

Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held in the Community Hall on Tuesday 13 June 2023

Present:	Cllr. Emma Waltham (Chair)	Cllr. Nicola White (Vice-Chair)
	Cllr. Clive Bell	Cllr. Michael Brooks
	Cllr. Annabel Kirk	Cllr. Ian Knight
	Cllr. Helen McCash	Clerk: Jane Allsop
Members of public:	Richard Lewis (until 21:15)	Mark Richardson (until 20:55)

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies: Cllrs. Christine Dinnin, Catherine Hammon and John Meischke (Vice-Chair).

2. Public participation

Cllr. Waltham welcomed Richard Lewis and Mark Richardson to the meeting.

3. Chair's/Clerk's report

Cllr. Waltham welcomed newly elected Clive bell to his first meeting as a Parish Councillor.

One additional item.

- Planning decision - 44 High Street Refer to item 7 b, Planning decisions.

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 16 May 2023**
Parish Councillors agreed that the minutes be approved and signed.
- **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 16 May 2023**
Parish Councillors agreed that the minutes be approved and signed.

b) Review of actions

1. Fit parts supplied by Wicksteed Leisure

Cllr. Meischke was not at the meeting to report on this item. However, he e-mailed all Parish Councillors the following update on 15 June.

“Swing checked and it is operating correctly the U bolt has freed off, so no action required. I have put the parts in stock and await the Annual safety report.”

2. Relocate junior football goal

Refer to item 8 a Community Hall Trustees - Junior football goal.

3. Ask Jon Hart to obtain a litterbin map – outstanding.

Action: J. Allsop

4. E-mail EHDC asking them to clear the High Street footpath outside Newmans Court

Cllrs. Kirk and McCash agreed to inspect the footpaths over the next week and if they have not been cleared, instruct the Clerk to chase EHDC.

Action: a. Kirk/H. McCash

5. Arrange for change of bank signatories

Refer to item directly following item 11, Items for Parish News.

6. Obtain quotation for repainting the doors on the car park side of the Community Hall

Refer to item 8 a, Community Hall - Car Park side doors paint.

7. Chase Nick Darter re quote for reseeding the goal mouth areas

Refer to item 8 a, Budget and Finance Sub-Committee – Approval of quotations.

8. Report broken glass in Mill Lane and rubbish around recycling bin

Both Joe Thomas and the Clerk reported the broken glass in Mill Lane, which has now been removed by EHDC.

c) Action points resolved

1. Write to Stephen Skelhorn re Holly hedge and grass verge on Rectory Lane
2. Write to Julian Humphreys re condition of footpath near the War Memorial roundabout
3. Ask EHDC to appoint an examiner for the Neighbourhood Plan (refer to Specific items)
4. Give Cllr. White HCC contact
5. Share High Street report and proposals with Joe Thomas and contact HCC (refer to Specific items)
6. Notify Clive Bell of his appointment as a Parish Councillors and arrange for him to sign paperwork
7. Contact both Richard Lewis and Mark Richardson
8. Send ferreting licenses to Bob Adams
9. Renew License across Cottage site

10. Arrange payment of Stuart McCash's invoice for internal audit
11. Advertise the public inspection dates for accounting year ended 31 March 2023
12. Give McCash & Hay a signed copy of the audited accounts
13. Renew Annual insurance policy
14. Purchase First Aid items
15. Inform Allotment & Garden Association that Cllr. Kirk is now Chair of the Environment Sub-Committee
16. Inspect wooden benches
17. Remove solar light by the War memorial bench
18. Upload the annual reports to the website and Facebook page
19. Write insert for Parish News re annual reports

6. Specific items

a) Neighbourhood plan

Cllr. Waltham said that she and Jacqueline Veater met with Laura Guy shortly after the May Parish Council meeting, to discuss the master plan process for the Walkern Road site and EHDC have agreed to reduce the work needed, due to the work already put into the Neighbourhood Plan, which does not need to be duplicated.

Mark Jackson (Fairview New Homes) have been made aware of the situation and is happy that they can proceed with the mini masterplan, which can be implemented alongside the NP examination process. It was agreed that Mark Jackson be allowed access to the NP materials to help Fairview prepare their evidence base.

Cllr. Bell said that the NP have tried to ensure they get physical things rather than money, such as the pedestrian bridge and football facilities, because HCC are still tending to take any S106 funds for themselves rather than distribute them to Parish Councils.

Woodhall Estate have agreed in principle to do a pre-planning application with EHDC for the 3G pitches, but in their own time. As a business Woodhall Estate's core activities are agricultural and rental properties. There is nothing we can do as a Parish Council we just have to wait for them to take the initiative.

Parish Councillors agreed at their May meeting to appoint an examiner for the Neighbourhood Plan, although the hydrology modelling required by the Environment Agency is still underway. Enough progress has been made to indicate that the bridge will be viable. Cllr. Waltham was pleased to report that Christopher Lockhart-Mummery, the Parish Council's preferred examiner, has been appointed and signed the contract.

Fairview New Homes have agreed we can tweak the NP policy around the footbridge so that the onus falls on them to achieve planning permission and the development will not proceed unless this in place. Jacqueline Veater will write to the examiner to tell him of this amendment.

Fairview New Homes appear to have bought too much land on both sides of the River Beane. Cllr. Waltham, Laura Guy and Jacqueline Veater agreed that we should not increase the size of Green Belt release to include the extra land purchased by the developers and it will remain protected from further development.

Cllr. Bell said that a meeting has been arranged between Fairview New Homes and the Environment Agency on 15 June. The base line model review comments are due on 22 June and a provisional meeting has been arranged for 28 June to discuss the review and comments.

Cllr. Waltham said that the Clerk only wrote to HCC a week ago re the re-routing of the fencing up by the school to enable a permanent access from the Gatekeeper estate to footpath 17 at the end of Glebe Close. If no response is received within the next week, the Clerk to chase.

Cllr. Bell said the Parish Council have been very lucky with the people who are on the NP committee as they are qualified and competent people who have been able to take this plan forward.

Cllr. Waltham said that the funding pots for Neighbourhood Planning have not yet become available yet this year. If this does not happen soon, then the Parish Council will have to pay for ongoing work (namely, Jacqueline Veater's work as our Planning Consultant).

b) High Street traffic issues, including Bus Stop outside the Bull public house

Cllr. White said that the bus stop issue has progressed enormously since the May Parish Council meeting. She contacted Cllr. Waltham's HCC contact, Dan Tancock, who is managing the installation of a bus cage.

Cllr. Waltham said she contacted HCC in the first instance, as children at the bus stop were not being picked up because the bus drivers could not see them due to parked cars. When they stop to pick up passengers, they often have to pick up passengers in the middle of the carriage way.

Cllr. White said that the plan is to install a bus cage. This would consist of double yellow lines and hatching from the BT phone box that houses the defibrillator, to the far-right hand side of Bull public house. The pavement curb will be raised to allow pedestrians to walk onto the bus without having to step up. This will be from the Bull car park entrance to the left-hand side of the Bull building. Work is planned to commence in the first week of July. Hopefully, this arrangement will also serve as a pull in for cars when there is no bus and will improve visibility for those exiting School Lane. The landlord at the Bull Public house, Alistair Bramley, is in full support of the bus stop scheme, although it will affect those using car park in the morning as they may not be able to enter or exit it when the bus has stopped.

Cllr. White said that she had provided Dan Tancock with her report on the High Street parking problem and the material the High Street working group has produced, including the large quantity of photographic evidence. He was very impressed with the quality and quantity of the material she provided and has forwarded it to the Strategy and Programme Manager, Gobi Ranganathan.

The last police report, provided by PCSO Sally Brooks on 8 June, mentioned an incident over parking, which also adds leverage to what the Parish Council are trying to achieve in the High Street.

- **9 c, Correspondence received - E-mail from Alan Rattue re condition of road by pelican crossing**
Alan Rattue e-mailed on 19 May concerning a dip in the road at the pelican crossing in the High Street. His concern was that the uneven road surface is a potential trip hazard. In addition, when heavy vehicles, such as lorries, go over this depression they make a loud noise which keeps him, and his wife awake at night. He submitted a highway fault and received the following reply.
‘We have assessed the fault at this location, and it doesn't currently meet our criteria for repair. We understand that this may be frustrating, but we need to manage the network and faults appropriately and deal with the most urgent faults/issues first.
We can't repair all faults immediately, however, please rest assured that the information provided will be used to inform our future works programs.’
It was agreed to forward Alan Rattue's e-mail to County Cllr. Ken Crofton. **Action: J. Allsop**
- c) **Co-option of a Parish Councillor**
Refer to item directly following item 11, Items for Parish News.
- d) **Village directory**
Cllr. Brooks and the Clerk to update the Village Directory. **Action: B. Brooks/J. Allsop**
This item to be placed on the September agenda. **Agenda: 09/2023**
- e) **Housing Association notice board at Great Innings**
This item to be deferred until the July Parish Council meeting. **Agenda: 07/2023**
- f) **Write Tree policy**
This items to be deferred until September agenda. **Agenda: 09/2023**
- **Additional item - Report from District Councillor Joe Thomas (dated 12 June)**
New Parish Councillor A very warm welcome to Clive Bell to the Parish Council. Looking forward to working with you over the next four years!
New Administration at East Herts District Council - As I am sure you know, there is a new administration at East Herts District Council consisting of the Green and Liberal Democrat groups. It is worth pointing out that there is a new executive member in the council dedicated to resident engagement, taking some responsibilities off from the member for planning and growth. You can find out more about the new administration here: <https://www.eastherts.gov.uk/latest-news/2023/east-hertscouncil-confirms-new-political-leadership>.
Potential Meeting with Cllr. Vicky Glover Ward, Executive Member for Planning and Growth - The new executive member for Planning and Growth is currently visiting communities around the district to get to understand the needs and concerns of residents in the area. I have sent an e-mail inviting her up to Watton-at-Stone to discuss the neighbourhood plan and would like to get the neighbourhood plan group to meet her too. Vicky is the chair of the Kingsmead Neighbourhood Plan group which was voted in last month so I think it could be really beneficial not just for us to share our progress but also to hear from someone who is a few more steps down the line from us. I am still awaiting a response from her but when I do am I OK with neighbourhood plan members to CC them into my next e-mail?
Upkeep of Land in Gatekeepers Meadow - I have had a number of residents from Gatekeepers Meadow complain about the upkeep of the land (or lack thereof) since 2019. As part of the developer's Section 106 obligations, £167,000 was paid to East Herts District Council for the future upkeep of the land owned by Hertfordshire County Council between Stoney Fields and Church Lane, however, this has not been done in recent years.
After a bit of investigation, I have found out that after years of asking the county council if they wanted to hand over the title to them, the district council has paid HCC £163,700 to look after their own land – this was done in March 2022, meaning this is now a county council matter. I have passed my comments to Herts Property and Cllr. Ken Crofton, hopefully we shall see some movement on this soon.
Fly Tipping on Mill Lane - I reported the fly tipping on Mill Lane and rubbish around the recycling bin soon after last month's parish council meeting. On inspection today I could see no more broken glass on Mill Lane however the bags dumped by the recycling bin still remain. I have chased up the EHDC waste team on this matter.
Planning Applications - I have no comments to make.

7. Planning

Cllr. McCash reported on the following items.

a) Applications

i) 35 Lammas Road (3/23/1004/HH)

First floor rear extension

In accordance with our Planning Protocol, Mrs. McCash asked Mr. Knight to visit the neighbours of the property involved in this application. Mr. Knight confirmed that the neighbours had no objections.

Mrs. McCash outlined the application for Parish Councillors and suggested a 'no comment' response.

Parish Councillors endorsed this decision. The Clerk to write accordingly.

Action: J. Allsop

ii) 33 Rivershill (3/23/0953/HH)

Insertion of dormer window to front. Part First floor and part two storey side extension, two storey rear extension with insertion of windows to flank elevations and partial garage conversion

Cllr. Kirk to visit the neighbours affected by this application and e-mail her recommendations to the Parish Council.

Action: A. Kirk

iii) Watton Mill, Mill Lane (3/23/0885/FUL)

Additional floor to existing office building

Cllr. McCash said that she was not happy about the visual impact this application would have on the surrounding areas.

Cllr. Waltham said she had mixed feelings about the application. On the one hand she would like the Parish Council to support the extra floor as it would make the building a more viable business proposition.

Conversely, the additional floor could have a negative effect on views from Mill Lane and the Lammas. The old Mill that burnt down was a higher building than the one proposed. However, the footprint of the current building is bigger. The additional height of the building would most likely be visible on the Lammas and may affect the residents of Willowdene, the adjacent property. She was also concerned about the lack of parking for users of the business units and pedestrian movement over the bridge, which has no footpath. Children cross the bridge to gain access to the Scout Hut and it is regularly used by walkers gaining access to the surrounding footpaths, including the Lammas. Parish Councillors were in agreement.

After further discussion, it was agreed to write to the planning department stating the Parish Councils support of this business and its concerns of the impact an extra floor would have.

Action: H. McCash/J. Allsop

b) Decisions

i) 30 Moorymead Close (3/23/0572/HH)

Conversion of integral garage and insertion of window to the front and patio doors to the rear

- EHDC permission granted

- 44 High Street (3/23/0750/HH)

Replacement of shed with garden room

- EHDC permission granted

8. Reports

a) Sub-Committees

Budget & Finance

Cllr. White reported on the following items.

- Monthly accounts

Watton-at-Stone Parish Council		
Petty Cash –		Petty cash – Payments
None		None
Payments		
Stuart McCash	Internal audit	283.00
Wages and Salaries	May 2023	1,490.30
NCD Ground	May 2023 sportsfield maintenance	1,308.00
NCD Ground	May 2023 sportsfield maintenance	720.00
BHIB Ltd	Annual insurance premium	1637.22
GoogleCloud	Google workspace - direct debit - June 2023	9.20
Grassroots	War Memorial Maintenance – 2 visits	100.80
		5,548.52
Receipts		
Ian Garner	Allotment rent and deposit	72.00
Seyhan Kasapoglu	Allotment rent and deposit	72.00
Nationwide	Interest	102.33
Santander	Interest on deposit account on 30.04.23	10.19
		256.52

Watton-at-Stone Community Hall			
Pettv Cash – Receipts		Pettv Cash -Payments	
Tony Silverstri – Pavilion	60.00	Amazon – first aid equipment	25.44
Rosemary Brown – Pavilion & meeting room	90.00		25.44
Floodlighting donations	116.00		
Archery – Main Hall	50.00		
Table tennis -Main Hall	124.00		
Michelle Ballinger	57.00		
Christine Dinnin – Pavilion	45.00		
	542.00		
Payments			
HMRC	Vat return		125.45
East Herts Council	Rates - payment 2 of 10		55.00
British gas	Gas		107.76
Rosemary Brown	25 hours cleaning		297.00
McCash & Hay	Annual; Audit		174.00
British gas	Electricity		135.78
			894.99
Receipts			
Ildiko Imre Kada	Meeting room - January - June		168.00
Fabiana Mezzaroba	Pavilion - April & May underpaid by £10		77.50
Fabiana Mezzaroba	Pavilion - April & May - underpayment		10.00
Janine - Bounce	Main Hall - April		135.38
Talbott Fitness	use of CH facilities April and May		172.00
East Herts Council	Pavilion hire for May elections		160.00
Paul Ghoghos	Main Hall and Pavilion		57.00
S. Burgess	Pavilion		15.00
Pete Bramley	Main Hall		20.00
Santander	Interest		10.18
Paula Sutton	Main Hall - April to June		268.85
Sue Burgess	Pavilion hire on		20.00
Peter Khera	Main Hall - April to June		239.40
Imagination Dance	Main Hall - April to June		216.00
Watton Ramblers	Donation		30.00
Lucy Ward	50% deposit for hall hire in September		38.00
			1637.31

Parish Councillors approved the payments.

- **Approval of quotations**

Nick Darter provided a quotation dated 22 May for £610 plus VAT, for the following work to the football goals on the sportsfield.

1. To rotovate areas in front of 2 no. goal mouths.
2. To supply 3 cubic meters of topsoil and level.
3. To supply Amenity grass seed.
4. To install temporary fence around areas, until seed is established

One other contractor, Perfect Ground Solutions, was also contacted but did not want to provide a quotation due to their busy work schedule.

The Clerk was instructed by Cllr. Meischke to e-mail Parish Councillors asking for their approval to accept Nick Darter's quotation. Cllrs. Brooks, Dinnin, Kirk, Knight, McCash and Waltham all e-mailed their approval on 26 May and Nick Darter was notified accordingly.

Due to the current hot weather this work has not yet been done.

- **Bank signatories**

Refer to item directly following item 11, Items for Parish News.

Community Hall Trustees

Cllr. Meischke was not present at the meeting to report on the following items.

- **Junior Football Goal post**

Cllr. Meischke was not at the meeting to report on this item. However, he e-mailed all Parish Councillors the following update on 15 June - "I hope to move the Junior football goal next week." **Action: J. Meischke**

- **Car Park side doors paint**

Parish Councillors agreed that Cllr. Meischke should obtain quotations for replacing the main entrance door and the windows in the Pavilion and meeting room from the suppliers of the Pavilion wall of windows, SJM Glazing Solutions, Stevenage. **Action: J. Meischke**

Cllr. Meischke was not at the meeting to report on this item. However, he e-mailed all Parish Councillors the following update on 15 June.

"The quote from Mark Blacktin for the painting of the doors on the Car Park side is £535 please can you all confirm agreement or not for this to Jane".

- **Next season Football usage**

Cllr. Meischke was not at the meeting to report on this item. However, he e-mailed all Parish Councillors the following update on 15 June.

“Although Emma read out about Junior football what none of you were aware of is that both Mike and I offered the pitch to them with exclusive use, this is because in the past having two groups playing on this pitch presents problems with it's condition also with blame on who's responsible not only for the pitch but also for the condition the hall, car park and Football cupboard. With all that in mind we recently agreed in a Parish Council meeting not to allow Women's football the use of the Pitch. Since then sometime last week I had Men's senior football contact me asking to use the pitch, I told them the situation and that it would not be available to them, this was not met with acceptance and after several long conversations I left it that, if they spoke to Junior football and they tell us that they will accept the Senior team playing on a Saturday then we as a council will revisit this issue. For those that don't know we haven't had anyone on the pitch for 2 years because neither senior men's or women's have been able to raise a team and in fact neither are sure that they can raise a full team for this year either, so if we said they could use the pitch and don't get teams we won't get paid anyway, hence Mike and I being very keen to get Junior to commit.”

- **Car park sleepers**

Parish Councillors approved the purchase of 4-6 sleepers to replace the ones that have degraded, at approximately £10 per sleeper. Cllr. Meischke to arrange purchase of the sleepers. **Action: J. Meischke**

Environment Sub-Committee

Cllr. Kirk reported on the following items.

- **Tree quotes re branches overhanging the Brambles at Watton Green**

Pam Filer (Brambles, Watton Green) contacted the Clerk about a tree overhanging her property from the Parish Council owned wooded road-side area of Watton Green. On inspection, in addition to the large tree limb, there was also a dead tree overhanging the driveway to the Brambles.

Two quotations were sort as follows.

- **Adam Smith** - to reduce the overhanging limb to 15 feet - £250,
- to reduce the dead tree down to a stump £320.
- **Tree Smiths** - Reduction Pollard of dead/dying tree. Cutback of several trees near property - £450.

It was agreed to accept Tree Smiths' quotation.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Community Orchard**

Cllr. Kirk said she thought it would be a nice idea to have a Community Orchard in the disused area of the allotments. Currently this area has no purpose. She said she spoke to Jane Dodson, Datchworth Parish Council, to find out about their community orchard, and was informed that it was running well but needed regular watering in the early years.

Cllr. Kirk said that are various funding pots available for such schemes and she would like to involve children in the building project stage.

Funding could also be sought from local businesses, or trees purchased as a memorial to a loved one instead of a bench.

Parish Councillors agreed Cllr. Kirk should investigate further.

Action: A. Kirk

This item to remain on the agenda for the July Parish Council meeting.

Agenda: 07/2023

- **Allotment changes**

Cllr. Kirk said that Cllr. Dinnin has been handing over the allotment management to her.

- **War Memorial Site maintenance advisor/coordinator**

David Stock (former Parish Councillors) has agreed to take over the management of the War Memorial Garden.

- **Condition of the grass verges on Rectory Lane**

Parish Councillors discussed this item briefly and expressed their concern that if too much of the grassed area is converted into parking, it will exasperate the flooding problem in this area.

This item was deferred to the September Parish Council meeting and a working group be set up.

Agenda: 09/2023

Mark Richardson left the meeting at 20:55

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 monthly. 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**

Although smart meters are fitted, Cllr. Meischke continues to give the Clerk gas and electricity meter readings at the end of each month. These readings are uploaded to the providers websites.

iii) **Weekly reports - Fire Inspection and shower tests**

Done.

iv) **Monthly village-report**

Cllr. Kirk completed the report on 12 June 2023 and reported on the main items highlighted in the monthly village-report. All Parish Councillors to be e-mailed a copy of the report. **Action: J. Allsop.**

- **Children's play area**

- **Condition of surface:** slightly loose by palace fortress, needs mastic for edges.

- **Junior climbing frame:** missing 2 retaining bolts. Cllr. Meischke to inspect. **Action: J. Meischke**

- **Community Hall car park** - Some of sleepers need attention.

Refer to item 8 a, Community Hall Trustees – Car park sleepers.

- **Tennis Courts A&B**

- Nets – one appeared broken but Cllr. Meischke fixed it.

- **Allotment area**

- **Access** - The Glebe court and Mr. Evernden's hedges needs trimming.

- **Condition of paths between allotments** - Some needed to be strimmed next to overgrown plots.

- **Condition of Allotments under cultivation** – 5 overgrown.

- **Recycling clothes bin** - One bag sitting on ground next to bin.

- **Ornate village sign** - Wooden post slightly split at bottom – due to heat? Feels soft when I pushed it. Ok for now but worth keeping an eye on.

- **The Lammas** - Riverside path on Lammas is slightly overgrown in two areas but it is still passable, so no work required but worth keeping an eye on.

Cllr. Kirk asked how long will metal barriers be in place at Walkern Road end of river as it is an eyesore.

Cllr. Knight said that Affinity Water will be sorting out the damage to the footpath, but the timescale is unknown.

v) **Weekly sportsfield-report**

Cllr. Meischke has cut back the Church walk hedge by the play-area benches and bins.

vi) **6- Month report**

Cllrs. Kirk and Meischke completed the report on 12 June 2023. All Parish Councillors to be e-mailed a copy of the report. **Action: J. Allsop**

- **Tennis courts**

- **Weeds** - Some on meadow side of main courts – needs weed killer.

- **Nets** – one appeared broken but Cllr. Meischke fixed it.

- **Floodlights** - Trees are in contact with the lights and need trimming.

Contact Adam Welch and Tree Smiths for a quotation.

Action: A. Kirk

Cllr. Knight said one of the floodlighting bulbs has blown and one of the lights is askew and needs

realigning. Floodlighting Limited to be asked to carry-out the work required in August.

Action: I. Knight

- **Play area**

- **Safety surfacing:** Need mastic for edges near palace fortress.

Action: J. Meischke

- **Seat near going Watkins Hall Farm:** the area around the seat is overgrown.

Cllr. McCash suggested that Sam Pearman (Watkins Hall Farm) be asked if he would trim the verges around the seat whilst doing grass cutting in this area.

Action: J. Allsop

- **Seat** – by High Street/Great Innings roundabout – very dirty due to bird poo.

- **Seats** – in need of painting - High Street North near bus stop, near Mill Lane and Sportsfield - Top corner bench with one slat missing.

vii) **Weekly defibrillator inspection**

Cllr. Hammon continues to do regular defibrillator checks.

viii) **Website/Facebook**

Upload Mike Smith's current piece on the Lammas to the website and Facebook page.

Action: J. Allsop

ix) **Highway issues**

Nothing to report.

x) **Dog fouling reports**

Nothing to report.

xi) **Police reports**

PCSO Sally Brooks e-mailed (on 8 June) the May Police report, which the Clerk then forwarded to all Parish Councillors.

9. Correspondence received

- a) **E-mail from Richard Lewis expressing an interest in becoming a Parish Councillor**
Refer to item directly following item 11, Items for Parish News.
- b) **E-mail from Mark Richardson expressing an interest in becoming a Parish Councillor**
Refer to item directly following item 11, Items for Parish News.
- c) **E-mail from Alan Rattue re condition of road by pelican crossing**
Refer to item directly after 6 b, Review of actions - High Street traffic issues, including Bus Stop outside the Bull public house.
- d) **Rhianna Ward re Station Road - Wild flower alternative grass verges**
Rhianna Ward e-mailed County Cllr. Crofton 16 May as follows
‘There is an area of grass along the footpath on Station Road, as marked on the picture. One morning last week I admired all the wildflowers (buttercups, daisies etc.) and how they would be feeding pollinators. The following morning, they had been mowed down along with the grass on the verge. It is not an area where growth would limit road visibility or pedestrian safety, and I believe it fits the criteria, so please could reducing the cutting of the grass/flowers be considered by the County Council?’
Cllr. Crofton suggested that she take this to the Parish Council to see if Councillors will support the idea before it is taken to officers at County Council, assuming the land is County Council owned.
Parish Council agreed they were in support of Rhianna Ward’s suggestion of a wildflower grass verge on Station Road, provided it does not cause any loss of visual sight lines for drivers as a safety issue.
Cllrs. Kirk and Brooks to visit the site to check the visibility and notify Rhianna Ward accordingly.
Action: A. Kirk/M. Brooks
- e) **Watton Ramblers – donation**
Watton Ramblers has given the Parish Council a £30 donation in appreciation of the free use of the Community Hall for their AGMs in recent years.
A letter of thanks to be sent to the Watton Ramblers.
Action: J. Allsop

10. Reports from other organisations

- **Watton Parish Church**
In her capacity as Church Warden, Cllr. McCash reported that the Church Fete, held on 29 May 2023, was very successful, raising just short of £6,000.
The Parish Church is currently undergoing repairs to its masonry, much of which is in a very dangerous state. She explained that the diocesan board charge the Parish Church £22,000 rent each year and do not contribute any funding towards repair work. All repair work is financed by the Parish Church. The Diocesan Board also take 2/3 of all fees received from weddings.

11. Items for the Parish News

The following items were identified for inclusion in the July 2023 issue of the Parish News.

- Michael Smith’s report on the Lammas
Richard Lewis left the meeting.
Action: J. Allsop
- **Co-option of a Parish Councillor**
Richard Lewis has written to express his interest in becoming a Parish Councillor. Cllr. Knight said that he would be standing down as a Parish Councillor directly after this meeting to make way for Richard Lewis and will e-mail his resignation to the Clerk.
Action: I. Knight
Cllr. McCash said that if, after having attended tonight’s meeting, Mark Richardson also expresses an interest in becoming a Parish Councillor, she would also be willing to stand down.
The Clerk to notify EHDC of Cllr. Knight’s resignation and on receipt of the EHDC notices of vacancy, the Clerk will publish them on the Parish Council website and notice boards.
Action: J. Allsop
If EHDC do not receive 10 written requests for an election, then the Parish Council will be able to fill the vacancy at their July Parish Council meeting.
- **Bank signatures**
Cllr. White said that to date no action has been taken about changing the bank signatures. Due to the impending resignation of Cllr. Knight it was agreed to make the following changes to the bank signatories to the four Santander accounts.
 - Remove Michael Smith, Stephen Block and Ian Knight.
 - Add Cllr. Nicola White, Annabel Kirk and Michael Brooks as signatories.The Clerk to obtain the necessary forms.
Action: J. Allsop

Meeting closed: 2125.

The date for the next Parish Council meeting is Tuesday 11 July 2023.