

Minutes of the Zoom Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 20th April 2021

Present:	Cllr. Michael Smith (Chairman)	Cllr. John Meischke (Vice-Chairman)
	Cllr. Stephen Block	Cllr. Christine Dinnin
	Cllr. Catherine Hammon	Cllr. Ian Knight
	Cllr. Kay Jancey	Cllr. Helen McCash
	Cllr. David Stock	Cllr. Emma Waltham
	Clerk: Jane Allsop	

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies: District Cllr. Sophie Bell.

2. Public participation

None.

3. Chairman's/ Clerk's report

Cllr. Smith said that he would like to take item 7 b, Neighbourhood plan and Benefits Committee – progress reports, under exclusion of press and public and as the final item on the agenda.

This was agreed by all Parish Councillors by a show of hands.

4. Declaration of interests

Cllrs. McCash declared a pecuniary interest in item 8 a, Budget and Finance Sub-Committee - Internal and external auditors for the Parish Council and Community Hall accounts for the year 2020/21 (Immediate Family).

5. Minutes of the last meeting

a) Acceptance

- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 16th March 2021**
Parish Councillors agreed that the minutes be approved.

b) Review of actions

1. Inspect the Community Hall roof during heavy rain for any leaks

Cllrs. Smith and Meischke are still waiting for heavy rain to carry out this inspection.

Action: J. Meischke/M. Smith

2. Inspect the wall at entrance to Willowdene and decide what action is needed

Cllr. Smith said that following inspection of the damaged brick wall, it was agreed this was a safety issue and residents living at Willowdene should be asked to contact their freeholders. The following letter was hand delivered to four residents of Willowdene on 9th April.

‘It has been brought to the Parish Council's attention that the perimeter wall of the Willowdene development adjoining the bridge parapet wall is severely cracked and bulging into the footpath.

We understand that maintenance is jointly managed by the freeholders and ask that they be made aware of the problem before it escalates and becomes a safety issue.’

No responses have been received to date.

Purchase felt backing for inside of the notice boards

This item is outstanding, the Clerk said she is waiting for the person who deals with the Tennis Club notice board to contact her before she proceeds.

Action: J. Allsop

c) Action points resolved

1. Give Clerk a copy of the garden waste leaflets
2. Write to planning department re 16 High Street (3/21/0610/HH)
3. If required, contact HCC for an update on the Hazeldell footpaths
4. Arrange for the Parish Council accounts to be submitted for internal audit
5. **Arrange for the Community Hall accounts be submitted for external audit:** outstanding. **Action: J. Allsop**
6. E-mail Parish Councillors amended Budget and Finance minutes
7. E-mail changes to allotment tenancy agreement to Cllr. Dinnin
8. Forward updated tenancy agreement to all Parish Councillors for approval
9. Send new tenancy agreements to all allotment holders for signing
10. **Produce laminated notice re trail bikers and put up on the Lammas bank**
Cllr. Dinnin did not put up a sign as it was then far too wet for any bicycles to use this area. She looked again today and now it is so dry no tyre marks were visible. No further action required at this time.
11. Contact Fank Cooper re sportsfield crass cutting
12. Inspect condition of bench by the Ornate village sign
13. Write to Highways re work to Milestone outside 138 High Street
14. Write to Headmaster of Heath Mount School re parking in the High Street
15. Give Cllr. Smith a copy of the ECHO poster, so he can put it up in Whempstead

6. Planning

a) Applications

The following planning applications were dealt with via e-mail and letters put through the doors of residents as and when required.

i) **1 Watton House (3/21/0776/HH)**

Demolition of detached garage and side entrance way; erection of two storey side extension; loft conversion with roof lights to rear; alterations to fenestration and creation of front entrance way with porch
Parish Councillors agreed the following response which has been e-mailed to the planning department.

‘The Parish Council takes on board the reasons for refusal of an earlier planning application concerning this property but believes this to be an acceptable compromise for Green Belt development.’

ii) **Hilltop, Gregorys Farm (3/21/0806/FUL)**

Change of use from holiday lettings to single residential dwelling and change of use of land to residential curtilage (retrospective)

Parish Councillors agreed the following response which has been e-mailed to the planning department.

‘The Parish Council does not object to the principal of this change of use but that no further dwellings are created by subdivision or new build on this historic site.’

iii) **18 Lammas Road (3/21/0579/HH)**

Front ground single storey side and front extension. Alterations to the front ground floor fenestrations and door

Parish Councillors agreed a no comment response and the planning department were advised accordingly.

iv) **Gregorys Farm (3/21/0750/FUL)**

Timber framed garden office outbuilding and proposed landscape works for recessed swimming pool, recessed plant room, outdoor kitchen and dining area, seating areas, low level garden walls, terraced planting beds, fencing, amendments to garden wall, oil storage area and bins store area

Parish Councillors agreed a no comment response and the planning department were advised accordingly.

v) **Gregorys Farm (3/21/0751/LBC)**

Timber framed garden office outbuilding and proposed landscape works for recessed swimming pool, recessed plant room, outdoor kitchen and dining area, seating areas, low level garden walls, terraced planting beds, fencing, amendments to garden wall, oil storage area and bins store area

Parish Councillors agreed a no comment response and the planning department were advised accordingly.

b) Decisions

i) **14 Lammas Road (3/21/0185/HH)**

Replacement bay window to front elevation. Part two storey, part single storey rear extension. New first floor side window openings, garage conversion and alterations to fenestration -EHDC permission granted

7. Reports

a) Report from District Councillor Sophie Bell

Cllr. Bell sent her apologies but did not provide a report.

b) Neighbourhood plan and Benefits Committee – progress reports

This item to be discussed at the end of the meeting under ‘exclusion of press and public’.

c) Footpaths

Cllr. Block provided the following report.

• High Street footpaths

County Councillor Ken Crofton has stated that a tentative date of circa May 7th has been allocated to re-start the improvements along the High Street and Great Innings.

Cllr. Stock provided the following report.

• Hazeldell Footpaths

The contractor revisited to finish the micro-surfacing of the areas not completed during the previous visit to do so. Unfortunately, a small area (outside of 82) was missed even though it was adjacent to a larger area that was completed (outside of 86/84). Cllr. Stock contacted HCC to inform them of this and asked what action could be taken to resolve the issue, and also to establish when weedkiller is to be applied to the footpaths. HCC is to get back to him in due course.

d) Parish Council meeting dates

Cllr. Smith said he would be away on holiday for the Parish Council meeting scheduled for the 20th July. He asked if Parish Councillors would agree to changing both the June and July meetings, so they are the 4th Tuesday of the month instead of the 3rd. Namely: 22nd June and 27th July. Parish Councillors agreed. The Clerk to change the meeting dates on the website.

Action: J. Allsop**e) Sports and Social Club**

Cllr. Meischke said this item is on the agenda as a reminder and has been delayed due to Covid restrictions. He said he would get into discussion with Cllr. Knight in the near future. This item to remain on the agenda.

Agenda: 05/2021**f) A602 improvement scheme**

Cllr. Meischke asked for this item to be on the April 2021 agenda as a reminder to chase the A602 team about the installation of a dog bin just passed the Watton House entrance, the new footpath from the roundabout into the village and the village gateway.

He said that these were non-urgent items, but he would get in contact with the A602 team before our May Parish Council meeting.

Action: J. Meischke**8. Reports****a) Sub-Committees****Budget & Finance**

Cllr. Block reported on the following items.

- Monthly accounts**

Watton-at-Stone Parish Council		
Petty Cash – Receipts		Petty cash - Payments
None		None
Payments		
Wages and salaries	March 2021	1330.63
HMRC	Tax & Ni -October - December 2020	269.13
Bidwells	Sportsfield extension Glebe rent	125.00
Govresources Ltd	Neighbourhood plan	1,800.00
BT	Phone calls -28.03.21	23.63
Watton-at-Stone PCC	Belfry grant	750.00
Groundwork UK	Return of NP grant	2,997.00
Adam Welch	£150 leaf pick, £60 remove tree limb on Watton Green	210.00
David Payne	Maintenance work on sportsfield	45.00
Christine Wrigley	Return of Allotment rent and deposit	69.40
Grassroots	War Memorial maintenance – March 2021	48.00
		7,667.79
Receipts		
HMRC	VAT rebate 03/2020 - 02.2021	2,888.57
Rhianna Ward	Allotment rent and deposit	69.40
Nationwide	Interest	17.34
Santander	Interest	0.22
		2,975.53

Watton-at-Stone Community Hall

Petty Cash – Receipts		Petty Cash -Payments
None		None
Payments		
British Gas	Gas	66.46
Wages	March 2021	340.25
Watton Youth FC	COVID-19 Refund - Girls' training in November 2020	52.00
British Gas	Electricity	32.38
First response	Emergency drain clearance	120.00
		611.09
Receipts		
Santander	Bank interest	0.08
HMRC	VAT rebate – February 2021	55.64
HMRC	VAT rebate – March 2021	4.70
		60.42

Parish Councillors approved the payments.

- **12-monthly statement of accounts for the Parish Council and Community Hall for year ended 31st March 2021**

The annual accounts show that Parish Council expenditure exceeded income by £913.98.

The annual accounts for The Community Hall show that income exceeded expenditure by £1096.46.

As a combined entity income exceeded expenditure by £182.48. A very good result in what was a very challenging time.

The year-end bank positions were £112,560.40 for the Parish Council and £19,589.07 for The Community Hall.

Parish Councillors approved the accounts.

- **PKF Littlejohn – external audit papers for year ending 31st March 2021**

PKF Littlejohn e-mailed, on 24th March, informing us of the details for the annual audit for the year ending 31st March 2021. The completed Annual Return and all relevant documentation needs to be submitted to them by 2nd July 2021. They have suggested that the public inspection dates are Monday 14th June to Friday 23rd July, which the Parish Council are able to comply with.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Microsoft software – annual renewal**

The Microsoft 365 software on the Parish Council's Dell laptop automatically renewed at the beginning of April and a payment of £59.99 was taken from the Clerk's credit card. The Clerk to be reimbursed.

Action: J. Allsop

Community Hall Trustees

Cllr. Meischke reported on the following items.

- **Reopening of hall**

The Community Hall is now open and in use to groups that are allowed to use the facilities under the current Covid-19 restrictions. Cllr. Meischke said we are now beginning to get in revenue from the archery.

H. D. Cleaning will start cleaning the hall on Monday 26th April. As the hall is not particularly dirty, he will ask her to clean the windows as they are all in a poor state.

- **Windows repair and repaint**

Mark Blacktin is due to start repairing and painting the windows this week and has promised he will have the work completed before the elections on 6th May.

- **Cricket water supply**

Cllr. Meischke said that the cricket pitch water supply runs from the same main as the Hall and outside toilets and unfortunately the cricket club accidentally snapped off the tap to the pitch and the water supply to the hall had to be turned off for about a week. It was an exceedingly difficult repair and during that time the drains under the outside toilets managed to solidify. When the water was turned on again, the drains blocked up, this was not helped by the toilets flushing system not working properly. An emergency drain clearance company were called out to clear the blockage. James Turner and Son have been instructed to fit new flushing systems to both the external toilets as the existing ones are worn out with age. Hopefully this will rectify all the drain blockage problems.

- **Hall outside toilets**

See above item— Cricket Water supply.

- **Hall Drain**

See above item— Cricket Water supply.

Recreation and Amenities Sub-Committee

Cllr. Knight had nothing to report.

Environment Sub-Committee

Cllr. Dinnin reported on the following items.

- **Report and minutes of meeting held on 15th April 2021**

All Parish Councillors have been e-mailed a copy of the minutes of the Zoom Environment Sub-Committee meeting held on 15th April.

- **Allotments**

Cllr. Dinnin said that Adam Welch had confirmed that all of the tree chippings he left on the disused allotments has been removed by the allotment holder who requested it. However, there is some more material wrapped in a blue tarpaulin. Cllr. Dinnin said she needs to make further enquiries to find out who the material under the blue tarpaulin belongs too. She said she would put an e-mail together for the Clerk to send to all Allotment holders.

Action: C. Dinnin/J. Allsop

The allotment site is in a very good and productive state, with just a few plots that need to be worked on. Cllr. Dinnin said that when she has been down there she has spoken to tenants and answered any queries they had about the new Tenancy Agreement, nearly all are happy with this agreement.

- **Seeking quotations to replace David Payne**
Cllrs. Dinnin and Meischke are seeking quotations from contractors. **Action: C. Dinnin/J. Meischke**
- **War Memorial**
Cllr. Stock reported that the scheduled routine-maintenance program had started as per our Management Plan and requested that if Councillors noted any future issues with the War Memorial site, they contact him so that he can liaise with Grassroots accordingly as appropriate.
 - **Insurance claim**
Cllr. Meischke said that as you all know, a car drove into the War Memorial site, causing damage to the concrete paving stones and surrounding shrubs. The Parish Council were hopeful that they would be able to reclaim the £125 excess from either the driver or the owner of the car. Unfortunately, the police have informed him that the vehicle was being driven on false plates and the chassis number was cut into the bodywork and did not belong to the car. It was therefore impossible to identify who the vehicle belonged to. The police have therefore had to close the case. Cllr. Meischke said the Parish Council can be thankful that they were able to claim £586.25 of the £711.25 cost to repair the damage and that no actual damage was done to the War Memorial.
- **Grass on Lammas**
Still some flood water but drainage ditch nearly empty - water green and smelly but bluebells are all coming out to make up for the smell!!

b) Routine Reports

- i) **Emergency escape lighting tests and manual alarm call tests**
Cllr. Meischke carries out the emergency escape lighting and manual alarm call tests on a regular basis. He 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. Knight completed the report on 19th April 2021. His overall comment was that everything seems to be in good order.
A copy of the report has been e-mailed to all Parish Councillors.
- v) **Weekly sportsfield-report**
Nothing to report.
- vi) **6-monthly report**
Cllrs. Meischke reported on the following.
 - **Rainbow multi-play and slide:** step number two is split
Mark Blacktin has been instructed to repair the damaged wooden step whilst on site carrying out repair and painting work at the Community Hall.
 - **Toddler - Crazy daisy:** daisy wheel cover missing.
No action required at this time.
 - **Safety surface:** three sink holes in safety surface.
No action required at this time.
 - **Benches:** some work could be done to the wooden benches; however, this work is not urgent.
No action required at this time
 - **Tennis Courts:** gravel gully around tennis courts needs weeding.
When a new contractor is appointed to replace David Payne, they will be instructed to weed kill this area.
- vii) **Weekly defibrillator inspection**
Cllr. Hammon continues to do regular checks.
- viii) **Website/Facebook**
None.
- ix) **Highway issues**
Nothing to report.

x) **Dog fouling reports**

Nothing to report.

xi) **Police reports**

All Parish Council have been e-mailed a copy of PCSO Sally Brook's police report dated 20th April.

9. Correspondence received

a) **E-mail from Ian Knight re Parish Church grant for the Belfry**

Cllr. Knight e-mailed on 12th April as follows.

'On behalf of the Watton at Stone PCC, I want to thank the Watton at Stone Parish Council for the generous gift of £750 to contribute to the cost of the remedying the Pigeon problem in the Belfry.'

10. Village organisations

None.

11. Items for Parish News

Cllr. McCash said that from June onwards, the Parish News will revert to paper format again.

Cllr. Knight said that the Parish Council can include their annual Parish Reports in the June edition.

It was suggested that the Neighbourhood Plan committee could place an article regarding Regulation 14 in the June issue of the Parish News, if the timescales are suitable.

Item 7 b, Specific items, Neighbourhood plan and Benefits Committee - progress reports

This item was taken under:

EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting for consideration of Item 7 b, Specific items – Neighbourhood plan & Gains Committee, as it contains exempt information as defined in Section 100a of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by Section 12A of the Local Government Act 1985).

The meeting was closed to the public.

- **Summary of exempt/confidential proceedings**

Parish Councillors agreed unanimously, by a show of hands, to accept the regulation 14 document, subject to any small changes that are required during the final proof reading.

Parish Councillors approved that the NP steering group committee spend approximately £300 on printing costs for the regulation 14 brochure, which will be delivered to all households in the Parish of Watton-at-Stone.

The meeting closed at 2004.

The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Tuesday 18th May 2021.