

## Zoom minutes of the Council meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> October 2020

<b>Present:</b>	Cllr. Michael Smith (Chairman)	Cllr. John Meischke (Vice-Chairman)
	Cllr. Stephen Block	Cllr. Christine Dinnin
	Cllr. Catherine Hammon (after 1930)	Cllr. Kay Jancey.
	Cllr. Ian Knight	Cllr. David Stock
	District Cllr. Sophie Bell	Clerk: Jane Allsop

### 1. Apologies for absence

Apologies: Cllr. Helen McCash and Cllr. Emma Waltham.

### 2. Public participation

None.

### 3. Chairman's/ Clerk's report

None.

### 4. Declaration of interests

None.

### 5. Minutes of the last meeting

#### a) Acceptance

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> September 2020**  
Parish Councillors agreed that the minutes be approved.

#### b) Review of actions

1. **Obtain quotation for repair of fence adjacent to the gate along the footpath to the Church:** completed.
2. **Send minute books to HCC for archiving:** outstanding. **Action: J. Allsop**
3. **Arrange for the disposal of the old acoustic screen:** outstanding. **Action: J. Meischke**  
Refer to item 8 a, Community Hall Trustees.
4. **Inspect cracks on Tennis court A**  
Refer to item 8 a, - Recreation and Amenities Sub-Committee.
5. **Inspect the play areas and safety surfaces and take action as required**  
Cllrs. Meischke and Block looked at the safety surface and had nothing to report over and above what is reported under 8 b iv, Monthly village-report.  
Cllr. Meischke said he hoped that any work required to the safety surface could wait until the play area layout is modified and the Community Hall car park area extended.

#### c) Action points resolved

1. Instruct David Payne to check on the level the paving slabs
2. Ask District Cllr. Bell to contact Clarion Housing re hedge by allotments
3. Arrange a Zoom meeting with Fairview New Homes
4. Give Cllrs. Smith, Meischke and Stock access to net NP Zoom meeting
5. Speak to the A602 team requesting a temporary crossing near the Methodist church
6. Ask David Payne to cut back hedge and tree behind the cricket screen to cricket shed and strimming work
7. Ask Mark Blacktin to repair gutter on car park side of Community Hall
8. Allow Hertford Shire Rotary Club use of portable floodlights
9. Purchase acoustic partition for Community Hall
10. Remove dead shrub in War Memorial garden and replace
11. Look up the details of when the light in the car park streetlamp was changed to LED
12. Accept Adam Welch's quotation to cut back the hedge on School Lane near the cricket shed
13. Request recycling clothes bin emptying
14. War Memorial hedge needs cutting and removal of encroaching vine and new plant
15. Contact Grassroots regarding work at War Memorial
16. Write article for October Parish News

#### d) Action points outstanding for more than two months

1. **Cut back the branches overhanging the footpath by the Ornate village sign:** outstanding.

**Action: M. Smith**

## 6. Planning

### a) Applications

The planning applications, items 6 a i to iii, were dealt with via e-mail and letters put through the doors of residents as and when required.

i) **Crumbs Bakery and Café, 119F High Street (3/20/1845/VAR)**

Variation of condition 1 (hours of opening) of planning permission ref: 3/18/0560/FUL (Retrospective change of use from A1 (Post office/Bakery) to A3 (café/restaurant): To permit the premises to open to the public for 7 days a week, from the hours of 0700 to 1900

ii) **Highfield Grove Farm Road, from Mill Lane to Gregory's Farm Dane End (3/20/1952/FUL)**

Erection of agricultural contractors' machinery storage building and associated hard standing to include 7 parking spaces

iii) **Crumbs Bakery and Café, 119F High Street (3/20/1845/VAR)**

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iv) **Highfield Grove Farm Road, from Mill Lane to Gregory's Farm Dane End (3/20/1952/FUL)**

Erection of agricultural contractors' machinery storage building and associated hard standing to include 7 parking spaces

Cllr. Smith commented on this application which is to add a machinery storage barn adjacent to two other barns in this area. Although these barns will be highly visible along High Elms Lane, he suggested a no comment response. Parish Councillors were in agreement.

The Clerk to write to the planning department accordingly.

**Action: J. Allsop**

### b) Decisions

i) **Land to the rear of 2 Rectory Lane (3/20/1381/FUL)**

Demolition of half of existing garage & erection of 2-bedroom chalet bungalow with 2 off-street car parking spaces

-EHDC permission refused

ii) **Highfields, Whempstead Road, Whempstead (3/20/1564/FUL)**

Erection of dwelling and detached double garage, demolition of existing dwelling

-EHDC permission refused

## 7. Reports

### a) Neighbourhood plan and Gains Committee – progress reports

Cllr. Smith provided the following report.

A very useful zoom with NP last night. Generally speaking there was acceptance that we should firm up the much talked about aspirations of achieving the site from Woodhall for football and the wildlife conservation area from the Ryan family. There was some discussion as to whether or not we should approach Messrs Ryan directly or via Fairview. In the end it was agreed that Fairview be pressed on the issue but that one way or another it should be resolved satisfactorily by the time Regulation 14 goes viral. Cllr. Waltham suggested that the Parish Council take a more active role in the delivery of benefits and I agree that should be the case, after all it will be the Parish Council that signs off the plan and will be held to account.

The Woodhall plan was presented as much as it could be, given the modest amount of detail presented by them via zoom. Generally, it was welcomed but there would have to be some modelling to assure that rooflines planned for bungalows beyond the 65 metre contour would not be visible or intrude into the expected view lines.

Similarly, Fairview was to be challenged on the positioning of what would appear to be 2.5 story dwellings on the high ground adjacent to Walkern Road and the bypass considering that it could obstruct the overarching view and in particular the wooded horizon towards Datchworth.

Also, they were to be asked to give more detail concerning traffic management on Walkern Road which was somewhat glossed over in the zoom meeting. It was agreed that we might contact HCC highways to see if they can enlighten us.

The aim is to have regulation 14 ready for publication by November the 16th. I personally am of the view that as much certainty as possible should be given to the benefits action plan as Reg. 14 will be our Statement of Intent and will signal to the developers that we are preparing for submission.

We also considered the old doctor's site at Gt. Innings. Despite this site being available for parking for 50 years there seems a marked reluctance to use it. It seems that in general people want to park as near to their homes as possible irrespective of the consequences, e.g. the obstruction of sight lines for road users and pedestrians and the general degradation of grassed kerbs.

Cllrs. Meischke, Waltham and myself met there to take a closer look and given that EHDC have an interest in the site for development suggested that two dwellings and some parking might be an appropriate use and this would trigger a closer look at the current practice of parking on the bend. If parking were to be restricted it could be allocated to the houses most affected within the redevelopment. This will fit in with the NP assertion that brown field sites will be developed first and provide some parking and the policy has been altered to reflect this.

**b) Traffic in the High Street**

Cllr. Jancey had nothing new to report. The situation remains the same as last month.

**c) Footpaths**

- **High Street Footpaths** – report provided by Cllr. Block.

Nothing new to add regarding the High Street. Still waiting for the back log of work to clear although I have noticed some white paint marks on the pavements around the village. Hopefully, an indication of imminent improvements.

- **Hazeldell Footpaths** - report provided by Cllr. Stock

Some of the post micro-surfacing corrective work has now been done.

However, the work carried out on the stretch of footpath adjacent to 84 took place before any consideration was given to the resident's complaints about flooding. Also, it has been noted by many that the corrective work to this stretch of footpath appears to be unsatisfactory because the undulating surface and related issues remain very much as they were before. Cllr. Stock took this up with some of the interested parties and suggested a site meeting (e.g. involving the resident involved, County Cllr. Crofton, staff from HCC and the Contractor) to resolve the issues plus the flooding problems. Cllr. Crofton informed Cllr. Stock that such a meeting had been declined and told him that he had subsequently highlighted the various issues to those responsible. He is also in contact with the resident of 84. It now seems to be a case of 'wait and see'.

Cllr. Meischke said he had received two complaints about weeds growing through the newly laid micro-surfacing on the footpaths. Cllr. Stock said he is fully aware of the situation and had highlighted the problem during his previous site meeting with HCC and the Contractors, and also subsequently. He has been assured that weed killer is to be applied to the footpaths in due course; probably as part of the next weed-killing programme within the village. His own personal feeling is that effective weed-killing should have taken place just prior to the works and/or soon after the micro-surfacing when the problems presented themselves.

Reported in December 2019, the long-standing issue of the blocked drain outside 84 has still not been resolved, although it has now been inspected again and marked-up for urgent attention.

In summary, 'Hazeldell footpaths' remain as work in progress.

Following on from the above, Cllr. Stock was happy to report a more successful outcome. A Hazeldell resident contacted him recently re the possibility of replacing two trees lost from grass verges outside of his property with new ones. Cllr. Stock visited the resident and agreed that it was a good idea and would be pleased to support his request. He put him in touch with Cllr. Crofton who was later able to confirm that two saplings would be planted later this year.

Cllr. Hammon joined the Zoom meeting.

**d) Sports and Social Club**

Cllr. Meischke said this item is remaining on the agenda as a reminder that Cllr. Knight needs to talk to affiliated sports groups about the future of the Sports and Social Club.

Cllr. Knight said he did not propose to make any changes at the moment.

**e) A602 improvement scheme update**

Cllr. Meischke said that Katy Isaac (Assistant Consultant, Engagement, HCC) e-mailed him this morning, to say that she would send an update re questions raised before the Parish Council meeting tonight.

However, this has not been forthcoming. Cllr. Meischke was waiting for a response to four questions raised including our request for a dog bin near the entrance to Watton House and a temporary crossing in the High Street near the Methodist church. Although the latter has mostly been resolved now that the traffic diversions in the High Street have ceased.

**f) Flooding in the village**

Cllr. Jancey provided the following report

'Ringway arranged and carried out a CCTV investigation of the highway drainage system on 8th October and then returned the following week to clear gullies and again check CCTV.

Cllr. Jancey asked Cllr. Ken Crofton for an update and received the following e-mail response on 26<sup>th</sup> October.

'Thank you for your e-mail. I am pleased to say I received a considered update from Ringway a few days ago after their extensive CCTV drainage investigation. They have concluded that the drainage system is flowing freely and that there are no blockages. Regrettably, that confirms the understanding that there is a water capacity issue resulting from all the house building in Hazeldell and surrounds during storm situations.

Hertfordshire County Council is the lead flood authority for the county and this further investigation is now in their hands and underway.

Be aware this is a complex issue and not a speedy process. I have asked officers to keep me advised.

## g) Liaise with Louise Wood re litterpicking

Cllr. Meischke said that Louise Woods's daughter has done three lots of litter picking with her Mother. The bags of waste were then left near the War Memorial and collected by EHDC's contractors.

The daughter plans to do more litter collection and write up a report of her experiences, which will go towards her Duke of Edinburgh Award.

## 8. Reports

## a) Sub-Committees

## Budget &amp; Finance

Cllrs. Block, McCash and the Clerk provided reports on the following items.

## • Monthly accounts

Watton-at-Stone Parish Council			
Petty Cash – Receipts		Petty cash - Payments	
3 Allotment holders – rent	58.20	BT phone line + calls to 28.07.20	27.29
John Fiddler & Jason Clay	0.60	BT phone line + calls to 29.08.20	26.49
Paul Bunyan – Donation	0.60		<b>53.78</b>
	<b>59.40</b>		
Payments			
Jeff Skidmore	Watton Green ditch and hedge. Sportsfield / Church Walk		1,068.00
HMRC	Tax & NI		303.60
Jeff Skidmore	Watton Green & the Lammas flail cut July Plus riverbank		1,866.00
Grassroots	War Memorial maintenance - June 2020		48.00
David Payne	Mow/strim around Com Hall car park - 1.5 hours @£15		22.50
Frank Cooper	pitch marking on 29/09/20		42.00
Frank Cooper	2 grass cuts at £60 per cut plus VAT		144.00
Knudge Limited	1st Call signs - 2 x tennis court priority usage times		36.00
EAS Transport Planning Ltd	Mill Lane re access to proposed football facilities		2,209.24
Jane Allsop	BT phone calls to 28.09.20		26.86
Perfect Ground Solutions	Sportsfield work		1,149.00
Wages and salaries	September and October salaries and wages		2453.94
			<b>9,369.14</b>
Receipts			
32 Allotment holders	Allotment rent 2020/2021		1020.02
Sports and Social Club	Donation towards football pitch line marking		35.00
Cricket Club	Donations towards work to cricket square		975.00
			<b>2030.02</b>

## Watton-at-Stone Community Hall

Petty Cash – Receipts		Petty Cash - Payments	
Active E.H. – Table Tennis	172.00	None	
Floodlighting - donations	200.00		
Tony Silverstri - Yoga	24.00		
	<b>396.00</b>		
Payments			
Wages	August and September		719.80
Rap Industries Ltd	acoustic panel + £30 net delivery charge		223.20
HCC	2 invoices £21.24 + £10.30		31.54
British Gas	Electricity		75.20
HMRC	VAT return		71.20
Rosemary Brown	16 hours cleaning @ £9.05 per hour		144.80
BHIB	Trustees indemnity insurance		379.00
British Gas			75.89
			<b>1575.83</b>
Receipts			
COIF	Interest (July to September 2020)		0.65
Ildiko Imre Kada	Meeting room (5 sessions – 08 to 12.2020)		120.00
Santander	bank interest		0.08
Laura Jeffs - Pilates	Main Hall - 1-week September 2020		12.00
Paul Sutton - Zumba	Main Hall		239.40
Peter Khera - Karate	Main Hall		226.10
Ben Talbott – fitness on field	Toilets and changing room use - 10		70.00
Watton Youth Club	Main Hall and Pavilion hire 01-03.2020		76.50
Laura Jeffs - Pilates	Main Hall - 4 weeks October 2020		48.00
Watton Youth Football Club	Main Hall		104.00
Janine Gildersleve - Bounce	Main Hall		567.62
			<b>1464.35</b>

Cllr. Blocks highlighted the main receipts and payments. Overall, a busy few weeks, lots of improvement works around the village and encouraging to see bookings in the Community Hall on the increase.

Parish Councillors approved the payments.

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

Cllr. Block had no comments to add to the 6-month statement of accounts. All Parish Councillors present at the meeting accepted these accounts.

- **6-monthly inspection of accounts**

Cllr. McCash carried-out the six-month inspection of the Parish Council and Community Hall accounts on 23<sup>rd</sup> October and they were in good order.

A copy of Cllr. McCash's reports is included in the Parish Council and Community Hall accounts for 2020/21.

- **Request for Budget items for 2021/2022**

Cllr. Block reminded Parish Councillors to give the Clerk their budget items for 2021/22 as soon as possible.

**Action: Parish Councillors**

He said that he and the Clerk hope to put the draft budget together in the couple of weeks and then he would arrange a meeting of the Budget and Finance Sub-Committee towards the end of November.

Cllr. Dinnin said that Adam Welch's three-year strimming, flowerbed maintenance and leaf picking work is up for renewal in 2021. She agreed to look at the schedule of works to see if it needs updating and then e-mail it to all Parish Councillors for their approval.

**Action: C. Dinnin**

It was agreed to only ask for Adam Welch to quote for the work, as he provides a very satisfactory quality of work. If his quotation is too high, then other contractors will be asked to quote.

**Action: C. Dinnin**

Parish Councillors agreed that it is difficult to find reliable contractors to do scheduled work in the village.

- **E-mail from PKF re 2019/2020 audit**

The auditors PKF e-mailed on 5<sup>th</sup> October, requested the following information.

“Thank you for submitting your AGAR Part 3 and supporting documentation for our review. I have started reviewing the information and have the following queries:

- I notice that there is a significant period from the date of approval of Section 2 of the AGAR (16/06/20) to the start of the period for the exercise of public rights (31/08/20). Please could you provide an explanation for this significant gap, along with any evidence that this delay has been explained to the public. We fully appreciate the difficulties arising as a result of coronavirus restrictions.
- Variance analysis: please could you provide exact figures to accompany the written explanation of reserves figure being more than twice that of Box 2?”

The Clerk spoke to both Cllrs. Block and McCash and replied to PKF on 14<sup>th</sup> October and replied as follows.

- I misunderstood your extension of public rights period and therefore thought that you were suggesting that this was done later to safeguard both the public and Clerk from COVID. We had not long come out of Covid lockdown when we approved the document.
- As requested, please find attached completed 'Explanation of High Reserves' form. I also attach a copy of our New Homes bonus accounts for the year 2019/2020.

PKF Have acknowledged receipt and said that team members who raised the issues will review the Clerk's response.

- **Trustees indemnity insurance cover**

Follow receipt of a circular e-mail from our insurers BHIB, it came to light that the Trustees ceased to have indemnity insurance cover back in 2015 when the Parish Council and Community Hall policies were combined.

A quotation for Trustees indemnity cover was obtained from BHIB for £379 (include £15 admin fees). Parish Councillors approved the purchase of the Trustees indemnity insurance via e-mail. The Clerk confirmed that the cover runs from 20<sup>th</sup> October 2020 to 19<sup>th</sup> October 2021. The Parish Council to reimburse the Community Hall the £379.

**Action: J. Allsop**

- **Watton-pc.org.uk - website hosting**

SiteGround's webhosting of [www.watton-pc.org.uk](http://www.watton-pc.org.uk) is due for renewal on 21 November 2020.

The last three-year renewal was in 2017 at cost £175.14 excluding VAT.

Their prices are now as follows.

- 3-years - £302.04 ex VAT (8.39 per month)
- 2-years - £230.16 ex VAT (£9.59 per month)
- 1-year - £143.88 ex VAT (£11.99 per month)

As the Neighbourhood plan hosting is £60 ex VAT per year from SiteMaker (standard annual moonfruit) on the advice of Cllr. Smith, the Clerk contacted Mark from Beanebytes. Mark advised the Clerk that the Neighbourhood Plan hosting cannot be compared to the Parish Council's as they have a fixed page website.

Mark then e-mailed her as follows.

“Having now gained access to the account, I can see exactly what your hosting provisions are.

Although on the face of it, the renewal fees seemed quite high, I can see that you have the following important attributes on your account:

- 1) Free SSL certificate - (keeps data secure - padlock sign beside website address)
- 2) 1GB Web Space
- 3) Free Daily backups
- 4) Free Cloudflare CDN - (speeds up data over the web)

Normally you would not get these components with a budget/cheaper hosting plan and you would ultimately have to pay additional fees. The SSL certificate alone would cost you an additional £60.

And the 1GB webspace is a definite bonus, particularly with the amount of files you have to store on the server.

As such I think you are better off staying with SiteGround. As mentioned earlier though, you can renew your subscription annually or bi-annually.”

Parish Councillors agreed to purchase a 3-year hosting with SiteGround.

**Action: J. Allsop**

## Community Hall Trustees

Cllr. Meischke reported on the following items.

- **Mobile floodlights**

Cllr. Meischke said that two of the batteries for the mobile floodlights are not working properly. One lasts about an hour and the other does not work at all. Bryan Allsop is investigating the problem and looking into the possibility of obtaining alternative batteries as the ones supplied by Ram Rugby cost £330 (plus VAT)

Cllr. Meischke has asked the Football Club if they could apply for some grant funding to pay for replacement batteries.

- **Purchase of partition/grant**

Cllr. Meischke is in the process of completing a grant application for two acoustic panel dividers. The maximum grant available is £300. Cllr. Bell has signed the form endorsing the application and Cllr. Meischke will submit the completed forms to EHDC before the end of the month.

- **Car park light**

The car park light, which has been flashing for several months, is still awaiting replacement parts, which D. P. Electrics are sourcing. The delay he is told is because of COVID-19 restrictions. He had hoped that as the equipment failed before it was two years old, it would be replaced under warranty. He said that the problem with this light is not helping with the current vandalism and laughing gas canister problems.

- **Outside lighting**

The timing for the outside lighting has been adjusted due to the time of year.

- **Guttering / Exterior window maintenance estimates**

Mark Blacktin has been asked to quote for the repair of the guttering. The new roof surface means that when it rains the water tracks down the room much faster and therefore the guttering needs all its joints sealed.

Mark Blacktin has also been asked to supply a quotation for painting the exterior windows and doors.

- **Vandalism**

Youngsters were witnessed throwing mud at the Community Hall. This was reported to PCSO Sally Brooks by a member of the public as well as the Clerk. The names of the culprits were also reported to the police. Cllr. Meischke said that the youngsters also made a mess of the outside toilets by wetting toilet and hand towel paper and throwing it all over the place. He said he helped the cleaners remove the mess.

It was agreed that as no actual damage was done and Cllr. Meischke had managed to remove the clumps of mud by knocking them off with a long pole when they were dry, no further action be taken.

On Thursday morning (22<sup>nd</sup> October) Rosemary Brown picked up 43 laughing gas cylinders in the Community Hall car park and on 25<sup>th</sup> a further three. Cllr. Meischke had a call from Hayley Daniels on Sunday 25<sup>th</sup>, who reported lots of little gas cylinders at the Great Innings play area. Cllr. McCash reported the first incident to PCSO Sally Brooks. PCSO Brooks was made aware of the second incident via Facebook.

Cllr. Meischke said he checked the CCTV footage and found a car arriving at the Community Hall car park around 2230 on both evenings. PCSO Brooks has been informed.

- **Toilet cleaning**

Cllr. Meischke said that the Community Hall are incurring extra costs due to Covid-19. The outside toilets are being cleaned daily by H. D. Cleaners.

Parish Councillors agreed that it would be difficult to justify closing the outside toilets and if they are kept open, they must be kept clean. These facilities are well used by members of the public, which include people using the sportsfield and play areas, as well as passing trades people.

Parish Councillors agreed that the outside toilet facilities will remain open and cleaned on a daily basis.

### **Recreation and Amenities Sub-Committee**

Cllr. Knight reported on the following item.

- **Tennis courts**

The surface of all the tennis courts have been inspected. The painted surface is in poor condition on all the courts but much worse on the double court.

It was agreed that repainting the surface would help to keep the surface together and prolong its life and as a minimum the double court should have this work done.

Cllr. Knight to obtain quotations for repainting the courts.

**Action: I. Knight**

### **Environment Sub-Committee**

Cllr. Dinnin provided the following report.

- **Allotments**

Renewals have been sent out; most people have now paid. Three allotments have been given up and I will start relocating these plots when I finally know if everyone has paid.

Cllr. Jancey asked how many people were on the waiting list. Cllr. Dinnin said there are currently seven people and four vacant plots. She said that the overgrown plots mentioned in Cllr. Block's monthly village-report are the ones waiting to be re-let.

The fence by gate on footpath 21 has now been repaired.

- **Hedge and Grass cutting**

- Adam has done the extra work on School Lane. Owner of 9 Rectory Lane has been in touch with the Clerk and said he is arranging to get the holly hedge on School Lane cut.

- Pat Brett's hedge needs cutting, and I spoke to him and he is happy to have it cut, not sure what the previous financial arrangements for this are.

Cllr. Dinnin to ask Adam Welch to quote for doing the work.

**Action: C. Dinnin**

- Grass cutting has all been done on the Lammas and Watton Green.

- **Footpath** - Old School Orchard to Hockerill pump slope needs resurfacing and the pump slope needs attention as tree roots are growing through the surface causing trip hazards. Cllr. Stock suggested that the Parish Council report this direct to Cllr. Ken Crofton.

**Action: M. Smith**

- **Traffic on High street**

Cllr. Hammon said that there is a morning parking issue in the High Street, when the 'no parking' restrictions are in place, outside the Bull pub and Crumbs area. However, the parking lay-by is often not in use. She asked if Cllr. Bell could arrange for the traffic warden to visit the area to alleviate this problem.

Cllr. Bell agreed to do so.

**Action: S. Bell**

- **War Memorial**

Cllr. Stock has spoken to Ben Storey and asked that Grassroots visit the War Memorial site on Friday 8 November and ensure that it is in the best condition for Remembrance Sunday. Ben has confirmed that this will happen. (Note that in accordance with the Management Plan this is the last scheduled visit of the year.) He also discussed the War Memorial Management Plan for 2021/22 with Ben and was pleased to report that Grassroots are happy to continue with the work during the coming year and at the same price as for 2020/21.

Cllr. Stock proposed that because of this, and the satisfactory nature of the work carried out by Grassroots to-date, we accept the quotation. This was agreed by those at the meeting.

Grassroots to be informed of the Parish Council's acceptance of their quotation for 2021/22.

**Action: D. Stock**

The Clerk, Cllrs. Dinnin and Block to be provided with a copy of the quotation from Grassroots.

**Action: D. Stock**

## **b) Routine Reports**

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

Cllr. Meischke continues to inspect the hall regularly including running the water every 2-3 days to prevent the risk of legionnaires disease.

- ii) **Gas and electricity meter readings**  
Cllr. Meischke gives the Clerk gas and electricity meter readings at the end of each month and she uploads these readings to the providers websites.
- iii) **Weekly reports - Fire Inspection and shower tests**  
Done.
- iv) **Monthly village-report**  
Cllr. Block completed the report on 18<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2020.  
A copy of the report has been e-mailed to all Parish Councillors.
- **Play area Safety surface** – wear under large swings and bits around climbing frame.
  - **Palace Fortress** – some slight damage to wood section.
  - **Crazy Daisy** – Top missing. – this has gone missing in the past and been replaced. It was agreed not to replace it on this occasion, but review the situation when the play and car parking areas are being upgraded.
  - **External toilet door** – could do with painting.
  - **Tennis court surface** – some crack in Court A, leaves around fence and some weeds between courts.
  - **Allotment footpaths** – some in need of attention.
  - **Allotments under cultivation** - one or two look neglected.
  - **Culvert in Mill Lane** – very overgrown.
  - **Litterbins – Footpath 17/Church Lane** - overflowing, checked again and now empty.
  - **War Memorial** – a few weeds but generally very good.
  - **Generally** – the village looks very good.
- v) **Weekly sportsfield-report**  
None.
- vi) **Weekly defibrillator inspection**  
Cllr. Block inspected the defibrillator whilst carrying out the monthly village-report, and all was in good order.  
Cllr. Hammon continues to do regular checks.
- vii) **Website/Facebook**  
Refer to final item under 8 a, Budget and Finance Sub-Committee -Watton-pc.org.uk - website hosting.  
Cllr. Stock said that during some of his 'lockdown-walks' he had taken various pictures in and around the village and will give a selection to the Clerk for inclusion in the Gallery section of the website. He feels that this section has not been expanded to keep it fresh and of interest, and therefore encouraged Councillors (and anyone else) to do the same if they had any pictures they think would be suitable.
- viii) **Highway and Lighting faults**  
Nothing to report.
- ix) **Dog fouling reports**  
Cllr. Meischke said that the dog bin in Mill Lane is down.  
Cllr. Block said that the bin does not need a new post just refixing to the post. This was caused by vandalism or accidentally damage that has not been reported. He has asked Mark Blacktin to inspect and quote for repairing.
- x) **Police reports**  
PCSO Sally Brooks e-mailed her police report to the Clerk Sally on 23<sup>rd</sup> October. This report has been e-mailed to all Parish Councillors.

## 9. Correspondence received

- **Charging point for electric cars**  
Cllr. Meischke said that in a recent e-mail that went on circulation, he read about the provision of electric point for cars at village halls. After discussion on the pros and cons, Parish Councillors agreed that Cllr. Meischke should investigate the installation of electric car charging point at the Community Hall and report back to the Parish Council. **Action: J. Meischke**
- **E-mail from Janet Ilott**  
All Parish Councillors have been forwarded an e-mail (dated 25<sup>th</sup> October) from Janet Ilott, who has lived in the village for many years. Every year she helps deliver Christmas dinners to homes alone run from The Sele School, but for obvious reasons this will not be happening this year. She suggests organising a meals-on-wheels on Christmas Eve. Put out a cry for people to donate any form of food products or presents and approach local shops for donations and pre-packaged meals for families to reheat. She said that we have always been a village that pulls together when needed and feels this could be done in a social distance way.

Parish Councillors agreed that although they would support such a venture in any way they could, the Parish Council should not be the one to organise it. Cllr. Meischke said that he and a group of Rotarians had recently delivered cream teas to 90 people in this area, because his wife was unable to run her annual charity tea party. He said doing something for Christmas was very achievable.

It was agreed that the Parish Council contact the people who led the team of volunteers during lockdown earlier this year to see if they are interested in taking this forward. Cllr. Waltham to be asked to do this.

**Action: E. Waltham**

It was also suggested that the both the Parish and Methodist Churches may be interested in being involved. The Methodist Church have the contact details for those who used to attend Luncheon Club before lockdown in March.

## 10. Village organisations

None.

## 11. Items for Parish News

The following items were identified for inclusion in the December 2020 issue of the Parish News.

- Re-opening of Forever active
- Library opening times

The Clerk to submit articles to the Parish News.

**Action: J. Allsop**

### • Report by District Councillor Sophie Bell

Cllr. Sophie Bell reported on the following items.

#### • Mill site

Unfortunately, EHDC do not think it is feasible for them to purchase the Mill Lane site. However, it is currently for sale as a commercial enterprise, but being marketed at too high a price considering the work that is required. If it does not sell, EHDC may put pressure to put a compulsory purchase order on it.

#### • Block of garages at Hockerill

There have been a lot of complaints about parking at the garages in Hockerill. Many of them need painting to make them look less tatty. Also, there is an issue of triple parking in front of some of the garages causing some residents not to be able to access their garages at all. A lot of the garages are being sub-let, which is against the tenancy regulations, including to people who do not actually live in Hertfordshire, let alone Watton-at-Stone. Some people seem to have control of multiple garages (up to 4) which they are sub-letting.

Clarion Housing were considering tearing down some of the garages in Great Innings and turning the area into a car park to help alleviate some of the parking problems. However, they decided not to do this because asbestos was found in the garages and the cost of demolition was around £400,000. Clarion Housing might consider removing the garages at Hockerill instead to alleviate the current parking problem. However, as the garages were probably built around the same time as those in Great Innings, they may have the same asbestos problem. Cllr. Bell will keep the Parish Councillors updated.

Cllr. Dinnin asked if part of the grass bank could be made into a lay-by for parking. Cllr. Bell said she had, in the past, spoken to Cllr. Ken Crofton who was not hopeful that this could be done. The grass bank she believed is owned by EHDC as they do the maintenance for it. Some Parish Councillors said this land was rumoured to be owned by Cambridge University. Cllr. Bell agreed to investigate.

**Action: S. Bell**

Cllr. Jancey thanked Cllr. Bell for organising the Halloween trail, which will take place on Friday 30<sup>th</sup> October. Cllr. Bell said that if it is successful, she will consider do another one for Christmas.

Cllr. Meischke thanked Cllr. Bell for expediting getting the blocked drains in School Lane cleared last weekend. Thames Water failed to come out to resolve the problem until Cllr. Bell intervened. Cllr. Bell said that she was informed that the blockage was due to a ruptured pipe.

**The meeting closed 2035.**

**The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2020.**