logo would become an un-necessary distraction from the task in hand.
- The subject of the logo will be an agenda item for further discussion at the Parish Council meeting in May.

Agenda: 05/18

- The Clerk said that the News section of the website is set up as a blog and suggested that because both she and Dr. Waltham are responsible for uploading articles to the Parish Council's Facebook page, this should be the same for uploading articles to the News blog. Dr. Waltham was content with this suggestion. To proceed with this, Beanebytes has to set-up a separate access to the News section, although this will not give Dr. Waltham access to the rest of the website. **Action: J. Allsop**
- It was agreed that we now need to advertise the fact that we have a new website and it is available to view. Dr. Waltham to put an entry on Facebook. **Action: E. Waltham**
- The Clerk to prepare an entry for the Parish News and the Notice Boards. **Action: J. Allsop**
- Mrs. McCash, together with the other Parish Councillors, thanked Mr. Stock for the extensive time and effort he has put in to this task, and which has resulted in us having an excellent new website.

Community Hall Trustees

In the absence of Mr. Meischke, Dr. Waltham reported on the following item.

- **Installation of new ceiling lamps in the meeting room**
The new lights have been installed and a new battery fitted to the emergency light near the door.
- **Identify someone to monitor dog-fouling on the sportsfield**
Rosemary Brown is currently monitoring dog-fouling on the sportsfield.
- **Negotiate new electricity contract**
A new electricity contract has been negotiated via John Molnar of Business Utility Renewals Ltd.
The new contract starts on 26th April and is for a 2-year fixed contract with Pozitive Energy as follows.
 - Standing charge – 24 per day
 - Unit rate – 12.46 per kilowatt hour
- **E-mail all Parish Councillors the kitchen estimate**
Refer to item 5 b 16, Review of actions - On receipt, e-mail all Parish Councillors the kitchen estimate.
- **Arrange for repair work to the see saw when the weather improves**
This item is outstanding **Action: J. Meischke**
- **Floodlighting light timer fault**
D. P. Electrics have charged £150 to fit an external clock to the floodlighting timer which ensures that the floodlights are switched of at 22.30 regardless of how much time is left on the individual floodlighting meter boxes. This installation was approved by Parish Councillors via e-mail as the fault needed to be rectified as a matter of urgency.
- **Broadband report**
The broadband cabinet at the junction of Rivershill and the High Street has now been fully installed allowing residents in the area, including School Lane to have access to superfast broadband.
Mr. Meischke to be asked to investigate the cost of the Community Hall being connected to broadband. **Action: J. Meischke**
- **Arrange for Mark Blacktin to fit new waste bins on sports field**
Mark Blacktin has fitted the three hooded litterbins on the sportsfield.

Recreation and Amenities Sub-Committee

Mr. Knight reported on the following items.

- **Tennis Courts**
 - **Pressure washing**
Sports Courts have completed the pressure washing and moss killing and repaired a small divot in the surface tarmac. They have agreed to rectify the faulty mortar. Mr. Knight to chase them to ensure the work gets done. **Action: I. Knight**
 - **Replacing the double tennis court wire netting**
Mr. Knight e-mailed all Parish Councillors on 25th January 2018 with the following quotations to replace the netting on the double tennis courts to match that of the new one and to replace the posts and netting
 - **Only replace netting**

BB & C fencing	£2,300
Sports Courts	£4,736
St Neots	£4,221
Jarratt	did not quote
 - **Replace all posts plus new gates as well as netting**

BB & C fencing	£10,525
Sports Courts	£8,236
St Neots	£12,201
Jarratt	£16,703
- Parish Councillors agreed via e-mail to inform Sports Courts that they would be interested in pursuing their quotations to either replace the netting or replace the posts, plus new gates and netting, but in the meantime were applying for grant applications. As reported at the March Parish Council meeting the Community Hall was unsuccessful in obtaining a grant from Awards for All.
- Mr. Knight proposed that Sports Courts quotation of £8,236, to replace the posts, plus gates as well as netting be accepted and funded from the New Homes Bonus. This was agreed by all Parish Councillors

present at the meeting. A condition of accepting Sports Courts quotation is that the repair required to the concrete between the new and old courts be resolved to the Parish Council's satisfaction.

Mr. Knight to inform Sports Courts accordingly.

Action: I. Knight

- **Floodlighting bulb**

Floodlighting Limited have replaced the broken bulb.

- **Sportsfield**

- **Goal mouth repair**

Mr. Smith and Mr. Knight to inspect, but little work will be required as goal mouth area is in good shape.

Action: I. Knight/M. Smith

- **Cricket nets/Deed of Waiver - update**

Mr. Smith said that the Deed of Waiver is being very slow to progress. He agreed to chase Bidwells again for a progress report.

Action: M. Smith

The Cricket nets project is moving forward, and an order has been placed with OMG Trading Limited for the matting, cage and nets. A deposit payment of £3,241.25 needs to be made by the Parish Council, who will be the owner of the cricket net equipment as it is sited on their land. It was agreed to increase the New Homes Bonus grant towards this project from £3,000 to £3,241.25 to cover the deposit payment. The remaining costs will be covered from funds raised by the Cricket Club.

The Clerk to pay OMG Trading Limited accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

Environment Sub-Committee

Mrs. Dinnin reported on the following items.

- **P3 grant**

Mrs. Dinnin said that she had e-mailed Tom Goldsmith (HCC Rights of Way Officer) re our P3 grant for 2018/19, but to date had not received a reply. Mrs. Dinnin to chase.

Action: C. Dinnin

- **War Memorial**

Adam Welch has confirmed that he is willing to do any replanting work required to the War Memorial garden. He is scheduled to do his gardening maintenance work before the end of this month.

- **Allotments**

Mrs. Dinnin said that she had re-let seven allotment plots, but there are still four plots vacant.

It was agreed advertise the vacancies.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Oak tree by tennis Court**

Mrs. Dinnin said that she and Adam Welch had been unable to identify the branch that is in danger of falling from the Oak tree by tennis court. Dr. Waltham agreed to show Mrs. Dinnin the branch in question.

Action: E. Waltham

- **Willow on Lammas**

Mrs. Dinnin said she had obtained two quotations for work to the multi-stemmed Willow adjacent to the Mill Lane gate as follows

- Adam Welch £175
- Tree Smith same quote £450

Parish Councillors agreed to accept Adam Welch's quotation

Both contractors to be notified accordingly

Action: C. Dinnin/J. Allsop

Mrs. Hammon said that grass cutting contractors should be made aware of stones that could damage their mower or strimmer. Facebook are encouraging their members to paint rocks (stones) and hide them so others can find them, and this has become popular in the village. She and her children are enjoying finding stones in the village that other people have painted.

New Homes Bonus Sub-Committee

Mrs. Stanley said that East Herts Council have e-mailed the Clerk requesting the details of New Homes Bonus expenditures and future planned proposals.

The Parish Council has already agreed to the following funding for 2018/19

- All weather practice pitch for cricket £3,241.25
- New tennis court posts, fencing and gate £8,236.00

It was agreed to include the following item in future planned proposals.

- Scout Hut
- Alterations to the Community Hall car park and play area swings
- Conversion of Parish Council owned street lights to LED

The Clerk to complete and return the New Homes Bonus form to East Herts Council before the end of April.

Action: J. Allsop

b) Routine Reports

i) Emergency escape lighting tests and manual alarm call tests

Mr. Smith and Mr. Stock did the emergency escape lighting tests and manual alarm call testing directly before this meeting.

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.

iii) Weekly reports - Fire Inspection and shower tests

Nothing adverse to report.

iv) Health and Safety for village halls

Nothing adverse to report.

v) Monthly village-report

Mrs. Dinnin completed the report on 15th April.

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

- **Grass-** awaiting first cut of season and needs strimming around the play area.
- **Play area safety surface-** worn under big and small swings.
- **Large swings** – looking scruffy.
- **Weeds** – around Community Hall building. Mr. Smith and Mr. Meischke to arrange for these to be weed killed. **Action: M. Smith/J. Meischke**
- **Harry's bench** – slat broken and lose as before.
Mrs. Dinnin said she received a phone call today from Mrs. Lois Jones, Harry's mother, to say that the family would like the memorial seat replaced and offered £100 towards the cost.
- **Allotments-** not bad, hopefully now the weather is improving tenants will start cultivating their plots. There are two lots in particular that need extra attention. Mrs. Dinnin said she would monitor.
- **Dog waste bins**– lid broken/missing on the footpath 17 bin. Lid broken on bin beside the War Memorial.
- **War Memorial garden** – needs weeding. Adam Welch is scheduled to do the work before the end of the month.
- **Clothes bin for Mill Lane** – the air ambulance clothes bin has not been reinstated since they changed providers. The Clerk to investigate. **Action: J. Allsop**
- **Defibrillator** to be added to the monthly village-report. **Action: J. Allsop**

vi) Weekly sportsfield

Nothing adverse to report.

vii) Website/Facebook

- Launch of new website
- Defibrillator

Action: E. Waltham/J. Allsop

viii) Highway and Lighting faults

None.

ix) Dog fouling reports

None.

x) Police reports

Refer to item directly after 5 a, Minutes of the last meeting – Acceptance.

9. Correspondence received

a) Letter from Denis Filer

This item was discussed directly after item 11 – Items for the Parish News.

10. Village organisations

None.

11. Items for Parish News

The following items were identified for inclusion in the June 2018 issues of the Parish News.

- Launch of the new Watton-at-Stone website
- Installation of defibrillator

Action: J. Allsop/I. Knight

- **Letter from Denis Filer**

Mr. Smith read out Denis Filer's letter dated 17th April.

'As discussed with your earlier in the year, I am now submitting my letter of resignation from the Parish Council. My resignation will take effect after tonight's PC meeting in conformity with the procedure listed by Jane.

This is my 20th as a member of the Parish Council and I have certainly enjoyed the experience.

However, the time has come when I should leave and make room for a younger person.'

Parish Councillors expressed their gratitude for the work that Councillor Denis filer has done over the last 20 years and presented him with an engraved glass commemorative plaque. Mr. Filer thanked Parish Councillors and the Clerk for their support over the years. Mr. Smith remarked that it was particularly fitting that Parish Councillors were of one accord because they understand the commitment that is made by individuals to the service of the community.

The Clerk was instructed to inform East Herts Council of Mr. Filer's resignation to enable the process of either electing or co-opting a new Parish Councillor. If an election is not required, the Parish Council will aim to co-opt their new Parish Councillor at their May Parish Council meeting.

Action: J. Allsop

The meeting closed at 2135.

The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Tuesday 15th May 2018.