

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held in the Community Hall on Tuesday 14 June 2022

Present:	Cllr. Michael Smith (Chair)	Cllr. John Meischke (Vice-Chair)
	Cllr. Stephen Block	Cllr. Christine Dinnin
	Cllr. Catherine Hammon	Cllr. Kay Jancey
	Cllr. Ian Knight	Cllr. David Stock
	Cllr. Emma Waltham	
	Clerk: Jane Allsop	
Public:	Roger Green and Nicola White	

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies: Cllr. Helen McCash.

2. Public participation

Cllr. Smith welcome Nicola White and Roger Green to the meeting.

Nicola White has expressed an interest in becoming a Parish Councillor and wanted to listen in on a meeting.

Roger Green (former Chair of the Watton-at-Stone Parish Council) said that tomorrow is the 40th Anniversary of the reopening of Watton-at-Stone station. It had been closed in September 1939 because the line was being heavily used during the World War II efforts. He was part of a committee involved in getting the station reopened again on 15 June 1982. It was decided that they would like to commemorate the 40th anniversary because there may not be many committee members around to celebrate the 50th anniversary. He has put together a collage type poster with former committee member Alan Rattue and asked the Parish Council to contribute towards the cost of the larger posters and the artwork. Parish Councillors agreed this.

Roger Green said that representative from the railway will be meeting him at the station tomorrow so he can put up bunting and the posters in the station notice boards. He said Parish Councillors were welcome to join the Station re-opening committee members at the Bull for lunch.

Roger Green left the meeting.

3. Chair's/Clerk's report

None.

4. Declaration of interests

None.

5. Minutes of the last meeting.

a) Acceptance

- **Minutes of the Annual meeting of the Parish Council held on Tuesday 17 May 2022**
Parish Councillors agreed that the minutes be approved and signed.
- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 17 May 2022**
Parish Councillors agreed that the minutes be approved and signed.

a) Review of actions

1. Chase a response re application for Speed sign funding

Refer to item 7 d, Specific items – Speed signs.

2. Contact EHDC and Hertfordshire Highways re parking in the High Street

Cllr. Smith said that he had spoken to County Cllr. Ken Crofton about the High Street traffic problems and was told that the Parish Council would need to contact Highways directly to discuss their concerns about the High Street traffic problems.

He reminded Cllr. Smith that parking issues are a EHDC responsibility. The Clerk said she had e-mailed District Cllr. Sophie Bell on this subject but not had a response. She will now contact EHDC enforcement asking them to arrange for traffic wardens to visit the village on a regular basis. **Action: J. Allsop**

Cllr. Stock suggested a small committee of two or three Parish Councillors should get together to take the High Street highways issues forward and he would be happy to be one of the members. Cllr. Jancey agreed to be the lead on this committee. **Action: K. Jancey**

This item to be placed on the agenda, under specific items until resolved. **Agenda: 07.2022**

b) Action points resolved

1. Fit new litterbins
2. Write to the planning department re Lane Croft, Perrywood Lane
3. Report overgrown hedge at Hockerill
4. Agree wording of license for Parish Council land adjacent to Beane Cottage
5. Place notices on Facebook, website and notice boards

6. Pay invoice for internal audit of the Parish Council accounts
7. Pay invoice for audit of Community Hall accounts
8. Send the completed Annual Return and relevant documentation to PKF Littlejohn
9. Renew BHIB insurance policy
10. Ask Frank Cooper & Son Limited (Coopers) to apply weedkiller to both sides of the Community Hall wall
11. Instruct D P Electrics to upgrade the outside storage socket
12. Carry out risk assessment prior to the Platinum Jubilee event
13. Inform our insurers of free of charge event being held by the Parish Council on Saturday 4 June
14. **Get youth Football Club to sign hire agreement and pay £1 for use of kitchen facilities**
This was not required because the Youth Football Club did not use the facilities during the Platinum Jubilee celebrations.
15. Ask Tennis Club players to walk to the tennis courts instead of driving
16. Write to contractors who quoted re new entrance to play area
17. Give the Clerk the details for ordering the new handrail
18. Give Cllr. Smith details of Ground Source heat pump installers
19. Obtain quotations for resurfacing the double tennis courts & re-tensioning of the fences on all courts
20. Obtain quotations for the repair of the football goal mouths
21. E-mail all allotment holders asking if anyone one is willing to give up their plots
22. Ensure that new grass contractors are fully operational
23. Inspect the Community Hall loft ladders
24. Speak to the family of the memorial seat at the Great Innings roundabout
25. Ask Rosemary Brown to clean the BT phone box
26. Put Jubilee notices and heart foundation notices on Facebook and the website
27. E-mail Ian McCreddie re Police cars racing through the village

6. Planning

a) Applications

The following planning application was received after the agenda was published.

- **20 High Street (3/22/1147/HH)**

Raising of roof ridge with hip to gable roof. Insertion of two dormers to front and dormer to rear. Single storey infill extension to front. Demolition of rear extension. Erection of single storey rear extension. Alterations to fenestration.

Cllr. Smith said that this is the third application received in recent months to alter the shape of the roof space. The previous two applications were refused.

Parish Councillors discussed the plans and agreed a no comment

Action: J. Allsop

- **Highfields, Whempstead (3/22/1166/FUL)**

Demolition of existing dwelling and erection of replacement dwelling

Cllr. Smith said that this application is totally different from the previous granted application.

Parish Councillors discussed the plans and agreed a no comment

Action: J. Allsop

- **78 Hazeldell (3/22/1184/HH)**

Single storey rear extension, new pitched roof to existing single storey rear projection, garage conversion and replace garage door with new front window.

Parish Councillors discussed the plans and agreed a no comment

Action: J. Allsop

b) Appeal

- i) **5 Watton House, Ware Road (Appeal Ref: 22/00009/REFUSE)**

Ref planning application 3/21/1913/FUL - proposed roof terrace with access hatch and external guarding

j) Decisions

- i) **Heath Mount School, Woodhall Park (3/21/3092/FUL)**

First floor side extension and infill to provide additional classroom with external staircase

- EHDC permission granted

7. Specific items

a) Neighbourhood plan and benefits

Cllr. Smith said that Agripower, our primary contractor for the redevelopment of Mill Lane football facilities, queried whether or not there had been landfill on the site as the soil samples were inconclusive on the issue.

Cllr. Smith contacted the Woodhall Estate, and they could find no reference to that being the case. He then spoke to Mick Inman, lifelong resident, and he said that the lower area used to be sewerage settlement ponds before the main sewer was connected. Apparently, they were popular for skating on in the knowledge that a 'breakthrough' added a touch daredevil to the practice. Also, he said that a circus pitched up every year. A particular favourite was a moth-eaten lion who appeared totally bored with whole thing and often refused to come in and if he did, refused to go out.

Agripower will proceed to the design stages with a proviso dealing with contamination may be an issue. Personally, Cllr. Smith said that having farmed the land, he did not think it will be. It is just good old Hertfordshire allsorts.

Cllr. Waltham said that their consultant, Jacqueline Veater, has finished looking through statutory responses and given her initial interpretations. Mehron Kirk is now reviewing the Design Code in the light of these.

Cllr. Waltham said it is hard to pin down exact timings, but the NP committee hope to share plan changes, via e-mail, with Parish Councillors before the July Parish Council meeting. However, they may have to have another NP meeting before they do this.

b) Hockerill footpath behind the George and Dragon public house

Cllr. Smith has asked Cllr. Crofton for a site meeting to inspect and discuss the condition of this footpath.

Cllr. Meischke asked if the dangerous condition of the Rivershill footpath could also be inspected during this visit. This was agreed. (Refer to item 9 a, Correspondence received – Letter from Ann Waring re condition of the footpath link from the Bull car park to Rivershill).

Cllrs. Smith and Meischke to attend the site meeting.

Action: M. Smith/J. Meischke

c) Overgrown hedge along the Hockerill footpath

Cllr. Dinnin said that Pat Brett's hedge needs cutting. She agreed to speak to him before asking Adam Welch to quote for doing the work.

Action: C. Dinnin

The overgrown hedge in front of the bungalows on the opposite side of the footpath to 78 High Street has been cut back. However, it has not been reduced in height.

• Footpath from Glebe Close to Church Lane

A complaint has been received about the overgrown hedge at the back of the school that runs from Glebe Close to Church Lane. Cllr. Smith said he had spoken to his daughter, who is a teacher at the school, who informed him that the person who usually does this work is away on sick leave.

The Clerk to report this as a Highways fault.

Action: J. Allsop

d) Speed signs

Cllr. Smith said that he contacted the Commissioner's office and on investigation they said that they found the form he had submitted in their spam folder. This happened because Cllr. Smith had not attached the form to the original e-mail. Applications are done on a rolling program, and it will be given due consideration.

e) Parish Council land adjacent to Beane Cottage

Cllr. Smith said that both he and Mr. & Mrs. Sell have now signed the new agreement that he and

Cllr. Hammon drew up for use of the Parish Council land adjacent to Beane Cottage. Mr. & Mrs. Sell have agreed to pay an annual rent of £400, paid annual each year in August.

The Clerk to send out the invoice at the proper time.

Action: J. Allsop

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		
Tornado Event hire	Staging for Jubilee event	290.00
Stuart McCash	Annual internal Audit	270.00
Wages and salaries	May 2022	1,729.64
Glasdon UK Ltd	2 litterbins	344.94
BHIB	Annual insurance premium	1,555.24
M. J. Smith	Wickes - Postcrete for installing new litterbin	17.70
Fred Burnell	Rodent control March & April 2022	96.00
BT	Phone bill - 28th April 2022	23.31
Grassroots	War Memorial maintenance – April 2022	50.40
		4,377.23
Receipts		
Nationwide	Interest for period 01.4.22 to 30.04.22	40.42
Santander	Interest on deposit account	1.74
East Herts Council	litterpick	1,776.21
		1,818.37

Watton-at-Stone Community Hall		
Petty Cash – Receipts		Petty Cash -Payments
Floodlighting donations	44.00	
Tony Silverstri – Pavilion	30.00	
Archery – Main Hall	80.00	
Table tennis	126.00	
Youth Football – Main Hall	24.00	
	304.00	
Payments		
British Gas	Gas	196.01
McCash and Hay	Annual Audit	168.00
Wages	May 2022	288.75
BSWW Parish News	Annual advert	100.00
British gas	Electricity	153.54
HMRC	VAT return - March 2022	83.57
		989.87
Receipts		
Peter Khera	Main Hall hire - April - June	209.00
Lucy Ward	Main Hall hire - July - paid in full	76.00
Santander	bank interest	0.86
Joanna Northcott	Pavilion and meeting room hire	75.00
		360.86

Parish Councillors approved the payments.

- **Long-term capital expenditures**

The Long-Term Capital Expenditures have been updated. The main changes reflect the expected future expenditure for the play area and car park.

Parish Councillors approved the revised document.

- **Public inspection of the Parish Council accounts for the year ended 31 March 2022**

The Clerk reported that the public inspection period started on 13 June and ends on 22 July.

The completed Annual Return and all relevant documentation will be sent to PKF before 1 July 2022.

Action: J. Allsop

Community Hall Trustees

Cllr. Meischke reported on the following items.

- **Hall wall**

Coopers have weed killed the wall. It now requires the dead weeds to be removed from the wall.

Cllr. Meischke said that this would be an ideal job for a Caretaker.

- **Caretaker**

Cllr. Meischke said that to date he has shown one person around the hall and sportsfield to explain the job specifications.

- **Jubilee event**

The Jubilee event held on the sportsfield following the fete on Saturday 4 June was a resounding success.

Parish Councillors thanked Cllr. Meischke for all his hard work putting the event together.

- **Bins installation**

Cllr. Smith has installed a new ground fixed (concreted in) bin near the ramp by the tennis courts.

Cllr. Block has relocated a bin from Great Innings that was not being emptied to replace the broken one near the teen shelter.

The smashed litterbin on the corner of School Lane, opposite Crumbs, has not been replaced. Instead, a new bin has been located on Church Walk, next to the dog waste bin.

Cllr. Block said that we now have some post mounted litterbin spare pieces, although he was not sure if there are enough good parts to make up a new bin.

- **Goal post**

The large goal posts will need to be removed when the goal mouths are revamped.

Members of the public keep on moving the five-a-side goal mouth down the field towards the Community Hall building. Cllr. Smith agreed to secure it in place, at the top of the field and away from the cricket pitch and has obtained pins to do the job.

Action: M. Smith

- **Goal mouths**

Awaiting quotations for this work and need to chase.

Action: M. Smith/J. Allsop

- **Toilet lights**

D. P. Electrics quotation dated 18 May for the following work, was sent to all Parish Council who all e-mailed their approval.

- To fit new RCBO in consumer unit fit outside socket £65
- To supply and fit new LED fitting in cupboard with electric main in £55
- To supply and fit 5 x new LED lights in toilet with built in sensors to turn light on and off £390

D. P. Electrics have now completed all the above work. Cllr. Meischke said that when no motion is detected after 3 minutes the lights will automatically turn off and the fans will go off in their own timeframe.

- **New entrance to play area**

Work to the new entrance to the play area will start in the next 7-10 days.

- **Hall energy consumption**

Cllr. Hammon e-mailed Cllr. Meischke the contact details for a ground source heat pump installer.

- **Tables replace**

Cllr. Meischke said that the 6 large tables, stored in the table rack, need replacing as they are in a tatty condition. It was agreed to obtain quotations. **Action: J. Allsop**

Cllr. Knight asked Cllr. Meischke not to dispose of any old unwanted tables as they might be useful for the annual church fete and other events. Cllr. Meischke said he did not intend to dispose of them.

Recreation and Amenities Sub-Committee

Cllr. Knight reported on the following items.

- **Tennis Court resurfacing**

Cllr. Knight e-mailed all Parish Councillors on 7 June as follows.

“We have obtained three up to date quotes for the resurfacing of the double tennis court.

They are:

Sports Courts	£21,593
Cambridge courts	£28,249
Doe North	£40,347

I propose we accept Sports Courts quote and go ahead”

Parish Councillors approved Sports Courts quotation via e-mail and Cllr. Knight notified all contractors accordingly. The Clerk to pay Sports Courts deposit payment. **Action: J. Allsop**

Environment Sub-Committee

Cllr. Dinnin reported on the following items.

- **Allotments**

Cllr. Dinnin said most of the allotment are in a wonderful condition, but there are a few in a poor state.

Currently there are two people on the waiting list. E-mails have been sent out to all allotments holders asking anyone who is struggling with their plot and wants to give it up, to contact the Clerk.

Cllr. Smith confirmed that Stanley Agricultural would be cutting back the disused area soon.

- **Mill site**

Cllr. Smith said a meeting has been arranged for 1 July at 1400, involving Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust, the Environment Agency and Stonemill (the owners of the Mill site) to discuss in general plans for the Beane and in particular the mill race.

Cllr. Smith said that he would like some firm agreements on this subject before he stands down from the Parish Council.

- **Grass cutting - Watton Green and the Lammas**

Cllr. Smith said that the first cut on the Lammas and Watton Green has been made with the aim of topping off the seed heads of grass to stop growth and encourage other less competitive species to thrive (in theory).

b) Routine Reports

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

Cllr. Meischke continues to carry-out the emergency escape lighting and manual alarm call tests on a monthly basis. He also continues to inspect the hall regularly including running the water every 2-3 weeks 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 7th June 2022, a copy of her report has been e-mailed to all Parish Councillors.

Overall, the village is looking in very good condition. The only new issue of note was some damage (probably by a vehicle) to the salt bin in Perrywood Lane.

Cllr. Dinnin said that this salt bin, which was replaced by the Parish Council a few years ago, had been damaged for several months.

vi) Weekly sportsfield-report

Cllr. Meischke said that Coopers have never been instructed to cut the grass under the sportsfield benches, because strimming causes damage to the strimming machine as well as the benches. He agreed to contact Coopers to try and agree a solution which could be hand-cutting or weedkilling the grass under the bench.

Action: J. Meischke

viii) Weekly defibrillator inspection

Done.

ix) Website/Facebook

Cllr. Waltham asked that reviewing the Website be put on the September agenda. This was agreed.

Agenda: 09/2022

x) Highway issues

None.

xi) Dog fouling reports

Cllr. Meischke said that an interesting article on minimising dog fouling was recently e-mailed to all Parish Councillors by the Clerk. In it they suggested that notices and a supply of dog waste bags does help reduce dog fouling problems. He agreed to investigate further.

Action: J. Meischke

xi) Police reports

All Parish Councillors have been e-mailed PCSO Sally Brook's police report of 13 June.

9. Correspondence received**a) Letter from Ann Waring re condition of the footpath link from the Bull car park to Rivershill**

All Parish Councillors were sent a copy of Ann Waring's letter via e-mail on the 31 May.

Refer to item 7 b, Specific items - Hockerill footpath behind the George and Dragon public house.

10. Village organisations**• War Memorial Hall Management Committee**

Cllr. Stock attended the recent meeting of the Committee on 23 May and was pleased to report that there were no routine issues of concern. However, following the death of Denis Filer (a Trustee) the Board of Trustees is to identify his replacement.

• Watton-at-Stone Scout and Guide Group

Cllr. Dinnin said she was made aware by the Scout/Cub leader, that they are looking for funding towards a new trailer. They were not aware that the Parish Council had a representative on their committee or that she was that representative.

11. Items for Parish News**• Platinum Jubilee**

It was agreed to submit the article written by Cllr. Smith that has already been posted on Facebook and our website to the Parish News.

Action: J. Allsop

Meeting closed: 2030.

The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Tuesday 12 July 2022.